



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 346  
Tuesday, October 1, 2024

---

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



## **CONTENTS**

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

---

*Prayer*

---

ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions on different topics.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[English]

### PETITIONS

PUBLIC SAFETY

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

I rise for the 46th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. Community members of Swan River are struggling with the rising rate of crime in their area. They feel the threat that this crime poses to the community's safety and economic stability.

Since 2015, violent crime has risen by 32% and gang-related homicides by 92%. The people of Swan River demand to be heard, since in the last five years, the town's crime severity index has increased by over 50%.

The people of Swan River are calling for jail, not bail for violent repeat offenders. They demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and communities.

I support the good people of Swan River.

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition to support improving regional cellular coverage, which is critical for public safety. Access to cell phones is fundamental to land use. Cellular connectivity is a real social, community and economic driver for a modern society. The lack of coverage in some areas of Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides causes service issues for residents. Cellular connectivity enables our municipality to develop, thereby contributing to the social and economic vitality of our region. The Government of Canada has a mandate to provide cellular coverage to its citizens.

The first is with respect to safety on our roads. The petitioners note that the best-selling passenger vehicles in Canada are pickup trucks and SUVs, which are characterized by tall, blunt hoods. They recognize that the increasing weight and hood height of pickup trucks and SUVs pose significant dangers to other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and occupants of smaller vehicles.

The petitioners describe the increased risk to other road users based on the additional weight of these larger vehicles. They note that Canada's motor vehicle safety standards currently only assess safety for drivers and occupants, neglecting the safety hazards that vehicles pose to other road users, including those I mentioned before, like pedestrians and cyclists.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to do two things. The first is to require vehicle safety testing that evaluates risks posed by vehicles to other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and those in smaller vehicles. The second is to improve safety requirements for vehicle size and weight.

HOUSING

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, we have not had much time for petitions in this place as of late, so I appreciate the additional time.

My second petition is one I have presented before. Some 22% of Canadians have a disability and no building code in Canada currently mandates that housing be accessible. The petitioners describe the implications this has, like hallway medicine and the forcing of folks out of dwellings. More needs to be done to ensure that folks with disabilities have better access to quality, dignified housing across the country.

*Business of Supply*

The petitioners have two very specific calls to action. The first is calling on the Government of Canada to amend the national building code to make universal design mandatory in all multi-unit housing developments across the country. The second is requiring that public funds for housing be delivered for universally designed housing and accessible housing.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE**

## SITUATION IN LEBANON AND ISRAEL

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that I received notice of a request for an emergency debate. I invite the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona to rise and make a brief intervention.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is an urgent need for an emergency debate to allow parliamentarians to address the crisis in Lebanon. Many of us represent constituents who are terrified and whose families are trapped in this conflict, and we must discuss what Canada can do to promote a ceasefire in the region.

On Monday evening, Israeli forces began a ground incursion into Lebanon. This follows a week of heavy bombing in densely populated Lebanese cities by Netanyahu's extremist government. Rockets have also been launched toward northern Israel by Hezbollah, a listed terrorist organization under Canadian law. The use of explosive weapons across Lebanon and Israel is causing massive civilian casualties, particularly of children. Thousands have fled for safety, and a ground incursion risks escalating this conflict further, threatening a wider regional war. Meanwhile, the genocide in Gaza continues.

This issue is urgent and greatly distressing to many Canadians. The Lebanese community in Canada includes between 200,000 and 400,000 people, and there are around 45,000 Canadians currently in Lebanon. Canada has offered extremely limited evacuation assistance, including commercial flights, many of which have been cancelled. At least two Canadian citizens have been killed in the past week.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your careful consideration of this request. Many Canadians around the country expect the government to stand up and help Canadians abroad and to alleviate the extreme stress and trauma that so many Canadians are feeling right now.

• (1010)

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for her brief intervention. I am prepared to grant an emergency de-

bate concerning the crisis in Lebanon and Israel. This debate will be held later today at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—REQUEST FOR A ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-319

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ)** moved:

That the House call upon the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that a royal recommendation is granted as soon as possible to Bill C-319, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (amount of full pension).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by inviting the House to recognize the importance of the discussions we are going to have, beyond the context in which this conversation is happening.

Bills with a budgetary component that are introduced by a party that is not in office require royal recommendation, which can only be obtained by the executive branch. That may sound like a platitude of little importance, but without royal recommendation, Bill C-319 cannot become law.

This bill seeks to ensure fairness when it comes to retirement pensions for seniors between the ages of 65 and 74. The government is the one that created this discrimination by increasing pensions only for seniors aged 75 and up. We will come back to the government's reasons for such a surprising decision. This bill also enables retirees to earn \$6,500 rather than the current maximum of \$5,000 without being penalized with respect to the guaranteed income supplement.

The Bloc Québécois has set two conditions for propping up a government in dire straits and not pulling the rug out from under it. We made no bones about the fact that this was an opportunity to make gains for a very large pool of Quebec seniors, but also to protect supply management, Quebec's agricultural model and prospects for the next generation of farmers, once and for all. Each time a trade agreement is being negotiated, the government promises that it will not put supply management back on the table until it puts it back on the table. That has to stop.

Since 2019, the Bloc Québécois has been calling on the government to significantly increase the purchasing power of seniors aged 65 and over, who built Quebec and are behind the prosperity we are all blithely enjoying. Purchasing power, those magic words everyone uses, is all well and good until there is a price tag on it. When it costs something, suddenly purchasing power becomes too expensive. I will come back to that.

*Business of Supply*

The Bloc Québécois was asking for that in 2019, before the pandemic. When I became leader of the Bloc Québécois, we made it a priority because it was a no-brainer. Then the pandemic hit and caused a kind of pre-inflation for retirees, with everything costing more due to their isolation and vulnerability. When actual inflation struck, affecting everyone, it hit the most vulnerable even harder. Interest rates started climbing. If I may be so bold as to mention the agricultural sector, there were increased environmental concerns. The agricultural model has been jeopardized, and the next generation of farmers is facing uncertainty.

The Bloc Québécois put forward two solutions that are good for Quebec and not bad for Canada, which is great. Both solutions are legislative, not to mention very advanced in terms of parliamentary procedure. Within a timeline now set at four weeks, the House of Commons, the Senate and the government could go through all stages of Bill C-319 on seniors and Bill C-282 on supply management. Both bills could receive royal assent, despite how archaic and outdated it is to think that we need the royalty to support a bill that stems from the democratic process.

• (1015)

If the fact that all the parties in the House have voted in favour of both these bills at one point or another does not get them passed within the next four weeks, we must ask ourselves whether somewhere, someone who shall remain nameless has not been a hypocrite. If nothing else, we will be able to test this out.

The recent sequence of events has created a fair amount of turmoil, it must be said. The New Democratic Party opted out of its alliance with the Liberal Party of Canada, although it is fair to ask whether this is actually the case. The days ahead, maybe the weeks ahead if not the months ahead, will determine the accuracy of this statement.

The Bloc Québécois captured the by-election in LaSalle—Émard—Verdun. This seismic event shook the pillars of a temple that was not as solid as was once thought. There was a motion by the official opposition to bring down the government, all because Joe wanted to be prime minister instead of Jack, even though he might not be so different from Jack because he has no program. Naturally enough, the Conservative motion fizzled out. Next came our proposal for seniors and farmers, which we are taking up today.

I would remind the House that this remains a minority government. Replacing it without a program, without an election platform, failing to tell voters what they would do with the mandate they are seeking, this is not an end unto itself. It would change nothing. It means nothing and it gives people no idea about what would come after. I can never get over the fact that the most comprehensive program presented to voters by the parties in this Parliament is the one put forth by the lone party not interested in forming the government. It is so ironic, but we are simply doing our job.

If the government does not accede to our terms, we will get the message and embark on negotiations, which will not necessarily be enjoyable but whose end purpose will be clear. We will negotiate with the other opposition parties to bring down a government that will have abandoned the very notion of being useful to millions of Canadians and Quebecers.

A number of things were said, but they are not necessarily based in fact. The government maintains control over the parliamentary agenda. It has the power to decide which subjects will be taken up and when, and when opposition days will take place. It still has a tremendous amount of control. It might still have some kind of understanding with the New Democratic Party. The government can also prorogue Parliament. The government can send the Prime Minister to talk to the Governor General for five minutes in English and an election will be called.

The government can also respect the clear will of a massive number of people and take into account the fact that we have not tried to turn this into a divisive issue. The Bloc Québécois has a bit of influence on the political or moral objective of this. In fact, the subject we have proposed is not controversial in Parliament. Some might have preferred this to be a controversial subject. At times there are some who hope for failure to justify their political posturing. We have more maturity than that.

We have proposed something for our most vulnerable, who were vulnerable before the pandemic, who were vulnerable during the pandemic and who are even more vulnerable during this inflation crisis, which also has repercussions on housing.

The government partially indexed the pensions of Canadians aged 75 and over on the pretext that they needed this more than other seniors. While not entirely false, this justifies nothing. It did not index the pensions of those aged 65 to 74. The real reason seems to be that the government, cruelly cynical in its approach, is telling people to burn through their private pension and if they are still alive once their money runs out, they will be given some more. There is something cruel about this message. It seems beneath an institution that should, above all, exhibit statesmanship.

That is really what this is about. The government told us our ask would cost a lot, so we are going to have some fun with this. It would cost \$3 billion a year and \$16 billion over five years. When we hear that, we all just beat our heads against the wall. Fine.

• (1020)

However, during that same period, no matter how many ways they try to conceal it, Ottawa will be giving between \$50 billion and \$80 billion to the oil companies, who do not need it. Some of the wealthiest companies in the world, supported by one of the wealthiest banking systems in the world, are going to receive for their shareholders, who are among the wealthiest in the world, between \$50 billion and \$80 billion over five years. Then we are being told that seniors do not deserve to get \$3 billion a year.

In response to that obscenity, I am telling the government to take at least \$3 billion from the money it is giving to the oil companies and, through them, to the banks in Toronto, take a bit more from Edmonton and Toronto and give it to seniors in Canada and Quebec, whose purchasing power has been shrinking for years.

*Business of Supply*

Since the oil companies are the ones benefiting the most, it is not surprising that the Conservatives, the great defenders of government austerity, are mum on this lavish, excessive, wild spending that is often supported by bad science.

We are talking about a lot of people here. Let us put numbers to it. There are one million people 65 to 74 in Quebec that some people are saying no to. The \$3 billion we are talking about for all of Canada would serve four million Canadians, including one million Quebecers. They seem far more important to me than some oil companies and a couple hundred shareholders.

We could be hardheaded and cynical and look at it through an electoral lens. Just for fun, let us say no to one million Quebecers. Let us think about it. We will be helping one million Quebecers, and beyond that, since we are happy to help others with our motion, a total of four million Canadians, which is no small thing. The merits need to be considered, but I cannot help but think that some people's approach is more cynical.

We have been told that we should talk about immigration, and I would like to settle that. We originally talked about giving Quebec all powers over immigration. We even talked about holding a referendum to get them. Now we are halfway through something that we hardly know how to calculate, given that there is more than one kind of immigration and even more than one kind of temporary immigration. We still maintain that Quebec should be given all immigration powers, and we have not backed down or shrunk from our position.

However, if we had chosen to debate a motion about immigration, language, secularism or ending the religious exemption for hate speech and incitement to violence, the NDP would naturally have sided with the Liberals, since that is where they reside ideologically. It is no surprise, as we all know. That is not a criticism in terms of the current debate. At no political cost, the NDP and the Liberals would have voted together. That would be the best way of guaranteeing that the government stayed in power until 2025, and perhaps well into 2025.

The best way to achieve the opposite of that, of what some people claim to want, was to choose a divisive topic that offers no real gains, a topic that no one in any capital could ever claim is nationalistic. I think we made the right choice, and we are forcing everyone, all the caucuses, to really think about what they are going to do here. The Bloc Québécois has wind in its sails and has put forward a meaningful proposal.

There is another issue that we would not have solved by going back to immigration because it is just smoke and mirrors. I have yet to hear the Conservatives say they are going to reduce the Liberal target of 500,000 immigrants per year. I have yet to hear the Conservatives say that they reject the McKinsey-led century initiative, which is basically the storyline of James Bond's *Spectre*. I have yet to hear the Conservatives say they are going to cede all immigration powers to Quebec.

● (1025)

Most of all, I have never heard the Conservatives dare say any one of these three things in English, because the cost for Ontario would be horrific. I have to say that, in this major war going on

mostly in Ontario, the Conservatives are trying to please exactly the same people as the Liberal Party.

Let me get back to something simple: the actual intention, the common good and statesmanship. I assume that no one in Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton or even Quebec City thinks that \$80 a month or \$1,000 a year for one million people in Quebec and three million people in Canada is nothing. It is more than the government's dental care program, which interferes in our jurisdiction. No one really thinks that the Bloc Québécois is asking for nothing. Anyone who seriously thinks that needs to listen to what we are saying, so let us pay attention to the words. Words have meaning and they can also have a price.

Bill C-319 will immediately improve the quality of life of four million people, including those who want to help mitigate the labour shortage, which is still affecting many businesses. Bill C-282 will ensure that supply management is no longer compromised in our trade agreements. All of the discussions and both bills put forward by the Bloc Québécois are currently at an advanced stage. Everyone voted in favour of them at one point or another. These bills help Quebec, and not at the expense of Canada.

If these bills are not passed and do not get royal assent within four weeks exactly, we will assume that the government has rejected this opportunity to help four million people, in addition to farmers; a lot of people stand to gain from this. Given the extreme vulnerability of the government and its principal ally, we will act accordingly.

Make no mistake, we are prepared to do what we have to do. We have the funds, the issues, the program and the candidates. We are ready to go. It is not what we would prefer in the short term. It is not what Quebecers would prefer in the short term. However, everyone understands that, if the government does not demonstrate its usefulness and open-mindedness very soon, we will trigger an election no later than October 29.

● (1030)

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have often heard Bloc members say that they vote for whatever is good for Quebec.

Why, then, did the Bloc Québécois vote against changing the program's age of eligibility from 67 to 65? This is on top of the GIS increase. We increased the GIS at the very start of our term. Today, we are talking about increasing the pensions of the most vulnerable seniors, those aged 75 and over. Then there is the dental care program on top of that.

Why has my colleague decided to vote against these wonderful bills when they are good for Quebec and Quebecers?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is not too interested in handing over \$2 billion to private insurance companies. That is not our business model.

I would also like to say that every time the government comes up with something moderately appealing, something we do not outright dismiss, it comes with a megadose of mismanagement, interference, disrespect, disdain for the provinces and disdain for Quebec, and a claim that the federal government is the best at everything, when in fact everyone can see that it is really the worst in terms of doing nothing at all.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see the leader of the Bloc Québécois in the House today. That does not happen often.

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

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier and all members not to mention the presence or absence of members. As members know, we all have work to do for our constituents, and sometimes that prevents us from being here. All hon. members are always working on behalf of their constituents.

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment and I apologize.

I would like to inform the leader of the Bloc Québécois that the Conservative Party of Canada voted in favour of this bill. We care about the well-being of seniors. In the leader's speech, he said he wanted to know more about the Conservative Party of Canada's election platform. We also look forward to unveiling our election platform. For now, it is important to understand what has happened over the past few months. The Liberals have caught on to some of our party's actions, intentions and desires and, unfortunately, they ran with them.

I simply want to know what is going to happen on October 30, the day before Halloween. Will Canadians be headed towards an election? The Bloc Québécois has issued an ultimatum, but it does not have the power or the legitimacy it needs. Could my colleague comment on that?

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, since I am a good boy, I will not refer to those who are absent, but I would like to point out that I have invited the Conservative leader to debate with me many times outside this chamber, but he has always been completely absent.

That being said, I am pleased that the Conservative Party is still planning to support the Bloc Québécois in its efforts to help seniors, as it has done from the start. Perhaps we will vote the same way on this. That has happened in the past, whatever they may say. If this does not work, then perhaps we will also be voting the same way to bring down this government.

• (1035)

[English]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are going to support the bill, but it is the bare minimum approach, which ultimately we feel is not very creative. Sen-

iors deserve better. We need to think beyond the 10% increase in OAS. We need to think about providing dignity of life and an approach that supports universal public drug coverage, dental care and initiatives like basic income.

The leader of the official opposition has had years to deliver for Quebec, and with an election looming, it would appear today that he seems desperate to show he could be relevant. When the Bloc has the opportunity to finally support the people of Quebec, whether it be getting dental care, pharmacare or supporting seniors, it refuses to do so.

Can the leader of the Bloc please explain to the House why he waited so long to deliver results for Quebecers, when he could have been supporting NDP initiatives like dental care, pharmacare and basic income?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, there has been too much interference, as well as some incompetence, on the part of the government. We have become so used to it that we do not always mention it. The care that he is talking about falls under Quebec's jurisdiction. It is as simple as that.

I agree with my colleague that this is not enough. We have been asking for more from the start and we have not given up on that. I am pleased to know that the NDP will support us, but it needs to do so for more than just three days and this cannot just be for show. Supporting the Bloc Québécois's measure means recognizing that, if the government does not attach a royal recommendation to these two bills, then we will say "Thank you very much and so long" and the opposition parties will bring down this government. That is what I want to know from the NDP.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Bloc Québécois leader about the major gap between the well-being of seniors and that of young people. Of course, the climate crisis springs to mind. Only the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party remain deeply committed to the issue of climate emergency. We are the only ones who do not flip-flop depending on the political situation.

Has my esteemed colleague, the Bloc leader, looked at the study by Generation Squeeze, a group at the University of British Columbia, which says that our country and our fiscal situation are more beneficial to seniors than to young people?

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, I have not read the study, but I have heard about it. I do have some reservations, however. Over the past few days, I have heard people go so far as to say that playing catch up and returning some purchasing power to seniors will be terrible for young people. Quebec's young people—and I am very happy about this—have a standard of living, a level of prosperity and a level of wealth that we never could have imagined. I am not that old but, that said, I am starting to shrink a little. They have a standard of living that even the generation in between did not envision at the time. That makes me happy, but I think the people who built it deserve to be properly compensated and properly treated for doing so.

*Business of Supply*

As for climate change, let me say that it is quite possible that the next few days will demonstrate the Bloc's deep commitment to fighting climate change.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beloeil—Chambly for his wonderful presentation on Bill C-319. First of all, I would like to say that a young man in his twenties named Samuel Lévesque was the first person who asked me to take action for seniors and sign a petition to address this unacceptable inequality between seniors in the name of intergenerational equity.

A few weeks ago, I went to the riding of Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation to meet with seniors' groups. I also visited the riding of Sherbrooke, which is also represented by a member of the governing party. Finally, I went to the riding of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, which is represented by a Conservative. Every single time, people asked me to do something. They did not understand why the government had created two classes of seniors, why it had brought on this unacceptable inequality between “young seniors” and “old seniors”.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether I like the idea of a “young senior”. We will talk about that later. However, I did not understand the government's approach. I have never understood why the government did not move quickly on our request. On the face of things, we thought it seemed fair. There was also something extremely cynical about creating a form of discrimination. The government's intent to oppose discrimination of any kind actually caused discrimination, with a significant impact on quality of life.

Bill C-319 became all the more important in a pandemic or post-pandemic context because the capacity, purchasing power and level of distress of many seniors were exacerbated by the pandemic, inflation and the impact on housing. I have never understood the government's lack of compassion and courage in this situation. Of course, I condemn such discrimination.

● (1040)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to address the House on such an important issue: our seniors. There are a couple of thoughts that come to mind right away.

Having listened to the leader of the Bloc Party, I would encourage him and his caucus to take a look at some of the policy positions they have taken on programs that are having a positive impact on seniors in every region of the country. We saw it in the form of a question in regard to the dental program, as an example, where there are tens of thousands of seniors who have directly benefited by the program, including in the province of Quebec. Let us think also of the potential of a national pharmacare program. It is something I have been a long-time advocate for. One of the biggest benefactors is our seniors.

These are initiatives the Government of Canada has taken because it is supporting Canadians in every region through providing good-quality, socially progressive programs. The programs are of

great benefit to our seniors. Unfortunately the Bloc has made the decision to vote against the programs.

It was interesting that the leader of the Bloc said that he has an agenda or a plan for whenever the election happens. I suggest the leader of the Bloc Party revisit the party's position on these social programs. The federal government does have a role to play; we have seen that in the past. Where did the old age supplement and the guaranteed income supplement come from? What about the CPP and its parallel in the province of Quebec?

The government, since the Prime Minister took the reins and put together a cabinet with a solid caucus, brought forward programs and initiatives through the budget to really enhance life for our seniors, to be there at a time in which people are retiring, in which there are medical costs and the ability to work is somewhat more limited. This includes the age 75-plus 10% increase on OAS.

The programs and initiatives are not just driven by the Liberal caucus or the Prime Minister. They are the types of issues on which all of us have received a great deal of feedback in our constituencies and have brought here to the House of Commons.

I will be splitting my time.

I want to look at some of the initiatives the government took in 2015-16. One of the very first was the dramatic increase to the guaranteed income supplement. That particular initiative lifted literally thousands of Canadian seniors, the poorest of them, out of poverty. Opposition members did not support it.

We can look from the very beginning to today at the types of things the Liberals have done. Let us think in terms of the pandemic. Stating the obvious, during the pandemic, we gave one-time payments to people receiving OAS and even more, in terms of the size of the payment, to people who were receiving the GIS. Even more than that, we enhanced many of the services that seniors receive through non-profit organizations, again as a way to support our seniors. The party, generally speaking, has been exceptionally forward-thinking in dealing with the seniors of Canada.

● (1045)

People ask why we would do it for those aged 75 and above. A few things instantly come to mind.

It was an election platform issue. The Liberal Party of Canada, in an election, said that if we were elected into government, we would increase the OAS by 10% for those seniors aged 75 and above. We fulfilled that election platform commitment. That is a positive thing.



*Business of Supply*

People ask why we would only do it for those aged 75 plus. Many discussions took place at the grassroots and constituency levels. If we look at the needs of seniors, we find that, as we age and get to 75 plus, our retirement funds, our mobility and our ability to supplement our income are not as great. These are the types of reasons that drove the policy decision that we needed to ensure that those aged 75 plus would in fact receive more money. It was exceptionally well-received.

What about the individuals facing retirement? I sat in opposition when Stephen Harper, as the then prime minister, did absolutely nothing for those individuals. In fact, one of his initiatives, when he was in Davos, was to increase the age of retirement from 65 to 67. One of the first actions we took back in 2015-16 was to reverse that decision, returning the age of retirement to 65 from 67. That was something we did virtually immediately.

If we look at the importance of seniors and the issues they are facing, such as health care, they are very concerned. If we look at what is happening in provinces today on issues such as hip and knee replacements, there is a litany of different aspects of health care that are so critically important to seniors. No government and no prime minister has made more of a commitment toward a national health care system than the current Prime Minister and government have, with \$198 billion over 10 years. That is not to mention the emphasis we have put on things such as long-term care, hospice care, mental health and the need for pharmacare; we now have legislation for pharmacare.

This caucus does not need to be lectured about caring for seniors. We have been caring for our seniors from day one, and we will continue to care for our seniors well into the future. If we look at the many budgetary and legislative measures that we have taken as a government, they clearly demonstrate that our government supports our seniors.

We are not alone. There are many other non-profit organizations out there that do fantastic work. For example, I think of the New Horizons for Seniors program, which is throughout all the different communities, as well as the volunteer organizations ensuring that there are all forms of activities for our seniors. The provinces, municipalities and indigenous leaders all play a very important role in being there for our seniors.

As a national government, we stepped up to the plate to demonstrate strong leadership with respect to our seniors. I can assure every Canadian who is following this debate, or anyone who is interested, that the current government and Prime Minister are committed to being there for our seniors, as we have been from day one and will be today and tomorrow.

• (1050)

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have studied Bill C-319 in committee, and we have heard from witness after witness about how the carbon tax has impacted their household expenses. Seniors, who have worked their entire lives to contribute to society, created a retirement plan that no longer has the ability to make ends meet.

Is it not time that Canadians have their say? I am asking the hon. member across the way to call for a carbon tax election and let seniors decide.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is a mouthful. I can say that some of the biggest beneficiaries of carbon rebates are, in fact, seniors who are on a fixed income; they receive a rebate four times a year. More than 80% of Canadians receive more money back from the carbon rebate than they actually pay in terms of the carbon tax. The sad reality is that the Conservative Party of Canada knows this, but that does not stop them from going out and telling lies to Canadians.

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for saying the word “lie”.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member knows the power of that word, and I am glad he withdrew it right away. However, I will ask the hon. member, and all hon. members, this: Please do not go to that line. We must make sure that we have pointed, passionate debates that still fall within the parameters of acceptable parliamentary language.

The hon. member for King—Vaughan is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts:** Mr. Speaker, I do not appreciate being called a liar, because this is what I hear from seniors in my riding. I do not—

**The Speaker:** Let me reassure the hon. member for King—Vaughan, no one appreciates that. She is justified, and that is why the hon. member withdrew his comment. The Speaker accepts the withdrawal, and as you just heard, encourages all people to not go to that line. Do not skate close to that line, and then we will all have better debates.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for using that word and that expression, but we should keep in mind this point: If we follow what the Conservative Party of Canada is putting out in its social media, it gives the impression that seniors of Canada will benefit from cutting the carbon tax. I would suggest to the hon. members, as would the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that one of the biggest pieces of fake information out there is related to the carbon tax versus the carbon rebate. Seniors actually benefit from it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question will be short, clear and simple: Will my colleague vote for or against the motion?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would say to my colleague across the way, as I said in my comments, that the Bloc really need to look internally and take a look at what they are doing on such issues as the dental care program. This program is helping many people, including seniors, in the province of Quebec. Many individuals would also be helped by the pharmacare program. These are the types of programs that are helping seniors. I would encourage my friends—

*Business of Supply*

• (1055)

**The Speaker:** Given the length of the question, the hon. member has overshot his time.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, I did not want to bother you, because you seem busy.

The member's answer completely misses the point. I asked him a question: is it yes or no?

**The Speaker:** That is clearly a matter of debate.

Hon. colleagues, again, it is Tuesday, the first day of this parliamentary week. I hope we can start again.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats will be supporting the bill, but we know it is a bare-minimum approach. Seniors deserve better. In addition to a 10% increase to the OAS, we need to think about providing a life with dignity, which includes universal drug coverage, dental care and such initiatives as basic income. New Democrats are asking for a grace period for old age security; if seniors are unable to file their taxes, there are detrimental impacts.

Will the member and the Liberal Party support the NDP's calls to have a one-year grace period for seniors who are unable to file their taxes so that they can qualify for the GIS and have the bare-minimum income they so desperately need?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, virtually from 2015 and 2016, we took a very open-minded approach in dealing with issues affecting seniors. In a very real and tangible way, we then brought forward different types of programs that advanced and encouraged our seniors, such as the dental care program, the pharmacare program, the enhancement of the GIS, ongoing support during the pandemic and the enhancement of many different non-profit organizations.

We continue to look at ways to support seniors. We understand and appreciate their needs, and that is one reason we even continue to look at the things that support our seniors indirectly, not only directly. One thing I should have made quick reference to when I referred to Stephen Harper is the CPP. As a government, we actually worked with the provinces and achieved, for a generation, a change to the CPP. Upon individuals' retirement, they will have even more money coming to them through CPP.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government's approach to seniors has been very thoughtful. In my riding, Argen-teuil—La Petite-Nation, we are very involved in projects to help seniors, whether with respect to old age security, lowering the age of eligibility from 67 to 65 or, now, the dental care program. We have also brought in the New Horizons for Seniors program. In Argen-

teuil—La Petite-Nation, we have been the champions for many years and the seniors in my riding have benefited from that.

It is important to me to speak today about some of the measures we have put in place and to remind the House of the significance of our actions to support seniors. As a government, we restored the age of eligibility for retirement to 65 from 67, preventing more than 100,000 future seniors from plunging into poverty. We also put thousands of dollars back into their pockets and increased the guaranteed income supplement by up to \$947 a year. That helped almost 900,000 seniors, many of whom live in my riding.

We also increased the earnings exemption for the guaranteed income supplement from \$3,500 to \$5,000, and extended it to self-employment income, which was not even on the agenda. We also granted an additional 50% exemption on employment and self-employment earnings between \$5,000 and \$15,000, and it is important to remember that the exemption for seniors, up to \$5,000 of employment income, still exists. If seniors want to work between the ages of 65 and 74, they do so mostly to avoid isolation and meet people. They also want to earn a little extra money. It is a good way to stay in shape and improve their quality of life.

Our government also enhanced the Canada pension plan. This was a gradual process, involving a small increase in contributions to the plan by today's workforce. That means higher benefits for these future pensioners. When I entered the labour market, many more people were contributing to our pension funds. Given the aging population, this is a concern that involves additional responsibilities for a government.

It is especially important to remember that we also permanently increased the old age security pension by 10% for seniors aged 75 and over. By doing so, in the first year alone, we gave \$800 more to retirees receiving a full pension. Who are these people? They are vulnerable seniors, mostly women, and mostly widows. A large percentage are also people living with a disability. Some 59% of these seniors earn less than \$30,000 a year. Giving seniors aged 75 and over a 10% increase was a good measure.

*Business of Supply*

If I may digress a little, I would like to talk a bit more about old age security. After all, this subject has been front and centre in our debates since 2015. Ever since I was elected we have been talking about the OAS, and we have put several measures in place. The OAS program plays a crucial role in income security for seniors, who deserve all our attention. These are our builders. They led the way in terms of the jobs we have today. The next generation also depends on them in terms of being able to do a good job.

OAS benefits consist of three things. First, there is the basic old age pension, which is paid to everyone who is 65 years of age and older who meets the residence requirements. Second, there is the guaranteed income supplement for low-income recipients of the old age security pension. This supplement was increased when I began my term.

- (1100)

Lastly, there are the allowances for low-income Canadians aged 60 to 64 who are the spouses or common-law partners of GIS recipients or who are widows or widowers. As people age, they tend to have lower income and face higher health expenses, which is a problem. This can be due to the onset of an illness or disability. Therefore, seniors face increasingly difficult obstacles, making them increasingly vulnerable, since some are less and less able to supplement their income with paid employment. They run the risk of depleting their personal savings and becoming widows or widowers.

I was at one time the parliamentary secretary to the minister of seniors, and I had the opportunity to meet with hundreds of seniors, organizations and groups. I am aware of seniors' needs: We listened to them and, in 2022, we increased the OAS for seniors aged 75 and over, when they are most vulnerable. We know that it was a very expensive measure, but it was worth it for our seniors. We wanted to give them more financial security later on in life, when they are more financially vulnerable.

This increase improved the financial security of 3.3 million seniors, more than half of them women, as I said earlier. This increase is an important component of the financial support for seniors offered by the old age security program. In 2022-23, we paid out \$69.4 billion in benefits to 7.1 million pensioners. This includes almost \$54 billion in OAS benefits, and more than \$16 billion in GIS benefits.

If I may remind my colleagues, benefits are indexed four times a year. We realize these are not huge amounts, but at least pensions are indexed to the consumer price index, or CPI, every three months. That means that benefits increased by 1.3% for the last quarter of 2024, a 2.8% increase over the previous year.

It is important to remember that the Old Age Security Act contains a guarantee that benefits will never decrease, even if the CPI goes down. We will always maintain pension amounts based on the CPI.

That is it for old age security. It goes without saying that this is a measure that makes life more affordable for older Canadians. That being said, our measures to make life more affordable for seniors do not stop there. We need to do more.

As we all know, we put in place several other measures that have borne fruit. The grocery rebate put hundreds of dollars back into the pockets of low-income seniors. The six-month doubling of the GST credit payment provided seniors with an average of \$225. The \$500 payment to nearly 2 million low-income tenants, a number of them seniors, helped cover the cost of housing. This too is part of the measures put in place by the government.

There is also the Canadian dental care plan, which I was eager to talk about. This plan offers care to low-income seniors. I recently did a major tour of my riding, criss-crossing the region to meet with seniors. We are proud to have listened to them. Seniors have a pressing need for dental care. This measure, which we implemented for seniors, has been a godsend. It was a very good decision to help seniors overcome this oral health crisis. Oral health is essential to overall physical health. It works hand in hand with proper nutrition and contributes to better self-esteem. This plan has worked.

For many years we have helped Canadian seniors integrate into their communities. This dental care plan is yet more evidence of what we are doing for seniors.

In fact, this year we are marking the 20th anniversary of the New Horizons for Seniors program. I championed this program in my riding, and I can assure members that seniors have benefited from it. They talk about it to this day. We are in the midst of the selection process for the program, and I am proud of this. Once again, this program seeks to help our seniors break out of their isolation. Our government is proud of this assistance.

- (1105)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, that was an interesting speech, but it totally left out one aspect, one word, one verb: “divide”. This Liberal government did something that no one saw coming and, to my knowledge, we have not seen it in any other democratic countries. It divided seniors up by distinguishing between those aged 65 to 74 and those aged 74 and over. Why divide seniors up?

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, there is no question of dividing our seniors up. We know how important they are.

*Business of Supply*

I have had my Quebec FADOQ membership card since I turned 50. I have been in at least four clubs since then. I am only 58 now, and I am considered a senior. Who decides who gets a senior's card? Some people are seniors at 65 years old. People in Quebec are seniors at 60 years old. My colleague was in the National Assembly. He knows very well that the age of eligibility for a pension was 60 in Quebec. Why create a division between 65-year-olds and 60-year-olds? Why did his government decide to grant this pension?

When I was elected, my colleague's federal government wanted to raise the retirement age to 67. Why create a division among seniors at 67? The first thing our government did was roll back the retirement age to 65.

It is not a question of dividing seniors up. It is a question of providing help to seniors aged 75 and over, to the ones who are most vulnerable, to women, to people with disabilities, to the Quebec women who defended their families, raised several children and worked hard at home but do not have a pension. That is why we decided to help seniors aged 75 and over, especially women.

• (1110)

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my question is very simple. Right now, we are hearing about all the measures the Liberals put in place to help seniors.

What I want to know is, will the Liberals vote for or against the Bloc Québécois's motion to increase pensions for seniors aged 65 to 74? Are they for or against the motion? I just want a plain answer.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, my colleague must know that we are in the middle of a debate and that there will be a vote at the end. That is how it works. Let me just explain to her how the House of Commons works. In the House of Commons, a member proposes an idea, we debate it, and then at the end, we vote.

My colleagues will see at the end of the debate how we are going to vote. I will, however, say that we have taken concrete action to help seniors in Quebec and across Canada, whether they are young seniors, 60 years old, 65 years old or 75 years old.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Terrebonne on a point of order.

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Madam Speaker, perhaps my colleague does not know how the House of Commons works. We usually try to answer questions.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is a point of debate.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I agree with the Bloc that more needs to be done for seniors in Quebec and across the country, and we could do it by taking even just a fraction of the money that the government currently gives to the oil and gas industry every single year.

A fair criticism of what is being proposed is that OAS is provided to seniors all the way up to just over \$148,000 of income, with limited recovery taxes in advance of that. Another way of supporting seniors is boosting the guaranteed income supplement, both the threshold and the minimum amounts, so that any additional dollars go to seniors with the lowest incomes across the country.

Can the parliamentary secretary comment in this debate, which he has mentioned he is keen on, on whether his level of support would increase if the proposal was to deliver the \$3 billion per year to increase to GIS versus OAS?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, in politics it is easy to say we can move \$3 billion from one line item to another. I would like to ask my colleague if we should cut \$3 billion from the dental care plan, which we just launched and is working very well, and redirect that money to seniors. Should we take \$3 billion from somewhere else, like the breakfast program we want to set up so that young Canadians start their school day with a full belly? Should we take \$3 billion out of that?

It is easy in politics to betray what we believe in and move \$3 billion around. We are here to talk about our seniors and their well-being. Everything our government has put in place for our seniors has been beneficial to them, regardless of their age group.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

We are gathered here today to talk about seniors. Canadian society owes seniors a tremendous debt. Canadian families owe seniors a tremendous debt. Seniors are the ones who built the country we live in, a country that has unfortunately been broken over the past 10 years but that nevertheless makes us proud to be Canadian, prouder than ever, in fact, in the face of the challenges that lie ahead.

Seniors are community builders. It is thanks to them that this country is prosperous, although it is not as prosperous as it could be. We owe seniors our respect.

Madam Speaker, I am sure it is the same in your riding. On weekends, when we meet with charitable groups, when we do the rounds in our ridings, we meet a lot of senior volunteers. Where would our country be without volunteers? It would be even worse off than it has been for the past nine years. Seniors step up. They do all kinds of volunteer work in each of our ridings. We can never thank them enough.

That is why seniors are economically vulnerable. It has been reported that 1.6 million Canadian seniors are low-income. It is especially challenging because they are on a fixed income and inflation has been so brutal for them these past few years.

That inflation was created and fuelled by this government's fiscal irresponsibility. Just a few minutes ago, I heard the Liberal member talk about taking money from here or there. The thing is he is forgetting is that this money is being taken out of taxpayers' pockets. This government has proven over the last nine years that it cannot control its spending. It spends with zero sense of responsibility and thinks that it is no big deal how much it spends, because the budget will balance itself, as the Prime Minister once said.

This government has saddled us with a chronic deficit of over \$500 billion. Whenever we buy something, we have to pay the goods and services tax, the GST. Those watching this debate should know that every penny paid in GST goes purely toward servicing the interest on this government's debt. None of the GST goes toward programs to enhance Canadians' well-being. It merely serves to pay for this government's senseless, out-of-control spending. This drives up inflation.

Inflation is one of seniors' worst enemies, given that they live on a fixed income. When inflation surges, as it has over the last few months and years, it has a direct impact on seniors. The Parliamentary Budget Officer and the governor of the Bank of Canada have acknowledged that fact. That is why a government needs to be much more prudent when dealing with public finances.

Earlier, I asked my colleague a question about dividing up seniors. Three years ago, the government tabled a budget that created two categories of seniors: people between the ages of 65 and 74, and people 75 and older. What was its rationale? Why did it divide up seniors? Why did it create one class of seniors that gets more than the other?

Only the Liberals could have dreamt up such an idea. It is so sad to see the impact this has had. I am sad to say that when I chat with seniors and listen to what they have to say, because listening to them is our first duty, some tell me they thought it was very cruel of this government to create these two categories. Why would one senior deserve more than another based solely on their age? After all, they are both retirees.

It is very sad to see this government taking advantage of a situation. It made things worse for many seniors. If it were truly interested in helping seniors, it would have acted completely differently. However, to help seniors, one must understand their reality.

I do not know how many times people 65 and over have approached me in a store or on the street to tell me they wish they could keep working, not full-time, but two or three days a week, so they could keep their hand in, see other people, do some work, contribute to society, and share and pass on their know-how. After spending 40 years at a job, people have knowledge they can share and pass on to the next person, the next generation. They can mentor others two or three days a week.

• (1115)

Unfortunately, today's tax rules penalize work, so some people would rather stay home because going out to work would cost them money. These tax measures could be fixed with the stroke of a pen by a government that really valued work and that wanted to help seniors who are interested in staying active and passing on their knowledge. That is the basis of our party's approach, but unfortu-

### *Business of Supply*

nately, it is what the government has been completely denying, especially over the past nine years, despite having the opportunity to do something about it.

We need this kind of mentorship for the next generation. To be honest, when I go to a service business like a hardware store, I tend to gravitate toward the employees with grey hair. I feel like they will be better able to advise me on a purchase, to make sure I am getting the right thing. That is what seniors bring to the table. Penalizing seniors aged 65 and over who want to work two or three days a week is not the right thing to do.

The same goes for fixing the tax measures. In some cases, with the GIS, people get less because they will pay more income tax later on. People often bring this up when we meet on the weekends or when they call my riding office looking for clarification. People should not be penalized. These measures can be corrected with the stroke of a pen in a budget if the will is there. Unfortunately, this government has failed in that respect. Moreover, with the stroke of a pen, it decided to separate seniors into two groups: older seniors and younger seniors.

It is a shame to see that today's seniors are struggling. Every generation has its challenges, but it is important to understand that this generation of seniors has had some very big challenges. Many of them were born during the Great Depression and went through it. They lived through the hardships of war. Although Canada was not invaded, people here still had to suffer through rationing. These are the people who built and created post-war wealth. These are the people who are responsible for the baby boom, the period when families had lots of children, who then contributed to the country's prosperity. The least we can do for seniors is to respect their choices and their lives. Too often, we have seen this government introduce inflationary measures, which have cost seniors dearly. This must be taken into account.

Soon, I expect, when we have a chance to express our opinion on this government and decide Canada's future, people will remember its reckless, out-of-control spending and belief that the budget would balance itself. They will remember that it is going to take us decades to pay that off. Today, our debt has topped over \$500 billion, in large part due to this inflationary government, aided and abetted by the Bloc Québécois 189 times. Each time, when confidence in the government hung in the balance, the Bloc Québécois gave the government its support. We saw it do so again recently for the 189th time.

Today, the Bloc Québécois will have an opportunity to vote on another confidence motion.

I can assure you that we, on this side of the House, have no confidence in this government. We will have to wait and see whether the Bloc Québécois will give this government its vote of confidence for the 190th time, or not.

*Business of Supply*

• (1120)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, a number of Conservatives across from me were part of the Stephen Harper government when it made the decision to increase the age of retirement from 65 to 67 in order to collect OAS.

Could the member clearly indicate that former prime minister Stephen Harper and those Conservative MPs at that time made a bad decision, and that in no way will the Reform-Conservative party raise the age of retirement from 65?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I did not have the privilege and the honour to sit with the Right Hon. Stephen Harper. Those were great years for Canada, and we were in a great economic position. Unfortunately, after nine years of the current government, it has destroyed all the good work that was done by Mr. Harper.

My hon. colleague from Winnipeg North talked about the age of eligibility going from 65 to 67. Does he remember Mr. Bill Morneau, the former finance minister of the Liberal government? What did he write in his book a few years before? He said that we should apply for it at 66-year-olds.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his speech because there was a lot of content. It is probably because he was speaking to a Bloc Québécois motion. It is also our job to provide content. I am very pleased to hear that.

There was something a little less convincing at the end of his speech, when he was talking about voting. The only answer that I can give him is that when it comes to voting on content and not replacing one party in government with another, we will be there. If it is not good for Quebec and if it is an intrusion, we will be there. There is nothing to worry about.

I would like to come back to the best part of his speech, when my colleague talked about the motion and the respect we owe seniors. I agree with most of what he said. One of the interesting points he made was that the government is penalizing retirees who want to work but cannot. He said that he has met with a lot of them. I have met with a lot of them too. I could even give the names of people who say that if they worked two days, it would be like working for free because their income would be cut.

The bill would increase the exemption from \$5,000 to \$6,500, but I think other things could be done as well. I invite my colleague to tell me about his party's plans and vision. For example, could a tax credit be established up to a certain threshold that would be complementary to the GIS exemption?

This will be of interest to people aged 65 and over.

• (1125)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, I think the member is trying to break down a door that we had already opened, meaning that we too want to encourage employment. We want to reward work, not penalize it.

Unfortunately, not only has the current government done nothing for nine years, but it has made things worse with its inflationary policies. Worse still—and the member may not want to hear this, but facts are facts—the Bloc Québécois has voted to support this government 189 times.

How can a sovereignist have confidence in this Liberal government which, just a week ago, asked what purpose the Bloc Québécois serves in Ottawa?

[*English*]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would agree with one point, that the Liberals have a long way to go before seniors will be able to live with the dignity and respect they need and deserve.

However, one point that the member across brought up was around the fact that the Conservatives, when they were in government, made it harder for seniors to retire by raising the age to access OAS from 65 to 67. I know this was brought up, but I am not hearing a clear response as to why the Conservatives expect seniors across Canada to think that the Conservatives would do any better, when they made the largest cut ever to Canada's public pension system, made retirement more difficult for Canadians and pushed thousands of seniors into poverty. How can the Conservatives justify it, or even think that Canadians would trust them to do any better?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, if those members want to know where Canadians are, and if they trust us, they can just call an election and repeat what their leader said three weeks ago, which was that he had no confidence in the government. However, suddenly, when it is time to vote, the New Democrats vote confidence in the government. Shame on them.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate on the Bloc Québécois motion to pressure the Liberal government. However, if the Bloc Québécois really wants to put pressure on the Liberal government, all it has to do is vote with us, the Conservatives, this afternoon to defeat this government. Otherwise, the Bloc Québécois will continue to be known as the "Liberal Bloc" for some time to come, if not forever. As the saying goes, heaven is blue and hell is red. There is nothing worse than the pact that the Bloc Québécois wants to make, which will hold the public hostage and keep everyone under pressure.

*Business of Supply*

I would like to talk about the Canadian dream. Forty years ago, young, hard-working families were able to settle down, buy a home, start a family, eat well, buy all of the necessities required for a good life and take vacations. All of this was possible thanks to the honest work of honest people who, day after day, got up in the morning to provide for themselves and their loved ones. Unfortunately, for the past nine years, day after day, extreme policies, like the carbon tax and other tax measures, have been taking more and more money out of the pockets of Canadian taxpayers. Now, the work is not worth doing and hard work is not fairly compensated.

People are being penalized for working, because it is costing far too much in taxes, thanks to the Liberal government's inflationary policies and the myriad of expenses that this Prime Minister has incurred in recent years. Despite our best efforts, our country's debt has reached such a level that future generations will be forced to use a lot of the money they earn at work to pay the interest on the debt. All of the revenue from the GST goes toward paying the interest on the debt. That means there is a lot less money to spend on social services.

Let us come back to our seniors. I would like to pay tribute to all of our Canadian seniors who worked all of their lives, who worked hard to give us the Canadian society that we have now. Unfortunately, the Liberal government is undoing all of that work with its bad policies. Our seniors believed that all of the sacrifices that they made over a lifetime of hard work would mean that their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have a good future, a promising future, in Canada. That was the Canadian dream.

Today, the Bloc Québécois is once again using smoke and mirrors by threatening to pressure the government, while knowing full well that it will hypocritically support this incompetent Liberal government yet again. The Bloc Québécois is trapped by its own promise to leave the Liberal government in power because it has issued the October 29 ultimatum. The vote on this Bloc Québécois opposition motion will probably take place on Thursday of this week, and it will not bring down this government. No need to worry, we can rest easy. Because of the "Liberal Bloc", there will not be an election until October 29.

I would like to point out that the only thing the Bloc Québécois will achieve today is perhaps grab some headlines. It certainly is not defending the interests of Quebecers and all Canadians. I truly believe that we need a change in government, and that is in the best interests of our country. The Bloc Québécois's pernicious strategy right now is to draw attention to potential electoral gains in the coming weeks and months, unfortunately targeting a vulnerable population. Unfortunately, it still aims to achieve more in the House, but it will never be enough for it to form government. Then again, if it would align itself with the next Conservative government, we could make substantial progress for all Canadians, for the Bloc Québécois and for all Quebecers.

I am reaching out as I repeat here in the House that, if the Bloc Québécois truly intends to bring down the Liberal government, I invite it to vote with us this afternoon and send a strong message that the Bloc Québécois is ready to work with the next Conservative government for all Canadians and Quebecers.

The Bloc Québécois makes no secret of the fact that it is a sovereigntist party. It has repeated that many times here in the House. Its real dream is to return to Quebec City, to the National Assembly, to go back to its parent company, the Parti Québécois, and work on sovereignty. We must all work together in the interest of all Canadians and the Canadian federation. The Bloc Québécois is merely a refuge for Parti Québécois members when they do not have a lot of seats in Quebec City. We might say that here in Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois is the senate of the Parti Québécois in Quebec.

• (1130)

The Bloc Québécois is being totally hypocritical. It is funded with money from all Canadian taxpayers who have to work hard to serve the entire Canadian nation. This is a huge scandal.

The Bloc Québécois also insists on keeping this government on life support. The treatment is becoming overly aggressive. The Bloc Québécois's attempt at bargaining has very little chance of succeeding. It comes at the expense of Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are calling for real change. The Conservative Party will improve the quality of life of all Canadians, at a time when the rising cost of living is affecting every single person. We are committed to improving the lives of seniors who have worked hard all their lives and deserve to live with dignity. That is why we previously voted to move forward with Bill C-319. However, the fact that the Bloc is now holding it out in exchange for keeping this dying government alive shows it is a political ruse with very little chance of success. If the Bloc Québécois really cared about people, it would instead support a Conservative non-confidence motion and change the leadership of our country.

However, we in the Conservative Party support the principle that we need equality among seniors and that we have previous generations to thank for this country's prosperity. We owe them nothing less than our eternal gratitude and the means to live a dignified life. Seniors' vulnerability is therefore a very important issue, but the Bloc Québécois's strategy serves no purpose.

Everyone in Canada is struggling right now. Young adults are no longer able to buy their first home because rents have doubled in the past nine years. I am also thinking of the middle class, who are feeling the impact of the carbon tax, and the small business owners affected by the increase in the capital gains tax, which threatens the investments they hope to use as a retirement fund.

The Bloc Québécois must vote to bring down this government, especially since many of its nationalist voters are unhappy that it is using an issue that has nothing to do with Quebec to keep the most centralizing Prime Minister in history afloat. All of a sudden, the Bloc Québécois has forgotten how fiercely anti-Quebec the current Prime Minister has been when it comes to the French language, immigration, respect for jurisdictions, and many other issues.

*Business of Supply*

It is high time to call an election. It is still difficult to understand why the Bloc Québécois is opposed to that. It is either because of its close ties with the Liberals or because of a strong bias against the Conservatives. At the same time, we know how many seats the Bloc Québécois had in the House when we were in power, so we can understand their reluctance. Quebec was respected and even recognized as a nation by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper in 2006. The Bloc Québécois is not unfamiliar with contradictions. This so-called anti-monarchist party is calling for a royal recommendation to move its bill forward. Now the House has seen it all.

A Conservative government will act for the common good of all Canadians by lowering taxes, so that hard work pays off again for our waitresses, truck drivers and plumbers, so that those who work more get more.

We are going to incentivize municipalities to speed up building permits, cut building taxes and free up land for development, while axing the taxes that block construction.

We are going to cap population growth so that the housing stock grows faster than our population.

We are going to fix the budget with legislation that requires the government to find a dollar in savings for every new dollar of spending. We will eliminate consultants, whose excessive fees were supported by the Bloc Québécois. We will eliminate red tape, waste and big handouts to multinational corporations that take money out of our country.

We will also stop the crime, not by banning hunting rifles, as the Bloc and the Liberals want to do, but by cracking down on criminals and strengthening border security.

Finally, we will rebuild the Canadian dream, creating a country where hard work brings home a more powerful paycheque to pay for food, housing and gas in safe communities where anyone can do anything with hard work.

That is our agenda, and that is what we are going to offer Canadians. I urge the Bloc Québécois to use common sense.

• (1135)

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, there is plenty of ineptitude I could capitalize on, but I will try to focus.

The member has the audacity to say that today's motion is purely a publicity stunt that serves no purpose, yet his party has pledged to vote in favour of it. I want to thank the Conservative members for voting in favour of seniors today. However, I find it hard to understand how, in a logical speech, a member can stand up and say that this is just a stunt that will serve no purpose and is not in the interests of seniors.

Is the member saying that a 10% increase in the OAS starting at age 65 is pointless? Is that what he is telling me?

I imagine that there are some seniors listening. The member really should answer.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Madam Speaker, if my colleague is actually serious and really wants to put pressure on the Liberal government—which does not seem to have any concerns about the Bloc

Québécois—all he has to do is vote with us this afternoon. All he has to do is vote for our motion of non-confidence in the government. It just might give the government a scare.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think that today's debate is much appreciated. I agree that we must support our seniors. I think that since we are marking National Seniors Day today, this is a good debate to have. However, I would like to ask a question. I know that my colleague will not answer my question, but I will still try to ask him a simple question.

Is moving a motion during an opposition day the right way to request a royal recommendation? Is it the right way to ask the government to give a royal recommendation? I would like to know.

I do not always agree with the Bloc Québécois. I like having the 10 provinces and three territories in my country, Canada. I do not agree that we should separate our country, but I know that the Bloc Québécois followed the rules and I just want to know if its way of asking the government for a royal recommendation is the right way.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is highly relevant. Very few precedents exist for private members' bills that received a royal recommendation. If the Bloc Québécois had really been sincere, its motion would have demanded that the government incorporate the spirit of Bill C-319 in the next budget or in an amendment to the budget. The Bloc Québécois would have done that today if it was serious, but it is only stalling for time. It wants media attention to make itself heard across Quebec.

• (1140)

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I could not help but notice the member generally has a lot more oomph in his interventions in the chamber, and today it did not seem to be quite as exciting as usual. I was wondering if that might be because of the fact that we know the Conservative Party is threatening to make cuts to necessary supports seniors rely on. Can the member share with the chamber today why the Conservatives are saying that they would cut, for example, the essential diabetes medication and devices many seniors rely on in their day-to-day just to survive?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague and I think she made up some fake news. What we are telling Canadians is that we are going to save a dollar for every new dollar we spend on Canadians. That is how every Canadian family manages their own budget, and we are going to do exactly the same across Canada.



*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives said that they were going to support this motion. It will generate an extra \$3-billion expenditure. However, the Conservatives also said that for every new expenditure, they would make cuts.

What are the the Conservatives going to cut to make up for the \$3 billion in spending included in this motion?

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Madam Speaker, what we are going to cut is wasteful spending.

[*English*]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

The NDP support the motion because, unlike Conservatives and Liberals, we believe that every Canadian deserves to live with dignity. This callous and cruel Liberal government does not. This patriarchal vision is how the Liberals govern. They hoard and keep resources for themselves, along with their corporate friends and allies, leaving Canadians behind. Most obvious in this patriarchal culture is the cruel perpetuation of the oppression and abuse of indigenous peoples.

On the day after the day to take time to reflect on truth and reconciliation, the calls for justice for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls are still unmet, and women continue to go missing. The killing of indigenous people by RCMP and law enforcement over the past months led to an emergency debate in the House a couple of weeks ago.

Genocide of indigenous people in Canada is well documented. For women, it was about erasing them through death and enfranchisement. Their legal rights, identities and connections to their communities were targeted based solely on their gender, and that continues today. I recently raised in committee a report, which was presented to metro Vancouver-elected officials many years ago, called “Red Women Rising”. The indigenous presenters from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver said that no indigenous woman should be homeless on her own land, yet that is what is happening today.

Conservatives are no better. Racist John A. Macdonald and the Conservatives created the Indian Act and residential schools. Macdonald is quoted as saying this about his Indian agents: “the agents as a whole...are doing all they can, by refusing food until the Indians are on the verge of starvation, to reduce the expense”. Reducing expense has always been the will and culture of the House when the NDP were not within it. The NDP is the only party that believes everyone is equal in this country and that everyone deserves to share in its abundant resources.

Women and children have always been the targets of white patriarchy and the lack of government investment. Today, when we talk about old age security, it too is rooted in the vision, shared by the Liberals and the Conservatives, of controlling and defining the family. Women are affected by low pensions because the House decided that they should stay home, should not be part of employment insurance, should not be working outside of the home, and were not able to earn an equal income to men. Now, 75 years after the Em-

ployment Insurance Act was put into place, women do not have the same rights as men. Women are affected by low pensions because they are not able to earn an income equal to that of men. They work in the not-for-profit sector and in caregiving, which pay much less. Do members know why? It is because they are women's careers, according to patriarchy.

I think about those caregivers, who had reduced earning potential and are now affected by a reduced OAS because they could not earn the same income as a man. I think about the 65- to 74-year-olds who the Liberals have decided do not deserve to have the same pension, do not deserve the measly \$73 more that these Liberals are refusing them. They have to wait until they are 75 for that extra \$73.

Women took the time and off-ramped their careers to stay at home and raise their families because it was so discriminatory out there in the workforce. My own mother tells the story of when she was pregnant and working in a doctor's office. She was told to rest every day at lunch and had to go and lay down. After her tummy started to show a bump, they told her she could not come to work anymore.

• (1145)

I think now about caregiving and how caregiving has come around. We now know that many people who are aged 65 to 75 are actually working in care homes, caring for elders, and then doing unpaid care at home. The Liberal government thinks that 65- to 75-year-olds should be at work. We did not want them at work in the forties, fifties and sixties, even in the seventies, but we want them at work now. In 2024, we want them at work. It is not acceptable.

StatsCan recently did a study of employment by choice versus necessity for seniors. It broke it up by those 65 to 75 and 75-plus. The Liberals actually did a study on why one should stay at work when one is 65. Through this study, they found that 20% of seniors aged 65 to 74 worked due to necessity. That is good news for the Liberals because now they can say that we need to stay at work, that, because they have made housing and food so expensive, they want us to stay at work.

For immigrant seniors, that percentage is even higher. I will take a moment here to say that the most at-risk people aged 65 to 75 are men who rent. They need to stay at work to keep their housing. It is an absolutely cruel and callous housing policy of the Liberal government's, and the Cons are worse on housing. They lost 800,000 affordable housing units and they want the power back. Forget it. We cannot afford to lose another 800,000 units of housing.

*Business of Supply*

The Cons do not care about people. They voted against dental for seniors. I was just at a dinner this weekend at a church. There was a number of people who approached me to thank me for the dental care program. They have actually been able to get their teeth fixed. The Conservatives are voting against diabetic medication. Have any of them ever had an aging parent with diabetes who cannot afford their medication? It is life-threatening, yet they vote against pharmacare. They voted to deny pensioners aged 65 to 75 their hard-earned pensions while they can take theirs at 55. These Conservatives and Liberals, sitting MPs, when they leave the House, will be able to take their pension at 55.

I think about the leader of the Conservative Party, who has a whole diatribe about pensions right now. That member would take pensions in the millions and has the audacity to come in the House to say that he is not going to feed kids, not going to give us any diabetic medication and not care if we live in a tent. It is not just that. This is gross and sickening: in B.C., the Conservatives are taping people living in tents and putting it out on social media for their own gain. It is absolutely sickening. The Cons want people living in poverty so that they can gain power.

I want to talk about this bill and the royal recommendation needed. I totally agree. The callous and cruel Liberal government would not give a royal recommendation for the Canada disability benefit. How many times have I tried to get the government to provide an adequate income for persons with disabilities with the Canada disability benefit, and it said no? Do members know what the minister and the parliamentary secretary said to me over and over again? They said to keep pushing. It is really shameful. Why does the government need to be pushed for people to live not in poverty?

● (1150)

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member across the way is referring to Conservatives in the Conservative caucus by using the word “Con”, which has a very negative connotation to it. It is unparliamentary, and I would hope that she would use the proper terminology, which is “Conservatives”, and correct her statements from now on.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** There is no judgment on whether it is parliamentary or not parliamentary, but I would advise the hon. member to use the proper name for the party.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I know that our Conservative friends have found some sensitivity about the abbreviation of their name, which has been known to be in public usage for quite some time. They are the Conservative Party, which is “Con” for short. Anything else is simply ridiculous.

I would encourage them to continue to pay attention—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Let us just remind ourselves of the proper names of the parties on both sides of the House.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that every time I have said “Cons” in the House, there is a fury in the back, with them saying, “She shouldn’t be saying that.”

The reality is that the Conservatives are the worst users of language I have ever seen. I was disgusted last week with what they said and how they acted in the House. It shows how they care more about how they are being portrayed than actually making sure people are not living in poverty.

I will close by saying that far too many seniors are now unhoused. Medications continue to be expensive, and across Canada, too many seniors cannot afford to pay their costs of living. They are making choices that hurt their health because the Liberal government and the Conservatives are cruel and callous.

The NDP protects seniors and, as a government, we would fix unfair taxation, support seniors with adequate income and support persons with disabilities with adequate income—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We are out of time.

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, since 2015-16, the Liberal government and the Prime Minister have been there in a very real and tangible way. We are the only political party in the chamber that has consistently voted in a progressive nature.

I will use this as an example: The Canada disability benefit did not exist until we brought it in, and now the member criticises it because it is not enough. The point is, it did not exist.

We understand and appreciate that we have brought in a multitude of progressive programs. It would be wonderful to be able to give a million dollars to every Canadian. It would be wonderful, but we cannot do that.

Would the member not recognize that, in supporting our seniors, there are direct ways and indirect ways to do it? It is something that we have consistently done from 2015 through to today.

● (1155)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, again, there is that whole patriarchal view of who is allowed to keep the wealth. We know that the Liberals have given millions of dollars to their corporate buddies, corporate friends and corporations, but when it comes to people, they are not interested.

I would just remind the member that, if it were not for the NDP bringing forward a unanimous motion to the House to get the Canada disability benefit on the agenda, Canadians would still be waiting.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a technical question about interference.

*Business of Supply*

The NDP and the Bloc Québécois have very similar visions when it comes to social democracy and income sharing. The only difference, which is quite annoying and significant, has to do with the mechanics of it. The NDP is very centralist.

The dental care program that the New Democrats managed to put in place with the help of the Liberals does not respect what already existed in Quebec. We were simply asking for a transfer to ensure that all of the money would be invested in the structure that already exists in Quebec. Quebec already had a dental care plan, and it could have been made more generous.

The NDP often talks about corporate greed. I would like my colleague to tell us about the \$2 billion that Sun Life collects from the dental care program. Would it not have been better to have a public plan and to have used that \$2 billion for public services?

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, it was the vision of Tommy Douglas that every Canadian would have a universal and free health care system.

If we were to rely on provinces to administer that health care, dental care and pharmacare, we would see what is happening in Conservative provinces in the country where people are being denied. In Alberta, they said no dental care. In Ontario, they have done a terrible job of keeping health care public. They are privatizing our health care.

Canadians deserve better than what Conservative governments and these provincial Conservative governments are offering.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I visited many seniors groups throughout the summer, and one of the things that they have told me is the fact that inflation has gotten out of control. The current Liberal-NDP government has spent money like it is nobody's business, yet we continue to see increases in the carbon tax, making it unaffordable for seniors.

Why is the NDP-Liberal government propping them up, instead of calling for a carbon tax election?

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, I have heard the member talk before about her vision of the family unit and what a family should look like, and it is the policies of members like her that have put us in the position we are in today with OAS, where women do not get equal income because these policies have kept them at home. I will not be going back in time, and I certainly will not be supporting any of the Conservatives' old-school thoughts on what a traditional family looks like and how women should stay at home.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I give a big thanks to the member for her ongoing advocacy and work in this chamber.

I appreciate the points the member is making on the ongoing disproportionate impacts on women, and I will ask her to speak to how policies that are not putting seniors first disproportionately impact women.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, for diabetes medication, so many seniors in my community have come to me and said that it is costing them thousands and thousands of dollars a year. They are

limiting how much medication they are taking to control their blood sugar.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's important discussion, since it has to do with our country's seniors.

However, while I have the floor of the House for a few minutes, I would like to point out that the NDP, like many tens of thousands of families in Quebec and Canada, is extremely concerned about the situation in Lebanon. My colleague from Edmonton Strathcona asked for and was granted an emergency debate in the House to discuss the alarming situation in Lebanon, particularly in the south, where there has been heavy bombardment in the last few days. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and forced to flee. Some days, there have been hundreds of civilian victims, among them many women and children. The situation is critical, and there is a risk of regional conflagration. The NDP will call on the federal government to do everything in its power to bring about a de-escalation and ceasefire, save human lives and put measures in place to bring Canadian citizens home from Lebanon. Canadians with families in Lebanon are extremely concerned about the fate of their loved ones and want them to be brought back to Canada for their safety. Incidentally, I spoke on the phone this morning with people from the Montreal area who are worried about their loved ones and are trying to get them home. The discussion or debate later today will be extremely important for us to find out the intentions of the Liberal government regarding the alarming situation in Lebanon for civilians, particularly in southern Lebanon.

The subject that we are discussing today as a result of an opposition day motion is important because it has to do with the plight of seniors across Quebec and Canada. I am pleased to speak to this subject, because this situation has been a cause for concern for years. The motion before us talks a lot about the discrimination that the Liberal government created between two classes of seniors, seniors aged 75 and up and those aged 65 to 74. This difference did not exist anywhere else before. However, in 2021, the government increased the old age security pension for people aged 75 and up. We applaud that measure. It was a good thing, given that many of our seniors are living, or trying to survive, in terrible poverty. We are not opposed to that increase, especially since I was horrified to learn that it was the first real increase in the OAS since 1973, the year that I was born. It has been a while. My beard has turned white. Apart from indexing adjustments to try to keep pace with inflation, no government had made any real increase to old age security for 50 years, so this extra help is very welcome. I even think that it shows respect for our seniors. However, what about seniors aged 65 to 74? Why has the Liberal government abandoned them?

*Business of Supply*

There is no inherent logic to it, except perhaps a cost issue. If that is the case, then the Liberals need to say so. Is it just a matter of money, and is it just because they lack the courage to go get the money where it is in order to help our seniors living in poverty and to lift them out of it? The NDP will obviously support the motion before the House today, because we think that it is the right thing to do in the fight against poverty, in support of seniors and in a fairer and more equitable society. Then we can go back and talk about the way of going about it, which is something that we may have some doubts about. Seniors are being hit hard by the rising cost of living and rising rents. There are seniors who are underhoused, with some living in their cars, trucks or tractor-trailers because they can no longer afford housing and because there is no affordable housing left, due to the 1993-94 cuts that were never restored, and there is a lack of investment in community-based social housing and housing co-operatives. Housing is an issue that really hits home for many of our seniors, who are sometimes in practically unlivable apartments that are health hazards and can cause a whole bunch of other problems.

• (1200)

We often talk about the cost of groceries. The Liberals' total inaction on the cost of groceries is truly appalling. I remember quite well when the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry said that he was going to summon the CEOs of the major grocery chains to give them a piece of his mind. He wanted to ask them to do something, but they did nothing. In the end, nothing changed. Then, we found out that these CEOs had gone back to their offices, said they had a meeting with the minister, but that it was not going to change their pricing policies in the slightest. As a result, we saw the price of groceries skyrocket and seniors struggling to feed themselves properly.

In our work as MPs, we meet with many groups, community organizations and individual people. Some of these people are quite desperate and need help from all levels of government. One of the things my office does, and I believe other MPs do the same, is take part in tax clinics every year. In doing so, we really help the poorest of the poor. Along with other members of my team, I volunteer with Revenu Québec. When I sit down at a desk and look at the income of someone who receives only old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, I seriously wonder how that person manages to survive. No one can live on such a woefully inadequate amount. It is distressing that we are letting our seniors down and consigning them to poverty when there are simple, effective ways to make their lives better.

What I am pleased about is the fact that the work of the NDP caucus in recent years has helped seniors in a meaningful way. During the 2021 general election, we campaigned on the fact that a human being's health extends from head to toe, and that there is no reason why some parts of the body should be covered, but not others. We said that we would go to Ottawa, to Parliament, and fight for a dental care program. At first, everyone said that it would be impossible, that it would cost too much, and that the federal government would never agree to it. However, we came to this minority Parliament and used our leverage to force the Liberals to do something they had always refused to do. Before the 2021 election, they voted against dental care.

The Bloc Québécois also voted against dental care. As for the Conservative Party, there is no telling what they would do if unfortunately they were ever to come to power. They could do away with the program.

Our gamble paid off, and the program is a major win for seniors. Parliament decided to prioritize them. In all three phases of the dental care program, seniors were given priority, thanks to the NDP. Today, over 3.5 million people are enrolled in the program. According to the latest figures that I have seen, 645,000 people, the vast majority of them seniors, have benefited from the program. They have been to the dentist, and their treatment has been fully or partly covered. I spoke to one lady who received two sets of dentures free of charge. I spoke with another lady who saved \$2,900 on her bill.

That is real. We kept our promise, and that is something that I am extremely proud of.

I am also proud of the fact that of the nearly 700,000 people who have been to the dentist, 205,000 are Quebeckers. In other words, 32% of the people who have benefited from the program are from Quebec. Quebec represents 23% of the population. I find it a bit odd to hear the Bloc Québécois criticize the dental care program when it is Quebeckers who are taking advantage of it the most out of all the provinces. I would like to make a small correction: when people say that Quebec already had a dental care program, that is not true, since it is a program only for children under 10. For older people, seniors, teenagers and adults, there was absolutely nothing. We wanted that to be done, we wanted to help people in a meaningful way. We are very proud of this.

There is also the framework for pharmacare. Too many seniors in this country are making agonizing choices between rent, food and drugs, which is having an impact on their health. People could have access to drugs and equipment for diabetes, for example. Millions of people are going to benefit. That is something meaningful that the NDP has offered to people. I could answer my colleagues' questions during the few minutes that are left.

• (1205)

[English]

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is similarly concerned that the Canada disability benefit cuts off at age 65. The NDP joined us in calling for the Canada disability benefit legislation to be amended, because a disability does not end at 65 and neither should the Canada disability benefit.

Can the member comment on the NDP's support for continuing the Canada disability benefit above the age of 65? If we are going to talk about seniors with low incomes across this country, we need to talk about seniors with disabilities, who continue to disproportionately live in poverty.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Green Party colleague for his question, which is very compassionate. As social democrats, we in the NDP share his concern.

If we want to help a person with a disability, we have to do it for their entire lifetime. My colleague is perfectly right in saying that a person's disability does not end at 65 and that just because old age security exists does not mean that we should stop providing targeted assistance for specific circumstances.

On the contrary, let us add all of that up. If, later on, we find that things are not quite fair and that changes are needed, the tax system can always be adjusted, but punishing seniors with disabilities is not the way to create a better society.

• (1210)

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that the NDP will be voting in favour of the motion, and the Conservatives said the same thing. As for the Liberals, they have been refusing to tell us all morning. We still do not know what they intend to do. We are still in the dark. They are saying that seniors are very important, but they are not telling us what they are going to do about it.

How does my colleague explain the Liberals' refusal to commit? They voted for this measure at one stage and against it at another. I am having a hard time understanding all of this.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I too am very interested in knowing where the Liberal government is at the moment. It is a minority government. I get the impression that the Minister of Finance is dealing with a hot potato and does not know what to do with it.

I would say to my Bloc Québécois colleague that it is a bit risky to bet on a royal recommendation to get help for seniors. I am not sure that it is the best way. It is a bit strange because, in doing so, the Bloc Québécois is submitting to the goodwill of King Charles. That is quite unusual. This assistance could be included in the fall economic statement, for example.

[English]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc has had years to deliver for the people of Quebec, and with an election looming it seems like the leader of the Bloc Québécois is a little bit desperate to show that he is relevant. In fact he voted against the NDP's dental care plan, which has already helped 162,677 Quebecers get dental care. He voted against the pharmacare act, which would have helped thousands of seniors living with diabetes in Quebec.

Why does the hon. member think the Bloc Québécois has waited so long to join the NDP's efforts in finally supporting seniors, including those living in Quebec?

### *Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It is true that the Bloc Québécois sometimes find themselves in a peculiar situation, because they do not want federal programs to succeed, which would undermine the case that they generally make. They think that it is a bad thing to have dental care delivered by the federal government. I have attended about 30 public meetings on dental care in the Montreal area, and people are thrilled to receive this assistance. It amounts to hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars. It will improve things for people who did not have access to a dentist, not only in terms of health, but also in terms of human dignity. I am therefore very proud to have helped put it in place, knowing that it is directly helping tens of thousands of Quebecers.

[English]

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been observing the House for a really long time. I find it fascinating that women are not being seen in this place. We know how opposition days work. We know, when it comes to questions being asked by a party, who should have the opportunity and who should not. You have been in the chair and you have said it.

Today you have demonstrated, now as a third Speaker in the chair, that I am not being seen, and I will tell you that I am very disappointed in that. With that said, I will ask my question.

[Translation]

We want to debate a number of things here today, and we know that there are rules and ways to move bills forward. In this motion, the Bloc Québécois is asking for a royal recommendation. I would just like to know if my colleague believes that using an opposition day to ask the government to obtain a royal recommendation is the proper way to go about that, or should we instead find other ways to obtain the support of several members to move bills and measures Canadians need forward?

I know that seniors have done so much here in Canada, and I am grateful to them for that. However, I would also like to know if my colleague feels that everyone should receive the same amount of benefits, or should vulnerable individuals get more than others.

• (1215)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Speaker, I have already expressed my skepticism about the method being used, but I am not going to answer my colleague's question and give her such an easy out.

I will, however, take this opportunity to question the Conservatives' vote on the motion. I find it odd that the Conservatives have decided to vote in favour of the motion for purely partisan reasons and to annoy the government considering that, when they were in government, they made cuts in health transfers to the provinces and raised the retirement age from 65 to 67. The Conservatives are no friends of seniors. On the contrary, they will make cuts to seniors' services and pensions if they ever get back in power.

*Business of Supply*

I find it rather odd that the Conservatives are saying that they will vote for the Bloc's opposition motion.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

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

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order, or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 later this day, no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

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

It is agreed.

[English]

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

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—REQUEST FOR A ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-319

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the charismatic and charming member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who is going to captivate us with his vast knowledge and legendary enthusiasm. Are we saving the best for last? We shall see.

I have so much to say. So many questions have been raised. First of all, the Liberals asked a number of times whether seeking royal assent on an opposition day is the right approach. Why not? An opposition day gives the opposition parties a chance to put a given topic on the agenda. On the one hand, we have a Liberal government that makes promises and does nothing, or does very little very slowly, promising sunny days ahead but delivering nothing. On the other hand, we have the Conservatives who want us to replace the Prime Minister with the Leader of the Opposition. If that is meant to happen, it will happen in due course. What we want, however, is substance.

We looked at the current situation and asked ourselves what issues we could push forward in the coming weeks and months. We did not choose the topic of immigration because, as my leader said this morning, we knew very well that the NDP would support this vote. What we want is to deliver something and show that we will no longer tolerate this government's inaction. We need action, not just lip service. What we are calling for today, with this request for

royal assent, is concrete action. It is that simple. If we do not ask for it this way, how will we ask for it? Should we accost the government members in the hall and beg? They will keep saying, "Yes, in two weeks", hoping to put us off until Christmas.

The vote following this opposition day will force the government to take a stand. That is why, in the motion, we are asking for royal assent. When I hear members say that it is ironic that the Bloc Québécois is calling for royal assent, what am I supposed to say? Until proven otherwise, we are stuck within the Canadian federal system. Rather than sitting at home and complaining as we watch the federal government act against the interests of Quebec, we thought that we could co-opt this government, go to the federal Parliament and be the voice of Quebec until Quebec is a country. That is what we are doing. However, we have to work within the institutions in place, or else we do not get any results. The Liberals can continue to poke fun at the fact that we are asking for royal assent, but that does not make us monarchists at all. There is no need to worry. On the day that we get to leave this country, we will be very happy. That day is coming.

What is today's topic? As I said, we in the Bloc Québécois wondered what we could gain. We looked at reasonable, sensible, intelligent bills that had the support of the majority in the House of Commons. That is another important factor.

Earlier, the Conservative member for Lévis—Lotbinière, if I am not mistaken—

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

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, it was him. I was right. He is applauding me, and that does not happen very often. Mark this day on the calendar.

Earlier, this Conservative member was criticizing us for working for gains. He criticized us for receiving media attention. There are seniors here on Parliament Hill today. The group from my riding includes people aged 72, 75 and so on. It is not just people under 75 who want to see this change, but everyone who believes in justice and fairness. These people have driven a little over three hours to get here, and I am sure there are others who have driven even further. They will drive back the way they came, which means they will have driven a total of six or seven hours. That is a lot for an older person. Why are they doing this? Why are they here? Why do they feel so strongly about this? They know that MPs work for them, so they decided to come support us. That is nice. Does that mean we get more media attention? Yes, but it is not just a photo op. It is to put pressure on the government.

● (1220)

What are we talking about today? We are talking about this vote and a possible election call in the event of a non-confidence vote. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about gains.

*Business of Supply*

Some television commentators are saying that the amount we want to give retirees adds up to about \$1,000 a year, or \$1,200 for those entitled to more. Obviously, each case is different. For someone who earns less than \$30,000 a year, \$1,000 a year is a huge amount. It makes all the difference when it comes to choosing which size or brand of product to buy at the grocery store. It makes all the difference when setting the thermostat in an apartment. That is what it does. We are talking about allowing the people who built Quebec, who worked all their lives and who deserve a decent standard of living, to live with dignity, free from stress at the end of every month. That is what we are talking about. When it comes right down to it, today, we are not talking about the Bloc Québécois, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party. We are talking about seniors. Can we give those people a decent standard of living?

We are not asking for much. We could have asked for a lot more, but as I explained at the beginning of my speech, we have asked for things we can get, things that are already in the works and that will really make a difference.

The old age security issue was voted on unanimously in committee. The committee that studied the bill voted unanimously. Representatives of the Liberal government sit on that committee. Basically, the purpose of the motion seeking royal assent for the bill is to stop hypocrisy. The aim is to keep members from voting and saying that they support seniors, that they have always been there for seniors and that they will continue to be there for seniors, while refusing to grant royal assent behind closed doors.

Our decision to shine a light on this issue is not a PR exercise. We are applying political pressure to achieve a specific result. I want to achieve this. I think seniors deserve better than the stress of running out of money in the last 10 days of the month. To me, that is unacceptable. Ten minutes is obviously not a lot of time, but I could have talked about my many years of experience acting for my father under his power of attorney. He passed away last year. He rests in peace, but I want to salute him even though he is no longer physically with us. I sometimes had to make major, unexpected outlays because his independence and health were declining and his home needed to be adapted. My father worked for Canadian National and had a good pension. As a result, I was lucky enough not to have too much trouble managing his affairs. We were able to give him decent care. However, I constantly thought about people with no money. I wondered how they managed. Today we are voting on a matter of human dignity. This is not just for show. We are leveraging our opportunity to gain something.

The other important gain we are trying to make is protection for supply management. I would remind members that this issue received the support of nearly 80% of duly elected members of the House. The bill in question has been languishing in the Senate since June 2023, collecting dust. This week, the members of this committee are again deciding to conduct long-term studies without prioritizing the bills duly voted on by a majority of the elected members of the House of Commons. That is undemocratic. They are just trying to hold up the bill until the election is called, so they will not have to vote on it. That is another thing we are pushing the government on, since it is the one that appointed 80% of these senators.

We are asking the government to talk to them. I think it could talk to them more often and ask them to move faster.

We are going to ask the same thing for Bill C-319. That is why we need to hurry up, get it passed and send it to the Senate. A private member's bill that involves spending needs government approval. It needs to leave this chamber with that approval and a message to the Senate that it needs to be passed quickly. We will not wait another year and a half for Bill C-319 to pass. We have to be serious.

These two bills can pass quickly. Our agriculture industry needs it, and seniors need a decent standard of living.

● (1225)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member said he wants real results. Seniors have benefited from the national dental care program, with over 750,000 patients in every region of the country, including Quebec. That is a real result. Seniors are benefiting from that program.

Can the member explain why the Bloc does not support our seniors receiving that dental care program?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to answer the question thus: intrusion, encroachment, duplication of structures. Quebec already has a dental plan that applies to children and so on. If Quebec had received the money directly, as it requested, it could have improved its services.

Instead, the Liberal government decided to give \$2 billion to a private insurance company, Sun Life, which lines its pockets to administer a program, rather than create a public insurance plan. That \$2 billion would have been used by now if the Liberals had listened to the Bloc's recommendations. That is the reason.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé and offer my sympathy regarding his father. We all face that reality, and his remarks brought back memories of my own family.

This government has been in power for nine years. The member has been watching this government day after day for five years. Just two weeks ago, the leader of this government stood in the House and twice asked what the Bloc Québécois is good for. In just a few hours, the member will have the opportunity to show whether or not he still has confidence in the government.

How can he, a proud Quebecker and staunch sovereignist, still have confidence in the spend-happy Liberal government, which is intruding into provincial jurisdictions and completely fails to respect the wishes of the Bloc Québécois?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interesting question.

If the government does not respect the wishes of the Bloc Québécois, it will show in the next few days through old age security and supply management bills.

My colleague talked about the vote on the non-confidence motion. As I said earlier during my speech, the Bloc Québécois wants to vote on content. Since the Liberal-NDP agreement ended, the Conservatives have been proposing a vote that would put the leader of the Conservative Party in the Liberal Party leader's place. What do we stand to gain? The Conservatives need to get down to business and show us some content. If they are serious about their endeavour, they need to move a motion that we can support. Earlier on, we spoke about smoke and mirrors. That is more or less what happens when motions like this are introduced. We have to be careful.

Our day-to-day work is not about supporting one party or another. We do not support any party. We work for Quebec and we want to make gains.

• (1230)

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé is a learned MP and he often brings a perspective that helps improve material conditions not just for Quebecers but for people across the country. Being in proximity to the hon. member has helped me gain an understanding.

I visited Montreal not too long ago and when I was in stores, I do not recall there being a special lane for seniors 75 and up. I do not recall inflation impacting a special portion of the population in Quebec, and certainly not in Hamilton, where seniors are seeing rates of poverty that far outpace the rest of the region.

Can the member perhaps expand upon how ridiculous it is that after a lifetime of work, people aged 65 to 75 have been shafted by the Liberal government?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague very much. I appreciate having deep discussions with him about what Quebec is and why we want independence. It is always interesting to talk to him.

His question will allow me to expand on something. It is a profound injustice. Do members know what is behind this scheme? I think the government decided that it was going to increase old age security to 75, that it would cost less, that it would allow the government to give more money to its friends, the oil companies, and at the same time, that it would encourage people aged 65 who do not have enough money to work.

That is not a good way to do it, because it is not fair. Just because someone is 65 does not mean they have not been sick and have had the same opportunities as other social classes. There are people who have worked very hard physically all their lives and are no longer able to do so at the age of 65 or 66. They need the pension. This government decision is putting them in the poor house.

My colleague is quite right to point out that there are not two lines at the checkout counter. The price is the same for everyone. Right now, these people are suffering and feeling anxious at the end of the month.

We want to put an end to that. The royal recommendation must be given.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that October 1 is National Seniors Day. We could not have picked a better theme for this debate.

When I think of the issue of seniors, I always immediately think back to 1980. Members will recall that on the eve of the referendum campaign to counter René Lévesque's Mouvement souveraineté-association, the Canadian health minister at the time said ad nauseam that seniors would lose their pension if the "yes" camp won. She even threatened to immediately make \$4 billion in cuts if Quebec became a country. At the time, the government was led by the Liberal Party of Canada, which was led by a Trudeau.

We see that in 2024, while Ottawa refuses to increase the pension for all seniors in a context where their purchasing power is plummeting, it is our presence in Canada that is threatening the dignity and quality of life of seniors. We will remember. We have to face the facts, and they paint a grim picture indeed. The population is aging. There are now more people 65 and over than children under 15. An estimated 25% of the population will be 65 and up in 2030.

According to the most recent statistics, 52% of old age security pensioners aged 65 to 74 and 60% of those aged 75 and up have an income of less than \$30,000. The gap between the median income of seniors aged 65 and the rest of the population has quadrupled in 20 years. That means that, over the years, seniors' income growth has not kept pace with workers' income growth.

When we add the context of inflation to this bleak picture, the situation becomes dire. Between September 2021 and September 2022, the price of food went up by 10%. Food prices rose faster than the generalized cost of living index, which rose 7% year over year. That is the tragedy of a world where inflation is wreaking havoc upon us like a vengeful spirit.

It is not true to say that only older seniors have more expenses. Younger retirees have to pay for housing and home maintenance, and they often own cars while they are still in the workforce. The cost of medication is the same whether a person is 18, 65 or 75. The same goes for the cost of groceries. Leisure activities and medical needs can also cost a lot. It is a gross generalization to say that only people aged 75 and up have more expenses.



*Business of Supply*

Ottawa, the capital where inertia and indifference intertwine in a macabre synergy, has responded with shameful mediocrity and employed nothing but ad hoc measures. Budget 2021, as members will recall, included an OAS increase, but only to seniors aged 75 and over. Consequently, the vast majority of seniors, who are between 65 and 74, were left behind. It took two years for the Liberals to finally follow through on this promise, which dates back to 2019. In August 2021, a one-time cheque for \$300 was sent to seniors, again only to those aged 75 and over. This was on the eve of the September 2021 elections. Barring a rather providential coincidence, the stunt was as crude as it was disgraceful.

Fortunately, it is possible to take matters into our own hands, on two fronts. Our Bill C-319 emerges as a beacon of hope amidst this darkness. To offset rising debt levels, a growing number of seniors are returning to the workforce. We therefore need to improve incentives for those who wish to return to work, especially in the context of labour shortages. Bill C-319, which does not just propose to increase pensions, would enable seniors who would like to work a bit to do so without being penalized by increasing from \$5,000 to \$6,500 the exemption for income from employment or contract work taken into account in calculating the guaranteed income supplement.

The best-known part of the bill is the pension component. We also have a responsibility to provide the best possible financial security to our seniors who are choosing instead to take a well-deserved rest.

• (1235)

That is why Bill C-319 amends the Old Age Security Act to increase by 10% the amount of the full pension that all pensioners aged 65 and over are entitled to.

These two fronts should be able to provide these builders with a little breathing room. However, that is only if Bill C-319 passes. Furthermore, it still needs to receive a royal recommendation. These words have an inherently negative ring to my ears and to those of my Bloc Québécois colleagues. As my colleague said, we have no choice, since we are still part of this system; it is not as though we enjoy it. Besides, if anyone finds it particularly ridiculous that we are asking for a royal recommendation, then they should have voted with us when we proposed to abolish the monarchy.

Personally, I dream of a country, ours, the country of Quebec, the only country where we can feel fully ourselves, and the only one where we are fully ourselves. It will never leave anyone behind, young or old. I dream of a country that will provide the builders of yesterday, who, by the way, have yet to make their last contribution to our homeland, with the full support that they deserve. Between now and our urgent and necessary independence, we need to provide seniors with some comfort, which is what Bill C-319 proposes.

It is not clear what the Liberals will do when they vote. We now need the rest of the members. That is the beauty of a minority government, recently brought back to minority status. I call on the Conservatives, the New Democrats and the Greens to show Ottawa the direction that it needs to go in, the only direction that makes sense, that of respect for our seniors.

[English]

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his passion on this, but we all care very much about all Canadians, especially seniors. They always have a special part in the hearts of all of us. The reality is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is no interpretation, so I will speak in English. There is now.

The hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

• (1240)

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member sits on committee with me and we know each other very well.

However, on the bill he is referring to, it is an issue of royal recommendation. There are rules for us as members of Parliament. There are rules as to how the House has to govern. I had a previous bill that was called a money bill and it was rejected. It did not get a royal recommendation because it would affect the fiscal purse. The same goes for this one. We cannot blindly ignore the rules by which the House has to govern. That is my concern with the bill. It is not the content of the bill. It is the fact that the rules are set in a certain way, and we all have to respect that.

What is his answer to that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, there is also parliamentary practice.

First of all, it is said that in the parliamentary tradition that originated in Great Britain—and has become the Canadian tradition—Parliament is supreme. In this case, however, the executive has decided to unduly keep a bill from coming into force, a bill that it has sometimes supported, sometimes not. It is confusing. It seems to me that, based on another parliamentary practice, royal recommendation is granted much more quickly when a bill comes from the government. That is why I invite all members to put their foot down and say enough is enough.

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that the Bloc Québécois voted nearly 200 times against the current Liberal government. That led to significant deficits. The Liberal government has never tabled a balanced budget.

The Bloc Québécois has also said that the government is incompetent. They said it again this morning. In May, they asked the government to call an election.

My question is quite simple. The Government of Quebec, to which the Bloc Québécois likes to stick close all the time, has asked the Bloc to not support the government and to hound it on the issue of immigration. How can it be comfortable with this situation and not vote in favour of our motion?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that we voted against the government 200 times. I guess it was a slip of the tongue. It was actually quite a bit more than that. In fact, I assume she is referring to the votes on the various credits. Obviously, we had no choice but to make it work. That does not mean we did not vote against the economic statements and the budgets. This means we did vote against this government's overall budgetary and fiscal policy.

Now, regarding the motion specifically, I will repeat what we have said many times. The government has just returned to a minority position. We are entering the third week of work since the government returned to a minority position. We still have a few tricks up our sleeves. We still have things to dig into, things to go after. That being said, if things do not work out, we are ready to drop the hammer immediately. We have said so very clearly and publicly.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the member is aware, the NDP has been in support of Bill C-319 since the very onset. We know that seniors deserve to be living with dignity and respect. We also know that so much more is needed for seniors today.

As far as I am aware, I have yet to see a national aging strategy put into place that addresses all the issues that are being faced by our increasingly aging population. I wonder if the member could speak to how important it is to have that strategy in place, that we have a plan moving forward and we do not see seniors continue to struggle to make ends meet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, we will always support any plan that respects our jurisdictions. In all kinds of situations in the House, we have voted in favour of creating a plan. That does not mean we will agree to it, but a plan is necessary because governing is planning. We need to be able to see the plan. Then we will debate its contents. We will look at what is good or less good, and then reach a decision. That said, the fact that our nation builders are not the focus of policies worthy of the name seems to me the sign of a flagrant lack of vision. We agree on that.

• (1245)

[English]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important to speak to a topic of great importance for Canadians from coast to coast to coast and the many seniors who I have the privilege of representing in the riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for the great riding Waterloo.

Before I begin talking about some policy measures and so forth, I would like to give a big shout-out to the seniors in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and the city of Vaughan. Many of them come from the Italian-Canadian community. They immigrated to Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. They came here and worked extremely hard. They sacrificed for their kids so they could have a brighter and better future.

I see many of these seniors at picnics in the summertime and when I am out in the community. They are our labourers, carpenters, bricklayers, electricians, road builders and construction workers. The Italian-Canadian community has contributed to building our country to be the greatest one in the world, in my humble view. I owe them a debt of gratitude and I thank them. I get to interact with them, share a few laughs with them and, most important, I get to listen to them.

My parents, Rocco, who is in his late eighties, and Vincenza, who is in her early eighties, are doing very well. They worked very hard to contribute to building our country. They also worked very hard so their three boys could have a bright future, which all three of us do. Canada chose us. It selected us to come to this country, and I always keep that in the back of my mind.

When it comes to seniors, all seniors are owed a secure and dignified retirement. I think about the measures we put in place as a government to help seniors, such as the Canadian dental care plan. We reversed the Conservative policy and restored the age of eligibility for old age security and guaranteed income supplement back to 65 from 67. We increased the old age security by 10%, or \$800 a year annually, for over three million seniors aged 75 and over.

We enhanced the Canada pension plan to increase the CPP maximum payment by 50%, or to over \$1,800 a month, for future retirees, coming together with all the provinces in our initial term. We increased the guaranteed income supplement for single seniors, our most vulnerable seniors, the majority of which are women, up to \$1,000 annually, which is benefiting a million seniors and lifting tens of thousands out of poverty.

We increased the GIS earnings exemption from \$3,500 to \$5,000 and a partial exemption of 50% for earnings between \$5,000 to \$10,000. Again, this is another measure that directly helps Canadian seniors across our beautiful country, ensuring that all seniors live in a dignified and secure retirement.

On the Canadian dental care plan, I am so happy that over 70,000 individuals in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, over 20,000 in the city of Vaughan, have now received coverage under this plan. Those numbers represent primarily seniors. If there is one measure that I know is transformational for seniors, it is the Canadian dental care plan. Many Canadians no longer have dental coverage when they retire. This fills the gap. We need to be proud of this measure and support it.

We, as a government, made a promise to restore the age of eligibility to 65 from 67 for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. We kept that promise and we delivered for Canadian seniors. If that measure had been kept in place by the opposite party, seniors would have lost over \$17,000, in today's dollars, in old age security income for those two years. That was a wrong measure to do at the time. We fixed it. We will always have the backs of Canadian seniors.

• (1250)

Increasing old age security by 10% for seniors aged 75-plus benefited over 3.3 million seniors and represents \$800 annually. This was not a small fiscal measure. It is \$3 billion annually that comes out of the fiscal purse to support our seniors. It was the right thing to do because, as we know, when our seniors age, the cost pressures on seniors increase, their retirement savings tend to diminish a little bit, their partner may pass away and so forth.

In enhancing the Canada pension plan, the former finance minister came together with the provinces because we needed to get the provinces' agreement to sign off on changing the Canada pension plan. The Liberals did it; we delivered. Now, future retirees will go from one-quarter coverage of their earnings to a maximum pay of 15%, but it is really one-third of their earnings that will be covered under future retirement.

The other measure we promised and we delivered on was increasing the guaranteed income supplement by 10%, or nearly \$1,000, for individual seniors. This assisted one million of the most vulnerable single seniors, lifting tens of thousands of seniors out of poverty.

We have accomplished much for Canadians, but there is always more work to be done. The Canadian dental care plan is another step in that direction, and so is the GIS earnings exemption. We know that many seniors wish to stay in the labour market. We want those seniors to flourish and to work. We increased the exemption amount on their earnings from \$3,500 to \$5,000 and the partial exemption of 50% of earnings between \$5,000 and \$10,000. These are concrete measures that we know help seniors. All these measures combined have strengthened Canada's retirement system, which we know depends on: pillar 1, the Canada pension plan that we all work towards and contribute to both as an employer and employee; pillar 2, the old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, which we know benefits millions of seniors; pillar 3, which tend to be RRSPs and TFSAs that seniors can contribute to; and pillar 4, private pension plans, which many Canadians receive, including my parents, who both worked for private sector unions, and that help Canadians.

That is our retirement system, but there is always more work to do. I always welcome new ideas. We have done a lot, but we also know seniors across Canada have been impacted by global inflation. It impacted all countries around the world. We know a lot of seniors face pressures. With regard to delivering more help to seniors, we know the carbon rebate assists seniors. They receive much more than what they consume, in terms of GHG emissions and so forth. We know that has helped.

I rose last week and said Canada is the best country in the world. This is Canada's decade. Not only because of our economic policies but because of the social policies we put in place, such as the Canadian dental care plan, the Canada child benefit, our early learning and national day care plan, and the Canada workers benefit. Our social fabric has been strengthened. Yes, we have our challenges. Yes, Canadians have been pressured by global inflation, which now is back down to 2%, the bank's target rate, which, in my humble opinion, will allow the Bank of Canada to further reduce the interest

### *Business of Supply*

rate in the months to come. It has gone down 75 basis points. I hope to see much more, and as an economist, I think it will.

We continue to do the right thing. Equally important, we continue to do it within a fiscal framework that maintains our deficit-to-GDP ratio, one of the lowest in the G20; maintains our credit at a AAA rating; maintains the finances of the country in an envious position throughout the world. We know it. We know what the economists, the IMF and the World Bank say about Canada's fiscal position. It is a strength. Anybody who has worked in the global financial markets, like myself, would know that and would say that we maintained it. We will continue to maintain it, and we are going to continue to move forward to help all Canadians, whether it is families, seniors, workers or businesses. It is great to see all these small businesses popping up and growing in the city of Vaughan. I have attended probably about a dozen new small-business openings. It is wonderful to see that confidence back. Yes, we have gone through some hard times. We had the global pandemic. We have war in Europe for the first time in 80 years. We had supply chain blocks. We had global inflation. Nonetheless, Canada is strong, and its best days are ahead of us. I know that. I believe in that and I cannot wait to keep going forth and advocating and putting forward policies that will continue to strengthen our country.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I still fail to understand the connection between SMEs, economic indicators and the seniors' issue. Of course, it can be connected to inflation and other things, but my colleague was telling us that everything is going well.

That means we still do not know where things stand. I will come back to my question: Will he vote for or against our motion?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. We need to support our seniors at all times.

[*English*]

We must support our seniors with measures that contribute to their well-being and that ensure their retirement is dignified and secure. We must always work toward those policy measures. We must always do it within a fiscal framework that allows us to do that, and that is what Canadians expect of us. That is what I expect, myself. I will continue to examine the opposition motion for what I think are good policy measures that are put forward, and I do that with all motions put forward in this House and all policy. I will obviously think about that and make sure our seniors are supported and make sure they are getting the help we want.

*Business of Supply*

We have done a lot. I look forward to working with all sides of the House, including my own team, with regard to measures that will continue to support all Canadians. We owe it to them. We owe them a secure and dignified retirement, and we have put in place many measures to make the seniors' poverty rate literally the lowest it has been historically, but we know that seniors continue to need help.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, typically, gaslighting techniques include denying something when there is proof, projecting onto others and telling blatant lies. The actions of gaslighting do not match what they say. Why do I bring this up? On the weekend, we heard from a Liberal strategist who stated, “I don't see clearly what the political upside is ... to spend more [money] on seniors”.

As such, why would we believe my colleague across the way when clearly their actions do not meet their words? Their costly carbon tax is blowing a \$34-billion hole in our economy, driving up the cost of living for everyone and especially those on fixed incomes.

When will this Liberal-NDP government stop gaslighting Canadians, axe the tax and call for a carbon tax election so that seniors know the true value of what they have to live with?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian dental care plan is implemented and done. The reversal of the age for old age security, which was put at 67 and announced in Davos, Switzerland, is back to 65 and done, putting \$18,000 in the pockets of seniors. Increasing old age security for seniors 75-plus with \$800 a year, benefiting 3.3 million seniors, is done. Increasing the guaranteed income supplement by up to \$1,000 for a million of the most vulnerable seniors in Canada is done. Increasing the guaranteed income supplement from \$3,500 to \$5,000 and then 50% from \$5,000 to \$10,000 is done. Sitting down with the provinces, showing leadership and enhancing and expanding the Canada pension plan for future retirees is done.

We will always have the backs of Canadian seniors. They deserve the utmost. They deserve a secure and dignified retirement, much like my parents have, and have earned, because they worked and sacrificed, and much like the community members in my riding, the seniors who came here and helped build this country. We will always have their backs of the LiUNA 183 members, the LiUNA 506 members and all the private sector construction workers. We will always have their backs, and I will always fight for them day in and day out.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are debating supports for seniors here today. Seniors, especially on fixed incomes, are struggling, but I just came from a human resources committee meeting where we were talking about people with disabilities. We have the new Canada Disability Benefit Act that was rolled out by this government. It is only available for maybe one-third of Canadians with disabilities, and it is only \$200 a month. It is really a slap in the face to the people with disabilities who really need supports to get out of poverty.

We heard from witness after witness today that this needs to change and that we have to fix these disability supports so that the people who need them really can access them.

• (1300)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, many of us do not get personal in this House when we answer questions from our hon. colleagues, but we have a beautiful nephew in our family who is one of maybe six children in Canada who is suffering from a rare genetic condition. When I am with Ethan, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, I fully comprehend what they go through on a daily basis, as well as the services and support they need, not only from society and government, but from the family. I see what my in-laws and other relatives do for them.

When it comes to the disability community, there is a very broad continuum. I treat this with a tremendous amount of seriousness, as I do all issues. This one, in particular, I treat with a significant amount of emotion and passion. I see my little nephew, and I see what my brother-in-law and sister-in-law do to fight for him, what they have to go through and the obstacles they face. He was not even diagnosed in Canada with this genetic condition.

I hear the hon. member. I would like to say to all of my hon. colleagues on all sides of the House that we must always remember that we are fighting here for Canadians. We need to bring our best to work every day to make sure that all Canadians can live to their full potential and that all families have the supports they need.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is good to be here. I would like to thank my colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge for his great speech and for sharing his time so that I too can participate in the debate on the motion brought forward by the Bloc on supporting seniors. I will also be talking about the Canada pension plan.

Before I get into it, I want to share a bit about what constituents in the riding of Waterloo are sharing with me and sending to my inbox. I have had a range of emails come through, which I have really appreciated because it demonstrates that people are watching. The good people of the riding of Waterloo are watching the calibre of debate in this House. They are listening to the words being exchanged. They are noticing that they need to be concerned and that we need to have these tough discussions. Oftentimes, they talk about things that are important to them, and planning for tomorrow, the future, is always of utmost concern.

One thing that has been brought to my attention, which I have been trying to raise today on the floor of the House of Commons, is discussions on processes to advance legislation, whether it be a private member's bill or government legislation. When it comes to spending and the need for a royal recommendation, people might not recognize what a royal recommendation is for. A royal recommendation is needed when there is an expenditure the government needs to be aware of. For a private member's bill, if there is an expenditure the government needs to be aware of, it has to give a royal recommendation.

*Business of Supply*

Today's opposition day motion calls on the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that a royal recommendation be granted as soon as possible, and a private member's bill is referenced that would amend the Old Age Security Act. This is concerning. As I have been asking in the House, is this the proper mechanism for receiving a royal recommendation?

Under former prime minister Stephen Harper during the decade of darkness, the Conservative government was notorious for using the backdoor, as we say in this place, by advancing private members' bills on the floor of the House of Commons that oftentimes would threaten the rights and freedoms of individuals, hard-fought rights and freedoms. The Conservatives would do it through the backdoor, through a private member's bill.

A private member's bill requires only a limited amount of debate. It is prescribed; there is no adding to the debate. It can even become less by way of UC motion, but it cannot increase. Often, the former Conservative government compromised members in this place, and Canadians from coast to coast to coast, by using that backdoor. Today, my concern, which I am raising on behalf of some of my constituents, is about that: Is an opposition day really the right way to advance a private member's bill? Is it the right way to receive public dollars to advance a benefit?

I will never challenge the work that seniors and the people who have come before us have done. They are instrumental. Today is National Seniors Day and I am very grateful to the people who have broadened my horizons.

My grandfather is not alive today, but yesterday, we went to go visit a dear friend of his, Ruprayankul, who is like a grandfather to me. I have a few people who, when my grandfather passed away way too early, came up to me and said, "Bardish, you still have a grandpa in me." Jathra Hujadadajee is another person who is near and dear to my heart. I really value seniors. I really value the work they have done. When it comes to ensuring that seniors have adequate resources, that is important to me.

What seniors are sharing with me is that this government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, has done a very good job of ensuring that benefits are means-tested. This means people who need the benefit are receiving the benefit, and people who do not need the benefit are not receiving it. I will give an example: the Canada child benefit. It was a taxable benefit under former prime minister Stephen Harper. Every family with a child 18 and under would receive \$100 per child, and then at tax time, that benefit would be taxed.

● (1305)

With the one hand, the government of the day under former prime minister Stephen Harper was giving this benefit to help Canadians raise their kids and give them the things they needed, and with the other hand, it was being clawed back, taken back. That did not make sense, because families that needed the benefit spent it to help raise their children, so we came forward with the Canada child benefit. What we said is that families with children who needed the most would receive the most, and families with children who had the most, often the wealthiest 1% of Canadians, would not receive the benefit.

I will say that the first year was tough. People really felt like the government of the day was taking something away from them. However, within a year, the good people of the riding of Waterloo said that if their neighbours were doing better, they were doing better. They appreciated that. They understood the benefit of having it be means-tested. This brings me to today's conversation. I know that certain people, especially seniors, are saying they always need more, but can we at least, as a government, ensure that people who need the most get the most?

As for the opposition day motion, I have not figured out how I am voting. I am reading my inbox and constituents' mail, so I am participating in this debate because it is important to me, but what I am hearing from some constituents is that they do not need this additional money per month. Sure, I could challenge them and say that if they do not need it, they can donate it, give it to somebody else. However, what they are saying is that this benefit needs to go to the most vulnerable. People who need this benefit should receive this benefit. People who do not need this benefit should not receive it. I thought that was quite compassionate and caring of them. It reminded me of generations before and the people who have been kind and generous enough to provide people like me opportunities. They have taken me under their wing to ensure that I, the child of immigrants, am able to maximize my abilities to contribute.

There is a concern over the tool being used to advance a royal recommendation. It is of concern to me because we have already seen the dysfunction, frankly, in the House of Commons. It has been spotlighted too many times. At some point, we need to ensure that the government of the day is held fiscally accountable, and randomly granting royal recommendations is probably not the way to do that.

I want to talk a bit about the Canada pension plan. Some might ask why. It is because it is one of the top-ranked public retirement plans in the world for seniors. For seniors in Canada, it is vital, and I would be remiss if I did not reflect upon past decisions that have been made, especially during the decade of darkness under former prime minister Stephen Harper. Not only did he close Veterans Affairs offices, but he also decided that it was necessary to raise the retirement age.

Seniors have simply never been a priority for the Conservatives. Today, they have come back to talk about their common-sense plan, but I would be remiss if I did not remind Canadians, especially people in Ontario, of former premier Mike Harris and his "common sense revolution", which brought about Walkerton.

*Business of Supply*

What else his “common sense revolution” did was shut down our hospitals. People talk about our housing issues and the crises that the country is facing today, but it was actually under former premier Harris that hospitals were shut down, including centres with support for mental health and illness. Former premier Harris, a common-sense Conservative premier, thought it was wise, rather than providing supports to these individuals, to put them in the streets and allow that to be their place of existence. We do not agree with that. We know we can do better.

The Conservative Party talks about common sense, but common sense would be supporting dental care for seniors. Common sense would be restoring the retirement age to 65. Common sense would be working to ensure that Canadians do better, not through slogans but by having respectful debate and dialogue. Those are all measures the Conservative Party does not support, and it is interesting that the Bloc also voted against them.

Today is a challenging day with this debate. I do not believe that Quebec should separate, which is one thing that I will always differ from the Bloc on, but I do know that the Bloc follows the rules. That is why asking for a royal recommendation this way is challenging for me. I just wanted to put that on the record.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I know she cares deeply about seniors, and her sincerity and candid spontaneity have often surprised me. I would like to ask her a simple question.

I am sure that there are 65-year-old seniors in her riding who do not have the privilege of having a private pension plan and who therefore have only their old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement.

In all honesty, does she not think that these 65-year-olds, in these conditions, deserve as much of an increase as those who got it at age 75?

What does she have to say to those 65-year-old seniors who are living in difficult conditions, but who did not get the 10% increase? I am curious to hear her answer.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I agree that we must help the most vulnerable seniors, but I do not agree that there is just one way to do that. The work that our government has done has helped improve the programs for the most vulnerable, including seniors. It is important. I do not think that what the Bloc Québécois is proposing is the only way to help seniors and that is why this debate is important.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked at the end of her speech about how it would be common sense for the Conservatives and the Bloc to support dental care in Canada. We obviously think this in the NDP caucus because it was our initiative, which the Liberals, I have to admit, voted against a couple of years ago. They also voted

against pharmacare, and now it is common sense too. I am very happy that we are moving those things forward.

I would like to ask the question that my colleague just got. How is it common sense that seniors aged 65 to 75 do not get the same treatment as seniors over 75? They are living in the same circumstances and should get the same supports, which they desperately need.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the debate today. Whenever we have debates like this, it restores some of my confidence and faith in this place. What we are recognizing is that people are living longer. That is where the narrative about those aged 75 and older came from.

I have had some good conversations. I have been involved in politics since I was 13 years old. I know a lot of history and I know stories that I probably should not know. There was a time when people talked about the Canada pension plan and age 65. It was almost an unattainable age, and that is where the number came from. I always ask where we pick these numbers from, but there is a narrative and story to why they are picked. The reality is that more people are hitting age 65, and thank goodness for that.

My father had a massive heart attack during the COVID pandemic, in October 2020, and I am so grateful that he is still here with me today. I want him to live longer. I want more people to live longer. The reality is that people are living longer, so we need to ensure that our resources are able to take care of them. Should it be one size fits all or should it be means-tested to ensure that the people who need the most are getting the most and are being helped? They are the people I will continue fighting for.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague said a lot of things in her speech. She kept saying that not everyone is in need. We have a progressive tax system to deal with that. Earlier I talked about my father, who had a good pension. At the end of the year, he paid back in taxes what he received. The matter is already resolved.

How will my colleague go about identifying a person who cannot work because they have arthritis and sore fingers, or even bad hips, from working in a sewing factory their whole life?

That is the appalling injustice that the Bloc Québécois is calling out today. I invite my colleague to support our bill.

[*English*]

**Hon. Bardish Chagger:** Mr. Speaker, that is the purpose of a debate. There is nothing wrong with actually coming to the House of Commons and having an honest debate.

*Business of Supply*

I need to represent the diversity of concerns from my constituents. My inbox is not filled with messages saying, “Yes, let's increase it.” What constituents are saying is that they are not sure everyone needs this. They are not sure that this is the most fiscally responsible. They want us to have the debate and make sure their voices are heard.

I will continue ensuring that diverse voices from the riding of Waterloo are represented in this place, and that is why I will be listening closely to the debate today.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with my colleague from Terrebonne.

Today is a very special day. October 1 is National Seniors Day in Quebec. In Salaberry—Suroît, as in the rest of Quebec, people have organized all kinds of events to celebrate seniors, thank them and recognize the work they do.

People tend to forget what a tremendous asset seniors are to communities. They volunteer with most of the community organizations that serve the least fortunate and most vulnerable. People tend to talk about seniors as folks who need services, a millstone around society's neck in their ever-increasing numbers. I myself have never seen things that way. I see seniors as a tremendous asset. Seniors enable communities to grow, thrive and develop a deeper sense of solidarity. Seniors create solidarity.

Today is a special day because October 1 is the day we celebrate seniors everywhere, but it is also the Bloc Québécois's opposition day, and we are once again dedicating it to seniors. We are seeking a royal recommendation for Bill C-319. We are devoting an entire opposition day to debating this matter because we want the government to understand how important it is to grant a royal recommendation so we can end discrimination between two classes of seniors. Today is a special day not only because October 1 is National Seniors Day and the Bloc Québécois's opposition day featuring Bill C-319, but also because seniors are demonstrating on Parliament Hill. Some 200 seniors from all over Quebec were on the Hill today to lend their support to Bill C-319. Their demand was clear: an end to discrimination between two classes of seniors. I have never seen such a thing.

There is a wise old man in my riding who was in the group. He is a wise old man, a community organizer, a trade unionist. He celebrated his 80th birthday this year. He was on the Hill. I asked him, of all the protests that he has taken part in over the course of his life to improve the lot of others, whether this was the first time he had attended a protest as a senior to demand that 65-year-olds be given the same rights as 75-year-olds. He told me yes. I congratulate him. He deserves a lot of credit for driving two and a half hours from my riding to come to the Hill this morning at the age of 80.

There are about a dozen of my constituents in the gallery—

• (1320)

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

I do not believe that my colleague, who has some parliamentary experience, has the right to refer to the galleries in Parliament.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Members do not have the right to mention whether someone is present in the gallery, but they can thank people for being present during the discussion taking place on the floor.

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member took fiendish delight in calling me on that. Maybe he wants to be the whip in the next Conservative government.

The debate we are having on this opposition day is very important. The Bloc Québécois did not conjure this out of thin air. As everyone knows, this has been one of its priorities since 2019. Just this morning, our position was endorsed by the president of the FADOQ network, the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, which represents nearly 600,000 Quebec seniors. There is also the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées, the AQDR, which advocates for retirees' rights. I am pleased to say that two delegates from the Valleyfield-Suroît branch of the AQDR, Lucie and Benoit, came here today to speak out against this terrible injustice on behalf of their organization.

The Bloc Québécois cannot understand how the Liberals across the way do not see this as an injustice. When people turn 65, they pay the same rent as when they turn 75. They have the same basic expenses as 75-year-olds, be it at the grocery store or the pharmacy.

Not everyone 65 and over has the ability to work. I am very active in my riding and I meet a lot of seniors in a year. They all talk about the rising cost of living. They all tell me that they are having a tough time making ends meet and that they have to make tough choices. They do not understand this government's decision to increase OAS by 10% for people 75 and up, but not for people aged 65 to 74. In Salaberry—Suroît, nearly 20% of the population is 65 or up. They do not all have the privilege of having a private pension in addition to the payments from the Quebec pension plan and old age security.

There are seniors who worked hard all of their lives, without missing a day of work, and it was not always under the best conditions. I am thinking of Ghislaine, who worked all of her life at La Lanterne restaurant in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. She started young and stopped at 65. Both her knees and hips were finished. Her body was tired from working so hard, but she worked. Even so, she had to find a little job to make ends meet, because her pension was not enough, and neither was the guaranteed income supplement. When we call for fairness among seniors aged 75 and up and seniors aged 65 to 74, this is not just something that we pulled out of a hat.

*Business of Supply*

I am also thinking of Normand, who turned 65 and who works as a packer at the Ormstown grocery store to make ends meet. Normand battled cancer. When a person earns a small salary and receives a small pension and then they have to stop working to fight cancer and they do not have enough money to pay their bills, it is very stressful. It can even interfere with their recovery.

When I think about the condition that our seniors, who built our nation find themselves in, I think of an old adage that says one can judge a society by the way it treats its seniors. Lucie Mercier asked me to talk about this in my speech. According to Judith Gagnon of the AQDR, how well we look after our parents, our ancestors, our predecessors, our most vulnerable citizens and those who built our nation defines who we are and where we are going, and an aging population only reinforces how important the proverb is.

• (1325)

We hope that all parties in the House will do the right thing and support Bill C-319, and that the government will take responsibility and get a royal recommendation so that it can be passed and enacted. This means that all seniors aged 65 and over will have the same amount on their old age pension, and the income that can be earned per year before GIS benefits are reduced will increase from \$5,000 to \$6,500.

Seniors are making a heartfelt plea to the Liberal government today.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member is articulating that a senior who is 85 years old should receive the exact same amount of money as a senior who is 65 years old. I appreciate what the member is saying. However, surely to goodness, she would recognize that there is quite a considerable discrepancy between an average 85-year-old compared with an average 65-year-old in terms of medical requirements, retirement savings and so forth. Would she feel there is any obligation?

Would she not agree that a truly national pharmacare program and dental program would help seniors?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the member opposite is raising doubts about the universal old age security system. Under a universal plan, everyone 65 and up gets the same old age pension. If people have more income, that is dealt with through taxes.

Now, it sounds like my colleague is saying, loudly and clearly, that Canada's old age security system is no longer a universal system and that he is okay with that.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that I say every chance I get in my riding, it is that we are where we are here in Canada thanks to our seniors. That is very important. I think that my colleague and I share that view.

We also share the same view when it comes to the cost of living. I think that since this government has been in office, over the last

nine years, the cost of living has gone up. The list is long, and this could be said over and over. I think that people are aware that everything is more expensive because of this government.

Therefore, why is the Bloc Québécois propping up this government? After all, this is a minority government.

Furthermore, what is going to happen on October 30? The Bloc has been scaring people by claiming that October 29 is the ultimatum date, or else they will trigger an election. However, that is just not true. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

• (1330)

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what to make of these two questions.

On the first, I think that what is clear to Quebeckers, and the message has been heard loud and clear, is that before putting the Leader of the Opposition in charge of the country, I know that my constituents and Quebeckers want us to work on securing a better old age pension for our seniors.

Now, will there be an election? I do not know whether there will be one, but what I do know is that the Bloc members are determined to withdraw their confidence as soon as it is clear that the Liberals are abandoning seniors, farmers, and supply management.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Bloc Québécois that more needs to be done for seniors in Quebec and in my community as well. This government can do it by reducing the massive subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

My question is about the best way to do it. The Bloc Québécois wants to increase the old age security base amount, which provides benefits with little variability to seniors who earn of up to just over \$148,000 a year. While the guaranteed income supplement is intended to provide seniors with monthly geared-to-income support, low rates still leave many people living in poverty at a time when the cost of living is rising.

Why not focus on increasing the monthly guaranteed income supplement amounts and further increase the income threshold to ensure that additional funds are directed to the seniors who need it most?

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague, who is always so thorough in the way he asks questions.



*Business of Supply*

There are many other ways to support seniors. I think that the Bloc Québécois, in its last election platform, also suggested tax incentives, among other things. I think that when someone purports to run a progressive or social-democratic government, choices also have to be made. What we understand about the current government is that it has deliberately chosen to lose billions of dollars to tax evasion and invest billions of dollars in the Trans Mountain pipeline. These are difficult choices that the government has made, but they are still choices. We are responsible for the choices we make. Right now, we are not calling into question the universal old age security pension plan. I understand that my colleague would agree with that.

What we are saying is that Canada can afford to provide seniors aged 65 to 74 with the same monthly old age security pension. We know it can, but this means making the right social-democratic choices. I have a feeling that it may not necessarily be prepared to support our motion being debated today. This makes me really sad because this means that it is making it loud and clear that it is abandoning the most vulnerable seniors.

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today on a matter of fairness, justice, and respect.

Being a senior in Quebec and Canada simply should not mean living in poverty. Although history is forever repeating itself and is almost always worse, let us look at the history of the old age security program.

The program was created in Canada in 1927. The Liberal government of Mackenzie King, the man who spoke to ghosts, set up the program in that dismal year, and it would expand significantly in the decades that followed. In an attempt to counter the constant criticisms of the Conservatives, who opposed the welfare state, successive governments have, from the start, tried to restrict access to pensions as much as possible. Humiliating measures known as the means test were implemented way back in 1927.

Here are some of the bright ideas the government had at the time. To qualify for assistance, parents had to prove that their children could not support them financially. Government officials even went so far as to encourage some elderly parents to sue their children for maintenance. Recipients' eligibility could be withdrawn once they began receiving other pension payments. Payments were even recovered through claims against the estate of dead recipients. Fortunately, these measures were abolished. However, the back-and-forth between expanding the plan to fight poverty and implementing measures to restrict access in order to reduce costs continued throughout the 20th century.

Why am I going over the complex history of the old age pension program? Because that back-and-forth continues to this day. Hounded by those who oppose all spending and have zero interest in fighting poverty, the Liberals came up with an all-new approach. They created two classes of seniors. People might be surprised to hear a sovereigntist remind the party in power about what is in the Constitution, but under section 94A of the Constitution, old age pensions are indeed a federal responsibility.

I would like to focus on the issue of jurisdiction. Canada was first created as a confederation. In a confederation, the provinces

hold most of the power. Quebeckers were told they could govern their province in peace, without too much interference. Later, a federation was imposed on them without asking their opinion. Just like that, the Canadian federation was born, with a nice lie told at the starting gate so the francophones would not rise up.

In English Canada, however, the measure did not meet with unanimous approval. Why make concessions to the losers? The Constitution of 1867 was therefore based on a lie designed to reconcile the irreconcilable: on the one hand, the Quebec people's desire for self-determination, and on the other, the desire for unity of the citizens of British origin. That is the whole history of the federal system in a nutshell: a tug-of-war between those who believe the real power is in Quebec City and those who believe the real power is in Ottawa.

It is ironic that a separatist MP has to remind the House yet again of how the Canadian Constitution works, whereas the government never misses an opportunity to remind us that the Constitution must not be touched and to say that all the issues related to it do not matter to Canadians and Quebeckers or that Quebeckers do not care about jurisdictions.

As it turns out, the Liberals are no longer federalists because they no longer believe in the federation and the separation of powers. Everything the Liberals and the NDP said all morning was about interference. They said they support dental insurance and programs that interfere in our jurisdictions. As my leader says, interference plus incompetence equals the Liberals.

Here are a few examples of incompetence and interference. When the figures are adjusted for population growth, Canada now has 25% more federal civil servants per capita than eight years ago. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, total spending on employee wages has grown by \$21 billion since the Prime Minister came to power. The most recent figures pegged it at \$60 billion. Another nearly \$15 billion per year went to consulting firms. We know that consultants are needed to provide expertise that the government lacks. However, it makes no sense to increase the number of federal employees to that extent while giving tens of billions of dollars to consulting firms.

● (1335)

After that, they say there is no money for seniors.

Among other recent examples is the more than \$13 million doled out to GC Strategies alone for the ArriveCAN app. Another \$190,000 was spent on food and planes for the government's Indo-Pacific tour. Impressive.

*Business of Supply*

When it comes to the economy, there was the 10-year, \$13-million subsidy to Volkswagen. The Prime Minister chose to help a foreign company with profits of \$34 billion, up 12.5% in one year, yet he remains unmoved by the 37% rise in bankruptcies among fully Canadian companies.

Another example of mismanagement is the fact that net debt has risen from approximately \$700 billion to \$1.3 trillion as of February 2024. Federal debt has risen from 31% of GDP to 42%.

As for the environment, in July 2019, when Project Reconciliation presented its first proposal to then finance minister Morneau, the estimated cost of building the Trans Mountain pipeline was over \$7 billion. Since then, the bill has ballooned to \$34 billion, according to the latest documents filed by the Crown corporation.

According to Environmental Defence, the federal government allocated over \$20 billion in subsidies to the oil and gas industry in 2022 alone. We are currently studying this issue in committee: \$167 million was invested in projects that were either ineligible or in a clear conflict of interest within Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

I have tons of examples like that. I could spend all day on them without even going into detail. This is a case of mismanagement, incompetence, and serious interference.

Once again, the Liberals and the NDP insist on talking about dental insurance. Why does it take a sovereigntist to remind us what the Canadian Constitution says? Dental insurance is not a federal jurisdiction. For once and for all, can we put that to rest?

• (1340)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Where does it say it is provincial?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Health is a provincial jurisdiction.

Read the Constitution, Mr. Parliamentary Secretary.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would simply remind the hon. member that he can ask his question after the member has finished her speech.

The hon. member for Terrebonne.

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for calling him to order.

I invite the member to reread the Constitution. Jurisdiction is a simple matter. It refers to the sandbox in which the federal government can work. The best example is that, in the case of dental insurance, the government could have saved \$2 billion by simply transferring the money for dental insurance to Quebec, which already has its own program.

If it wants to increase dental insurance coverage, if that is the priority, then that is fine. However, in that case, the government should transfer the money unconditionally and let the Quebec government manage its health care plan as it sees fit, with the program that already exists, not go through a private company that will ultimately provide inadequate service, because we know that it is go-

ing to be inadequate. Instead, the Quebec government needs to be given the money to manage its own jurisdictions. The Liberals need to stop talking about dental insurance and look at what they have done. This is a very good example when it comes to the economy. I have given tons of them, but this is the best one.

The government needs to prioritize the issues that are within its sandbox. Within the sandbox, there are many things that could be prioritized. However, despite the priorities within the federal government's sandbox, it decided it would rather give money, billions of dollars, to the oil companies. That is the truth.

What are the Liberals going to prioritize? I am asking them today, in this debate, whether they will continue to prioritize the oil companies or will they finally invest in seniors, people who have worked their entire lives and who deserve not to have to go to food banks to be able to eat. I am asking the Liberals to remain focused on their areas of jurisdiction, to increase old age security for people aged 65 to 74, to honour their own Constitution and to be consistent. They need to either honour the Constitution or reopen it, and we will see how Quebecers respond.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the provinces have 100% jurisdiction in regard to health care, maybe the member can explain why it is that no provincial government has taken the Canada Health Act to court. Maybe she can enlighten the House as to why the Canada Health Act is allowed to exist if in fact there is no responsibility of the federal government. It seems to me that the Bloc is uncomfortable with the fact that we have a dental care program that is literally helping 700,000-plus Canadians in every region of the country, including the province of Quebec.

What would the member say about those seniors who are receiving this benefit, which helps with their disposable income? Why is she opposing a national dental care program that is helping seniors in Canada, including in Quebec?

• (1345)

[Translation]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Mr. Speaker, at the risk of repeating myself, we do not oppose the idea of more people being covered by dental insurance. Here is what we want. If the federal government has so much money, it should transfer the money to Quebec and let Quebecers manage it themselves. We are already doing a pretty good job. There is always room for improvement, but we are doing it fairly well.

We want the federal government to stop giving our money to private insurance companies. Give the money to the RAMQ instead and let us manage it ourselves.

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Terrebonne criticized the Liberal government's hiring spree and inflationary spending. She criticized the use of outside firms and the spending related to Arrive-CAN.

*Business of Supply*

Oddly, the record shows that the Bloc Québécois voted nearly 200 times in favour of the government. The Bloc Québécois therefore voted for all these measures that the member is criticizing today. Why does the Bloc Québécois not want to vote in favour of our motion to call an election, the motion we are voting on today?

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Mr. Speaker, it is simply because robbing Justin to pay Pierre is not a good idea. What I am saying applies only in the context of an election, of course.

To answer the question more specifically, we do not want to vote for a non-confidence motion that we believe lacks substance. We want to try to make gains because we have no guarantee, none at all, that old age security will really be increased if the Conservatives come to power. It is better to ask now and try to get it now, because we think it is very important.

[*English*]

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the motion is great, although it is very late for the Bloc to be pushing for programs to assist seniors, at the eleventh hour, pretty much before a potential election, when it voted against so many programs to assist seniors. My bill for a guaranteed livable basic income was voted against by the Bloc. It voted against dental care, even though the highest number of people using it live in Quebec. It voted against the pharmacare plan.

Although I agree with my hon. colleague that we need to increase pensions, unlike the Liberals, who think that seniors are doing just fine, I am wondering why the Bloc waited until the last minute, when it has had quite a number of years to push the issue.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Mr. Speaker, we did not wake up today thinking about seniors for the first time. Seniors were part of our pre-budget requests in both 2023 and 2022. They were one of our priorities. This is not a sudden awakening. This has been one of our demands from the beginning. Following every budget, we wondered why the Liberal government refused to increase old age security and why it was creating two classes of seniors. That is why we are here today.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Terrebonne on her excellent speech.

My question is very specific. Some objections were raised earlier about increasing old age security for everyone. Someone suggested that not everyone needs it. I know my colleague has a background in economics, so could she explain to the members opposite that we have a progressive tax system that will balance all that out?

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent question. In fact, the answer was already in the question. We have a progressive tax system, so it is not true that some seniors do not need it. Yes, there is a segment of seniors who receive old age security who may need it less than others, but they receive a smaller amount. It is called a progressive tax refund. Everything is already taken into account. That problem does not exist.

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I should let you know that I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

It is a privilege to rise in the House to debate the Bloc Québécois motion, which reads as follows:

That the House call upon the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that a royal recommendation is granted as soon as possible to Bill C-319, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (amount of full pension).

It is important for Canadians watching at home to remember that such motions are not binding on the government. That said, it is important to discuss the measures in Bill C-319 and the Bloc Québécois's other demands. As everyone knows, this is once again a minority Parliament. We usually go vote by vote, and the Bloc Québécois has made two requests. As a member of Parliament who is not a member of the Privy Council, I will share my perspective on what I believe to be the best way forward.

I want to begin by sharing a thought. I represent the small riding of Kings—Hants, where the issue of supply management is extremely important. My riding is home to largest concentration of supply-managed farmers east of Quebec. I was rather surprised to see that the Bloc Québécois motion did not include any measures or considerations regarding the importance of supply management. I was also rather surprised to hear the leader of the Bloc Québécois raise this important point last week. He also talked about how important it is for all parliamentarians and the government to protect the supply management system. It is very important for our farmers, but also for our food security.

Personally, I have some concerns about the U.S. presidential election and the position of the next U.S. Congress on the issue of supply management. I was in Washington this summer. It is not just one American party. It is not just the Democrats or just the Republicans. Representatives of both parties will have the opportunity to raise the issue of greater access to the Canadian market. It is very important for our parliamentarians to educate themselves and to resist this idea, because our supply management system is more important. The Conservatives are taking a very weak position in this respect. Many Conservative members voted against Bill C-282, which sought to protect supply management. All of the other MPs, especially the Liberals, were in favour of the bill and of protecting supply management.

I want to remind farmers in my riding and other ridings in Nova Scotia that it is important to keep an eye on the Conservatives.

● (1350)

[*English*]

In the past, Conservative governments have allowed cuts to accessing the system, willingly, without necessarily negotiating it away.

*Business of Supply*

There are a lot of seniors in Kings—Hants. They are important, and they are the type of seniors, by and large, who are blue-collar workers. They are seniors who have worked in forestry. They have worked in agriculture. They have worked in the type of industries where they may not have large pensions, unlike people in other areas of the country and maybe in bigger urban centres.

I have taken great pride, over the five years I have had the privilege of being the member of Parliament for Kings—Hants, to try to be an advocate in this space, because we do have to make sure that our seniors have a dignified retirement and that we are taking measures to support seniors across the country, including indeed, for me, right at home in Kings—Hants. Our government has been there.

Our government has been there, and there are a few things I want to point out to my hon. colleagues.

When Mr. Harper was in government, he was proposing to actually move the retirement age up from 65 to 67, such that seniors in Kings—Hants would not have been eligible for old age security or the guaranteed income supplement until age 67, had the Conservatives had their way. Of course our Minister of Seniors has pointed out that Mr. Harper made that decision and policy choice at the World Economic Forum.

However, we are the government that actually brought the retirement age back to 65. We have invested in old age security for those who are age 75 and up, and I know that is part of the conversation piece, representing over \$3 billion a year in new investments for seniors. We have also supported long-term care facilities.

We have invested in dental care. I had the opportunity to talk to some of my constituents, who have said to me, “Look, I haven't had the opportunity to have my teeth cleaned in over five years. I haven't been able to visit a dentist, because I just can't afford it.” Our government, with the support of the majority of members of Parliament, actually created a program where now close to 80% of dentists across the country are participating. That is extremely important, as it is a measure that supports not only health care for seniors but also affordability.

The members who voted against the measure, namely the Conservatives, like to talk about seniors, but when it comes to the measures that actually support them, they vote against them. The member for Carleton talks about pensions and the member for Burnaby South, yet he is not willing to support seniors' dental care in my riding of Kings—Hants or anywhere else in the country. He says it does not exist, but almost a million Canadians now have benefited from the program, notably our seniors.

Let us talk about the threshold before there are clawbacks. Our government has been increasing the amount of money that a senior can earn before it is clawed back on the guaranteed income supplement or on their old age security cheque, which is important. We had moved that from \$3,500 up to \$5,000, and now it is 50% more, from \$5,000 to \$10,000. That is great; however, I would like to see the government do more.

Hopefully in the fall economic statement, in the budget, we can see it go even higher, because for seniors who are still able and wanting to contribute by working, we do not want there to be an

impediment to their doing so because they are worried about losing their seniors' benefits. Therefore we need to go higher, and I believe that the government has the ability to do so and will do so in the days ahead. We will see where our other hon. colleagues stand on that.

Let us talk about the health care investment. When I talk to seniors, I hear that they worry about health care. We have been there as a government to step up. However, the Conservatives voted against it.

The point I want to make is that, as it relates to seniors, I am proud of the record the current government has. We have one of the lowest poverty rates of seniors in the world, which matters. This is not just a feeling, an emotion, but a fact. Are there challenges out there that we have to continue to address? Absolutely there are, and I may not agree with the entirety of the motion before the House here today as it relates to doing something to support seniors between 65 and 74.

However, I think that particularly for our lower-income seniors between ages 65 and 74, we have to be there to make sure we can support them. In fact it is in the Liberal platform to make sure we can identify those seniors who would be on the guaranteed income supplement, to support them in the days ahead.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

When we look at the Bloc's voting record on support for seniors, it immediately becomes clear that they do not really care about seniors' needs. The Bloc voted against dental care for seniors, against lowering the retirement age, and against increasing the GIS.

Generally speaking, the initiatives in this bill are good, but it is important to understand that, with regard to the motion that the Bloc Québécois is moving today, it is very difficult and very rare for a government to grant a royal recommendation.

[*English*]

I would love to be able to have one of my hon. colleagues step up and ask me a question.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am shocked to hear that. My colleague is usually a rather sensible person, yet he just said that Bloc Québécois members do not truly care about seniors. That must be why we put this issue on today's agenda and why we are trying to get this gain. That must also be why we have been fighting for five years to get his government to act fairly and equitably toward all seniors.

We are prepared to force an election on this issue. Is my colleague prepared?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, but the voting record is very clear: That member and the other Bloc Québécois members voted against dental care for seniors, against lowering the retirement age and against increasing the guaranteed income supplement.

Although I thank the Bloc Québécois for joining the game, it is a little too late.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### CANADIAN COAST GUARD

**Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a group of seven harvesters from my riding who went to work at sea this past July and endured a terrifying experience.

The boat, the *Elite Navigator*, did not arrive back home as expected. This set off a massive search effort, headed by the Canadian Coast Guard. Fifty-one hours later, and just after the crew members had used their last emergency flare, rescuers were able to locate them. I am thankful that all the men were healthy and otherwise uninjured.

Transported home by the Coast Guard, they were greeted with a hero's welcome in New-Wes-Valley by hundreds of people.

The story speaks to the importance of the Coast Guard, and I am proud of the investments our government has made to new lifeboat stations around the coastline of Newfoundland and Labrador to monitor and support mariners in distress.

I want to express my appreciation to all involved in this search and rescue mission, as well as my relief that the “lucky seven” are back home. I welcome the boys home.

\* \* \*

### KING CHARLES III CORONATION MEDAL RECIPIENTS

**Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was an immense honour to spend time with two extraordinary Canadian Forces veterans from Kamloops and to present them with the King Charles III Coronation Medal. They played pivotal roles in the D-Day efforts.

Zach Bourque, a 101-year-old Royal Canadian Air Force veteran, served with unwavering dedication as a supply technician, defending Britain's coast during these critical moments. His courage and commitment during D-Day are nothing short of inspiring.

I had the profound privilege of awarding the same medal to John Kuharski, a veteran who bravely stormed the shores of Juno Beach during the D-Day invasion. At 104 years of age, he can still recount that day in great detail.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Zach and John. Through their incredible service and sacrifice, they have helped preserve the values and freedoms that define our great Canadian way of life. They are true heroes. We are forever indebted to them. I thank them for their service.

## Statements by Members

### RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute today to an exceptional citizen of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne and someone I am proud to call a friend.

Dan Lamoureux first joined Riverside School Board 26 years ago, serving as chair of its council of commissioners for the last decade. During his tenure, he was instrumental in making Riverside one of the highest-performing school boards in Quebec, with a graduation rate of 88.5%.

Dan was previously president of the Quebec English School Boards Association, where he played a key role in ensuring the survival of Quebec's English-language school boards. Demonstrating a lifetime of service, Dan was a firefighter for the City of Westmount, a frequent volunteer in Greenfield Park and a strong advocate for the English language community in Quebec, serving as president of the QCGN.

As Dan begins a well-deserved retirement, I am sure he is looking forward to spending more time with his sons and grandsons, as well as his wife, Joanne; I am sure she already has a list of projects for him to do.

I am sorry I cannot be at Dan's retirement party this evening, but I wanted to recognize his incredible contributions and wish him all the best.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I ask that members be a little quieter so we can hear the presentations from members.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

\* \* \*

### ACADÉMIE STE-THÉRÈSE STUDENT COUNCIL

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today we are pleased to welcome 40 elected student council members from Académie Ste-Thérèse, a high school in my riding.

This is the student council's 13th year, and its members, who are with us today, actively encourage young people to take part in democratic life by generating debate on social and political issues and by coming up with projects and activities by and for students. I appreciate their engagement, and I also appreciate the teachers and administrators who support this undertaking.

I have a little advice for these young parliamentarians: parliamentary work is not always easy, but it is essential and so very stimulating. It is a privilege to serve the people who elect us, and it is a tremendous privilege to welcome these young parliamentarians. I wish them all the best for their term in office.

*Statements by Members*

● (1405)

*[English]***NATIONAL SENIORS DAY**

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October 1 is recognized as Seniors Day in Canada and all around the world. Today, we celebrate seniors across our country and acknowledge the significant contributions they have made to our families, our communities and society at large. From fighting for our freedoms to building the railroad, highways, schools and hospitals, as well as creating vibrant community centres and gathering places, seniors have helped build the great country Canada is today.

This National Seniors Day, I would especially like to acknowledge the formation of the Canadian Senior Living Association. The CSLA is a group of provincial associations across the country that advocate for seniors on a national scale to address their issues. I say congratulations to the Canadian Senior Living Association on its launch and happy National Seniors Day to our seniors. I thank them for all they have done and continue to do.

\* \* \*

**HUGH MICHAEL GREENE**

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the life of Hugh Michael Greene. Hugh immigrated to Alberta with his family in 1928. A centenarian, he was 101 years old at the time of his passing.

A living definition of a gentleman, Hugh loved his family, community and country, and he brought honour to all his deeds.

After graduating from Wetaskiwin high school, he joined the RCAF, where he served in England and Germany until 1946.

When he returned home from the air force, he married the love of his life, Doris. They called Ponoka their home for more than 65 years. Together they raised five children; they had five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. I am so glad that Hugh and Doris were recently able to celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary.

He is remembered in the Ponoka community as one of the last veterans of the Second World War. He was the embodiment of Canada's greatest generation. Royal Canadian Legion branches across our country recently put their flags at half-mast to honour Hugh, who once served as the Legion's Dominion president.

On behalf of a grateful community and nation, I thank Hugh for a life well lived. May my friend rest in peace.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Mr. Speaker, it was an immense honour to spend time with two extraordinary Canadian Forces veterans and present them with the King Charles III Coronation Medal. They played invaluable roles in the D-Day efforts.

Zach Bourque, a 101-year-old Royal Canadian Air Force veteran from Kamloops, served with unwavering dedication as a supply technician, defending Britain's coast during those critical moments. His courage and commitment during D-Day are nothing short of inspiring.

I had the profound privilege of awarding the same medal to 104-year-old John Kuharski, a veteran who bravely stormed the shores of Juno Beach during the D-Day invasion. He can still recount those details with tremendous clarity.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Zach and John. Through their incredible service and sacrifice, they have helped preserve the values and freedoms that define our great nation. We are indebted to them. I thank them for their service.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we reflect on the significance of both Truth and Reconciliation Day and Seniors Day, honouring the profound history and contributions that have shaped our Canadian identity.

Yesterday, we reflected on the resilience and the contributions of the first nations, Inuit and Métis people and organizations in Richmond Hill, such as Odeiwin. I speak with sincere gratitude for its important work as an indigenous-led not-for-profit that provides vital employment and education programs across York Region.

As we celebrate National Seniors Day today, I recognize leaders, including the Mon Sheong Foundation and the Caribbean North Charities Foundation. They are crucial in helping seniors in my riding age well at home, stay informed and connected, and live with dignity and security.

In recognizing both days, we embrace the lessons of our past while fostering compassion and unity in the present.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

*[Translation]***CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE ET D'INDUSTRIE DE VAUDREUIL-SOULANGES**

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Vaudreuil-Soulanges chamber of commerce and industry, the CCIVS, as it celebrates its 30th anniversary.

For three decades, this vital organization has been an important resource for our business community. It helps foster economic growth, innovation and collaboration in our region. From connecting entrepreneurs to stimulating local development, the CCIVS has been instrumental in transforming the economic landscape of Vaudreuil-Soulanges. Its dedication and hard work have created many opportunities that have allowed our small businesses to grow.

As we celebrate this milestone, I would like to recognize the exceptional leadership of the CCIVS's staff, members and partners. May the coming years bring them prosperity and success.

*Statements by Members**[English]***SENIORS**

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Today is Seniors Day, and it is an honour to serve as the shadow minister for seniors. Seniors have dedicated their lives to the prosperity of our country. They have made incredible sacrifices in order to provide for their families and plan for the future.

Seniors should be able to retire on their savings and enjoy their golden years in peace and financial security. Seniors' retirement income is simply not keeping up with the pace of the cost-of-living crisis. The continuous increase of the carbon tax affects the price of groceries, gas and home heating. This is the reckless record of the NDP-Liberal government on seniors.

The Conservatives will promote financial securities and create policies that do not penalize seniors and that encourage meaningful connections for our valued seniors. It is time for a carbon tax election, so Canadians can decide.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL SENIORS DAY**

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Seniors Day. Seniors, older Canadians and elders have lived and contributed to our country for 50, 60 or even 100 years. Yesterday, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I saw the great respect indigenous communities accord their elders, one of many indigenous practices that would lead to the betterment of our society.

I would like to recognize some of our local organizations that support seniors: CHATS; Crescent Village; Richmond Hill and Elgin West Seniors club; Aurora Seniors; Italian, Tamil and Indian seniors clubs; Mon Sheong; and Seniors for Climate Change, who are demonstrating right now.

Our government's support for seniors is solid and enduring: OAS, GIS, dental care, pharmacare, the caregiver credit, aging in place. We will never put a singular ideological focus on a balanced budget ahead of support for older Canadians, who have not only helped build Canada, but can continue to make Canada the best country on earth. To my 89-year-old parents and all seniors across Canada, I thank them and wish them a happy Seniors Day.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives, along with thousands of Canadians and Quebeckers, have lost confidence in this Prime Minister and are afraid of what an opportunistic Bloc may do. The NDP kept this government on life support for months, and now the Bloc Québécois is the one flip-flopping, hypocritically trying to blackmail the government until October 29.

In its eagerness to save this costly, centralizing Prime Minister, the Bloc Québécois is showing no concern whatsoever for the fate of Quebeckers. It is keeping him in power even though he is constantly encroaching on provincial jurisdictions.

The Liberals will callously put 1,400 jobs at risk with the Liberal boreal caribou order. The Bloc Québécois failed to negotiate the revocation of the order. The only party working to save the forestry sector is us, the Conservative Party.

As the worst negotiator in history and the worst party for the Quebec nation, the Bloc Québécois is ready to sell its soul instead of giving Canadians the country they deserve. Will the Bloc Québécois vote to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime?

\* \* \*

*[English]***THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Canadians are finding the dream of Canada shattered. A country where we could once find a good job, buy a home in a safe neighbourhood, afford groceries, access reliable health care and pay fair taxes is slipping away.

The Liberal-NDP government's reckless spending and socialist agenda have committed economic vandalism. GDP per capita is down. Unemployment rates, especially for our youth, are up. Household debt is up and taxes are up, all this when Canada, under the Liberals, starts at third base and they act like they are hitting a triple. We are rich in talent. We have the talent and the resources, and we should be hitting a home run.

Canada is mired in economic vandalism, but common sense will lead us home. We will cap spending, axe taxes, reward work, build homes, uphold families, stop crime, secure borders, rearm our forces, restore our freedom and unite our people. Canada, let us hit a home run and bring it home.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**DENTAL CARE**

**Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the transformational impact of the Canadian dental care plan, which has already benefited over 750,000 Canadians, including over 5,000 residents of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, and that number continues to rise.

*Statements by Members*

This initiative has made essential dental services accessible, reducing the financial burden on families and promoting better oral health.

[Translation]

The plan does not just cover urgent dental needs. It also supports preventive care, thereby helping our fellow citizens maintain their smiles for years to come.

Let us continue to support and expand this vital program by strengthening our commitment to the health and well-being of all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ANTI-SEMITISM**

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark one year since the October 7 attacks on Israel. This was the single deadliest day Jewish people have faced since the Holocaust, and it forever changed their world.

On October 7, Hamas terrorists took 251 civilians hostage while killing over 1,200 people, including eight Canadians: Judih Weinstein, Vivian Silver, Ben Mizrachi, Netta Epstein, Shir Georgy, Adi Vital-Kaploun, Alexandre Look, and Tiferet Lapidot. May their memories be a blessing.

In the year since, Jewish Canadians have faced an alarming rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes, with vandalism, bomb threats and open calls for violence against Jews. Jewish Canadians wearing a Magen David or a yarmulke in public or placing a mezuzah outside their homes face harassment and threats to their safety, all with the added stress of ongoing deadly rocket attacks targeting friends and family in Israel.

Jewish Canadians are calling for action. We know all too well the dire consequences of turning a blind eye to anti-Semitism. It is time to work together, to demand the return of all hostages and to chart a path toward a just and lasting negotiated peace for all.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SENIORS**

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as coincidence would have it, the Bloc Qu b cois's opposition day calling for a royal recommendation for Bill C-319 happens to fall on October 1, the International Day of Older Persons.

The bill aims to restore equality among all seniors and eliminate this gross unfairness. We have to recognize that people on fixed incomes are directly affected by inflation and need an increase in their old age security as of age 65. We must not leave them financially vulnerable, since poverty unfortunately does not wait until people turn 75.

We also need to let seniors keep working if they want to, without being unduly penalized. We need to recognize their diversity, but also think collectively about their place in our society. We owe them our respect. They are the ones who built Quebec.

Let us take a day to consider how much they contribute. We have a duty to treat them with the utmost respect and to ensure that the social safety net is always there to let them to age with dignity.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The Prime Minister's economic vandalism is making Canadians poorer with every passing year. Per capita GDP is lower than it was nine years ago and shrinking.

Since 2015, Canada has had the worst per capita GDP in the G7. We are down 2%, while the U.S. is up 8%. That is what nine years of capital flight looks like. We have abundant land and resources, and great workers, but Canada no longer has the tools and the technology to compete because of capital flight.

Since 2015, half a trillion dollars has shifted from Canada to the United States, especially in the energy industry. Investments are leaving Canada to create high-paying jobs building mines, factories, pipelines and houses in the United States.

From 2001 to 2014, it was Canada that won the investment tug-of-war with the U.S. That is why we need a Conservative government now to clean up the Liberal government's economic vandalism and make up for nine lost years.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**ANTI-SEMITISM**

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow night is the beginning of the Jewish new year. Normally, this is a festive time, one of joy and celebration. However, this year there is a shadow. The last year has been an annus horribilis for Jews.

Next week is the anniversary of October 7, a day Hamas attacked Israel, slaughtered over 1,200 people and kidnapped hundreds of others. Then a wave of anti-Semitism swept across the world, people here at home telling Jews to go back to Poland, firing shots into our schools, yelling hateful slogans outside our community buildings, setting up encampments on university campuses and attacking our support for Israel.



I pray this new year is a better one. I pray for a world where Israel can defend itself from Iranian and Hezbollah missiles without being condemned, and one where it can live securely in peace with its neighbours. I pray for a Canada where Jewish Canadians can feel safe again, as all governments take real action to confront anti-Semitism.

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### NEW MEMBER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Sauvé, member for the electoral district of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun.

\* \* \*

### NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé, member for the electoral district of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, introduced by Mr. Yves-François Blanchet.

**The Speaker:** I invite the hon. member to take his seat.

Colleagues, before we proceed to oral questions, I want to say that, since returning from the summer recess, many questions and comments in the House have gone too far.

[English]

I am going to ask all members to please let the person who is speaking ask the question and let the person who is responding respond, and to slow down their heckling in question period.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the “Liberal Bloc”, which doubled the debt and increased taxes, seniors are having a hard time paying their bills. A record number of them are being forced to go to food banks to put food on the table. They are struggling to pay the rent after the cost of housing doubled. They are seeing that their children and grandchildren are unable to buy a home like before.

Will the government agree to our common-sense plan to fix the budget and axe the tax so that our seniors can pay their bills with dignity?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian seniors remember all too well the Conservative government's policy on seniors. They remember Prime Minister Harper announcing in Davos that the retirement age should be 67.

### Oral Questions

When it comes to grandchildren, Canadian seniors support our national child care program for their grandchildren. We will work for seniors and their grandchildren.

\* \* \*

● (1425)

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Québécois is still picking fights with the Government of Quebec. Instead of standing up for the Quebec nation, he says he is glad an order might be issued against the forestry sector. Quebec's environment minister says the opposite. I would like the Bloc Québécois to be more assertive than it is being right now.

Will the Prime Minister listen to common sense and permanently cancel the order against the forestry sector?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader mentioned picking fights. He is the one who insulted Quebec municipalities by calling them incompetent. Will he apologize for calling Quebec's municipalities and, indirectly, all their employees and the Government of Quebec, incompetent? Let us not forget that, during his term as minister responsible for housing, he built six affordable housing units.

\* \* \*

[English]

### FINANCE

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the famous carbon tax Carney became conflict of interest Carney when the Prime Minister named him to be effectively the phantom finance minister to advise on economic policy while he presides over a massive multi-billion dollar, multinational corporation that sought 10-billion Canadian tax dollars to take over our pension system.

He got a \$2-billion loan for a friend, and now we have learned that the economic task force he heads up has only one person. Is he not a walking, talking conflict of interest?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are glad to get economic advice from smart former Canadian central bankers like Mark Carney and like Steve Poloz, who is doing some great work advising us on how to encourage Canadian pension funds to invest more in Canada.

Meanwhile, on that side of the House, they get their foreign policy advice from Elon Musk and Tucker Carlson. They should be ashamed of themselves. The people of Ukraine certainly know what is going on.

*Oral Questions***CARBON PRICING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the very courageous and common-sense Premier of New Brunswick launched a renewed lawsuit against the quadrupling carbon tax. He is pointing out that the carbon tax would force the layoff of nurses, doctors and teachers because of the extra costs it would impose for operating schools and hospitals.

Instead of requiring courts to decide on the quadrupling carbon tax, why will the Prime Minister not let the people decide in a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that the Leader of the Opposition gave me an opportunity to talk about the price on pollution.

We made a great announcement just a few minutes ago, and that is that small businesses in the province of New Brunswick, which he was talking about, that have one to 499 employees are going to get rebates of \$43,413. In the province of Ontario, which we both represent, a business of one to 499 employees can get a rebate of nearly \$300,000. They are going to get that money directly in their bank accounts by the end of the year.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, almost a year ago today, Tehran-backed terrorists unleashed the worst attack on Jews since the Holocaust. Ever since, they have continued to push this genocidal aim. Today, hundreds of rockets came from Tehran towards Israel, forcing millions into shelter. Two terrorist attacks were carried out.

The Prime Minister has talked out of both sides of his mouth, saying one thing to one group, and the opposite to another. Will the Prime Minister state clearly that Israel has the right to defend itself by defeating Hezbollah, Hamas, the IRGC and all the other terrorists?

• (1430)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the attacks by Iran against Israel today, and of course we condemn them unequivocally.

These attacks from Iran will only serve to further escalate the situation in the region. That is why I have been in contact with my Israeli counterpart this morning. I have been in contact with many G7 foreign ministers, as well as Arab countries' foreign ministers.

This is a very dangerous time for the Middle East, and we need to make sure that this war stops.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SENIORS**

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals do not want an election, they need to support seniors fairly. That is why seniors' groups are here on the Hill today. FADOQ is here with its Mauricie branch, as well as the Association

québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées, or AQDR, the Association québécoise des retraité(e)s des secteurs public et parapublic, or AQRP, the Outaouais branch of AREQ and the Table de concertation régionale des aîné-e-s des Laurentides. They are here to make sure the federal government puts an end to the two classes of seniors. They are here to demand a 10% increase in old age security for seniors aged 74 and under.

Will the government finally listen to them?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are a little incredulous at everything the Bloc Québécois is saying, when we know what it voted against. It voted against dental care, which is currently saving hundreds of thousands of Quebecers and Canadians hundreds of dollars. We are incredulous at the fact that the Bloc Québécois voted against enhancing and increasing the guaranteed income supplement, which helps the poorest seniors. Yes, we are incredulous at the hypocrisy of a Bloc Québécois that voted against seniors.

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Seniors Day. Let us just say that it is not the best day to avoid answering questions about old age security, especially when seniors' representatives are watching us. We will give the Liberals another chance. Time is of the essence. They have until October 29 to stop depriving seniors 74 and under of a 10% OAS increase. It seems to me that National Seniors Day would be a heck of a good day for the Liberals to finally be able to say yes to seniors.

Will they grant a royal recommendation for Bill C-319, yes or no?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to wish a happy National Seniors Day to everyone, including the people from the Outaouais branch of AREQ who are here, according to the member for La Prairie. The member for La Prairie rises every day, but he seems to forget that when we voted to lower the retirement age to 65, he voted against that. He wanted to keep the retirement age—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Nunavut.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, it is another injustice and another day in court for the Liberals. Two Ontario first nations are suing the government for its discriminatory underfunding of fire services in their communities. With climate change and aging infrastructure, first nations are at a higher risk.

Instead of wasting more time in court, will the Liberals stop their discrimination against first nations, truly commit to reconciliation and deliver the funding needed to save lives?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right. We all have to do more to protect the lives of indigenous people, in particular first nations children who are many times more likely to die in a house fire than their non-indigenous counterparts. That is why we have invested over \$136 million for first nations' self-determined projects to reduce the risks of fire, including making homes safer and ensuring equipment is available and working.

• (1435)

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, indigenous people have a right to culturally informed community health care when they need it. Due to failed health care policies under the Liberal and Conservative governments, nearly 10 years since the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, health care gaps for indigenous people have widened.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to indigenous experts and leadership to design a health care system that ensures access to this basic human right?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the government has done with the renewed health transfers, separate money and \$2 billion dedicated to first nations leaders who are working on health transformation and self-determined health care services across this country. On top of that, there is another 10 years of funding for the First Nations Health Authority to continue to plan and deliver health services for first nations people in B.C. We will get this work done together.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote one of the world's most credible news organizations on financial and economic matters. A headline from the Financial Times of London on May 10, 2024, reads: "Break-down nations' like Canada have a lesson for the world: Canada leads nations which have suffered a sharp decline in per-capita GDP".

I have a simple question: Does the government agree that Canada leads nations that have suffered a sharp decline in per capita GDP?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the government agrees with is that Canada was the first G7 country to lower interest rates for the first time. Canada was the first G7 country to lower interest rates for a second time, and Canada was the first G7 country to lower interest rates for a third time. The government also knows that wages in Canada have outpaced inflation for 19 months in a row. Meanwhile, inflation, which was 2% in August, has been within the Bank of Canada's target range.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada has become the first central bank to cut rates because Canada has become the first leading economy to go through an economic contraction. Again, the Financial Times,

for which the finance minister once worked, said, "Canada's GDP per capita has been [shrinking] 0.4 per cent a year since 2020, the worst rate" for any developed economy in the top 50.

Does the government agree that Canada's per capita GDP is shrinking at the worst rate of any of the top 50 economies?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government knows that what matters to Canadians is inflation. That is why it is so important that inflation was 2% in August and that it has been within the Bank of Canada's target range all of this year. It is because of that progress that interest rates in Canada have come down three times.

That is real relief to homeowners. That is real relief to businesses. That is real relief to anyone who wants to buy a home. All the Conservatives know how to do is talk Canada down.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government loves to tout its economic record, but the results are simply underwhelming. Canada has the worst housing inflation among its peers and the worst performance in per capita income among the G7. The gross fixed capital formation has not increased in a decade, and R and D spending as a per cent of GDP is at its lowest point in 20 years. It is no wonder young Canadians and businesses are packing up in search of better economic opportunities and higher standards of living.

When will the government admit that its economic policies are putting the future of Canada at risk?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I find so interesting about these Conservatives is that the only thing they know how to do is talk Canada down. A couple of months ago, the only thing they wanted to talk about was inflation, but we have good news on inflation, and with that good news on inflation comes good news on interest rates.

On this side of the House, we celebrate good news for Canada and Canadians. On that side of the House, all they want to do is break things and cut.

• (1440)

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the minister is not persuaded by my comments, but perhaps she might listen to economist Trevor Tombe, who wrote, "If Canada had simply kept pace with the U.S. over the past two years, our economy would be 8.5 percent larger." That is \$6,200 per person richer we would be. Trevor Tombe says that this is an incentive for Canadians and businesses to move south of the border in search of greater economic opportunities and higher standards of living.

When the Deputy Prime Minister says that her economic plan is working, is this what she means?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we did even better than that. We have attracted \$60 billion of investment in this country. Even Bloomberg put Canada ahead of China for the battery ecosystem.

We have the talent. We have the ecosystem. We have the critical minerals. We have the renewable energy. We have access to the market. Let us talk about possibilities. Let us talk about opportunities. Let us talk about Canada in the 21st century.

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

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, as we know, question period is of a limited time, which I have been reminded of many times. I have allowed this to go on, but if we have to interrupt all the time, we might get to the point where we need to end a question due to a little heckling. Therefore, I will ask hon. members to please not do so.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SENIORS**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is high time that the economic vandalism committed by this Liberal government, with the backing of the Bloc Québécois, stopped.

Under this Prime Minister, Canada has experienced the worst growth in income per capita, or GDP, of any prime minister since 1930. In fact, Canada's growth in real income per capita has been the worst in the G7 since 2015: minus 2% in Canada, plus 8% in the United States. That means a lower standard of living for all Canadians, including seniors who no longer have enough money to pay their rent or bills.

When will this “Liberal Bloc” give a thought to seniors and end its economic vandalism?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have noticed something very interesting about the Conservatives. A few months ago, the only economy-related word that the Conservatives knew was the word “inflation”.

Today, however, we have good news about inflation. In August, inflation was 2%. All year long, inflation has stayed within the Bank of Canada's target range. This is good news for Canada and for Canadians, but all the Conservatives want is bad news.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Okay, Mr. Speaker, let us talk about that. Seniors, Canadians and Quebecers are no longer able to put food on the table. Why? The cost of food has gone up, the cost of rent has gone up, and everything has gone up because of this government's inflationary policies, which the Bloc Québécois supports.

Seniors built Canada. In their Canada, hard work was rewarded.

Why would the “Liberal Bloc” want to keep sabotaging seniors' retirement by raising their taxes over and over?

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

**The Speaker:** I encourage the hon. member for La Prairie not to speak before he is recognized.

The hon. Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we do indeed respect seniors. That is why we have always been there for them. However, seniors understand that we need to invest in the future as well. Canadians understand that.

That is why we have been able to attract generational investments to Quebec. Take, for example, Moderna, which set up shop in Laval. Ford and GM are in Bécancour.

We brought Quebec into the 21st-century automotive industry. We need to thank our workers and the people who built this country. They can count on us to set Canada up to thrive in the 21st century.

• (1445)

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is making October 29 its ultimatum on behalf of seniors.

Their representatives are in Ottawa today to support our efforts. The FADOQ is here, and so is its Mauricie association. The Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées, or AQDR, is here. The Association québécoise des retraités des secteurs public et parapublic, or AQRP, is here. The Académie des retraités de l'Outaouais is here. The Table de concertation régionale des aînés des Laurentides is here.

They are all here to end discrimination against seniors and to call for a 10% increase in old age security for seniors aged 74 and under. They expect a clear answer.

Will the government give a royal recommendation to Bill C-319?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk about the Bloc Québécois's hypocrisy. The member for Shefford should know that in the province of Quebec, 13,300 people are eligible for the dental care program. They are saving hundreds and hundreds of dollars.

The member voted against dental care for vulnerable seniors in Quebec. Shame on her.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if what the minister is saying were enough, FADOQ, AQRP, AQDR and many other groups would not be in Ottawa today. However, they are here to demand a 10% increase in OAS for seniors under the age of 74.

*Oral Questions*

All seniors deserve the same support when they are facing the same rising cost of living. Everyone understands that. They certainly do not deserve to be divided into two classes of citizens. It is time the Liberals put an end to their age-based discrimination.

Will they grant royal recommendation to Bill C-319?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no party in the House has done as much for seniors in Canada and Quebec as the Liberal Party of Canada, despite the push back from the opposition—the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois. What did they vote against? They voted against the dental care program, the GIS and additional housing for vulnerable seniors.

The Bloc Québécois voted against all that. Now, what are they accusing us of? The Bloc Québécois should apologize.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on this International Day of Older Persons, the Bloc Qu eb cois would also like to highlight the work of community organizations that support retirees.

It is inexcusable that they are being denied funding from the age well at home program. It is inexcusable that the government is starving our organizations and depriving Quebec seniors of the money and services that are rightfully theirs. It is inexcusable that the feds are bickering over jurisdictions with Quebec at the expense of seniors.

Will the feds finally transfer to Quebec its share of the funding and stop holding seniors hostage?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are particularly proud of the age well at home pilot project. It is a government priority for seniors to stay at home and live independently.

We have transferred the funds to all provinces and sent Quebec 60% of its funding. There are a few projects left. The Quebec government just needs to check a box and it is ready to go. Organizations such as the volunteer centres and Montreal's Chic Resto Pop will get their money.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the latest conflict of interest from a government of serial ethical lawbreakers, the Prime Minister wants his buddy Mark “carbon tax” Carney's company to be in charge of \$10 billion of Canadians' pension dollars. He does not want him to be subjected to any of the conflict of interest rules: all the power, all the money, but none of the accountability.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for carbon tax Carney and the Prime Minister. Why do they not just call a carbon tax election?

• (1450)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is another week and another tired line from the Conservatives.

When it comes to Canadians who disagree with their vision of the country, instead of allowing for that disagreement to happen, the Conservatives attack them personally and try to bring them down. We have seen this time and time again from Conservatives, whether it is the news media like CBC or CTV or whether it is eminent Canadians who give of themselves.

The Conservatives only have one objective, and that is to tear down Canadians who do not share their beliefs.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that the member wants to deflect from the Prime Minister, who was twice found guilty of breaking ethics laws himself, and that is why he is trying to protect his buddy, carbon tax Carney, from the ethical rules that would, of course, call into question this \$10 billion of Canadians' pensions that they want to let him get his hands on, in exchange for what? It is for advice that he is going to give them from Bay Street that everyone on Main Street can just eat cake when they cannot afford any more of his rising carbon tax.

It has been nine years of the failed NDP-Liberal policies. Canadians are out of money and they are out of time. When can we have an election?

**The Speaker:** Before the hon. House leader gives her answer, I did hear a comment out of turn. I think it was from a minister, though I could not figure out who it was. I will ask members again to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Chair.

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again what we see from the Conservative members of Parliament is that they just cannot handle being criticized.

It is the same way Conservatives treat the media. When the media asks them tough questions about what they are putting forward in terms of their agenda for Canadians, what do they do? They attack them. This is what they do with the media. This is what they do with eminent Canadians. This is what they do with any Canadian who does not share their vision for Canada.

We should be talking up Canada and talking up Canadians instead of talking them down, like the Conservatives do.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first the Liberals announced that Mark Carney, the chair of Brookfield, a trillion-dollar corporation whose interests span the entire federal government, would be setting Canada's economic policy. Then news broke that Brookfield had been lobbying for a federally funded, multi-billion dollar investment fund that it would manage. Then, over this past weekend, Mark Carney sent out a fundraising email blast via the Liberal Party's donation list. That is interesting.

Did the Liberals or Brookfield clear any of this with the lobbying commissioner?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Speaker, what we see from the Conservatives is when Canadians do not share their vision of Canada, they talk them down. They try—

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

**The Speaker:** I am going to ask members again to please not take the floor until they are recognized by the Chair.

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons from the top.

**Hon. Karina Gould:** Mr. Speaker, it is okay, I understand this response makes them uncomfortable because they know it is true.

When it comes to Canadians who do not share their vision of Canada, what do Conservative members of Parliament do? They talk them down. They try to bring them down. They do not like having people push against their agenda. They do not like it when they are asked tough questions. When intelligent people do not share their vision of Canada, they try to take them down instead of having that debate.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Grifols, a big pharma company, recently gained approval from Canadian Blood Services, which is regulated by the Liberal government, to acquire Canadian plasma resources, a critical source of blood products for Canadians, but this summer, reports said that under this contract, Canadian blood plasma products could be sold abroad for profit by Grifols, something that could jeopardize supply in Canada. Guess which company has been in takeover talks with Grifols this whole time? It is Brookfield.

Is that why the Liberals did not clear Carney with the lobbying commissioner?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is known everywhere in the world as being absolutely one of the best jurisdictions to manage blood supply, and that is something that we are absolutely committed to continuing. I think that casting aspersions and trying to manufacture things is something we are used to from the other side, but that reputation that we have won, hard-earned, to make sure that when Canadians need blood it is there for them and it is there for them safely, is something that we are going to continue, unabated, to be committed to.

• (1455)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets has been keeping his voice down, but it has been regular, so I am just going to ask him to please not do that.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith has the floor.

\* \* \*

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, residential school survivors and their families deserve answers. We know that truth comes before healing. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on all levels of government and churches to hand over all records, but survivors still face barriers, missing records, delays and disappointments. Why is this government failing to give survivors and their families access to the truth?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and the many commemorations that took place across this country.

Since 2015, when the truth and reconciliation report's calls for action came to the government, we have been working toward enacting all 94 calls for action. We will continue to work with survivors in order to ensure that there is truth, justice and accountability.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis in Edmonton rages on, and indigenous people are disproportionately impacted. The latest reports show that Edmonton's homeless population has jumped by 1,300 people since the start of the year. To make matters worse, last winter's amputations due to frostbite skyrocketed by 162%. With colder temperatures approaching, people are going to lose limbs or die.

Will the Liberals continue to stand by and watch alongside Danielle Smith, or will they finally build the homes people in Edmonton desperately need?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after a decade of nothing happening under the previous Conservative government, we launched the national housing strategy, and we have been working with communities, with first nations leaders and with indigenous organizations to ensure that people have access to the kinds of housing they need.

We are not going to stop until every person in this country knows that there is someplace they can turn to as winter approaches.

### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, September 30 marks one of the most important days on the Canadian calendar. For generations, indigenous peoples had to conceal their cultures, languages and true identities. The results, both past and present, led to the devastating consequences faced by families and communities and gave way to intergenerational trauma, the impacts of which are still found immensely in our country today. Yesterday, communities across Canada came together to honour survivors and their relatives and to commit to doing our part on this journey toward truth and reconciliation.

I ask the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations to share his reflections with the House on the importance of this day and the work ahead.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by acknowledging the work of my friend from Winnipeg.

Yesterday was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and over the last several days I have had the opportunity to listen to many survivors who spoke about the enormous loss that they feel. I also have had the chance to speak to many who have been working toward advocating and toward finding truth for the loved ones who never came home.

This afternoon we raised the survivors' flag right here on the Hill, and I ask all Canadians to reflect on this day and to ensure that they do their part toward reconciliation.

\* \* \*

### THE ECONOMY

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal-NDP costly coalition, grocery prices are up 27%, gas prices are up 40% and now new data from Equifax shows that credit card debt is up too. The average Canadian now has \$4,300 on their credit card, the highest on record since the last recession.

Why are these Liberals using their carbon tax to inflate the price of everything, punishing families and forcing them to take on more debt just to get by?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am really glad to have the chance to talk about our carbon rebates and our policies on credit cards because today we announced that later this month, thanks to the government's negotiations with credit card companies, the fees that small businesses have to pay are going down. That is good news for small businesses across the country.

What else is good news? Small business owners are going to get big carbon rebates. That member of Parliament, like me, is an Ontario MP. An Ontario business owner with 10 employees is going to be getting 4,000—

• (1500)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Thornhill.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister might be the only person left in the world who

### Oral Questions

thinks paying more tax makes a person richer and somehow stops climate change. The carbon tax is not about the environment, and it is certainly not about affordability. It is about getting more money for her spending addiction. Even Catherine McKenna admits that the Liberals' plan was always to spend Canadians' money.

It is clear that the Liberals have run out of money. They are going to raise the tax, over and over again, to 61¢ a litre as two million people use a food bank. How many more people will face poverty before the Liberals reverse course?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will give the Conservatives a number: 69 million cars in avoided pollution. That is our number on this side of the House. If we listened to the Conservatives, we would do nothing to fight climate change, pollution would be even worse and emissions would be 41% higher than with what we have been doing. We are working to fight climate change. We are working to support Canadians to create the economy of the 21st century. The Conservatives have nothing to offer.

\* \* \*

### CARBON PRICING

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberals are desperately trying to convince Canadians they are better off paying a higher and higher carbon tax. However, the truth hurts. It appears that food inflation is not a global issue; it is an NDP-Liberal issue. According to the "Food Professor", because of the carbon tax, wholesale food prices in Canada are up 34% in every single category and are 37% higher than they are in the United States.

Will the Prime Minister just admit he was wrong about his carbon tax and call a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems Conservatives are now starting to listen to economists, and they quoted Trevor Tombe. Let us hear what Trevor Tombe has to say about carbon pricing and the price of food: "While concern around affordability is clearly warranted, climate policies are not a significant driver of the rising cost of living. Nor will removing policies such as carbon pricing materially improve the situation."

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberals just cannot handle the truth. The truth is that Canadians are being forced to food banks in record numbers. Even the Liberal member for Winnipeg North said that when we attribute the increase in food prices of 34% to the carbon tax, that is absurd.

*Oral Questions*

Data from the “Food Professor” show that the Liberals are wrong. What is absurd is increasing the carbon tax when nine million Canadians do not know where their next meal is coming from. Will the Prime Minister admit their tax plan is the carbon tax and call a carbon tax election, so Canadians can put food on the table?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, being a farmer myself, I know what it is like for farmers to be on the front line of climate change. Our farmers face devastating storms like hurricane Fiona, which tore down barns and killed cattle. We have floods and fires right across the country. This is one of the reasons food prices are so high.

The government put a price on pollution that works. Also, in my hon. colleague's riding, the average farmer would receive \$1,800 a year as a carbon rebate. I know the Conservative Party of Canada—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

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

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Foothills, who has just had two questions, can have more questions if they could work that out with their leadership, but not at this time. I will be happy to recognize the hon. member for Foothills when he stands up on his feet when it is time for the people from his political formation to get a question.

• (1505)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

\* \* \*

**SENIORS**

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is affecting all seniors. There are not two grocery bills, one for those 65 to 74 and one for older seniors. There are no age-based discounts for housing, clothing or medication. However, people aged 65 to 74 receive 10% less OAS. Everyone understands that this is unfair.

Will the Liberals put an end to this injustice, or are we all going to head on out in our campaign buses?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the member for Thérèse-De Blainville had the chance to help vulnerable seniors, including 7,300 in her own riding, save hundreds of dollars, she voted against it. That is hypocrisy. Now she wants to lecture us on her opportunistic policies.

We are there for seniors. The Liberal Party of Canada supports seniors. It is the Bloc Québécois that—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun for his first question in the House.

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to speak, I would like to thank the people of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun for placing their trust in me. I will do everything I can to be worthy of it.

Today, I am proud to back the Bloc Québécois's ultimatum on behalf of seniors. The Liberals have two options: they can increase

old age security for those aged 74 and under, or they can call an election right now. I would remind them that it did not go so well for them last time.

Will the government choose seniors or will it choose its demise?

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

For the second time today, I will ask the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier not to speak while a member is speaking.

The hon. Minister of Labour and Seniors.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member to the House. I can assure him that I heard him loud and clear, despite the fact that he will be excluded from a position of power until the end of his days in this House.

Over the next five years, our government will spend more on old age security to protect the incomes of retirees than any previous government. For my colleague's information, that is \$71 billion more in seniors' pockets thanks to the Liberal Party of Canada.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The government is forcing families to pay more for gas, groceries and home heating at a time when they can least afford it. Now the Province of New Brunswick is taking the Liberals to court to hold them accountable for the money their carbon tax is making off the backs of everyday Canadians.

Will the government listen to Canadians and scrap its carbon tax, or will it finally let Canadians choose in a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member opposite can remind some of the members of his own bench that they asked Premier Higgs to go with the federal system because people get more money back, and that is exactly what the premier did. The Premier of New Brunswick decided to go with the federal system because more people in New Brunswick get more money back than what they pay in carbon pricing.



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberals would rather talk about anything else than the fact that their 61¢ per litre carbon tax would mean Canadians would have among the highest fuel prices in the world. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that the Liberals' carbon tax costs Canadians more than they get back. Canadians have no confidence in the Prime Minister or in his costly carbon tax.

When will the Liberal government get out of the way so Conservatives can finally axe the tax?

• (1510)

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the vast majority of Canadian families get more money back than they pay. That has been validated by 300 economists, very much including Trevor Tombe, who Conservatives like to quote these days as an economist of record.

Not having a climate plan or an economic plan for the future would have dire implications for the people who live in Atlantic Canada. These folks, the Conservatives, oppose the Atlantic accord and the work being done to launch an offshore wind industry and a hydrogen industry to ensure we are creating good jobs and economic opportunities in Atlantic Canada. They have no plan for the climate. They have no plan for the economy.

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, tax is up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for this costly coalition's carbon tax scam. Nine premiers are now against the Liberal carbon tax. Today in New Brunswick, Premier Blaine Higgs is challenging this scam in court. Provinces do not get a rebate for heating schools and fuelling ambulances. Carbon taxes are not revenue-neutral when provinces and municipalities end up paying more for essential services.

Will the Green-Liberal-NDP coalition axe the tax, or keep making health care and education more expensive?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member opposite does not remember that he himself asked Premier Higgs to go with the federal system so more people in New Brunswick would get more money back than they pay in carbon pricing. Perhaps he forgot he made that request to his premier.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Quebec and across Canada, we are dealing with a housing crisis that is having an impact on people's lives. We need to build more housing more quickly to help Quebecers and Canadians access affordable housing that meets their needs.

Can the Minister of Public Services and Procurement explain to the people of my riding, Lac-Saint-Louis, what our government is doing to create more affordable housing across the country?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, you know that the Conservative

leader built six affordable housing units during his entire tenure as minister responsible for housing. What is more, we searched for them all summer and could not find them. Then he added another layer, saying that building affordable housing, including for seniors, on federal property is a form of communism. The good news is that we are going to build 250,000 housing units on federal land over the next few years.

\* \* \*

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment's emergency order is an attack on forestry workers in some 30 communities. It will be a disaster. It will kill at least 1,400 jobs, destroy lives and devastate the economy of Quebec's regions.

The Bloc Québécois voted once again to keep this government in power. This illustrates how out of touch they are with the realities of our regions.

Is the "Liberal Bloc" aware of just how disastrous the order will be for Quebec communities?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that we have come to the table with half a billion dollars in potential investments in Quebec, in the regions, in the forestry sector, for forestry workers and for indigenous communities. We are just waiting for the Quebec government to come to the table with us to talk. We want to find a solution. The Conservatives have nothing to offer, whether for the environment, the economy or jobs.

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec's environment minister is in Ottawa today. Like all Canadians, he is completely at a loss to explain the reason for imposing an order in council that will throw our workers out on the street. Like the Conservatives, he is calling on the government to immediately withdraw this threat and leave Quebec's jurisdictions to Quebec. On this issue, the Bloc Québécois, which claims to be the defender of Quebec's jurisdictions, is missing in action.

Will the government finally accept, once and for all, that the order in council is a disaster in the making?

*Oral Questions*

• (1515)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleague, once again, that at the end of 2022, the federal government and the Government of Quebec signed a joint letter stating that Quebec would submit a caribou recovery plan by June 2023. Here it is October 1, 2024, and we are still waiting for that plan. All we are asking is for Quebec live up to its commitments. We are ready to work with Quebec on finding solutions.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like the Prime Minister, the leader of the Bloc Québécois likes to entertain us with imaginary tales to try to justify his relevance. For example, on X, he is always selling himself as a hero, the one who put a stop to the order in council that would jeopardize the forestry industry, including in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the North Shore and Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

The reality, however, which we found out from the Quebec environment minister this morning, is that the Prime Minister and his Minister of Environment and Climate Change want to shut down the industry. They have no other option. The Bloc Québécois is not much help.

Once again, will the Minister of Environment and Climate Change put an end to his radical order in council once and for all?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, experts, environmentalists, forestry workers and first nations all agree that the future of forestry in Quebec and elsewhere in the country depends on the health of the forest and on the health of the caribou. We cannot have one without the other. The only people who do not understand that here are the members of the Conservative Party of Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SENIORS**

**Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Seniors Day, a day to celebrate and thank seniors across the country. Our government knows the importance of promoting the health and well-being of seniors. That is why we make investments toward programs and services for them.

Can the Minister of Health update Canadians on what we are doing to protect and support the health of seniors across this country?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for St. John's East for her tireless advocacy in championing the health of seniors in this country.

Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the 13 agreements signed in every jurisdiction in the country on aging with dignity, helping seniors to age at home and improving our long-term care facilities. Critically, those agreements include, for the first time, common indicators so we can see progress in data and see how provinces are doing. Obviously, there is work to ensure that hundreds of thousands of seniors get dental care, as well as what we are doing with pharmacare.

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council has declared a state of emergency in every single one of its 14 nations' territories. The lack of mental health support, treatment, recovery and harm reduction services is causing irreparable harm. The Liberal government has failed to deliver the urgently needed supports, and young and older people are paying the price. Indigenous people continue to die at a higher rate than non-indigenous people. This is not reconciliation. Action is needed now.

When will the Liberals stop with the empty words and deliver the urgent funding that the Nuu-chah-nulth people need to save lives?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the path that our government has been on, working hand in hand with first nations and indigenous leaders to ensure that programs and services delivered by first nations and indigenous people are available to their members so that people can heal from the trauma of colonization, something that just yesterday our government stood up with many survivors across the country to acknowledge. This has deep impacts on communities, and we will continue this hard work together.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Liberals spent yesterday professing support for first nations, the same first nations that the government is currently fighting in court over something as basic as clean drinking water. Canada's lawyers are saying, "Canada does not owe any legal obligations or duties to operate [first nations] water systems." They even say that when ministers make promises, it is just context-specific and can be ignored. This is the Liberal approach to reconciliation: promise clean drinking water to first nations and then direct lawyers to fight first nations in court on clean drinking water.

Will the Liberals cut the hypocrisy, stop fighting Shamattawa and other first nations in court and deliver clean drinking water once and for all?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is really heartening to hear the member of Parliament from the NDP speak so eloquently about the need to move quicker on alleviating long-term boil water advisories across this country. Since we have taken office, we have lifted over 145 long-term boil water advisories and prevented well over 200. We are going to continue that hard work. I assume her comments mean she is going to support this new legislation and ensure it has safe passage through the House.

• (1520)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Mr. Speaker, I had a member's statement under Standing Order 31 today and that statement had to be delivered twice. It was to salute two veterans, one who is 101 and one who is 104, in my riding. Both times, there was quite a bit of noise in the chamber for what I had hoped to be a very solemn salute to these two living veterans who lived through D-Day.

I bring this to the Chair's attention in hopes that, especially when people are giving heartfelt members' statements like this one on our veterans, there is a bit more quiet.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for raising this issue. It is an important point on the importance of Standing Order 31.

I know that Statements by Members is usually the time that members are coming from committee and entering the House. I would encourage all members to take their seats quietly so that members can give their declarations appropriately and share these important issues and this important time with their constituents.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:21 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Mégantic—L'Érable relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 865)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Aboultaif  
Albas  
Arnold  
Barlow

Aitchison  
Allison  
Baldinelli  
Barrett

Berthold  
Block  
Brassard  
Calkins  
Carrie  
Chong  
Dalton  
Davidson  
d'Entremont  
Dowdall  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Epp  
Falk (Provencher)  
Ferrerri  
Gallant  
Genius  
Godin  
Gourde  
Hallan  
Jeneroux  
Kelly  
Kitchen  
Kram  
Kurek  
Lake  
Lawrence  
Leslie  
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Lloyd  
Maguire  
Martel  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
Melillo  
Morantz  
Motz  
Nater  
Paul-Hus  
Poilievre  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Roberts  
Ruff  
Schmale  
Shields  
Small  
Steinley  
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)  
Stubbs  
Tochor  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vis  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williams  
Zimmer — 121

### Business of Supply

Bezan  
Bragdon  
Brock  
Caputo  
Chambers  
Cooper  
Dancho  
Deltell  
Doherty  
Dreeshen  
Ellis  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Findlay  
Généreux  
Gladu  
Goodridge  
Gray  
Hoback  
Jivani  
Khanna  
Kmiec  
Kramp-Neuman  
Kusie  
Lantsman  
Lehoux  
Lewis (Essex)  
Liepert  
Lobb  
Majumdar  
Mazier  
McLean  
Moore  
Morrison  
Muys  
Patzner  
Perkins  
Rays  
Reid  
Richards  
Rood  
Scheer  
Seeback  
Shiple  
Soroka  
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)  
Strahl  
Thomas  
Tolmie  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williamson

### NAYS

#### Members

Alghabra  
Anand  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Bachrach  
Bains  
Barron  
Battiste  
Beech  
Bergeron  
Bibeau  
Blair

Ali  
Anandasangaree  
Arya  
Atwin  
Badawey  
Baker  
Barsalou-Duval  
Beaulieu  
Bendayan  
Bérubé  
Bittle  
Blanchet

*Speaker's Ruling*

Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Schiefke	Serré
Blois	Boissonnault	Sgro	Shanahan
Boulerice	Bradford	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Cannings	Carr	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Casey	Chabot	Sorbara	Sousa
Chagger	Chahal	Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Champagne	Champoux	Sudds	Tassi
Chatel	Chen	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Therrien	Thompson
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier	Trudeau	Trudel
Coteau	Dabrusin	Turnbull	Valdez
Damoff	DeBellefeuille	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Desbiens	Desilets	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	Vignola	Villemure
Dhillon	Diab	Virani	Weiler
Dong	Drouin	Wilkinson	Yip
Dubourg	Duclos	Zahid	Zarrillo
Duguid	Dzerowicz	Zuberi— 207	
Ehsassi	El-Khoury		
Erskine-Smith	Fisher		
Fonseca	Fortier		
Fortin	Fragiskatos		
Fraser	Freeland		
Fry	Gaheer		
Gainey	Garon		
Garrison	Gaudreau		
Gazan	Gerretsen		
Gill	Gould		
Green	Guilbeault		
Hajdu	Hanley		
Hardie	Hepfner		
Holland	Housefather		
Hussen	Hutchings		
Iacono	Idlout		
Ien	Jaczek		
Johns	Joly		
Jones	Jowhari		
Julian	Kayabaga		
Kelloway	Khalid		
Khera	Koutrakis		
Kusmierczyk	Kwan		
Lalonde	Lambropoulos		
Lamoureux	Lapointe		
Larouche	Lattanzio		
Lauzon	Lebouthillier		
Lemire	Lightbound		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney		
Martinez Ferrada	Masse		
Mathysse	May (Cambridge)		
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)		
McGuinty	McKay		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod		
McPherson	Mendès		
Medicino	Miao		
Miller	Morrice		
Morrissey	Murray		
Naqvi	Ng		
Noormohamed	Normandin		
O'Connell	Oliphant		
O'Regan	Pauzé		
Perron	Petitpas Taylor		
Plamondon	Powlowski		
Qualtrough	Robillard		
Rodriguez	Rogers		
Romanado	Rota		
Sahota	Sajjan		
Saks	Samson		
Sarai	Sauvé		
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia		

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

I wish to inform the House that the volume of earpieces will now be reset. Members using their earpiece at this time will have to adjust the volume.

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

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## POINTS OF ORDER

## ORAL QUESTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the point of order raised on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, by the member for Edmonton Griesbach concerning comments made during question period that same Wednesday.

Midway through question period that day, at a point when the Chair was standing and calling the House to order, heckles coming from one side of the House could be heard. The source of the comment was not immediately apparent to the Chair, nor was it to the editors of the Debates, who attributed them to “an hon. member”.

After question period, the member for Edmonton Griesbach rose on a point of order, claiming that the comments were clearly homophobic, and asking the Chair to look into the matter. Several other members referred to this specific situation the following day, on Thursday, September 26, pressing the Chair to rule on it. At some point, accusations were made directly toward the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, who was suspected to have said the alleged words.

[*Translation*]

Just before question period last Thursday, the Chair made a ruling dealing with decorum and unparliamentary language. The Chair will repeat one of the quotations used in that ruling.

As indicated on page 624 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, and I quote: “In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking, the person to whom the words at issue were directed, the degree of provocation, and most important, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber.”

*Speaker's Ruling*

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan rose and admitted to having made the statement in question, but explained the context in which it was made and his intentions in making it. He maintained that his comment was meant to criticize government spending and that no slur was intended.

[*English*]

Of course, comments that are clearly meant to denigrate someone due to their sexual orientation, or make insinuations about someone's sexual orientation, would not be acceptable in the House. While the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has vigorously denied that this was his intent, and the Chair is prepared to take him at his word, I would invite him to reflect upon how his comments could have been interpreted and to recognize that they provoked disorder.

The situation underscores certain principles that should govern our actions in the chamber: first, the importance of not shouting out comments across the floor, and second, to avoid jokes that others could interpret as hurtful or offensive. We all have a responsibility to choose our words carefully. It is in this context that I will invite the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to withdraw his remarks and to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

I thank all members for their attention.

• (1540)

ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am also now ready to rule on the point of order raised on September 27, 2024, by the member for Edmonton Strathcona concerning an alleged personal insult made by the member for Calgary Heritage during a statement delivered pursuant to Standing Order 31.

In her intervention, the member for Edmonton Strathcona alleged that the member for Calgary Heritage used a personal insult directed at the member for Burnaby South earlier that day in his statement. She noted that the Chair had made a ruling recently about personal insults directed towards other members. She suggested that the member for Calgary Heritage should be asked to withdraw his comment and apologize.

[*Translation*]

As I indicated in my ruling of September 26, 2024, I remain very concerned about the tendency to use overly personal criticism and insults. I also concluded my ruling, found at page 25926, of the Debates, by inviting, and I quote, “members to be more judicious in their choice of words and behaviour. If they are not, the Chair will have no choice but to discipline those members who persist in their unparliamentary behaviour.”

The Chair has reviewed the statement made by the member for Calgary Heritage and finds certain words indeed constituted a personal attack on the member for Burnaby South.

[*English*]

The member for Calgary Heritage should have been aware that his words were problematic as I had warned one of his colleagues a few days before during Statements By Members against using the exact same terms. As I have stated before, there are ways to make

our point without resorting to personal insults. As a result, the member for Calgary Heritage will not be recognized until such time as he withdraws his offending words.

I thank all members for their attention.

The hon. member for Don Valley West is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to your first ruling, I am not questioning it; however, I do have a question that I would like to raise in the House with respect to it, which is on the application of the sexual harassment policy of the House of Commons with respect to the way members treat each other.

We have all taken extensive training in sexual harassment. One of the key parts is that intent does not play into findings in those proceedings, but it is how someone receives them that matters, even though someone says that they have no intent. Therefore, I would like the Speaker to reflect on that to see whether the workplace sexual harassment policy applies in the chamber or whether it applies just outside the chamber.

It is a genuine question, and you can take time. I do not know the answer to it, but we did sit in many sessions with respect to sexual harassment training. I think the hardest thing for me to get in my head was that I might say something that I do not think causes offence, but if it is heard that way, then I need to own it. I just do not know whether that actually applies in the House or not.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Don Valley West for rising on this important distinction. I want to make sure that the hon. member understands that the sexual harassment policy applies outside the House. It is one where, as quite rightly pointed out, it is not the intent of the comment but of course how it is received that matters. However, again, that applies outside the House.

If members want to have the policy explicitly applied to debates in the House, then I would invite them to raise that through the appropriate channel, namely the procedure and House affairs committee.

The hon. member from Regina—Qu'Appelle is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, flowing from the rulings you just gave, where you indicated that you would not recognize members who refused to withdraw remarks, you ordered the Prime Minister to withdraw his libellous and baseless personal accusations, and he refused to do so. You gave him multiple opportunities. If you check Hansard for that day, you will see that he in fact did not withdraw the term or the phrase that you ordered him to, and he ignored your ruling.

We would expect that the same application would be made on the government as you have just made on the opposition. I hope that you will come back to the House with a ruling on the question, because it is a very similar situation as to what you have just ruled on. I would formally request that you look at Hansard from that day. I am sure you will see that the Prime Minister ignored your direction and did not withdraw his remarks. The same sanction should apply on both sides of the House.

*Business of Supply*

• (1545)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for raising that point of order.

At the time, if I recall, the Chair felt that the comments had been withdrawn, but I will check Hansard and come back to the House if necessary.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the same point of order, we have to be somewhat cautious with respect to us being able to review Hansard and then come back citing it. My interpretation of what had taken place that day was very similar to what your interpretation was at the time. At times, it is not just the word that is spoken, but also everything else that goes along with that word. The manner in which it is expressed, for example, should also be taken into consideration. It is more so a cautionary note and we have to be careful, for example, saying, “four weeks ago so-and-so said this and now I am coming back to reflect on that.”

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to follow up on one of the points of orders that was brought up already, in which a member had asked that the Prime Minister retract a statement. If I understand correctly, the Leader of the Opposition was asked to retract a statement and has also not done that yet. I could be mistaken, but if that is the case, I would urge you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the Leader of the Opposition also retracts the offensive statement that you have asked him to retract.

**The Speaker:** The Chair has heard many comments on this and I will come back to the House after advisement, if necessary.

I see the hon. member for Vancouver East is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Speaker, I am still grappling with your first ruling.

So I can understand the ruling and its application, and the rules in the House and the decorum that is required for the House, when someone makes a comment about the Prime Minister that he should hold hands with another individual of the same gender and go into the bathtub together, it is within order in the House and that we should not take it in any other way? Do I understand this correctly?

**The Speaker:** I will invite the hon. member to take a look at the ruling I made a couple of minutes ago. I would be happy to provide her with a copy of that and then we will have an opportunity to have a further discussion.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—REQUEST FOR A ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR  
BILL C-319

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today we are discussing a very interesting and very important topic.

We are touching on two important issues. The first is the situation of our seniors. The second is the state of our public finances, especially when the government is dealing with certain constraints that might limit what it can do with the programs it wants to develop.

In all honesty, I do not think we can accuse the Bloc Québécois of being opportunistic about this. We can accuse the Bloc Québécois of a lot of things. As my colleague from Honoré-Mercier often used to say, we can accuse the Bloc Québécois of picking fights, but in this case, we cannot accuse the Bloc Québécois of being opportunistic. It has been calling for this for quite some time now. It has been consistent about these demands. However, and I will come back to this later, I think we can accuse the Bloc Québécois of improvising a bit on this issue.

As for the member for Shefford, in my opinion, she comes across as truly sincere. Seniors are certainly very important to her. She is a strong advocate for them. She stands up not only for seniors in Quebec, but also for those in Canada as a whole. In fact, she is very supportive of seniors from the rest of Canada. We might wonder if that support could one day lead to support for federalism. Who knows? I remain hopeful.

The first thing I want to point out about the Bloc Québécois's position is that the Bloc knows very well that age 75 was not chosen arbitrarily as the threshold for the OAS increase. It was not picked out of a hat. There is a certain logic behind choosing 75 as the age when the OAS is increased.

There are exceptions, but the situation of people 75 and over differs from that of people under 75. For example, the data show that people 75 and older are more likely to outlive their savings, to be unable to work, to be widowed and to have greater health care needs. One telling statistic is that half of seniors over 75 have a serious disability, 57% are women and four in 10 are widowed. In short, the situation of seniors 75 and over is, as a rule, different from that of seniors under 75. We try to be precise when setting a threshold, but it is tough. There are always exceptions.

• (1550)

The retirement age was set at 65 a long time ago. One might even say that it is a bit of an arbitrary number. Why not 63, 62 or 60? It is hard to be absolutely precise about everyone's situation, but decisions still have to be made.

It is also important to note that old age security is not the only program where the amount of benefits changes with age. Take, for example, the Canada child benefit, which decreases at age six. Obviously, the government decided that this benefit would decrease starting at age six, not at age five or seven. Setting a threshold at which a benefit changes is not unprecedented.

*Business of Supply*

Yes, the OAS could be increased for those under 75. Many programs that are very important to the well-being of Canadians could also be enhanced, such as the Canada child benefit, which I mentioned. It is a program to reduce child poverty. In a world with no budget limits, of course we would always want to do more for everyone.

The Canada disability benefit could also be increased. The maximum has not been reached. The government just introduced this new benefit, and we are working with the provinces to ensure that, if it is enhanced, the provinces will not reduce their investments. We have to be fairly strategic with the provinces, but ultimately, the goal is to provide a much more generous benefit. We could achieve this more quickly and aim for an even higher maximum. This is another program that could be improved.

The child care program could also be improved. Why should child care cost \$10 instead of \$7, \$6 or \$5?

Federal health transfers could also be increased. The Bloc Québécois always accuses us of underfunding Canada's health care systems. It blames the federal government for not doing enough. However, a study published two or three weeks ago compared the rate of growth in federal health transfers to the rate of growth in provincial health spending, and it found that federal spending was growing faster than provincial spending on health, so I think we are already doing a lot, but obviously in a world with no limits, we could do more.

The other thing to understand is that seniors have always been the government's priority. Our government has done a lot for seniors. We introduced a dental care program that greatly benefits seniors. I regularly receive emails from seniors thanking our government for introducing this program. We are also going to introduce pharmacare, which will also greatly help seniors.

It is about balance within a limited financial framework.

• (1555)

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, never have I heard such a distressing speech about arbitrariness and relativism.

They seem to be trivializing what seniors, the various FADOQ groups and the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées have been asking for. He is a member from Quebec, but he does not hear these people. When people have worked hard all their lives, sometimes the aches and pains start to appear between the ages of 65 and 74.

My colleague spoke about health transfers. What was called for was \$280 billion over 10 years, not \$46 billion in new money over 10 years. Sun Life incurs \$2 billion in administrative costs for its dental care program. They cannot say that they do not have any money. The money is there: \$83 billion for the oil companies and \$34 billion for Trans Mountain. It is all about priorities.

Is the hon. member telling me that, because there may also be an increase elsewhere, it would be too much to invest where people need it? There could be savings in the health care system, because these people would not be as sick.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, what I was saying is that there are budget constraints. Members often talk about Canada's deficit. In my opinion, it is a reasonable deficit because it pays for various programs to provide support to many people.

However, according to the Bank of Canada, if the deficit were to increase any further, it could throw fuel on the inflationary fire. Members should ask themselves whether inflation would serve the interests of seniors on fixed incomes.

• (1600)

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis praised the Bloc Québécois members, to my great surprise. He is on a charm offensive. I understand that he is trying to court them to become federalists, but I think he is wasting his time, since they are separatists.

However, he is justified in wondering about the Bloc Québécois, because it voted nearly 200 times on \$500 billion in budgetary appropriations.

I have a simple question for my colleague. What did the Liberal government promise the Bloc Québécois members in return for giving it a blank cheque, Quebecers' money, to spend recklessly and lose control? I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, the government did not promise the Bloc Québécois anything. I have no other answer for my colleague.

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I just heard the member say that he is concerned about the deficit. I wonder if that is why 65- to 74-year-olds are being forced by the Liberal government to stay at work, so their taxes can come off the federal debt. Is that why the Liberals have a two-tier system?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, no, that is not why.

The government did its homework. It did an analysis of the demographic situation facing seniors. There were some hard facts about how life changes quite drastically in some ways after the age of 75. For some people, it would not be at age 75, but at age 74. For others, it would be at age 80. We are looking at a general rule here that things become a little tougher for seniors after the age of 75, and the government is just trying to help those who need a little extra help.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by answering the member for Lac-Saint-Louis by paraphrasing what my colleague from LaSalle— mard—Verdun said: True power is independence. I wanted to remind the member of that.

*Business of Supply*

I am not sure how to approach this issue any more, because, since we came to the House in 2019, the Bloc Québécois has been talking about the importance of equity among seniors and the importance of increasing the old age security pension for all seniors, not just for those aged 75 and up. That is what seniors in our communities are asking for. We are simply being consistent with who we are and what we have been saying in the House for more than four years now, nearly five years.

First, I will remind the House of the Bloc Québécois's position on seniors. For the past two summers, I have been listening to people's opinions and travelling all over Quebec as part of my work on Bill C-319. I will conclude my remarks by explaining what has led us here today, why we are having this opposition day that seeks to increase pressure on the government and remind it that it absolutely must give this bill royal recommendation.

I also want to apologize to my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue. I got carried away thinking about my colleague's speech earlier and forgot to say that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue. I apologize for that. I know that someone is listening carefully to my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue today. I will come back to that. As I said, I am not handling this portfolio alone. The Bloc Québécois leader and member for Beloeil—Chambly decided to make this issue a priority, but the entire caucus is helping me wage this fight for fairness for seniors. I would not be able to do this without my colleagues' help and support. I want to sincerely thank them.

As I said, we have been trying, since 2019, to hammer home the idea that old age security is a universal program and that there must be no gaps in it based on age. Those who are 67 must be given the same amount as those who are 77. People have been talking to us about this issue since we arrived in office. As early as January 2020, groups, like FADOQ, that we met with during pre-budget consultations were telling us why it was important to increase the old age security pension for all seniors, not just for those aged 75 and up.

We then made that a priority when each budget was tabled. For each budget, we made it clear to the government that we would not vote in favour of the budget if it did not meet this expectation of the groups on the front lines. Even though there may have been other worthwhile measures in the budget, we would not vote for it if it did not contain this measure, which local seniors' groups call for. That is one of the reasons.

We have set other priorities at other times. I would like to once again mention supply management, which is now a priority, but has been before too. We have also mentioned the environment. We have mentioned other concerns, but the issue of seniors came up in our pre-budget requests for every budget. Since we did not get a response from the government, we did not vote in favour of the budgets.

In early 2021, I met with representatives of SOS Dépannage, a food bank located in Granby, in the riding of Shefford. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of this organization's employees. Representatives of the food bank called me in to their office to show me the numbers they were seeing and alert me to the fact that more seniors were applying for food assistance because they were

having trouble making ends meet on a fixed income. I also want to say that, no, seniors were not going to food banks to request medical assistance in dying. That is not why the people at SOS Dépannage had me come in to their office. It was to make me aware of the difficult financial realities seniors were facing.

• (1605)

The first petition that we presented came from Samuel Lévesque, a young man in his 20s. As a believer in intergenerational equity, he felt that it was unfair to separate seniors into two classes. He understood very well what was at stake, and he hoped that when he retired, there would be no gap, no two classes of seniors, and that he would receive the same amount as seniors aged 75 and over. Two other petitions were presented following this one.

Last year, SOS Dépannage even came to support me at the launch of my tour. We held a press conference at its office. Its representatives explained why they thought Bill C-319 could help seniors seeking food assistance. One senior even came on behalf of Eastern Townships community groups to seek support for Bill C-319. At the press conference we held to launch the second year of my tour on Bill C-319, the volunteer centres providing services to seniors came to explain why they so desperately needed this bill to receive a royal recommendation and royal assent. I would also give a nod to other colleagues. I toured everywhere. I remember having a lovely meeting over coffee with a group of seniors in Rouyn-Noranda in 2021. They had made me aware of the issue of the two classes of seniors. They were very open and spoke to me frankly about their financial situation.

In 2023, we also organized a conference. The bill did not exist yet in February 2023, but it was the fruit of that conference. My caucus colleagues and other colleagues took part in that day of reflection. People involved in a research chair on inequality came to talk to us about seniors' needs and the growing gap between the least fortunate seniors, who were getting poorer. They did a good job of explaining who can live with dignity on \$22,000 a year. Roughly a third of seniors live on fixed incomes alone, in other words, old age security plus the guaranteed income supplement. OAS is the universal program. What is being done for all those who are just above that threshold, for those who do not receive the GIS or extra help because their income is just above \$22,000? They are not rich, and a 10% increase could improve their situation.



In the summer of 2023, I travelled to a dozen ridings across Quebec, covering more than 10,000 kilometres. I got out there to find out what seniors needed. I heard about housing. I heard about food. I heard about the need for a decent social life, the need to get out a little. After that, I also did some tours on the margins of the pre-session caucuses. I visited Sherbrooke last fall and Chicoutimi at the beginning of the year. Each time, I heard about the need to correct the unacceptable inequity created by the government, that is, these two classes of seniors. This summer, I travelled to 11 ridings, covering over 8,000 kilometres. All this is to say that we are able to prioritize the bill because it has made progress, because at some point along the way, it has been supported. At the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, it received the unanimous support of the parties on the committee, and at second reading, the majority of members in the House voted in favour. It has gone through many stages already, and it is important.

We saw it this summer. Seniors are struggling so much that the smallest cuts to the GIS are really affecting their life choices. They are struggling to eat properly. We are talking about basic needs. This bill is receiving support from across Canada. I get emails from seniors in Ontario who are concerned about their financial situation. I am getting emails from everywhere from Saint John's to British Columbia. I see that support as confirmation. We have prioritized an issue that was making good progress in the House and that meets Quebec's expectations, and so much the better if seniors elsewhere can also benefit from it.

• (1610)

I want to say one last thing. This past weekend, a researcher on aging confirmed to me that seniors need this bill, that this 10% increase should be given to all seniors aged 65 and over, and that we need to think about how seniors can work with fewer obstacles in their way. Support is coming from everywhere, including community groups, civil society and researchers.

[English]

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is a very important subject for me. One of the three objectives with which I came into politics is a secure retirement income. Twelve million working Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan. We have already reformed CPP. I am in support of targeted benefits for seniors and other disadvantaged Canadians who are in need. I do not understand the logic of providing additional income to Canadians who have very high incomes, even seniors in retirement.

What is the reasoning for giving additional funds to, say, seniors who have a retirement income of more than \$100,000? Why not target the support to the people who really need it?

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I would say this to my colleague. What is the retirement age, in the Liberals' view? Is it 65 or 75?

We hear that some seniors have a harder time working. Not everyone can work. The retirement age was set at 65. It is a universal program. Creating two age categories and two separate amounts in a universal program is called a loophole and age discrimination. It

### *Business of Supply*

is called ageism. Let us not forget that OAS is taxable. Those who need it the least will pay taxes. That is how the program works.

• (1615)

**Mr. Jo l Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I must acknowledge that the member for Shefford has been leading this fight since she entered politics, and I applaud her work.

Now, the Bloc Qu b cois is presenting itself as the only party defending seniors, but that is not true. For example, the Conservative Party of Canada voted for Bill C-319. I think it is important to set the record straight.

The cost of living has exploded, we all recognize that. We met people throughout our ridings this summer and again this past weekend. People are telling us they are drowning. This government has racked up a \$1.441-trillion deficit. This Prime Minister has run up double the debt of all the other prime ministers in Canadian history. This is serious.

I have a simple question for my colleague. Why does the Bloc Qu b cois insist on keeping this government in power? Why is the Bloc Qu b cois once again asking—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s):** I must allow the hon. member for Shefford to answer the question. I am sorry, but there is very little time left.

The hon. member for Shefford.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, we are not keeping the government in power. We are not here to replace one government with another. We are here to get this bill passed. Also, there was no record to set straight. I have always said that there was a majority vote at second reading and that the Conservatives voted in favour of this bill. I thank them.

This bill has already made its way through the House. After a majority vote, there was a unanimous vote. The Bloc Qu b cois is very close to achieving this major gain for seniors. We are not here to replace one government with another. We are here to defend the interests of Quebecers. The money in question amounts to 0.57% of the budget, which is nothing. It represents \$16 billion over five years. Think of all the money that was funnelled into bad programs or money taken from where it should not have been taken. Just think of all the assistance provided to oil companies. Do they really need it—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s):** I will give another member the opportunity to ask a question.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to work with the member at committee and really admire her work raising the reality of invisible work, which is mostly done by women.

*Business of Supply*

Many women who visit me are caregiving at the ages of 65 to 74, and expenses are piling up. I wonder if the member would share why it is so important for the Liberal government to make sure that those aged 65 to 74 have additional income.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which leads me to a final comment about senior women.

During a press conference a while back, the Association f eministe d' ducation et d'action sociale, or AFEAS, came out in support of the bill. At one time, women could not amass as much capital or prepare for a comfortable retirement. Those women are now between 65 and 74 and are practically penniless. Even so, if their income is just above the set threshold, they are not eligible for the GIS. They are struggling financially, and this is what often keeps them vulnerable. I therefore urge all members to adopt the bill for these women.

**Mr. S bastien Lemire (Abitibi—T miscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we are here today to address a crucial matter that affects both the dignity and well-being of our seniors. I invite all my colleagues to consider the importance of a royal recommendation for Bill C-319, which seeks to amend current legislation to increase the full pension amount. By asking the government to act quickly, we are affirming our commitment to our seniors by ensuring they receive the financial support they need to live with dignity and respect. It is time to make their voices heard and take action for a better future.

This Bloc Qu b cois demand is reasonable and in the best interests of both Quebec's and Canada's seniors. We have received dozens of emails from seniors across Canada thanking the member for Shefford for her hard work in restoring fairness for those who built our society. I would also like to thank her personally. Passing this bill will improve seniors' quality of life. We will see the impact of this measure very quickly.

One of our initiatives back home, and also a campaign promise, was to set up an advisory committee with seniors. We then held a series of public consultations with these seniors to identify the challenges and, at the same time, seek their support. My colleague, the member for Shefford, met with seniors, particularly seniors from Amos and Rouyn-Noranda, to hear what they had to say about her bill.

I am rising in the House on behalf of seniors to stop the injustice against them and to do the right thing. I proudly salute the work of the important people by my side in a cause I hold dear. I would like to mention one of them by name, G rard Thomas, who is here in Ottawa at the moment. He is a member of my advisory committee and executive team, and he has come all this way today to help send a strong message to the government. He wanted to be part of the demonstration that took place in front of Parliament. He is a man of action, devoted to a cause. He wants things to change. He does not accept the status quo. This was particularly evident during our discussions with seniors. He accompanied me to several of these public consultations to hear what people had to say. I thank him for his commitment. It really motivates me.

On that note, it is time to address the real issues. During our tour to meet with Abitibi-T miscamingue's seniors, we travelled from T miscamingue to Pikogan, via Sainte-Germaine-Boul , Authier-Nord, Rouyn-Noranda, Amos and La Sarre. We visited all four regional county municipalities in my riding, including both towns and villages. We met and listened to people in the communities. I would like to share some of their conclusions with the House.

Before I get into that, however, maybe I should give members some background information about seniors in Abitibi-T miscamingue, a region where we are fortunate to be able to count on an organization called L'Observatoire. This vital organization provides statistical data on the Abitibi-T miscamingue region. Frankly, supporting this type of organization is crucial, and the federal government should commit to funding it, but that is a debate for another day.

Currently, one in five people is over the age of 65, and of these, 60% are between 65 and 74. This means that the majority of seniors in Abitibi-T miscamingue will be affected by the Bloc Qu b cois's bill. In recent years, our towns and villages have started celebrating their 100th anniversaries, meaning that many people were born and raised here. These people broke the land and cleared the way for Abitibi-T miscamingue. They settled here. It is a very different picture from that of seniors in other regions.

Did my colleagues know that 38% of seniors in our region do not have a degree? That explains why the average income is lower for seniors in Abitibi-T miscamingue. This also explains why services should be better adapted to this clientele. We have to go back to what my father called compassionate management. We have to manage relations with seniors at a human level and go back to listening. This does not end with a period or a comma. That is something we heard a lot from seniors.

There are clear differences in income between men and women. That is still absolutely shocking today. A man's income is roughly \$43,000, while a woman's is \$30,000, for a difference of \$13,000 annually. Fully 58% of senior women depend on government transfers.

• (1620)

According to the figures obtained by L'Observatoire, the average pension received by women in Quebec is \$400, compared to \$650 for men. Increasing OAS also directly addresses this problem, especially when we know that one in four seniors in Abitibi-T miscamingue lives below the low-income threshold. One strong message from seniors that makes me proud is the desire to stay and remain in the community. We heard that.

Two years ago, as part of my riding newsletter, I sent out a petition about supporting Bill C-319 before it was introduced. It called for an end to inequity and demanded equity for seniors aged 65 to 74 by increasing the old age pension. It would have amounted to about \$110 a month. In response, I received not a dozen or a hundred, but more than 5,000 leaflets in the mailbox at our office. The first few days, we were pleased with the success of our initiative, but every day we got more in the little green boxes we have in the office. There are seven boxes, which hold about 5,000 petitions. It is heartbreaking, because people are not living in dignity. People are living in poverty, and that needs to be addressed. Once again, I tip my hat to my colleague from Shefford for prioritizing this message.

The people in Abitibi-Témiscamingue are proud. Whether it is Barraute, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé, Authier-Nord, Chaze or Béarn, every village inspires pride. Statistics show that 78% of seniors in Abitibi-Témiscamingue have a strong or very strong sense of belonging in their community.

One of the issues that was raised during my tour was aging at home. This takes additional income, because everything costs more these days. Local health care services are also going to have to adapt in order to allow seniors to age at home.

The purpose of this motion is simple. We want concrete, rapid results that have a real impact on the lives of over one million people across Quebec, real people. Across Canada, it is nearly four million people.

It is exhausting to see so much public money going to bad corporate citizens, while seniors have to live on fixed incomes that are no longer enough. The government's choices do not always align with the needs of seniors and the general public. As I have said several times in the House, the government needs to stop taking seniors for granted and trying to put square pegs into round holes. Seniors are not numbers.

One program that comes to mind is New Horizons for Seniors. Volunteer organizations, many of which are supported by seniors, are required to come up with proposals, submit applications and fill out dozens of pages of forms and paperwork. That is very commendable, but instead of increasing funding so they can do what they do better, they are expected to take on an incredible amount of accountability. Things need to be simpler. That is what seniors tell us. That is also one of my heartfelt pleas.

The Bloc Québécois chose seniors. I want to mention three things that emerged from my analysis of public consultations with seniors in my riding: seniors' working conditions, family caregivers and public transit solutions.

This government could look closely at a number of other things. The current labour shortage is an opportunity. Right now, the employment rate for seniors in my region is 10%. Seniors want to work. They want to take on low-key jobs, but when they do, anything they bring in with one hand they have to shell out with the other. Nobody wins when that happens.

People need to pass on their knowledge. If we increase seniors' income, obviously without affecting their pensions, it could help them remain more active. I am convinced that everyone would

### *Business of Supply*

come out ahead. At the same time, it would also enhance the dignity of seniors.

Another big problem is the caregivers who support seniors. Employment insurance does not adequately meet their needs. Home care is the future, yet once again, health transfers to Quebec are insufficient, if not a mere token: \$1 billion instead of \$6 billion. This is not working. It is time we got down to brass tacks.

To wrap up, seniors' living conditions merit special attention. That is what the Bloc Québécois is proposing with the bill sponsored by my fellow member from Shefford. It will be a major step forward for the people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. She can count on my unwavering support.

• (1625)

[*English*]

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, 56% of working Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan. It is possible that many of them will retire directly into poverty. To address that, we have reformed the Canadian pension plan and we have introduced programs to help people in need.

I would like to ask the hon. member to give me one logical explanation, something reasonable, for why rich Canadians who are above the age of 65 should also get this benefit, which in my view, should be targeted toward the people in need. We need to support everybody who is in need, who has a shortage of income in their retirement, but why give the same benefit to the rich seniors?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Madam Speaker, the member asked for something reasonable. Eliminating discrimination is reasonable. Allowing seniors aged 65 to 74 to live in dignity is reasonable. Poverty can strike at any age, but it always strikes those who do not have the means to earn extra income.

I want to bring a fundamental element into this debate. Seniors have a right to live with dignity. As things stand, the government has chosen to isolate our seniors.

I have no doubt that the government will pay a political price for that.

• (1630)

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Madam Speaker, during their opposition day today, I would have liked to see the Bloc Québécois put more pressure on the government.

This afternoon, the Bloc again voted with the Liberal government on our non-confidence motion. That does not do much to scare the government. It is clear that the government is not at all concerned about its future.

*Business of Supply*

I am still reaching out to the Bloc Québécois here because the Conservative Party has three more opposition days, which will no doubt be three more opportunities to hold a vote of confidence. The Bloc Québécois has no opposition days left. Bloc Québécois members are going to be very disappointed when the Liberals fail to follow through on their motion.

Will the Bloc Québécois agree to vote with us next time to bring down this government?

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Lévis—Lotbinière for his question and outstretched hand. I think the Bloc Québécois has been very clear with its ultimatum. This is going to be a big win for Quebec seniors and for our agricultural producers.

In the current context, let us face it, I am ready to trigger an election if need be. I have done what needs to be done. If this is what it takes, we will not hesitate. I think seniors will appreciate it, too.

That said, the bill calls for increasing old age security by \$60 to \$80 a month. That is peanuts to the government, but it is going to make all the difference in the world if it means seniors can cope with the cost of living.

I am never going to back down on this.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very suspicious of the Conservative Party's current position on the pension increase for seniors, given the Conservatives' record of the past few years, whether on raising the age of retirement or on the cuts to health transfers to the provinces. Suddenly, the Conservatives are friends to seniors. I find that a bit suspicious, especially when their main argument is that inflationary spending has caused the increase in the cost of living. They now want to adopt a measure that adds \$3 billion to federal government spending.

Does my colleague not see a certain contradiction or a certain momentary hypocrisy?

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure that the word hypocrisy is parliamentary. I do not mean in the way the question was asked, but during question period I as a bit shocked to hear it coming from the minister. I digress.

What is deeply hypocritical is the federal government reducing the GIS, while the Government of Quebec is being a bit more generous to its seniors and increasing transfers. I am sick of receiving phone calls from people asking why they are getting just \$11, why their benefits were cut, why the promised increase never came, why they have to pay back CERB in the form of taxes a few years later. They wonder if they were being bribed.

At some point it has to stop. It is a matter of dignity.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today, October 1, is National Seniors Day. I wish all seniors in Canada and around the world a very happy day.

It is a real privilege to rise in the House to talk about our government's work to make life better and more affordable for Canadian seniors. Seniors are a growing segment of the Canadian population. It is therefore important that governments reflect on how our poli-

cies and approaches can best meet the needs of a rapidly changing demographic.

We have a wide variety of needs and desires in life. However, at the end of the day, we all want much the same things in our golden years: to maintain our independence, to stay connected to our friends and loved ones, and to age in place as long as possible. That is our government's commitment to Canadian seniors. No matter where they live, all seniors in this country should be able to age on their own terms, with dignity and choice.

Since 2015, despite opposition from the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois, our government has taken significant steps to strengthen the financial security of this country's seniors, including restoring the age of eligibility for OAS and the GIS to 65, after the previous Conservative government raised it to 67 in Davos. Our government also increased the GIS to give low-income single seniors up to \$947 more per year, despite opposition from the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois.

The rising cost of living and global inflation are affecting all Canadians: seniors, students, young families, everyone. That is why, when we took steps to put money back into the pockets of Canadians, we made sure to take into account the specific needs of our seniors. We doubled the GST tax credit for six months and sent \$500 payments to nearly two million renters to help them cope with the cost of housing, despite the relentless efforts of the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois. Once again, they voted against these measures.

We implemented the Canadian dental care plan for over 750,000 Canadians, starting with seniors. It is frightening. The Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives would have deprived 750,000 Canadians of the dental care that they need. That is the hypocrisy we are witnessing in the House today.

Bloc members—sovereignists, separatists—want a snap election so that a Conservative government can take power. According to the Bloc, a Conservative government will create the winning conditions needed for their sovereignty project to see the light of day. What kind of impact would their project have? First, it would threaten OAS for all seniors in Quebec. What the Bloc Québécois does not want to admit to Quebec's seniors is that their sovereignty plan and their opportunistic little plot would hurt Quebec's seniors. Such is the irony of today's debate.

The changes we have made have truly improved the lives of Canadian seniors. These changes remain true to the retirement security systems we have relied on for many years. It is not a question of blowing them up in an attempt to find new solutions, but of strengthening them and ensuring that they keep on meeting seniors' diverse and ever-changing needs. This includes strengthening one of the cornerstones of Canada's public retirement income system, old age security.

Old age security gives Canadian seniors peace of mind in their retirement years. It provides essential income security to millions of Canadians every year, particularly low-income recipients of old age security who are also entitled to the guaranteed income supplement.

• (1635)

As I said earlier today, \$71 billion will be transferred to seniors' pockets over the next five years through the increases and enhancements from the Liberal Party of Canada. We know that the older seniors get, the more financially vulnerable they become. Their incomes decline as they age, and they often have to spend more to cover their health costs. They also face greater financial risks due to an increased risk of health problems, the loss of a spouse or partner, and the possibility of outliving their savings. This financial vulnerability only worsens when seniors have a reduced ability to supplement their income through paid work. This is particularly true for seniors aged 75 and over.

When we increased the OAS by 10% for seniors aged 75 and over, it was the first permanent increase since the 1970s. It was a historic change aimed at meeting the financial needs of some of the most vulnerable seniors in our communities. Providing full pensioners with an \$800 supplement in the first year alone strengthened the financial security of 3.3 million seniors, 56% of whom are women. It was an important step in making life better and more affordable for Canadian seniors. We know, however, that there is still work to be done.

It is rather cynical of the opposition parties, including the Bloc Québécois, to accuse us of having a two-tier system when we used evidence and data to improve old age security. There needs to be greater improvement for those with greater need. This was proven by studies, statistics, sources of information. This decision was made based on evidence and data and with the greatest compassion. It is absolutely absurd to hear the Bloc Québécois say that it is a two-tier system. We are the party that has improved and secured pensions in Canada the most. What has the Bloc Québécois done?

Whether on the guaranteed income supplement, housing or dental care, we have systematically met with resistance from the Bloc to support seniors, including the most vulnerable seniors in Canada. That is hypocrisy. They should be ashamed to rise in the House and talk about a two-tier system. Never has a Canadian government been there more for seniors than this government formed by the Liberal Party of Canada. Today the Bloc Québécois is being mistrustful, cynical, hypocritical and opportunistic.

• (1640)

[English]

That is why our government continues to invest in the lives of seniors in this country. Investment in our pharmacare program will

### *Business of Supply*

help one in four Canadians and one in five seniors living with diabetes, so they can monitor, test and treat their diabetes without worrying about the cost. They would have to worry about the cost if the Conservatives and the Bloc got their way; those parties would be against that too. Investment in our dental care program, opposed by the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois, has not only helped over 750,000 Canadians get the care they need but will also support 200,000 Quebec seniors.

[Translation]

Again: this will help 200,000 Quebec seniors.

[English]

The uptake on this new program has been nothing short of phenomenal. In just five months, 750,000 Canadians and counting have gotten their teeth cleaned by a hygienist for the first time in years.

They have gotten new dentures after wearing old ones for decades. They have had that toothache looked at after simply living and suffering through the pain. They have gained the confidence to smile again after avoiding the dentist's office down the street because they needed to put food on the table for their family.

Those are real numbers. Those are real statistics, but they mean little to the Conservative Party and to the Bloc Québécois; it is just an abstraction. They mean a lot to the people who are benefiting from them. These folks over here want to fool and deceive Canadians out of getting the care they deserve, but they will find the Liberal Party in their way. We will be sure to keep reminding folks to sign up and get the care they are entitled to. As long as we're here, dental care is a reality in this country.

However, the things so many of us seek in our senior years, such as independence and staying connected to the people around us, are not just things that health care programs alone can solve. That is why I am so proud to see funding from the New Horizons for Seniors program reach senior-serving organizations and communities across Canada every year. New Horizons helps seniors fight social isolation, be included in their communities and live enriched lives. From curling clubs in Prince Edward Island to senior centres in the Yukon, the program helps seniors to be more connected and active members of their community. As more and more seniors have also chosen to age in their own homes, we have also launched the age well at home initiative.

• (1645)

[Translation]

This is another measure the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party opposed.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

This offers up the helping hands that seniors sometimes need to make it possible. That means supporting local food delivery programs and those helping seniors shovel snow in the winter.

[Translation]

You oppose direct investments in meals on wheels in Gatineau. You oppose direct investments in seniors in Montreal, at the Chic Resto Pop. You oppose—

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

I think he just realized what he was doing, but I simply want to remind my colleague that he has to address his comments through the Chair.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I would remind the minister to address his comments directly to the Chair, who has nothing to do with these debates.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I am flabbergasted that a political party which claims to champion Quebec would object to Gatineau's meals on wheels program for seniors. Now I have seen everything.

[English]

These two programs make a real difference to seniors, and they are helping make Canada a better place to live, grow and age. That is why they are so important. After what we saw during the pandemic, we know that Canadians are looking to governments to step up and make sure our long-term care system is delivering high-quality, safe care and treatment to our seniors. That is why we transferred \$1 billion to the provinces and territories in 2020 to immediately work to protect people living and working in long-term care.

However, we need longer-term solutions; our \$200-billion health care deals with provinces and territories are squarely focused on that. That is why, as part of these agreements, we also signed unique aging with dignity agreements with provinces and territories to make sure our health care systems meet the needs of an aging population and the workers who make it all possible.

On a systemic level, our government will be tabling, yes, a new safe long-term care act.

[Translation]

Once again, this is another measure that the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party opposed.

[English]

What would this act do? It would make sure we do right by seniors, their families and their care workers. It would make sure that what happened in our long-term care facilities during the pandemic never, ever happens again.

[Translation]

All of these supports for health care and community services are based on our government's core beliefs. We need to meet Canadian seniors where they are. We must not only be there to serve seniors today; we must be there for them tomorrow.

This requires planning. We need a thoughtful economic policy that takes into account the needs of people in the short, medium and long term, and not guesstimate policies that run counter what the numbers tell us. That is what our government did when it decided to increase old age security for seniors over 75. It was a data-driven choice, as I said earlier.

Our 10% increase in the old age security pension aimed specifically to address the increased vulnerability of seniors as they age. The facts are clear: seniors over 75 are more likely to have significant health problems and, accordingly, have higher health care expenses. In fact, health spending for seniors over 80 are on average \$700 a year more than that of people 65 to 74.

Seniors in this age group are also more likely to live with a disability. In 2017, 47% of seniors 75 and up suffered from a disability, compared to 32% of seniors 65 to 74. Since only roughly 15% of seniors 75 and up continue to work, or less than half of those 65 to 74, these seniors living on a fixed income need support to cope with these increased expenses. That is why a larger proportion of these seniors is already eligible for the guaranteed income supplement and benefiting from it, according to the numbers from 2020.

We raised old age security for seniors 75 and up to increase their financial security when they need it most. Far too many seniors fall into poverty after losing their spouse or partner. The loss of a loved one is more than just a devastating time for these seniors, the majority of whom are women. Often it can also lead to a significant decline in their quality of life. In 2016, the proportion of widows who did not remarry was three times higher among people 75 and up than among people 65 to 74.

These conversations about how we can better support Canadian seniors are important. They are important because the future of aging in Canada is really everyone's future. We welcome these discussions. We welcome these kinds of debates. We welcome dialogue with all the opposition parties to discuss how we can do more to help seniors.

However, when any reasonable measure that puts money in seniors' pockets is consistently met with opposition, we can only conclude that it is cynicism, and that the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party of Canada are playing politics at the expense of the most vulnerable seniors.

However, Bill C-319 does not reflect the reality facing Canadian seniors. Our government is committed to investing in people, whether it is with child care or school food programs for children, skills training for young people entering the workforce, or dental care and pharmacare for seniors. We know that there is always more work to do, but I am proud of what our government has done since 2015, especially when it comes to advancing the interests of Canadian seniors.

Ultimately, the discussion today is not just about seniors. It affects us all. This is about the future of aging in Canada and the future that every Canadian deserves in their retirement years. After a lifetime of hard work, Canadian seniors deserve to age with dignity and choice. As a government, we will make this future a reality for every senior in this country.

• (1650)

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have rarely heard a minister make a speech so full of political posturing and crass partisanship. That is not at all representative of what a minister who is dignified should be when dealing with seniors who are suffering.

Was the \$34 billion for Trans Mountain evidence-based? Was the \$83 billion in tax credits to oil companies evidence-based? Was the \$2 billion in administrative costs for dental insurance evidence-based?

Never in the House has there been a vote specifically and strictly on reducing the age of eligibility for the pension from 67 to 65. That was included in budgets in which we wanted more for Quebec seniors and Quebec seniors.

This minister is not telling the truth. He is playing politics. If that is the government's response to what we are asking for today, then clearly he needs to get out in the communities. Obviously, it will come as no surprise to us that he has no interest in the truth.

• (1655)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, we have just seen a perfect illustration of how the Bloc Québécois works. Everything we just heard was for show. Why is the Bloc putting on such a show? It is simply so it can cover up its plans for the future. It is obvious.

Sometimes, I think Bloc Québécois members do not realize that their vote is recorded on paper. It is true, they voted against dental care for seniors, a program that is saving thousands of people in my colleague's riding hundreds of dollars.

Imagine, they voted against increasing the GIS for Canada's most vulnerable seniors. The Bloc Québécois decided it was wholeheartedly against that idea. It is against pharmacare, housing for seniors, and the list goes on.

I am incredulous at the fact that sovereignists hoping to promote their cause would come here to the House out of opportunism and political cynicism and try to throw us off the scent. They should be ashamed of themselves.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Gatineau for

### *Business of Supply*

his passionate speech. However, I think he is out of touch with reality.

To hear him tell it, all is well in Canada. Seniors have plenty of money in their pockets, the cost of living is fine, rents never doubled and everything is beautiful. Life is good, and it will stay that way. With a magic wand, everything will work itself out.

In reality, the cost of living is suffocating Canadians, Quebeckers and seniors. That is the reality. I invite him to meet with people in his riding of Gatineau and see the situation on the ground.

Earlier in his speech, he talked about hypocrisy. It is sheer hypocrisy that the Liberal government voted for Bill C-319 but is not moving the bill forward. Why is that?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, first, I invite my colleague to tour Gatineau with me. He will see that it is a lot of work to follow me around my riding, visiting seniors in particular.

Second, I remind the member that we voted against this bill at second reading.

Third, we have never claimed to solve all the problems. We know that we are facing a cost-of-living challenge. We also know that there are needs we can target, such as poor seniors, lack of dental care, and medication. We can target these things and address them one at a time.

What do we run up against, however? We run up against opposition from the Conservative Party. I have never understood the position of the members from the Conservative Party of Canada who come into the House every day and talk about inflationary spending.

What is inflationary spending? It is dental care, the guaranteed income supplement, pandemic assistance, housing assistance, grocery assistance, the GST tax credit. Some \$71 billion will be injected in OAS over the next five years. That is inflationary spending. Canadians had better watch out, because the Conservatives are going to cut all that.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are hearing big words like “hypocrisy” and “cynicism”, but I think the most cynical thing the Liberals could do would be to vote for Bill C-319 and then not give it a royal recommendation.

That way, they could say that they were in favour of the bill, but that they had to prevent it from passing because it would be too expensive. That is political cynicism. Let us talk about the measures to help seniors that the minister mentioned and that we support. We are seeing the beginning of a pharmacare program. It was the NDP that forced the minority government to deliver on that thanks to the agreement we negotiated two and a half years ago. The Liberals promised pharmacare for the first time in 1997, and it still had not been delivered.

*Business of Supply*

As for dental care, it is fortunate we forced you to bring in dental care, otherwise you would have nothing to say to help seniors—

• (1700)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I would remind the hon. member that I am “you” here in the House.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I have a whole lot of smart things to say. I wonder what the minister would say if there were no dental care. The Liberals voted against dental care in the last election. We forced them to implement it. Now, 200,000 Quebecers are reaping the benefits thanks to the work of the NDP.

I would like to hear the minister say one thing. I would like him to say “thank you”.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, obviously, I thank all members of the House who voted for progressive measures, including measures to assist seniors. As Minister of Labour and Seniors, I am delighted every time a member, like my colleague here, rises to support the initiatives we are able to put in place to help seniors in Canada and Quebec.

What bothers me, as I said, is the cynicism and opportunism of a political party that wants Quebec to separate and that comes to the House and systematically votes against any assistance for seniors. It does so in the hope that it will lead to the Conservatives being elected, which would lay the groundwork for its ultimate plan, which in turn would weaken old age security for Quebecers. That is the real story behind today. That is what Canadians and Quebecers need to focus on. How can a party be so cynical and opportunistic? Shame on the Bloc Québécois.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, what does the minister have to say to the organizations in Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation that welcomed me this summer and that, without knowing why I was coming to see them, told me that they had told their member of Parliament that the idea of creating an OAS loophole made no sense? What does he have to say to the people from the Association québécoise des retraité(e)s des secteurs public et parapublic en Outaouais and to the president of FADOQ, who lives in the region? They were here today and heard everything he said.

I think they completely agree, because they see the work of the Bloc Québécois. What does the minister have to say to the people and organizations in the Sherbrooke region who welcomed me and told me that it made no sense to increase pensions only for people aged 75 and over?

The minister says that he is out listening to the community. I was too in the Outaouais region. Clearly, we were the ones who had the support today on Parliament Hill. There were 200 people there, and I encourage people to sign the petition between now and October 3.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, let us talk about members. In the riding of Shefford, we used to have a member who supported organizations and the idea of dental care for the 14,000 or so people who benefit from it in that riding alone. That member voted against it.

If she wants to help Quebec seniors, even just a little, all she has to do is call the Quebec government and convince it to give the

green light so that we can fund the wonderful projects in Quebec ridings through the age well at home program—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that I will be sharing my time with my dear colleague, the member for Montcalm.

In light of what I just heard from the recently appointed Minister of Labour and Seniors, I would appreciate it if he could stay a few minutes. I might get angry; I might get indignant. At the same time, I am worried. I think our minister is in a very vulnerable state. As a nurse by profession, I think he has a bit of a health problem, given the speech he just made. His whole speech worried me, because it was full of untruths, lies and partisanship the likes of which I have never heard before. That reminds me, we still have not received his new mandate letter. I am guessing that the speech he delivered today was part of it. He must be a good ambassador for the inertia of the government, his government, when it comes to federal social policies and programs. It is rare that we have the opportunity to talk about exclusively federal social programs that we are asking to be strengthened.

Usually, as we just heard and as we hear in the answers we are given during question period, the government members just talk about their exploits implementing programs that have nothing to do with the federal government, but rather are the responsibility of the provinces. Take the dental care program, for example. The Bloc Québécois is being accused of being against dental care. That is not true. For seniors and young people alike, a dental care program is a good idea. We voted against the bill not because we are against dental care, but because it was another example of crass interference in a provincial jurisdiction. This program is going to cost \$2 billion and be administered by private insurance companies, while Quebec's dental care program is administered by a public system. That is the Liberal government's hypocrisy, in the falsehoods it denounces. That is why we stand firm.

There is one thing to take away from today's debate on our bill, which has been defended with such passionate determination by my colleague, the member for Shefford, and has the support of my political party and all the seniors we met with in the field. The one thing to remember is that we demand fair treatment. Of course, the issue concerns dignity, but fair treatment is also at stake.

The equation is simple. The federal government introduced a program in the early 1900s called the old age security pension. It was a universal pension, with certain conditions, that started at age 65. The plan was intended for all seniors aged 65 or over, for whom OAS was viewed as a social safety net. In fact, it was praised as an important social policy at the time. Where does Canada stand today as far as the overall program goes? Canada ranks 13th in the OECD.



Restoring fairness is the purpose of our bill and the reason we are requesting a royal recommendation. What the government did for the first time ever was to make a distinction between people aged 65 to 74 and those aged 75 and over, in a universal plan that should apply to everyone.

● (1705)

That is the gap we want to correct with Bill C-319. As I said in another speech, seniors are not all facing the same situation. People aged 80 and over may be living a different reality from those aged 75 and over or from those aged 70 to 75. That is not the real issue here. The question is whether the federal government believes that there are now two OAS plans: one for seniors aged 65 to 74 and one for seniors aged 75 and over.

That is nonsense because it is a question of equity. In committee, when we talked about OAS, I heard people say that seniors 65 and up have money while those 75 and up have less. People seem to lose sight of the fact that as of age 65, many seniors, including 30% or more in Quebec, start living on a fixed income. For many seniors, that is their only income. For many people in both Quebec and Canada, single women in particular, OAS provides an income that barely allows them to live in dignity. It is their only income. To cut them off from an increase is to make them poorer and even more insecure. It is also to ignore the fact that if we want to improve seniors' situation and quality of life, then we need to act now.

If we support an increase in OAS as of age 65 that allows for an adequate standard of living, as the bill proposes, we will improve these seniors' quality of life and, at the same time, the quality of life and living conditions of people 75 and up. The equation is simple. As my colleague said, there is no evidence proving that age-based discrimination in the application of a universal system will make the government understand how poor and vulnerable our seniors are.

During question period, we ran out of ways to say that the cost of living is the same whether one is an 80-year-old senior or a 65-year-old living on a fixed income like old age security. Many people are struggling to pay for clothing, housing and food, with a bit left over for leisure activities. They are avoiding that, because they do not have the money. For 10 years of their lives, they will be worried because they may have had a little nest egg, but no private plan or supplementary pension plan. They only get old age security. It is unfair to say that they can go back to work to get by, instead of saying that, out of fairness, old age security will be increased for everyone, as it should be, as it was intended to be, which would be the fair approach. A number of witnesses appeared before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to talk about this. The Liberal government members on that committee unanimously supported this bill.

● (1710)

I hope that the answer we heard today from the Minister of Labour and Seniors is not the government's answer. It is a matter of fairness. There is still time for the government to be on the right side of history rather than the wrong side of history.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with all due respect, I am going to turn and face my Bloc

### *Business of Supply*

Québécois colleagues. The member for Thérèse-De Blainville has highlighted the distressing reality of this government. This is a government that prides itself on wanting to help seniors, when in fact it has divided seniors into two categories: those aged 65 to 74, and those aged 75 and over. Frankly, I never saw this coming. I do not understand how a government can divide seniors into two classes and help some more than others. That is outrageous.

Let us imagine that this government votes in favour of the Bloc Québécois motion to make itself look good. Nothing would change, because the real game is in the Senate. Theoretically, the federal government has no power over the Senate.

I have a fundamental question for the Bloc Québécois. I see my Bloc Québécois colleague who has been here for nine years. Some have been here for five years. Day after day, these people see what the government is doing. How can proud Quebecers, Bloc members, sovereignists still have confidence in this inflationist, centralizing, spendthrift government, which cannot seem to mind its own business when it comes to provincial jurisdictions?

● (1715)

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has confidence in its political party. The Bloc Québécois has confidence in its political agenda and in the people it represents.

The government definitely failed to sow division among seniors. Even people aged 75 and over tell us that what the government did is not right. There is even solidarity among seniors. They want nothing to do with a government of any stripe that, for the sake of its political agenda, wants to deprive them of an OAS pension that would afford them a life lived with dignity.

That is the pride of the Bloc Québécois, and that is our political agenda.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have sat with my friend and colleague on HUMA for eight or nine years now, and we have done some wonderful work together.

One of the first things our government did was to raise the GIS by 10% for low-income seniors, and we are certainly a friend of seniors. The rationale behind our 10% raise for those over 74 was obviously because seniors are living longer, their money is running out and they have more health needs.

*Business of Supply*

The member opposite gave a great speech, and I do not disagree with it, but does she not recognize why we did what we did to support seniors who are over 74 years old?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Madam Speaker, usually I really try to understand, but this time I did not understand a thing.

I did not understand anything at any stage when we discussed the issue. No one provided any evidence that would have allowed me to understand the age discrimination when it comes to OAS. I get the impression that it is for economic reasons. It is unbelievable. It would cost \$3 billion a year to meet the needs of people with fixed incomes and bills to pay. We must not think of it as an expenditure. In fact, it is an investment. I will never understand—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Victoria.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are hearing, on National Seniors Day, the Liberals say they are friends to seniors while they are saying no to increasing the amount that pensioners aged 65 and older would get. It has been shown that, over the next five years, as the member mentioned, it would cost \$16 billion. That is half of what the Trans Mountain pipeline cost.

Could the member reflect on how the Liberals keep saying yes to building pipelines that benefit oil sands CEOs but no to seniors who are struggling right now with the cost of living?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Madam Speaker, my colleague is right, that question continues to be relevant. The oil companies are getting \$82 billion in subsidies. My colleague talked about a pipeline. These are political choices and decisions.

What we want is for the government to choose the right policy, which is to invest in these programs, to invest in seniors and to invest in fairness for those who receive OAS benefits—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have rarely heard so many ridiculous speeches in the House. Quite frankly, this minister's constituents deserve better. I was wondering why there were problems between the federal government and Quebec regarding meals on wheels, when there were never any issues before this minister came along. I can see that he is making the situation a lot worse with his partisanship. I am talking about interference.

The minister is saying that it is appalling that the Bloc Québécois is plotting to put the Conservatives in power in order to achieve sovereignty. It seems as though the minister has not reviewed the history of Canada and Quebec. By definition, it is the current Liberal government that has implemented programs that interfere in provincial jurisdiction in a way that we have not seen in a very long time.

Take the dental insurance program. We support the idea of dental insurance for seniors. Why did the government not engage in discussions before announcing it? They scribbled it on the back of a napkin to keep themselves in power until 2025. Instead of immediately taking partisan action to stay in power as long as possible—since the polls show that things are not going well—they should have sat down with a province like Quebec. Quebec runs a program that does not cover seniors, but it did cover a certain number of people and was administered by a public agency, the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, or RAMQ. Now, they are scribbling it on the back of a napkin. Quebec is asking for money to improve its dental insurance program. Seniors would be covered, but we would not have to pay \$2 billion in administrative costs to a private company. How can the government take pride in setting up a so-called public dental care program when it is forking over \$2 billion to a private company? Not to mention all the problems dentists have had. We have heard dentists say that it does not make sense, that they do not even know if they will be reimbursed. They see all these patients and then get denied by Sun Life.

In short, it is nonsense to claim that the Bloc Québécois is here strictly for its political purposes to stir up trouble. When I arrived in the House in 2015, we called for the GIS to be automatically given to people who, when they filed their tax returns, were eligible for it. Before that, according to the statistics we commissioned, there were a lot of people who were entitled to it, but the Canadian government did not tell them. People had to apply. That was when Minister Morneau, the finance minister at the time, agreed to put it in place, but in 2018. It was the Bloc Québécois that fought for the GIS in the early 2000s, and yet, this program falls strictly under federal jurisdiction.

Now we are being told that it is going to cost far too much. We are talking about \$3 billion to make a federal program fair for seniors. There is no money for that, we are told. On the other hand, we had money for Trans Mountain, to export oil, to make oil companies richer. We had \$34 billion. The government also had \$83 billion to give tax credits to the five big oil companies, which raked in \$220 billion in profits. I would add to that \$2 billion in administrative costs.

It is not at all a matter of cost. It is about priorities. The government interfered in programs with costly redundant structures. It now has to be careful because that will come back to haunt them.

● (1720)

The government had no business getting involved in that. If it wanted to get involved, it should have sat down with the Government of Quebec and respected the will of the Quebec National Assembly. That is also what we represent in the House. The government should have created something that would make sense, at a lower cost, and that would cover everyone.

When the Bloc Québécois voted against this program, it voted with the unanimous support of the National Assembly. When the minister lectures us about being hypocrites, it should come as no surprise that he does not have good relations with Quebec and the Government of Quebec. In fact, it has such poor relations with the Government of Quebec that the Premier of Quebec is meddling in federal elections. However, every time we ask a question in the House, the Minister of Health or the Minister of Justice rises to tell us that the government has a very good relationship with the Government of Quebec and the National Assembly.

We tabled all sorts of motions. One of them said that the National Assembly was opposed to pharmacare. Quebec wants the money, with full compensation, to manage its own programs. When a minister stands up and tells me that we are against seniors and that we are opportunists because the government is in a minority Parliament, this is ridiculous. Not only is it ridiculous, but it insults the intelligence of our seniors.

My colleague from Shefford has done extraordinary work on this issue. Now the minister is saying that all the groups that support us across Quebec and Canada do not know what they are talking about, that he knows better than they do what is good for them, and that he does not have the money for it. He tells them to look at everything the government has already done. If everything this government has already done was really enough, I do not think that so many seniors who are currently living below or just above the poverty line would support this bill.

When seniors can have a bit left over in addition to surviving, they do not get as sick. Ultimately, health care costs less. It is cost-effective for everyone, because these people do not have a nest egg. They are going to spend that money. From an economic point of view, what the Liberals are thinking does not make any sense. However, having the Minister of Labour and Seniors speak and listening to this government's response, I understand very well that our support for this government is over. We have never had—

• (1725)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It being 5:27 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

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.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s):** Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 2, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

### Speaker's Ruling

[English]

#### PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED FAILURE OF WITNESS TO RESPOND TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 17, 2024, by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes on the alleged failure of a witness to provide information to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

In his intervention, the member referred to events described in the 12th report of the committee, presented to the House earlier that day. The report alleged that a witness, Mr. Stephen Anderson, failed to answer questions and refused to produce specific documents ordered by the committee following the adoption of two distinct motions. Specifically, Mr. Anderson repeatedly refused to provide the name of an individual he had referred to in his testimony.

The member made reference to a question of privilege he raised on March 20, 2024, concerning the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates and the subsequent finding of a prima facie case of privilege, noting its similarities with the current situation. He added that this incident goes further. In addition to failing to respond to questions, Mr. Anderson also disregarded orders of the committee for the production of documents. The member argued the current situation also constitutes a prima facie contempt of the House.

• (1730)

[Translation]

In reviewing this matter, the Chair took into consideration the arguments made by the member for Hamilton Centre, who supported the assertions made by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

The Chair also considered carefully the committee's report. After presenting the sequence of events and describing the attempts made to receive the requested information, it concludes with, and I quote, “having not received the documents requested from the witness, and, most significantly, the name referenced during the committee meeting of Wednesday, July 17, 2024, continuing to be withheld, [the] committee feels it is their duty to place these matters before the House at this time so that the House may take such measures as it deems appropriate.”

The Chair notes that two privileges enjoyed by committees have allegedly been breached. These are rights fundamental to the proper functioning of Parliament.

[English]

With regard to answering questions put by members of a committee, it is worth reiterating that witnesses are obliged to provide answers to questions from the committee. According to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 1081, “refusal to answer questions or failure to reply truthfully may give rise to a charge of contempt of the House, whether the witness has been sworn in or not.”

*Privilege*

[Translation]

In terms of ordering the productions of documents, Standing Order 108(1)(a) delegates this power from the House to its committees. Indeed, as Speaker Milliken stated in a ruling from March 9, 2011, at page 8841 of the Debates, and I quote, “the power of committees of the House to order papers is indistinguishable from that of the House.”

[English]

In light of the above and given the importance of protecting the powers accorded to the House to fulfill its duties, the Chair finds the matter to be a *prima facie* question of privilege.

Accordingly, I would now invite the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes to move his motion.

REQUEST FOR WITNESS TO ATTEND AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House, having considered the unanimous views of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, expressed in its 12th Report, find Stephen Anderson to be in contempt for his failure to provide the information which the Committee had ordered him to produce and, accordingly, order him to attend at the Bar of this House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on the next Wednesday the House sits which is at least one week following the adoption of this Order, for the purposes of

- (a) receiving an admonishment delivered by the Speaker;
  - (b) delivering up the records referred to in the 12th Report;
  - (c) providing responses to the questions referred to in the 12th Report; and
  - (d) responding to supplementary questions arising from his responses to the questions referred to in the 12th Report,
- provided that
- (e) any records which Mr. Anderson produces shall stand referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics;
  - (f) the questioning shall be governed by the provisions of subparagraphs (b)(iv) and (v) of the Order adopted on April 8, 2024, concerning the appearance at the Bar of Kristian Firth, except that references to “Mr. Firth” be read as “Mr. Anderson”; and
  - (g) it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to consider the records produced by Mr. Anderson and his testimony at the Bar of the House and, if necessary, recommend further action.

● (1735)

Here we go again. We are here in this place dealing with another example of Liberals who do not seem to understand that their job is to represent Canadians and not to represent the best interests of their best friends and their business partners. Of course, I am talking about the saga of the “other Randy”.

We do not know who the other Randy is. That is one of the main reasons why we find ourselves here today; it is one of the questions that the witness, Mr. Anderson, refused to answer at committee when he had an obligation to do so. Why do we need to know who the other Randy is? At the heart of it is the Liberal minister from Edmonton, who was found out to own 50% of a business while he was serving in the cabinet. It was believed that he was directing the operations of that company.

The minister said, of course, that it is another Randy. We heard from members of the Liberal caucus that perhaps it was “Randeep”.

We heard from the witness, Mr. Anderson, that he could tell us only if we held an in camera meeting, a private meeting of the ethics committee, so that he could reveal it to us. The committee rejected that. Sunlight is the best disinfectant. If the Liberals have nothing to hide, they should show us who the other Randy is.

It gets worse. In the multiple appearances at committee, of witnesses on the strange story of the Liberal minister from Edmonton and his business dealings, we learned of course that the NDP-Liberal government did award a contract to the Liberal minister's business while he was serving in cabinet. That is outrageous. Of course, it is not allowed under the conflict of interest regime we have in this country. Said another way, it is illegal.

We heard from the minister, when he first appeared at committee, that he had not been in touch with his business partner, Mr. Anderson, in 2022. He was explicit that he had not. The thing about the company and about everyone who seems to be involved in it is that it is pretty sketchy. That sketchy company is involved in a massive lawsuit that alleges fraud of half a million dollars. An unexplained but suspicious warehouse fire targeted only the inventory at the Liberal minister's company's warehouse. Through the legal system, we are learning, through the disclosures, that there was in fact contact, which is in direct contradiction to what that Liberal minister said.

The minister said that he had not talked to his business partner in 2022. He then had his ministry talk to the media and say that it was impossible for the minister to have communicated with Mr. Anderson on the days in question, when he referenced Randy nine times in text messages. Mr. Anderson claimed, obviously not believably, that these were nine autocorrects, though he could not tell us what was being autocorrected. The recipient of the messages of course never challenged him on who the other Randy was, because he was always represented as the business partner, the individual who owned a 50% share in the business, the Liberal minister from Edmonton.

The minister's staff said that he could not have communicated, because he was in cabinet; he was locked up. He flew into Vancouver, and before he got there, they must have taken his phone and put it in a box, and he did not get it back for weeks. He did not talk to anybody. They said it was impossible.

However, we then demanded his phone records. He provided them for only one phone. We know he has another one, so we had to issue another demand for phone records and text messages. Guess what we found out: While the Liberal minister's business partner was telling the victims of the fraud worth about \$500,000 and saying that Randy was in Vancouver and needed answers, the minister from Edmonton was in Vancouver at that time. Although his office said that he could not get the messages, there is testimony from the last time that he testified at committee.

● (1740)

I want to reference a story from Blacklock's Reporter from Friday, September 20, titled "Minister Changes His Story". It says that the minister admitted to being in both a text message exchange and a phone call with his business partner during the 2022 retreat. What changed? What is it called when someone says something that they know is not true?

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

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, I heard people say that it makes them want to cry. It certainly does.

A minister from the NDP-Liberal government came to committee, a minister of the Crown who should be able to put their personal interests aside. They legally have to, but we see that has not been the case for the minister. To save his own skin, he came to committee and said something that we now have proven to be not true, and he later admitted it at committee.

Was the minister telling the truth the first time, or was he telling the truth the second time? He was telling the truth when he got caught having not told the truth. That is the material fact of the matter. This is what we are dealing with. His business partner defied multipartisan efforts to tell the truth. He refused.

What are they trying to hide in this company? The Liberal minister from Edmonton's business partner put up a handful of Porsches and Land Rovers as collateral in the hours before they incorporated the business together, but the Liberal minister said he had no idea. That seems as unbelievable as pretty much everything the minister said at committee, because we now have the receipts and the records to show that what he said was not true.

We cannot believe what he is saying, which is very often the case. It has been a case of serial breaking of ethics laws by the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet. Now there is a minister who is just saying one thing when another is the truth. This is not acceptable in a parliamentary committee. It is contemptuous in and of itself. In a courtroom, it is perjury. Had the minister been asked to swear an oath, it would be perjury. Perjury in this country is punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

There is a common-sense Conservative private member's bill that will come before the House when we are done dealing with all the questions of privilege that arise from the broken government after its nine years. The bill will deal with fines of \$50,000 for contempt and a mandatory six months in prison for perjury before a House of Parliament. Is it not about time we had real consequences?

We are going to have to have Mr. Anderson come before the bar. Members across party lines, like the report, came out of committee recognizing the refusal of the witness to answer the questions. All members of the House should be in lockstep in the belief that it is unacceptable to come before a parliamentary committee and refuse to provide the answers requested, very reasonable answers.

The whole issue at the committee hinges on who Randy is. One name was the hallmark ask for the committee. The individual refused to provide it, along with a host of text message records and phone records he refused to provide, just like his business partner,

### *Privilege*

the Liberal minister, refused to provide the full material requested by the committee and had to be asked for it multiple times.

● (1745)

The Ethics Commissioner took a preliminary look at it and said that he did not think there was anything there, but then some of the half-truths of the minister were exposed and the Ethics Commissioner had to take another look at it. However, with the information he had, he did not proceed with a finding against the Liberal minister.

The Liberals said that he did not do anything wrong, that the Ethics Commissioner is not launching an investigation and finding him to have broken the law, like the Prime Minister has twice, or the public safety minister, the former finance minister or the trade minister. It is "or, or, or" with the Liberal benches.

The Ethics Commissioner had to look at it again, but he still does not have all the information. He does not have the power to order the minister to produce it; he is just asking him. Conservatives asked the minister, and he did not give us all the information. It is a \$500,000 fraud. Contracts were being given to a member of cabinet.

At the same time, the minister had his name listed in the corporate registry for a lobbying firm. It got left on there by accident, he said, and then he got paid by the lobbying firm while he was sitting as a minister. It was a deferred payment, he swears. Does he swear like he did when he said he did not talk to Mr. Anderson in 2022 but now we have the receipts that show that he did? It is highly suspicious. What is going on?

The Liberals do not see the forest for the trees. Today there was a common-sense Conservative motion recognizing that after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, with taxes up, costs up and crime up, its time is up. Why is there no government legislation on the floor of the House? The Liberals are trying to get as many opposition days out of the way as they can, and now they are stuck dealing with matters that stem from corruption, like the matter that is going to be dealt with tomorrow in the House, the billion-dollar green slush fund. The government is refusing an order of Canadians to produce the information.

The government House leader, in the past week, produced a perfect example for the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics' study on misinformation and disinformation. It was government disinformation produced, with taxpayer-funded resources, by the Liberal House leader. She spun a tale about Canadians' rights being trampled on because a majority of members of the House, all democratically elected, ordered the production of documents from the government about its corruption. However, Liberals say it is an erosion of Canadians' rights that is too great to bear.

*Privilege*

The government is so terrified that documents about its corruption are going to be turned over to the RCMP for the RCMP just to consider. The RCMP is going to look at them. It does not have to investigate. It has independence and can make that decision.

The Liberals do not even want the Mounties to see the documents, because we know there have been examples before where the Liberal Prime Minister invoked cabinet confidence to block documents from being released to the RCMP in matters concerning criminal allegations against the Liberal Prime Minister. However, he blocked them. He used cabinet confidence, whose purpose is not to provide a get-out-of-jail-free card for the Prime Minister, but that is what the Liberals used it for.

What is the billion-dollar green slush fund for which the Liberals do not want documents going to the law clerk and the RCMP? The Prime Minister appointed his friend Annette Verschuren, who, like the Prime Minister, was found guilty of breaking ethics laws, padding her pockets and Liberal insiders' pockets with hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is what this is all about.

● (1750)

Sustainable Technologies Canada is what it was called at its inception. Of course, in 2017, after Conservatives had left office, it received a clean bill of health from Canada's Auditor General. Not so after a couple of years of the self-interested economic vandals who occupy the government benches. They stacked the board, they lined their pockets and now they are trying to cover it up, blatantly disobeying an order of Canada's Parliament. What is the common theme here? It is a disregard by the Liberals for basic honesty, for transparency, for the rule of law and for democracy. That is their legacy.

When we talk about time being up after nine years, this is what we are talking about. There are things we are allowed to say, and there are things we are not allowed to say. Saying a minister lied is not something we are allowed to do, but—

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. So the member is aware, and I know he is, we cannot do something indirectly that we are not supposed to do directly. The implication is that the member opposite is playing on words, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, if you review what he just said.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I apologize. I hope I will get it better next time; I was not paying attention.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Doth thou protest too much, Colleague?

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in time we will find out, because sunlight is the best disinfectant. My goodness, we need a lot of disinfectant on the opposite side. We are going to tirelessly pursue every scandal. We are going to tirelessly pursue every dollar they have misspent, misappropriated or overseen the theft of.

Can the members imagine that I have been talking for more than 15 minutes about government corruption and I have not even been able to get to the \$60-million arrive scam? I have not talked about the billion dollars to the Kielburgers, the Liberals' friends at the WE organization; the now public safety minister, former fisheries min-

ister, giving lucrative contracts to his family members in the clam scam; or former finance minister Mr. Morneau making sure the WE organization got a contract with the Liberals when his children were working there, to help enrich them. These guys, the Liberals, have not found a Canadian taxpayer dollar that they have not promised to one of their buddies before taking it out of the jeans of the person who earned it.

We have the business partner of a sitting cabinet minister who comes before committee and conducts himself in a way that the Speaker has ruled represents a prima facie case of privilege. We have a Liberal cabinet minister from Edmonton who comes to committee and says one thing and then, when we show him the receipts of what actually happened, says the other thing is true. Of course, when Mr. Anderson comes before the bar of the House, we are going to need to find out who the other Randy is. I do not think there will be a surprised face in here if we find out it is that Liberal minister from Edmonton.

● (1755)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise to me that the member opposite has been conspiring, has had all sorts of imaginings that have driven him to be the attack dog on anything with even a hint of corruption, and if it is not corrupt, he will still imply that it is corrupt.

The minister he is talking about has not once but twice been cleared by the Ethics Commissioner, yet the member persists in trying to assassinate the character of ministers in this government, whether it is justified or not. I underline the word "not", because the member continuously, more than any other member in the House, tries to assassinate the character of the individual.

Does the member believe the Ethics Commissioner did his job when he cleared the minister whose character the member is now trying to assassinate?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack there.

First of all, the parliamentary secretary does his best impersonation of a good defence, but he talks about conspiracy. There is no conspiracy. The Liberal Prime Minister was the first in Canadian history to have been found guilty, not once but twice, of breaking the law, and he cannot handle it, so let us talk about the other ministers who broke the law.

The member talks about whether the Ethics Commissioner ruled on the minister from Edmonton Centre. He did not do an investigation, because he is not getting all of the facts from that Liberal member for Edmonton Centre. Just as the member for Edmonton Centre came to committee and said one thing when another thing was true, when he said he had given us all his phone records when he had not, of course the same is true for what he is not providing to the Ethics Commissioner.

Edmonton Centre deserves better than that Liberal MP, and Canadians deserve better than the corrupt Liberal government.

*Privilege*

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the strength of a democratic Parliament comes from the confidence that people have in that Parliament. When people lie in committee, distort the truth in committee or do not provide the requested documents, it is akin to saying that at the end of the day, Parliament does not deserve people's trust and they do not have confidence in our work. The foundation of everything we do is the trust that people put in us. When witnesses do that before a committee, then the public necessarily questions it.

I would like my colleague to provide details on the importance of having our constituents' trust, but also having trust in the witnesses who appear before a committee.

• (1800)

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, Canadians elect their representatives. They have sent the 338 to this place, and we have seen now that the Liberal government, on more than one occasion, has flatly refused the majority will of this Parliament. That should concern Canadians. We see in matters dealing with government corruption that the Liberals try to protect people affiliated with them, in this case with the minister from Edmonton Centre's business partner refusing to answer questions, and just like when Mr. Firth from the Prime Minister's \$60-million arrive scam refused to answer questions. They do not want to bite the hand that feeds them.

Canadians should expect, and must be able to expect, that when someone comes before a parliamentary committee or before the House, they will answer in a fulsome way and truthfully. Anything less is unacceptable, just as it is unacceptable for this government to continue to defy the orders of a majority of elected representatives.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the work he does on the ethics file. He is doing yeoman's service on behalf of all Canadians. Everybody who pays taxes in this country owes a debt of gratitude to the Conservative Party of Canada for the hard work we are doing to protect the interests of taxpayers from this particular government.

I think the burning question everybody wants to know the answer to is this: Does my colleague know who the other Randy actually is?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe has been here a long time, and he has seen a lot of Liberal scandals, just like the green slush fund case, which even government officials have described as a sponsorship-level scandal. That is the last one that took down a Liberal government. It is no wonder the Liberals do not want to release the documents in the billion-dollar green slush fund and in this case, a scandal that exposes the Liberal minister from Edmonton Centre and his practices in cabinet that are obviously unacceptable to main street Canadians.

The question to the minister was whether he knew who Randy was. He said it was another Randy. The question to his business partner was about who the "other Randy" was. He said he would tell, if the cameras were shut off. He did not. This is something we do need to find out.

What we do know is that when we asked straight questions to the Liberal minister from Edmonton Centre, he would give one set of truths at one meeting and a different set of truths, not the same, at the next meeting. Obviously, it is unacceptable. It does not allow us to get transparency and accountability for Canadians. That is why it is so important that we have Mr. Anderson come here. He can tell us who the other Randy is, even if he just points right over there.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I know the Conservatives believe they need to pursue these types of issues. As much as they want to do that, it is important to recognize that there are many other issues that Canadians face, issues dealing with legislation we are bringing forward, as an example.

What does the member across the way envision in terms of the time to discuss this particular motion, as well as yesterday's motion? Some might think the Conservatives are using it as a mechanism to prevent legislation from being discussed.

• (1805)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, accountability really gets in the way of a good Liberal grift. Am I right? Liberals want anything but taking a minute to talk about how they are lining the pockets of their well-connected buddies while Canadians are lined up at food banks in record numbers.

Food banks in my community and in communities right across this country have seen their use double. They are having to expand their hours so they can serve people their groceries in between shifts at two jobs. One in four Canadians is saying they are going to need to use food banks. That is not the unemployment rate, so these are people who are working but cannot afford to feed themselves and their families after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government. Why?

It is because of \$60 million to two yo-yos in their basement in the arrive scam. It is \$1 billion in the green slush fund with the hand-picked Liberal chair. There is example after example. It is \$21 billion to their buddies in the consulting class in one year alone. That is what the Liberals are spending their money on. We need to expose that, because we need to stop it. We need to get Canadians their money back, because they need it. They need every single penny.

I know it is really inconvenient for that member and the Liberals to talk about the consequences of their actions, but that is what our job is here, even if they continue to defy the will of the majority of democratically elected MPs. That is how we know, after nine years, that their time is up.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member.

*Privilege*

If Mr. Anderson had to put up his vehicles for collateral, he would have had to obtain ILA, because someone else is getting the benefit of that collateral. Did that come out in questioning?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal minister from Edmonton Centre is in business dealings with someone who has a very shady and questionable reputation, to be gentlemanly. That is my assessment of it.

This requires a much deeper look. While the Liberals are already trying to shut down the discussion about this very thing, through the committee process we have exposed the Liberal minister's ties to this unsavoury character. Edmonton Centre deserves better. Canadians deserve better. Mr. Anderson must testify at the bar of the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Trois-Rivières.

Not to brag but to let members know where I was coming from, I already had the opportunity to say, during another question of privilege last week, that I taught ethics for 30 years. I have some political experience from two legislatures. I fail to understand the situation that we find ourselves in today.

Parliamentary committees are not supposed to be a leisure activity for members who are looking to spend their time. Working on parliamentary committees is our job. We are paid to participate and to do thorough, serious work.

I have already had the opportunity to say in the House that job number one of a member is to hold the government to account. Many questions have been asked about the situation that we find ourselves in today. I could call my speech “Finding Randy”, like the game that we played as children. However, it is pretty serious to see a government—I think that it is typical of a government on its last legs—not being able to respect the institutions and the institution, trying to get around the rules and not respecting the requests of the House and the committees. This is a matter of transparency.

I am sure that if my colleagues on the other side of the House were on my side, they would be saying the same thing I am saying. In fact, for many of my constituents, blue or red is the same thing. They have become cynical. They would rather look at the sky and vote light blue because they find it more inspiring. However, what they have noticed in the history of this Parliament is that when members change side, they start cutting corners and stop being reasonable.

Quite simply, the committee is asking for documents and for its order to be followed, and the Liberals are acting as if they do not get it. That is a serious problem, because if democracy cannot happen inside Parliament—some may think I am naive, but I believe in parliamentary democracy—and it does not happen through representatives of the people like us, it is bound to happen on the street. When it does, the law of the jungle prevails. Quite often, contempt for democratic institutions leads to totalitarian regimes. We see that in some countries. When a leader somewhere decides to take over a national government and to impose untested values, people do not acquire a democratic mindset.

I do not understand the government's attitude. With regard to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada scandal, we have just heard a ruling on a question of privilege where the government does not want to provide the reports and documents in a transparent manner so that we can make up our minds. Now, once again, things are getting out of hand at committee.

I get the impression that members on the other side of the House do not take our committees seriously. That is what I have seen. I have seen unanimous motions and reports tabled in the House and then shelved.

• (1810)

Then, the government wants voters to believe in the work that we do here, to believe in us, to continue to not be cynical and to continue to say that they have dedicated representatives who do their job and who meet their expectations. I think that we are far from that.

I see the members opposite hanging their heads and I understand that. I would be ashamed to have to endure such situations over and over again. This is a situation in which a serious ethical error has been made. Regardless of the government stripe, we cannot put up with a lack of transparency. We cannot allow the government to prevent MPs from doing their job of holding the government to account by calling into question potential conflicts of interest. That seems to go without saying. One day, we will see the members opposite sitting on this side of the House. They will be ranting and raving and saying the same thing as me. Likely, the members on this side—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask the hon. member not to bang on his desk.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

As I was saying, we will see people change sides. We can always give them the benefit of the doubt, but they may have the same attitude. When we ask for documents, they are completely redacted. What is the government afraid of? When one seeks a mandate to sit in a chamber like this one, and when one party manages to get enough representatives elected that it can form government, the least it can do is be worthy of being in government and respect the work of all parliamentarians on all sides.

Parliamentarians must be able to do their job, which consists of demanding transparency from the government and holding the government to account. The government must be willing to meet these demands. This government will quite often try to hide behind partisanship. It will try to undermine the merits of the request. Basically, it will try to say that, on this side, we are not being entirely fair and equitable, that it is ill-intentioned to show up and demand accountability.



In this particular case, I hope that no one on the other side would dare say that Mr. Anderson must not provide what he must provide. I hope the government feels responsible for that. They may be trying to protect a minister. It is possible. I am asking the question: When someone has made a mistake, when someone has shown a lapse in ethics, when someone has crossed the conflict of interest line, should that person be this fiercely defended and protected? I would say the answer is “no”. People are watching us. Some have lost trust in this institution. I do not think that most people here deserve such a loss of trust.

• (1815)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would go to the institution, which I have an immense amount of respect for. I think of the standing committees of the House; we have standing committees that meet and do a lot of good work. There is no doubt about that. I suspect that if we did a history of the standing committees, we would find that, unfortunately, witnesses might actually be exaggerating or misleading the committee at times, with respect to the many different issues that are out there. Does the member believe that, whenever an incident of that nature occurs, the most appropriate action is actually to call that individual, whomever he or she may be, to come before the bar of the House of Commons or to continue to pursue the issue through a standing committee? I am not aware of this, and maybe he can let me know: Is the member aware of others who were brought to the bar in previous administrations?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to take issue with this government's respect for standing committees. One example is the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, which prepared a report on a study of the harms associated with breast implants, with unanimous recommendations. The House was told that breast implant illness had to be recognized. This government has done nothing with this except to remind us that, while the Food Drug Administration recognizes this illness, Health Canada and the government believe that there is no reason to consider it to be real. Committee reports are being shelved.

When someone comes to see me in committee, I do not have any time to waste. I want them to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. If they do not, then there are procedures that we must follow. The next individuals who come and give us nonsense, or who do not answer questions on subjects as important as conflict of interest, will think twice before not telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for raising this important question of privilege.

An important context beyond the particulars of this case is that, in 2021, we had someone brought before the bar under this—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry, but the Speaker had made a decision that I am not to recognize the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan until he apologizes for a comment. I can give the hon. member a copy of this. It reads:

### *Privilege*

The situation underscores certain principles that should govern our actions in the chamber: first, the importance of not shouting out comments across the floor, and second, to avoid jokes that others would interpret as hurtful or offensive. We all have a responsibility to choose our words carefully. It is in this context that I will invite the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to withdraw his remarks....

I thank all members for their attention.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

• (1820)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, out of deference to the authority of the Chair, I withdraw the remarks. I appreciate how the Chair acknowledged that I did nothing wrong and there was no ill intention, but the Chair invited me to withdraw my remarks; out of deference to the Chair, I have done so.

Mr. Speaker, may I now proceed to pose my question—

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe there is an understanding that, when a member withdraws their remarks, they do not do it with an explanation of why they did not want to do so. They withdraw their remarks and perhaps express remorse.

As I stated earlier in the House, sexual harassment is a serious issue, and it should be taken very seriously as well. It does not matter what the intent is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I accept the response.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Mr. Speaker, I am seeking a point of clarification from the Speaker. My understanding is that the member for Etobicoke Centre has not been allowed to speak since March 20, and in that case, he has to apologize. I understand that, in this case, the request is to withdraw. Can the Speaker clarify the difference between the two to ensure that all members are being treated in the same way?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, in very much the same sense as the member for Kitchener Centre's comment, I would say that this was, at best, a half-hearted withdrawal with an explanation. That is certainly not in keeping with the traditions of this place. The member should fully withdraw and apologize for those homophobic remarks.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I witnessed the exchanges. The Chair accepted my colleague's withdrawal of his words and recognized him. I therefore ask the Chair to continue with this evening's debate.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I appreciate the interventions, and I can help clarify that. I will get back to the hon. member when I have further clarification. However, I did accept the apology and the retraction.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the Speaker affirmed that no rules have been broken, I am happy to continue with my statement.

We are dealing with potentially the third time in the life of the current government when an official could be brought before the bar. Before 2021, that had not happened since 1913. Twice, since then, during the life of the current government, emerging from scandals, lack of disclosure and various investigations at committee, officials have been called before the bar. This could be the third time.

When we talk about respect for this institution, I think we need to notice how common it has become for elites, whether well-connected lobbyists, friends of ministers or public officials, to think that they do not have to take the directives of this Parliament and its committees seriously. This has been happening at committee when documents are ordered and this has been happening in the House when there are requests, which is why we are dealing with multiple questions of privilege at the same time.

I wonder if my colleague from the Bloc can comment on just how many problems of lack of respect for this institution we have seen under the government, a dramatic escalation in this problem and what can be done to resolve it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, aside from that one, I remember the problem with Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the problem with the Winnipeg lab. Again, we had to work hard to try to get accountability and transparency. There was also the ArriveCAN and WE Charity scandals.

That is why I say that it looks a lot like a government on its last legs.

• (1825)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think that my colleague has put his finger on the problem. As he just said, we have a government on its last legs, a government of neglect. We can see that this government is not too bothered by the fact that a minister could have dipped into the fund and given contracts to his own company through the government.

In this specific case, I think that they have crossed the line. There were a lot of jokes this summer about the two Randys. The problem is that it is true. Somewhere, there is a Randy who either does or does not exist. Perhaps it is the same person. That is where we are at with this government.

Exactly eight years ago, my colleague and I sat together on the Special Committee on Electoral Reform. Let us not forget that the Liberals got elected in 2015 by saying that they were going to change the electoral system and that it would be the last time that Canada would vote under a first past the post system. In 2016, after criss-crossing Canada and consulting hundreds upon hundreds of Canadians, the Liberals finally said that they were leaving it alone. That is a broken promise.

A political party that changes its mind once in government, that is something. It is not good, but it breeds cynicism. In this case, does the member agree with me that what is currently happening

with the two Randys is much worse than a broken campaign promise?

**Mr. Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, we may agree on the substance, but I do not think that it is all that different. I think that this kind of broken promise and the lack of transparency related to conflicts of interest both fuel cynicism.

I am a little surprised by my colleague's question because it is as though the Conservative Party was waiting for this reform when they were against it, if memory serves, and I think it does. The Liberal Party wanted reform as long as the voting system that it favoured and cherished was to its advantage. Therefore we are still dealing with partisanship and the public's lack of confidence in elected officials.

In closing, I would like to say that people across Canada told us that what they were enormously upset with was the party line.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here today.

I was there when Stephen Anderson appeared as a witness before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I was able to see first-hand his attitude toward the requests that had been made. We knew all along that promises would not be kept. His dismissive attitude was disturbing and must be discussed today. Parliament is built on trust. We have to trust each other. The public trusts us. People elect us and put their trust in us. We need to live up to that.

Trust means that you do not have to provide evidence. In this case, not only do we need evidence but the promised evidence has not been provided. The bond of trust has been completely broken. We are bordering on what my colleague referred to earlier as shame. Personally, I would go even further; I think that when we look at some of the debates at committee or even in the House, there is a cruel lack of decency. Decency is something that exists when people have some kind of social contract that leads them to do the right thing. Beyond that, what we are seeing is nonsense.

Mr. Anderson came to committee and told us that he could not provide the information right away. He promised that in a matter of days—I forget how many days—he would provide us two things: the phone records and the identity of “Randy”. We gave him the time to gather his evidence and do his things. Then, we were buried under the phone records. It practically took a team of investigators to find some sort of path. One thing is for sure, what was missing was the ability to determine who “Randy” was. We did not find out. Does “Randy” exist? I do not know. Is he the same Randy? I do not know.

One thing is certain, Mr. Anderson's attitude was, in my opinion, shameful. It is unacceptable, and I advise my colleagues across the way not to try to defend the indefensible, because that only makes matters worse. Everyone in life can serve as an example. Mr. Anderson is a bad example. It is not a good example. It is not an example of what should be done in committee. The committees are not a court, especially not the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, because we see all sorts of abuse.

Committees are a place where we often look for solutions to clearly defined problems, like disinformation or social media. Conflicts of interest are also an issue under our purview. I am not someone who would take legal action unnecessarily or make allegations out of obligation, but frankly, it was impossible to believe Mr. Anderson. It is not complicated. He even seemed flippant about the fact that he was a bad example.

As a responsible parliamentarian, I will support my colleague's motion. Responsibility is the ability to answer for one's actions. Mr. Anderson promised to answer for his actions, but failed to do so. In light of this attitude, we have no alternative but to say there must be consequences. Even though he said it was not his intention, the consequences are part and parcel of the underlying intention. Enough is enough. Actions have consequences, and the two cannot be separated. Therefore, Mr. Anderson must be held accountable for his actions and face the consequences. My language may seem harsh, but he left us no alternative. Unless we impose consequences for Mr. Anderson's actions, we will be left with a Parliament that lacks any credibility, where mistrust and chaos prevail. This is the decadence of a government on its last legs, as mentioned earlier, a kind of complacency that lulls people into believing that nothing is wrong and that everything will be fine.

Mr. Anderson is like the tree that hides the forest. In that sense, this matter must be brought to its conclusion. I will fight a headwind if I have to. This is contempt of the House. Again, these are not meaningless words. These are strong words. It does not look very good on a résumé. Mr. Anderson must therefore answer for his actions and come before the bar, because the credibility of Parliament is at stake.

• (1830)

To anyone who opposes my position, I would say that Mr. Anderson perhaps had it coming. He did everything he could to be treated this way. Mr. Anderson has taken indecency to a whole new level. I therefore believe that Mr. Anderson's appearance at the bar is inevitable. The credibility of Parliament is at stake. Public trust in parliamentarians is at stake. At a time when cynicism toward politicians is at an all-time high, we must take action and bring Mr. Anderson before the bar.

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with many different Liberal scandals right now, but this is, in many ways, the most ridiculous. We have a person testifying before committee with text messages that suggest a minister of the Crown was actually involved in the operation of a company he was not supposed to be involved in.

The defence of that apparent involvement of the minister of Crown in the operation of a company, that was, in fact, also getting

### *Privilege*

government contracts, was to say the person referred to in the text messages was a different Randy. This is a tiny company where the partner happens to have that same name, and yet the claim was made that this was a different Randy.

We then have a partner come back to the same committee and say that he lied about it being a different Randy. He admitted that it was all made up. He then said the references to Randy in the text messages were the result of autocorrect. There were multiple different text messages, I think, over nine times. It is just the repeated tragedy of autocorrect causing so many problems. Members should know to disable autocorrect on their phones.

More seriously, this is obviously adding to a litany of Liberal scandals, but it is the most absurd, most comical and most ridiculous. If one were writing a story, one would not put these details in because they are so obviously absurd. No one would believe them.

Does the member have any explanation for why the Liberal government would have tried to cover itself in such an obvious way?

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a comment before responding to my colleague. The witness admitted in committee that he had lied to the journalists when he told the story. Believing a liar, in my mind, is not exactly a win.

The Liberal government seems to have this kind of self-defence deeply rooted in its DNA. We only have to look at how many times the Ethics Commissioner has levelled allegations or issued verdicts against this government. Questioning the integrity of someone like the Prime Minister, for example, is bad enough. Now we are constantly questioning the integrity of ministers of the Crown, when something like that should only happen on rare occasions. It shocks me. As an ethicist, downplaying these kinds of things is not an option. I think it is habit in part, perhaps as a result of being in power for so long, but it is also a kind of entitlement, and that is unacceptable.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Trois-Rivières. As we know, and as he just said a few moments ago, he is an ethicist. He was elected in 2021, so he has been here for three years. To put it mildly, he has been earning his keep over the past three years. I think that he has had a lot of work to do when it comes to ethics, and the House too, for that matter.

He talked a lot about how Mr. Anderson's example is not one that should be followed. Earlier, my colleague from Alberta mentioned the famous autocorrect defence. He said that almost nothing about Mr. Anderson's testimony made sense.

Was there anything specific, a specific statement or unanswered question that really struck the member for Trois-Rivières for him to say that this is what we should be teaching people not to do before parliamentary committees?

*S. O. 52*

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very relevant question. The list of things not to do is about as long as Mr. Anderson's appearance before the committee. He admitted that he lied. After someone admits to lying to a journalist, I no longer believe anything.

We have a business with three people, two of whom are called "Randy" and one of whom does not know the other. It is absolutely ludicrous. We have a lie. We have the "Randy" mystery. There is also a sort of flippant attitude. The witness said that he could do whatever he wanted, that he was untouchable. Honestly, I find that unfortunate. I presume that we are all here in good faith, but these actions undermine the public's trust in our good faith. That is unacceptable.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, of course, the discussion on this matter will continue in the House in the coming days. I want to announce now that I will be sharing my time.

Now, it is very clear, when we look at this scandal, that we need to get to the bottom of it. The NDP has always supported financial transparency. We know that the Conservatives are only interested in Liberal scandals. The Liberals are only interested when there is a Conservative scandal. According to the federal Department of Finance, the NDP is the only party that stands for sound fiscal management. That includes transparency, which means getting to the bottom of things. That is why we are supporting this motion.

The reality is that good fiscal management means using the tools of Parliament.

• (1840)

*[English]*

In the few minutes I have, I should flag some of the scandals I mentioned earlier, in which the Conservatives are only interested in the Liberals' scandals and the Liberals are only interested in the Conservatives' scandals. I was in the House when Conservatives refused to have any sort of investigation into any of their scandals. The following is just a partial list, which I will be able to elaborate on when this matter comes back before the House.

There is the ETS scandal, which was \$400 million, and the Conservatives shut down any inquiry into what happened with that money. There is the Phoenix pay scandal, which we are still afflicted with, and it represents \$2.2 billion. The Harper regime and the Conservatives were part of that. There is the F-35 procurement scandal, which I am told is worth billions. There is the \$3.1 billion for anti-terrorism funding, and we simply do not know what that was spent on. There is the billion dollars that went into the G8 gazebos and other funding for the G8. In every single case, Conservatives shut down any sort of inquiry.

The NDP is supporting the motion to bring Mr. Anderson before the bar. This is extremely important. These are the tools of Parliament that should be used, and in a minority Parliament, we can use them. However, it is important to note that, every single time during the Harper regime, Conservatives refused to get any sort of information out to the public. They refused any sort of transparency. To boot, they cut back on funding for the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, two independent officers of Parlia-

ment whose jobs are to ensure transparency in the use of public funds.

I find it a bit hypocritical that Conservatives are saying they want to get to the bottom of this when they never want to get to the bottom of it when it is a Conservative scandal. Frankly, when we look at the amount of money the Conservatives misused in their terrible decade in power, it is much more than what has happened under the Liberals.

We are going to support the motion, but we are also going to call the Conservatives to account.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume consideration on the privilege motion at another sitting of the House.

---

## EMERGENCY DEBATE

*[English]*

### SITUATION IN LEBANON AND ISRAEL

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the situation in Lebanon and Israel.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP)** moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the incredible member for London—Fanshawe.

Today, I rise with a heavy heart to amplify the voices of Edmonton Strathcona constituents, the Lebanese-Canadian community and Canadians from across the country who are devastated by the escalating violence in the Middle East. Canadians believe in justice and fairness in a world where innocent lives, all innocent lives, are protected. We have a history of being peacekeepers, of convening others and of making diplomatic efforts that not only kept peace, but also built peace. However, now, for months, people have been telling me that that is not what they are seeing from the government.

A Canadian citizen of Lebanese heritage told me just this afternoon that she feels as though she does not belong, as though the government has turned its back on her and her human rights. Another individual told me that it is the double standard that is so horrifying to him. He asked me how the government can feel such empathy for Ukraine, and he was very clear that it should feel that empathy for Ukraine and for what is happening in Ukraine, but he questions why there is so little empathy for those who are from Palestine or Lebanon. This breaks my heart. The citizens of this country feel as though the government does not see their humanity, and this goes against everything we believe in as Canadians.

*S. O. 52*

Tonight, we will speak to the crisis in Lebanon. We must. We must also speak to what happened today just hours ago. Iran launched missiles at Israel, further escalating this global crisis and threatening Israeli civilians. Every member of the House must unequivocally condemn this horrific escalation by Iran.

I want to be crystal clear: Civilians in Israel, in Gaza, in Lebanon and in the wider region are paying the price for the failures of world leaders. The world is on the brink of further violence because we have not been holding political leaders to the standards of international law, we have collectively tolerated the erosion of rules-based international order, we have not done enough to de-escalate and we have not countered the warmongering and the hate that is too prevalent among the powerful.

There is no military solution to this crisis. War crimes must not beget war crimes. If we continue down this path, there is nothing but death. For one year, we have witnessed the horrifying violence of Netanyahu's genocide in Gaza, which followed the terrible Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on October 7. For one year, our party has appealed to the Canadian government to do the hard work to secure a ceasefire, to implement a real arms embargo, to get Palestinians to safety, to return the hostages, to de-escalate and to save the lives of so many, including children and vulnerable people, especially Palestinians in Gaza, who are bearing the cost of political inaction and the betrayal of international law.

We are now here to discuss a new escalation of violence, the violence and aggression that may cost even more lives, including the lives of Canadians. All of us in the House have constituents who have loved ones in the Middle East. The Lebanese community in Canada includes hundreds of thousands of people. Around 45,000 Canadians currently live in Lebanon, and we already know that two have lost their lives. While Canada has offered limited consular services in the form of seats on commercial flights, we know that many people cannot reach the airports due to air strikes. There is no power. There is no Internet. There is chaos, and Lebanese Canadians have told me that they do not know where to turn.

Over the past several days, a thousand people have been killed in Lebanon, 6,000 have been wounded and one million people have been displaced from their homes as a result of Israeli air strikes. Israeli is bombing densely populated cities, and Hezbollah, a listed terrorist organization under Canadian law, is launching more rockets toward Israel. Tonight, Iran launched ballistic missiles at Israel, another frightening development that threatens Israeli civilians, who, like everyone else, deserve peace and to live in security. We know this could lead to a wider war.

There is retaliation after retaliation, and the escalation is terrifying. We are on the brink, and it is our duty, as parliamentarians and as Canadians, to not just call for a ceasefire, but to use every tool possible to bring about peace.

● (1845)

I want to be clear. Hezbollah is a listed terrorist organization under Canada law that has committed very serious crimes over the decades. Hezbollah and its leaders should be brought to justice, just as the Iranian regime, a sponsor of Hezbollah and Hamas, should be brought to justice. New Democrats have worked hard to ensure that Canada listed the IRGC as a terrorist organization. We worked

hard to bring a motion to the House calling for the Toomaj sanctions against Iranian leaders.

However, the Iranian people are not the Iranian regime. The people of Lebanon are not Hezbollah. The people of Palestine are not Hamas. The people of Israel are not Netanyahu.

International law clearly states that civilians are never a target, not in Palestine, not in Lebanon, not in Israel and not in Iran. International law states, clearly, that wars have limits. The fundamental rule of international humanitarian law in conflict is that all parties must distinguish at all times between combatants and civilians. What we have seen over the past year with Israel's genocide in Gaza is that the Netanyahu government is ignoring its obligations under international law. There is no consideration for civilians.

Giving people a 30-minute warning that their homes are going to be bombed when they have nowhere to go does not absolve it of its responsibilities. That is not how international law works. Civilian protection is absolute. To suggest that these civilians do not matter or that they are collateral damage, whether they are Palestinian or Lebanese, is racism. It is deplorable. It is dehumanization, and it is intolerable.

The people of Lebanon are terrified that Lebanon will become the next Gaza. The people of Lebanon are still dealing with the worst economic crisis they have ever seen. They have not recovered from the explosion in the Port of Beirut. Their hospitals are short of medicine. The people of Lebanon do not want war. Children will bear the brunt of this war just as children in Gaza have borne the brunt of the genocide.

Just yesterday, Oxfam reported that more women and children were killed in Gaza by the Israeli military than in any other recent conflict in a single year. Thousands have fled for safety. Children are traumatized, and homes have been destroyed. I am grateful to the many humanitarians, medics and helpers who are doing everything they can to save lives and help the one million who have been displaced, but this is a political problem, and it will require a political solution.

Tonight, as we stand here in relative safety in Canada, afraid for what comes next and thinking of the traumatized children in Israel hiding in bomb shelters tonight, knowing that the displaced children in Lebanon and Gaza do not have bomb shelters and are equally traumatized, we have a duty to act.

*S. O. 52*

The UN has called on Israel to end the ground incursion, which is a violation of UN resolutions and a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty. Israel has ignored an international request for a 21-day ceasefire, which Canada and many other states have asked for. Earlier today, the United Nations special coordinator for Lebanon stated:

What we feared has materialized. With strikes throughout Lebanon, including in the heart of Beirut, and incursions across the Blue Line, violence is spiralling to dangerous heights.

Every rocket and missile fired, every bomb dropped and every ground raid conducted pull the parties further from the vision set out in Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)....

This cycle of violence will not end well - for anyone. A sliver of opportunity remains for diplomacy to succeed. The question now is whether it will be seized or squandered.

Canada needs to act now. Canada needs to call on Israel to stop. There must be an arms embargo, including closing the loopholes that allow weapons to go through the U.S. We must put sanctions on Netanyahu's extremist government. It is clear that over the past year, none of the actions have made Israelis safer. We have spoken to many Israelis who are marching in the streets, opposing the government's violence, calling for a hostage deal and a ceasefire. Arab leaders, such as the Jordanian foreign minister, have stated clearly that Netanyahu is not a partner for peace. There are partners for peace in Israel, people who reject the dehumanization of others, people who yearn for peace and justice for all, but Netanyahu is not one of them.

New Democrats stand in solidarity with the innocent people of Lebanon, Palestine and Israel. Canada must do better.

• (1850)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a sincere question for the member. She said in her speech, "Hezbollah and its leaders should be brought to justice", and that is good. I agree that Hezbollah and its leaders should be brought to justice. However, how would she propose that we go about achieving that objective? What process would she suggest be followed that would be effective in bringing Hezbollah and its leaders to justice?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I want everyone in this House to think about if it were their children or their families. If they were in Ottawa and a foreign state bombed Ottawa, what would that feel like? I want everyone here to recognize that when we say it is okay to kill innocent civilians, we are dehumanizing those people, and that is appalling. No one is ever, under international law, allowed to have collective punishment. This is very clear. We have to protect the rights of innocent people. That is how international law works. The member should know this.

I am deeply disappointed that a member of the Conservative Party would stand and not recognize that what he is saying, in effect, is that the lives of Lebanese civilians, the innocent people in Lebanon, do not deserve the same support and respect as every other person.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the aspersions the member just cast are clearly inaccurate and unparliamentary. I ask that the Speaker call her to order on that.

**An hon. member:** Debate.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** It is not debate at all.

• (1855)

**The Speaker:** I regret that the Chair did not hear the comments as there was a transition between two Speakers, but I will come back later on that point.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona for ensuring this debate happened today. I also thank her for centring the implications on all civilians, whether they are Lebanese, Israeli or Palestinian.

In the member's speech, she spoke about the need for de-escalation and diplomacy. Obviously, there is a role for the Canadian government in that diplomatic effort. I wonder if she could elaborate on what she would like to see the government do better when it comes to moving forward our role on the world stage toward the diplomatic solutions for which, as she said, there is a sliver of opportunity remaining.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, that is what we are debating today. There are some very important steps the government could take. Canada has a long history of being not just peacekeepers but peacebuilders, and has played that role with diplomacy. We are a G7 country. We have the ability to use the diplomatic tools at our disposal to work with our allies and bring things forward.

One key piece that needs to be done right now is an arms embargo. We need to ensure that no arms are getting to either side of the combatants, as they are using them against innocent civilians. We know there are loopholes that need to be closed.

We should also be using our sanctions effectively against Netanyahu and those within his administration. We have seen sanctions on Hamas. Absolutely, we support that, but frankly, we do not need them because it is a listed terrorist organization already. Any member of it is a listed terrorist. We also need to support the ICC and the ICJ, the international criminal justice system, not only in certain cases but in all cases.

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I feel an obligation to remind my NDP colleague that defence is not escalation. Since October 7, over 8,000 rockets have been fired at Israel. I would suggest that if people have been silent while those rockets have been fired, they are not advocates for peace but are apologists for a terrorist group.

Why have you been silent? I have looked at Hansard. You have mentioned Hezbollah once. You have tweeted about it only once, criticizing Israel when it responded to Hezbollah.

**The Speaker:** I have two things. First, I would like to remind all members that questions and answers should be put through the Chair and not directly to members. The second is to allow a member the time allotted. I did ask for a very brief question.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona can give a brief answer.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, that is, frankly, not true. The New Democrats have been very clear on our stance. Since the very beginning, we have been clear that Hamas is a terrorist organization. We condemn what it did in Israel on October 7. That has been extraordinarily clear, and I have mentioned it multiple times in multiple different forums.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for bringing this emergency debate forward tonight. She has been an incredible advocate and fighter for so many people who need a voice in this place. I am so grateful for her advocacy every single day.

I want to acknowledge the extremely disturbing and unacceptable recent attack in my community that targeted Muslim women who were wearing hijabs in front of their children and family members. I continuously want to say that I cannot believe this happened in my hometown, the place I grew up in, but I cannot say that anymore. This level of hatred has reared its ugly head in my hometown far too often.

Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian hate are on the rise across our country. Londoners have endured so much. They saw the tragic killing of our London family. They have watched their family members being killed in Israel, Sudan, Gaza and now in Lebanon. We all need to recognize how our words we say in this place on what is happening in the Middle East can turn to horrible acts at home. The vilification of Muslims, Palestinians and Jewish people is fuelling the rise of hate and the dehumanization of our fellow Canadians. They need all parties in this place to come together and fight for justice and peace in the Middle East.

Almost a full year ago, the NDP fought for a ceasefire. We called for the release of the hostages, a de-escalation and the protection of innocent civilians from Israel's siege on Gaza. The Palestinian community was repeatedly told that this would be a short incursion to defeat Hamas, but nearly one year later those bombings have only increased. We have seen over 40,000 Palestinians killed, including many children. We have seen the indiscriminate bombing of Palestinian schools and hospitals. We have witnessed the occurrence of war crimes. We have watched in horror as a short incursion turned into a genocide.

Now there is a ground incursion into Lebanon. Lebanon has already suffered the deadliest day of war since 2006, with hundreds of rockets attacking it. Lebanese Canadians are worried sick for their loved ones, many of whom are trapped or fleeing their homes and are seeing the communities they love destroyed. My constituents have directly told me again and again that they do not want war, that the people of Lebanon deserve to live in peace and to rebuild their country.

As the member for Edmonton Strathcona stated, which I think bears repeating, tonight we are here to speak to the crisis in Lebanon, but only hours ago, Iran launched missiles at Israel, further escalating this global crisis and threatening more civilians. We unequivocally condemn this. Civilians in Israel, Gaza, Lebanon and the wider region are paying for our political failures. She said this

*S. O. 52*

very clearly. We have seen an escalation of violence because we have not held up a universal standard of international law. We have tolerated the erosion of the rules-based international order.

Lebanese Canadians deserve the full protection of our government. The Minister of Defence said that he is not confident the Canadian Armed Forces could do mass evacuations of Lebanese Canadians. This is unacceptable. These Canadians are fleeing an invasion by a country Canada describes as an ally. There have already been reports of Canadians dying in Lebanon, and the government is still not coordinating a military evacuation. It is shameful that these Canadians are being told to evacuate by commercial flights on their own dime.

Lebanese Canadians are worried about getting their loved ones back after seeing how the Liberals have handled the special measures immigration program for Palestinians. A recent report by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East shows that the temporary resident visa program for Gazans was intended to fail. Despite increasing the shameful racist and arbitrary cap from 1,000 to 5,000, no one has been able to come to Canada. Palestinians who have been able to arrive have done so on their own with no help from the government.

Let me be clear. Canada can stand up for Lebanese Canadians and their loved ones, can stand up for international law and can stand up to Israel's horrific war crimes, but the government lacks the courage to do so. This is something I have heard repeatedly from my constituents. They have a continual disappointment in the Liberal government.

● (1900)

The Canadian Armed Forces has a presence in the region. It is stationed. It could be called upon to assist in the evacuation of Lebanese Canadians. We can stand up to Netanyahu's extremist government, clearly stating that we will not diplomatically support Israel's ongoing genocide and will not support its invasion and bombing of Lebanon, and we can sanction its war cabinet. We can stand up to the Israel Defense Forces by implementing an immediate arms embargo on Israel. We can stand up to the United States, making it clear that we will review the U.S.-Canada defence production sharing agreement and not allow Canadian-made arms to be used in war crimes by Israel. However, the government refuses to do so.

Today, we need to call on all parties to recognize an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon. The war between the extremist Netanyahu regime and Hezbollah, a terrorist organization, has led to 1,000 deaths, 6,000 wounded and more than one million displaced in Lebanon. War crimes must not beget war crimes. We need to stand up for Lebanese civilians who do not want to see their country face another war. They have struggled for so many years to rebuild their country, to rebuild their systems and to rebuild their infrastructure. Lebanon is already facing the worst economic crisis in history, endured because of the largest non-nuclear explosion ever recorded. Lebanon needs our support.

S. O. 52

The Government of Canada must work with the international community to ensure that UN resolution 1701 is implemented in Lebanon in full and immediately. We need to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon are respected. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has clearly stated that “any crossing into Lebanon is in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity” and is a violation of resolution 1701. It urges “all actors to step back from such escalatory acts which will only lead to more violence and more bloodshed”. The price of continuing the current course of action is too high. Civilians have to be protected, civilian infrastructure must not be targeted and international law has to be respected.

I cannot imagine what it must be like for someone to watch news reports of their country of birth being bombed, to see their home destroyed, a home they had grown up in, and to see all the memories wiped away. Staff in my offices are impacted by this. Staff here in this place are impacted. They do not know where their loved ones are. They cannot get a hold of them. I cannot imagine that terror and witnessing friends displaced and desperate. They are literally holding their breath in fear, hoping desperately they will not get bad news.

To all of those people, I am so sorry that Canada is not the strength that it needs to be. These people, who have given so much to this institution, to the work that we are supposed to go forward with, cannot rely upon this country, where they have made their home, for the support they need for the family members, friends and neighbours still there. I have held countless constituents while they cry about this.

However, I say that we can stand up, that Canada can be a force for peace. We can be. I ask this place to do that, for my constituents and for all Lebanese Canadians, Israeli Canadians and Palestinian Canadians. We need to do better.

• (1905)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as leaders in this Parliament, it is critically important that we speak for universal human solidarity and empathy. Clearly, we believe that the dignity of the human person is universal and not dependent on any factor, such as citizenship, national origin place, age, degree of vulnerability, etc. From that basic moral ground, we have to think about policy actions that will concretely make a difference.

I asked the previous NDP speaker a serious question and did not get an answer at all. I just got personal insults. The previous member said that Hezbollah and its leaders should be brought to justice. The question is, how would the NDP propose to bring Hezbollah and its leaders to justice?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, the comments from the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona were bang on.

Further, in a lot of the questions that she tried to answer following the hon. member, it was very clear that Canada has actually shown itself, on the world stage, to follow rulings of the ICC and the ICJ for other countries in some regards. It has followed through and tried to put forward sanctions in the case of Ukraine, although not as successfully as we would like. They have been supportive.

I would ask for that consistency when it comes to Gaza, Palestine, Lebanon and everyone across this globe.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the NDP for proposing this highly timely emergency debate. From what I gather, the NDP'S general position on this conflict is to advocate for a ceasefire. That is our position as well.

Obviously, Canada cannot do it alone, but it seems to me that we have not used all the pressure tactics that may be necessary. For example, Canada is bound by a free trade agreement with Israel. Why does the member think that this has not been used more as a way to push Israel to cool its jets, so to speak ?

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, we have not used all the tools at our disposal by any means.

As I communicated in my speech, that is a failure of the government. I hope that the hon. member will ask those questions of government members when it comes to their time.

New Democrats, in response to the conflict in Palestine and in Gaza, called upon this Parliament to put forward many ideas about how we could make change, including arms embargos and the recognition of the Palestinian state. We have not seen that occur. All of these things play a part in a larger push for peace that we could partake in.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, moving forward, it is so important that we take the time to talk about the impacts on people, including Lebanese Canadians and Canadians who are unsure of their family's future. This is something my colleague does all the time.

Could the member share what real impacts she is hearing from constituents and Canadians across the country in terms of the government not taking the action required?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, sometimes I just end up holding people who break down because they are trying to be strong for their families.

They are trying to demand action from the Liberal government but are not seeing it. Many have felt extremely frustrated with the response and see it as systemic racism that has not been addressed.

All I can tell them is that we will continue to try and to push, and we hope we will get somewhere with the Liberal government.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will begin by thanking the New Democratic Party for bringing this topic forward for the emergency debate this evening.



*S. O. 52*

There must be no war in Lebanon, full stop. This most recent outbreak of conflict is part of a long-standing cycle of violence in the Middle East. History has taught us that civilians always bear the heaviest price of senseless violence. The continued attacks on Israel by Hamas, a terrorist organization, are unacceptable. Hezbollah, another terrorist organization, has been launching rockets at Israel for nearly a year. Moreover, today's attack on Israel by Iran, a state sponsor of terror, is devastating.

We have reports of hundreds of long-range ballistic missiles from Iran, some of which have hit Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. We unequivocally condemn this unprecedented escalation, which has forced millions of Israelis to take shelter. We reaffirm Israel's right to defend itself. These attacks only serve to destabilize the region further. Canada will continue to do everything in its power to hold Iran accountable for its role in funding terrorist organizations. We urge all parties involved to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilians and humanitarian workers, and avoid any actions that could ignite a regional war.

We are gravely concerned for civilians in Lebanon, including thousands of Canadians. The safety and security of our citizens at home and abroad is our top priority. Thus far, we have been devastated by the deaths of two Canadians, Hussein and Daad Tabaja, who were killed by an IDF air strike while fleeing Beirut. All they sought was to live in security, peace and dignity. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has spoken to the sons of Hussein and Daad. While extending her deepest condolences on the passing of their parents, the minister also made clear that she would do all in her power to ensure that Canadians in Lebanon are kept safe. The potential for wider conflict across the Middle East has not been more imminent for decades. The costs of inaction are far too great.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

We owe it to the people of Lebanon, Israel and the region to make tangible progress towards peace and stability. Canada is exploring every possible avenue to ensure a diplomatic solution to the crisis between Hezbollah and Israel. Immediate action to stop the violence is urgently needed.

Canada is committed to continuing its work with the international community to help advance peace in the region. Alongside our allies, we have endorsed a diplomatic settlement and call for an immediate 21-day ceasefire across the Lebanon-Israeli border to provide space for diplomacy. We are also pushing for full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the cessation of all hostilities in Lebanon.

The Prime Minister has engaged leaders from across the region in search of a diplomatic resolution to the conflict. In the past days alone, the Prime Minister has had the opportunity to discuss the situation between Hezbollah and Israel with the Prime Minister of Lebanon and the King of Jordan.

Last week, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was in New York to attend the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly. While there, she called on all parties, including the governments of Israel and Lebanon, to endorse the temporary ceasefire immediately. In the past days, the foreign minister has also met with the Prime

Minister of Lebanon, the foreign minister of Lebanon, G7 foreign ministers and Arab foreign ministers; she has also been in contact with the Israeli foreign minister. The message is consistent and clear: We must see a de-escalation of tensions at the border between Lebanon and Israel.

In response to the worsening conditions in Lebanon, Canada is stepping up its humanitarian efforts. On Saturday, the government announced an additional \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to address the urgent needs of civilians affected by the conflict. This funding will provide food, water, emergency health care, protection services and other life-saving aid to the more than one million people believed to be newly displaced. This contribution is in addition to the \$10 million already allocated by the United Nations central emergency response fund, bringing Canada's total humanitarian assistance for Lebanon in 2024 to \$37 million.

Since October 2023, we have been advising Canadians in Lebanon to leave. As the security situation along the border between Israel and Lebanon has been deteriorating, we have been clear with Canadians that now is not the time to travel to Lebanon. The Beirut international airport remains open to commercial flights.

● (1915)

We have already helped secure the departure of hundreds of Canadians through commercial means. Today, we announced that we will increase the capacity for commercial flights out of Lebanon by securing an additional 800 seats for Canadians, permanent residents and their immediate family over the course of the next three days. There is a flight scheduled to depart today.

It is critical that Canadians in Lebanon leave now. If they have not registered with the registration of Canadians abroad, or ROCA, they should do so now. Canadian consular officials and embassy staff will use this system to communicate and transmit instructions to those in danger. If they are offered a seat on a commercial flight by ROCA, they should take it as soon as possible. Canadians looking to leave Lebanon should also make sure that their travel documents and those of their spouse and dependent children are up to date and secure.

We will continue to work with industry, international partners and like-minded countries to coordinate contingency planning efforts to respond, should the situation deteriorate further. In the past months, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has visited the region several times to secure agreements with like-minded countries for use in the event that a large-scale evacuation of Canadians in Lebanon is necessary. We have also increased our diplomatic, consular and security capabilities in the region, such that we can respond more quickly and effectively as the situation continues to worsen.

*S. O. 52*

We will exercise every tool at our disposal to ensure that Canadians, permanent residents and their immediate families in Lebanon are safe. We call on all parties to accept the temporary ceasefire.

Should any members of the House require support in providing consular services to their constituents, they should encourage them to reach out to the emergency watch and response centre. Furthermore, they should not hesitate to contact me or Global Affairs Canada.

The situation in the Middle East is an unspeakable tragedy. Civilians in Lebanon and Israel, as well as across the region, must be protected and cannot bear the cost of this conflict.

Canada is committed not only to ensuring the safety and security of its citizens but also to reaching a diplomatic settlement in this conflict. Canada has joined allies in calling for an immediate 21-day ceasefire across the Lebanon-Israel border. All parties, including the governments of Israel and Lebanon, must endorse the temporary ceasefire immediately. Of course, at the same time, we continue to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Canada is committed to the pursuit of peace. We will continue to work with our international partners to advance stability in the Middle East, and we will do everything in our power to protect civilians, hold bad actors to account and push for a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

Now is the time to give a real chance for diplomacy and for peace.

• (1920)

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to know if the hon. member is clear on what she is actually being told to read in the House. What did she mean when she uttered talking points about Israel having a right to defend itself? Is it that Israel can intercept hundreds of ballistic missiles in a single day, and that is where it ends?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Mr. Speaker, through you, I want to assure the hon. member that I did not use talking points. What has been happening to Israel, which is something I mentioned in my speech, is unacceptable. Israel has been attacked by two terrorist organizations, as well as a state that sponsors terror.

I am insulted that the member would not give credit to me and our government for actually caring about the people of Israel and that she would call my speech “talking points”.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned for families in Lebanon who are fleeing for their lives, already rocked by death and grief as Netanyahu's extremist government pushes a ground offensive. I am distressed for families in Israel who have had to deal with rockets and missiles launched by Iran and Hezbollah, which is clearly a terrorist group, as recognized by Canadian law. I am heartbroken for Gaza and Palestinians, who are currently undergoing daily horror from Netanyahu's extremist government. However, the Liberal government has failed to take action. It has failed to impose a two-way arms embargo. It failed to impose strict sanctions on Netanyahu's war cabinet.

Why has the government failed to take action and do its part to stop the escalation of conflict in the region?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to arms exports, the minister has said that we have not approved export permits since January 8. We will always support Israel's security, and this includes permits for the Iron Dome. I would disagree with the hon. member that we are not doing anything. I firmly believe that we are, in fact, doing everything that we can as a country to work toward a ceasefire in the region and for peace in the region.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, earlier, I asked my NDP colleague a question and she suggested I ask the government that question. I thought that was a good idea, so that is what I am going to do.

Does the government believe that it has used every pressure tactic necessary to arrive at a ceasefire? Is it Canada's position to advocate for a ceasefire in the region?

Why has the free trade agreement between Ottawa and Israel not been used to try to push Israel in that direction?

• (1925)

[*English*]

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely we do want a ceasefire in the region, and that is why the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have been so actively involved with their counterparts in the G7, with foreign ministers in the region and with prime ministers in the region, to push our desire for a ceasefire. The fighting must stop and civilians must be protected. We call for an immediate ceasefire.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member calling for a ceasefire, for diplomacy and for de-escalation. She also mentioned that we are giving \$10 million in humanitarian aid immediately. I wonder if she can tell us why that is so important.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Mr. Speaker, I would say that we are seeing the deterioration of how civilians are living in Lebanon, and we find it completely unacceptable. As such, Canada has stepped up to provide an additional \$10 million to assist those citizens with humanitarian aid to really try to reach those individuals whose lives have been so terribly uprooted by the conflict.

*S. O. 52*

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a really heavy heart, but understanding how important it is for us to have this debate today to shed light on what is the living reality of millions of people in the Middle East. As we announce \$10 million in humanitarian aid for Lebanon and as I watch our government work really hard to try to make sure there is de-escalation and that we are finding a way forward to peace, I cannot help but think about a town hall I held in my riding over the summer. It was a round table on anti-Palestinian racism. Throughout the summer, I have continued to meet with Canadians of Middle Eastern decent, of Jewish decent. Throughout this whole process, one thing has stood out to me. It is the fear expressed by some residents, who are not Palestinian, that this war would escalate and draw in other nations in the Middle East, and that soon, no one would be safe. We are witnessing that escalation right now.

These indiscriminate attacks against the people of Lebanon, regardless of the intent to target terrorist Hezbollah, will only bring more war and more death to the region. They will endanger the lives of the people of Lebanon. Netanyahu's violence is now bringing retaliatory strikes that will lead to injury and death of the people of Israel as well.

Next week will mark an entire year of watching Netanyahu's campaign of violence against the people of Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank. It has been one year of death and violence and famine for over a million innocent Palestinian people. It has been one year since a raid by the terrorist group Hamas killed over 1,000 Israeli people and took hundreds hostage, some of whom have died, while others remain in captivity. What we have watched in the year since is a disproportionate, brutal and inhumane slaughter of innocent lives. It is not a targeted strike, but collective punishment for an entire culture for the actions of specific, extremist people. We have seen, and Netanyahu's regime has made it clear, that they do not see any difference between a terrorist aggressor and an innocent child playing in the street. There is no difference between the terrorist and the innocent and that all must be eliminated. This is how they spoke of Palestine and now how they speak of Lebanon.

We do not tolerate this type of behaviour from any nation. We must hold our friends to that same standard. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression and protest are protected, but we must ensure that we do not conflate fair criticism of the actions of Netanyahu and his regime in Israel with how it manifests within communities in Canada. Constituents in my riding have told me quite frankly that this concept of de-escalation through escalation is nonsense. It is warmongering, plain and simple.

I stood in the House six months ago and said that Canada is a friend to the people of Israel, but that does not mean that we must support or defend Netanyahu and his regime's horrific actions. Since then, Netanyahu has continued to slaughter Palestinians in Gaza and invaded the West Bank settlements and has now forged ahead another war with the people of Lebanon in the name of destroying terrorist Hezbollah.

This endless cycle of violence and attack has lasted 75 years, and it has achieved nothing. The people of Palestine still live under oppression. The people of Israel and Lebanon still live in fear of rockets and air strikes. Extremism continues to grow and inflict terror,

and we are no closer to peace in the Middle East. This way has not worked for 75 years and is not going to start working now.

● (1930)

Canada has to be a voice for peace, because this constant war, fear of attacks and inhumane living need to end for the good of the people of Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Jordan and all those who call the Middle East home.

As I said, I spent the summer talking to my constituents and learning from them. One of the biggest, most tragic moments I experienced was learning about immediate family members who have suffered. My constituents have lost their loved ones to this indiscriminate punishment. They are not terrorists. They are innocent people trying to live their lives. Entire generations have been wiped out.

I want to share some of the emails I have received from my constituents about this. The grief, dismay and anger are very real. Everybody in this chamber understands how they would feel if their loved ones were going through the same situation.

A constituent wrote, "Words are not enough to capture my sadness and disappointment when hearing about Israel's escalation in Lebanon that has already killed hundreds and injured thousands more. Through nearly a year of genocide in Gaza, we have learned that Israel does not value civilian life or infrastructure and instead wants to make its border regions unlivable for all Arab peoples."

Another email stated, "My concerns are amplified when I hear that Canada continues to allow weapons transfers to Israel despite its war crimes and violations of international law in both Palestine and Lebanon, as well as its assassinations in Iran. To date, Canada has only suspended 30 out of over 250 active permits for weapons being shipped to Israel. This comes on the heels of the disturbing revelation that many Canadian companies are sneaking weapons to Israel through the U.S."

There are a lot of concerns from constituents, not just mine but from across the country, who share their viewpoints on all sides of this. People are sharing how afraid they are of this war manifesting here within our communities in Canada. We are obligated, as Canadian parliamentarians, not just to ensure that Canadians are getting the correct information but also to ensure we continue to build bridges, to work hard and to make sure Canada lives up to its record and reputation of being a peacekeeper at home and abroad. We are a multicultural society, a mosaic that believes in diversity being our strength, and it is our strength.

The common ground between all of us is that we are all human. It does not matter what religion we are part of. It does not matter what creed we are or what colour our skin is. At the end of the day, human life is human life, whether it is in Israel, Palestine or Lebanon. We, as Canadians, need to do more. We need to ensure we build those bridges among Canadians and also among the world at large.

S. O. 52

As I have done over the past couple of months, I will use my last minute to ask my constituents and all Canadians who are in Lebanon right now to please come home. It is not safe. We are here to provide support. I encourage those who are watching to reach out to their local members of Parliament, including me, to ensure they understand and have the support they need in this really difficult time we are all facing, not just as Canadians but as human beings all around the world.

I pray for peace, I pray for those who have been lost in this war and I pray that we find our humanity one more time.

• (1935)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member who spoke is a parliamentary secretary. Can we assume the positions she took in her speech are positions of the Government of Canada, or are the positions she took in her speech different from the positions of the Government of Canada?

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Mr. Speaker, I think that we as parliamentarians here in the House have an opportunity to express what our constituents express to us. We are representatives of our constituents.

The positions of our constituents are no different than the position of the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada is trying to find peace in a very difficult situation for so many different people. Whether it is providing humanitarian aid in the region or trying to build relationships, we are trying to work for humanity, and I look forward to working with the member on ensuring that all Canadians are kept safe.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone wants us to engage in partisan rhetoric tonight. This is an emergency debate on how we can have an impact on peace in Lebanon, but I think the main issue is how we can repatriate Canadian citizens who are in Lebanon. Many of them are Quebeckers, since Quebec is home to a large Lebanese community. I think that is what we should be talking about today.

What matters most to me in this emergency debate is to help people of Lebanese origin who are caught in this conflict get out of the region. What is the government's response to that? How are we currently helping people get out of that conflict zone?

[English]

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we as parliamentarians, who deal with our constituents and have access to our constituents on a regular basis, do encourage them and their family members who are impacted in the region to come home as quickly as they can.

There are resources through the Government of Canada's website and the foreign affairs website, and all parliamentarians have access to that information. I think the more we can do to disseminate that information, to proactively encourage people to come back home if they are willing and able to, the better it is for all of us. That duty rests on all members of the House.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we must address the unfolding crisis in Lebanon. It is crucial that the govern-

ment condemn the horrific civilian casualties across Lebanon, Gaza and Israel, and Canada must do more to support peace in the region

People in Lebanon are terrified. There are 45,000 Canadians, many of whom are unable to travel or to return to Canada as our country has offered limited evacuation assistance. I have heard directly from constituents who are hearing bombs ringing in their ears, and some cannot find flights out; they are being denied travel documents.

We need to create pathways for families who are desperate to reunite with their family in Canada. Many have noted the difference between the government's response to those fleeing Gaza and to those fleeing Lebanon.

Can the member speak to the need for an equally urgent response to those who are fleeing the conflict?

• (1940)

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot even begin to imagine the terror young kids and innocent civilians feel when they hear the bombs and when they feel the bullets whizzing by. Our foreign affairs minister has spent the past number of weeks and months trying to really get Canadians to disseminate the message to please come home while there is still a chance.

I know that our government will do everything possible to make sure Canadians are able to come home. I know that the minister has spent a lot of time over the past number of weeks with the United Nations General Assembly to really talk about the issue and to play the role Canada needs to play to ensure that it is not just the safety of the Canadians there right now that we can protect but also the safety of all those people in the region.

I encourage the member to let all her constituents know how to access the resources available through the Government of Canada.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the Peace of Westphalia was concluded in 1648, the international system has developed into modern nation states and international law. In the almost 400 years since those treaties were established, the world has created nation states that conduct relations based on international law. That international system further developed after 1945, a period during which Canada was instrumental in creating the current rules-based international system that has ensured our relative peace and security here at home.

*S. O. 52*

Our forebears here in Canada well understood the need for a rules-based system, because Canada paid a high price in the Great War and in the Second World War in defence of freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Some 60,000 Canadian soldiers died during the Great War. Some 40,000 Canadian soldiers died during the Second World War. Over 100,000 Canadian soldiers gave their lives in two world wars. Hundreds of thousands more were injured physically and mentally, came home and suffered for the rest of their lives.

As a result of that suffering, our forebears understood the need for a rules-based international system that would ensure not only the peace and security of Canadians here at home but also the peace and security of all humanity abroad. That rules-based system, which we have enjoyed for 80-some years, has given us relative peace and security.

I want to highlight some very stark statistics to illustrate what I am talking about. There is no doubt that millions of people around the world today have suffered and are suffering. However, that pales in comparison to the bloodshed and the suffering before 1945. Life before 1945, for the vast majority of humanity, was nasty, brutish and short. In the First World War, the Great War, some 40 million people died. In the Second World War, some 75 million people died.

That scale of human misery, suffering and death has largely been avoided because of the rules-based international system that Canada was instrumental in founding in 1945. The deaths from the two world wars were the smallest part of total deaths before 1945. In the period before 1945, people suffered not just because of conflict and war; hundreds of millions more suffered and died because of extreme poverty.

Two-thirds of all humanity before 1945 lived in extreme poverty. Today, only about one in seven people on the planet lives in extreme poverty. In fact, the number of people living in extreme poverty today is not only much smaller as a proportion of the planet's humanity, but it is also smaller in absolute numbers of people suffering, compared to prior to 1945. This is despite the massive growth, the trebling or quadrupling of the world's population, in the last half-century and more.

The rules-based international system for trade and investment has significantly reduced suffering and increased prosperity. It is the rules-based system that has led to a huge drop in extreme poverty and a massive increase in prosperity for peoples around the world. It is the rules-based system that has led to a significant drop in deaths and suffering from war.

It is a system that states such as the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran want to dismantle. They do not want this system. They have been very explicit about this in their speeches and their declarations. They would rather have us revert to a pre-1945 world where power determines relations between states. None of us should want to return to that world.

• (1945)

An essential part of the international rules-based system is international humanitarian law, otherwise known as the law of armed

conflict. International humanitarian law is the heart of what we are debating tonight in the House: whether actors in the conflict in the Middle East today are acting in accordance with international humanitarian law, the law of armed conflict.

Under international humanitarian law, states have the right to defend themselves. On October 7 of last year, a Liberal democratic state was attacked by Hamas. On that day, two and a half thousand Hamas terrorists invaded a sovereign state, breaking through the sovereign 1949 armistice border and killing over 1,100 innocent civilians.

These 1,100 civilians were not killed inadvertently or accidentally. They were not killed incidental to the targeting of armed combatants or military objectives. The innocent civilians were the target. The 1,100 innocent civilians were deliberately and systemically targeted and murdered by Hamas in what constituted a massive war crime.

They were gunned down execution-style, just like with the mobile killing squad of the Nazis, the Einsatzkommando, which executed some 1.5 million Jews during the Aktion campaign in 1941 in eastern Europe. On October 7 last year, whole families were executed, innocent babies were killed in their cribs and the dead were mutilated. Some of the dead were paraded through the streets of Gaza. There were Canadians among those people deliberately killed, and there were Canadians among those who were deliberately taken hostage.

Since Hamas began its attack on Israel last October 7, Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic of Iran have joined in. Hezbollah has launched some 8,000 rockets at Israel over the last 12 months, forcing the displacement of some 60,000 civilians from the north of Israel to the south, essentially making northern Israel a vacant zone for civilians. These civilians have had to leave their homes and their communities, and the government of the State of Israel has had to evacuate them out of Israeli territory to the south. Today Iran launched yet another attack on the State of Israel by launching some 200 ballistic missiles.

All states have a responsibility to defend their citizens and to defend their territory. The State of Israel is no different. Israeli is at war. This is a legal war under international humanitarian law. The war the State of Israel is conducting against Hamas, against Hezbollah and against the Islamic Republic of Iran under international humanitarian law is a justifiable war against two terrorist groups and a state that sponsors terrorism.

Israel has the right to prosecute this war under international humanitarian law and to prosecute this war to its conclusion that the State of Israel has so determined and ensure that Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic of Iran no longer threaten the citizens of its state or its territory. Canada did the same thing during the Second World War. We defended our citizens and our territories against a hostile threat, and the State of Israel has the right to do the same.

*S. O. 52*

Millions of civilians are suffering because of the war in Gaza, in Lebanon and in Israel, and we mourn the loss of innocent civilians, particularly women and children. The combatants in this conflict need to ensure that they distinguish between combatants and civilians, and take all feasible precautions in the targeting of military objectives to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects.

• (1950)

Ultimately, the solution to the conflict and the war in the Middle East is for Hezbollah and Hamas to lay down their arms to protect innocent Lebanese and Palestinians, who for too long, for decades, have been subject to these brutal terrorist entities.

For too long, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian and Iranian civilians have been the victims of Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic regime in Iran. For too long, these regimes have suppressed democracy, human rights and freedoms, and the rule of law through brute force. For too long, millions of Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and Iranians have suffered. If there is any ray of hope in recent events, it is that they mark the end of the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah, and the beginning of the end of the Islamic Republic of Iran's hold on much of the region.

Canada is a western liberal democracy. What is going on in the Middle East is a clash between a rising authoritarianism, backed by states such as the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and democracies, such as Taiwan, Ukraine and the state of Israel, and in that clash between a rise in authoritarianism and democracies, there is no question on which side of the line Canada should stand.

Canada must stand for democracy, Canada must stand for human rights and freedoms, and Canada must stand for the rule of law as it is articulated in international humanitarian law. Conservatives support the state of Israel. The state of Israel is a liberal democratic state. It is also the homeland of the Jewish people. It has the right to defend itself. It has the right to use all legal means necessary under international humanitarian law to ensure its peace and security.

Israel, like Ukraine and Taiwan, is at the front lines of a clash that is unfolding before our eyes: a clash that we did not anticipate a decade ago, that has unfolded over the last several years. In that rising clash between two very different models of governance, there is no doubt where Canada's interests and values lie.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member's speech, and I have several things to say.

He gave some history that I think could have provided fodder for several debates. For example, if we are talking about the world order that was established after the Second World War, that order clearly must have had some grey areas, or we would not be seeing what we are seeing today. Perhaps that is because it was built at the expense of other development models that could have been put in place, but we could have a whole other debate on the history.

However, we cannot just say today that this is a democratic state and that we support it, period. Obviously, Israel has the right to exist. That is fundamental. Obviously, Israel is a democracy, and ob-

viously, Israel is a state that has the right to defend itself. Now it is a geopolitical flashpoint in the region. Because it is a democracy, there are debates and people are not unanimous. Benjamin Netanyahu's policy is not the same as Yitzhak Rabin's was.

What is the Conservative Party's plan to get us out of there?

• (1955)

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, of course Canada is a democracy but, at the same time, we are not perfect. We have plenty of problems. The same can be said of other democracies around the world, like Israel; it is not a perfect democracy. There are internal problems there, but it is not for us to speak to the issues that exist in other democracies. There are problems in the great democracy of southern North America, but it is not for us, as Canadians and as Conservatives, to pass judgment on the problems in the U.S.

In my opinion, it is clear. We are a liberal democracy, based on western principles. The State of Israel is the same. We have to support Israel, because this is a major—

**The Speaker:** I would ask the hon. member to quickly wrap up.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, we have to do this because this is a major war between democracies and authoritarian states.

**The Speaker:** I would ask all members to look at the Chair when answering questions. I will give you signals to keep you from going over time.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find it shocking that my colleague was not able to find even one example of how Netanyahu's administration could be criticized.

I am interested. He talked about international law. He talked about rules-based international systems. Clearly, the member would know that almost every single international expert has said the actions of the Netanyahu government have reduced the rules-based international order. Therefore, I would like the member to tell me very clearly what the Conservative Party's position is in terms of international justice. Would a Conservative government support the ICC and ICJ calls for justice that we have seen come through?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the premise of my hon. colleague's question. I have seen no credible reports that indicate the State of Israel has contravened international humanitarian law. I have also seen no credible reports that the State of Israel has violated customary international law—

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

*S. O. 52*

**The Speaker:** I ask the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona to please hold her time until she has an opportunity to speak, when she is recognized. I insist on this for all members. This is a very sensitive issue, and I congratulate all members for being patient with each other as we explore a very sensitive issue.

The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I have seen no credible reports of the State of Israel's violating either international humanitarian law or customary international law. The number of civilians who have been, unfortunately, killed in this conflict is not an arbitrary determinant as to whether a state is complying with international law.

I remind this House that the Allies during the Second World War killed 400,000 German civilians and that was not a war crime. Those were incidental to the targeting of military objectives. I remind this House that the Luftwaffe killed 40,000 Londoners during the Second World War and every one of those deaths was a war crime because the Luftwaffe deliberately targeted civilian areas of East London and not military objectives. The number of civilian deaths, however unfortunate, is not the determinant as to whether international humanitarian law has been breached.

• (2000)

**Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a former history teacher, I listened with great interest to the remarks from my colleague across the way.

I actually want to shift for a moment to what is happening domestically by virtue of what is happening overseas. I wonder if my colleague can comment on some of the trends we have seen here in Canada whereby, by virtue of the way one feels about the current government of the state of Israel, there have been substantial implications for Jews, such as me and those I represent, across Canada.

Can the member speak, for example, to some of the calls for boycotting of so-called Zionist businesses and how he believes this is a problem for us here in Canada as we try in our diaspora communities to deal with the impacts of what is happening overseas?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, the federal government should show leadership in tackling the heinous rise in anti-Semitism in our country, in tackling the disorder in our public spaces and our streets that is targeting Jews, synagogues and Jewish institutions such as schools.

I believe the public safety minister should convene a federal-provincial Solicitors General meeting in order to come to agreement among the 10 provinces and the federal government that directives will be issued, of general application to law enforcement in this country, that laws will be enforced against those who would use public disorder in our streets to target the Jewish community. That is the kind of leadership I would expect from a Government of Canada, and leadership I am convinced would be in place if Conservatives form the next government.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by sharing how much I agree with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills on the importance of the rules-based order. I appreciate his focus on international humanitarian law, and I agree with him on condemning Hamas for its terrorist attack of Oc-

tober 7. However, my question to him is about all parties following international humanitarian law. He was looking for examples earlier, and I will cite some for him.

From Amnesty International, January 2019: "Israel's policy of settling its civilians in occupied Palestinian territory and displacing the local population contravenes fundamental rules of international humanitarian law." That was prior to October 7. If the member is looking for post-October 7, on January 26, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to take six actions to prevent acts of genocide. Clearly, we would agree that is against international humanitarian law.

Is the member going to call for international humanitarian law to be followed by all parties or only some?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, the International Court of Justice did not find that Israel had committed genocide; it just asked the State of Israel to comply with the 1948 Genocide Convention, which Israel is in the process of and has been doing.

With respect to Amnesty International's interpretation of international humanitarian law, I disagree with its interpretation of the facts on the ground. At the end of the day, there have been no credible reports that I have read that indicate the State of Israel has committed war crimes or has had grave breaches of customary international law. What I do know is that the terrorist group Hamas, in taking some 250 hostages last October 7, did commit war crimes; that is obviously a war crime. Also, Hamas, in executing and targeting some 1,100 innocent civilians, committed war crimes. Those are findings I think the international community has agreed to that adhere to Hamas, for which it should be held responsible.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to know the member's thoughts on the very idea that the government just reaffirmed its commitment to funding UNRWA. The leader of Hamas in Lebanon, who was an UNRWA schoolteacher, was buried in Hamas regalia today. What does the member think of that?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Government of Canada should immediately suspend all funding to UNRWA. It is clear that UNRWA has a problem with a certain number of employees who are supporters of Hamas and Hezbollah, and UNRWA has a problem with some of its facilities being used as staging grounds for terrorist activities, and that is why the Government of Canada should immediately suspend funding.

• (2005)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by mentioning that I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

*S. O. 52*

In this evening's debate, I think that certain observations are absolutely in order at the outset. First of all, this evening, no matter how carefully we comb through the causes of the conflict that started on October 7, one thing cannot be denied: Lebanon is currently in a war zone and, despite all the requests made in the House, despite all the positions taken by the various parties, whether or not they were consensus based, and despite the calls made by elected officials and communities, the situation is escalating. Nothing that we have done, asked for or wished for in the past is going to change anything that is happening now. The conflict is spreading across the region, and now there is a state of emergency, hence the need for this evening's debate.

Another observation is that, despite the fact that relatively few Canadian nationals in Lebanon have availed themselves of the options to leave the country so far, we must not forget that Canada has certain obligations towards its citizens. We cannot begin to judge the reasons why a Canadian citizen or national would choose not to leave Lebanon or choose to head to Lebanon from Canada. We also cannot assume that, since there are currently 45,000 Canadian nationals in Lebanon, we need to get 45,000 out of there. We will not be able to pick people up from their homes. Some may have specific reasons for staying where they are. We cannot criticize or judge those reasons. We do not know everyone's story. We do not know who has a sick mother who is not a Canadian citizen and who they need to stay with. We cannot know when a father will decide to come back because he is starting to realize that if he stays, he will leave two orphans at home. Canada's obligation is to be ready to respond as soon as a Canadian national asks to leave Lebanon.

Another observation that must be made is that, unfortunately, Canada has had a less-than-stellar evacuation record as of late. There are lessons to be learned from the past, and tonight, many questions remain. Consider the evacuation that took place in 2006. Canada was criticized when messages sent to expats did not reach them after the power cuts because there was no Internet service and the telephone network was only accessible on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. It is good that the government moved relatively quickly and with increasing insistence in July and August to call on Canadian nationals to leave Lebanon. For the future, however, there are still many questions to be answered, and that is what I am going to focus on this evening. Unfortunately, we do not have all the answers, but there are many questions.

I am going to start with a brief overview of the situation. Based on current estimates, between 40,000 and 45,000 Canadian nationals are in Lebanon. We know that about half of them, or 20,000, have registered with consular services. About 4,000 have registered with Global Affairs Canada to be kept informed of their options for leaving the country. We know that flights currently chartered by Canada are not 100% full, not at maximum capacity. We know that some people are going in the opposite direction, leaving Canada to go to Lebanon.

As members of Parliament, we likely have a lot of questions. After all, we do not have the same expertise or knowledge of the terrain as Global Affairs Canada or the Canadian Armed Forces may have. I hope that what I am going to speak to this evening will elicit a reflection and bring forward factors we had not considered before. So much the better if tonight's debate raises additional ques-

tions or sheds light on blind spots that we may not have known about.

• (2010)

I was talking about the issue of the channels of communication. Is there a contingency plan in the event of telephone or Internet outages? Has any thought been given to getting media outlets that are still active on the ground in Lebanon to inform Canadian nationals about the options that are still available for leaving the country?

What is happening with the Canadian embassy in Lebanon? As we know, in Kabul, the government was quick to close the embassy, which left many individuals without access to important consular services. What is currently happening with the embassy, and what are the plans for the future?

What is being done for Canadian nationals whose travel documents or whose family member's documents are not up to date? Are there any options for fast-tracking these applications? We know that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is not exactly the most efficient machine in the world. Has any thought been given to a contingency plan for people who might not have travel documents?

As I mentioned, at the moment, the supply of charter flights exceeds the demand, but this could change. Is there a contingency plan for increasing the number of charter flights if necessary? Is there any flexibility? Above all, is there a list of people who will get priority for flights if the situation changes and demand ends up exceeding supply? As we saw with the Afghanistan evacuation, the issue of prioritization became a problem that we will be talking about for the foreseeable future.

Do we know whether the cost of airline tickets is stopping some families from flying out? We know that Canadian citizens are being asked to pay about \$445 to board. Payment plans are available, but how effective are they? We know the economic situation in Lebanon. Does a family of four, for example, have four times \$445 at their disposal to buy airline tickets right now?

Right now, commercial flights are less and less available. More and more flights are being cancelled. Is there a contingency plan in case there are no more commercial flights? There is the possibility of a maritime evacuation. That was raised. However, what is the current state of the port of Beirut? We know that there have been many logistical problems since the explosion.

Are the plans for a maritime evacuation to Cyprus, which took in approximately 60,000 people in 2006, ready?



S. O. 52

We went from 50 soldiers on the ground to 200, but is it enough? Do we have the capacity to deploy more troops if necessary? For example, the United Kingdom has currently mobilized 700 people to potentially evacuate 4,000 to 6,000 British nationals who are in Lebanon. We see that the U.K.'s proportion is much higher than Canada's. Is our mobilization capacity adequate?

Are permanent residents and Canadian citizens the only ones who can leave the country? For example, would someone who has a mother, a spouse, or a child who is not yet a citizen be allowed to leave the country with the rest of their family? This could affect their decision to leave the country. How much is Canada co-operating with other countries? Australia, for example, already has a maritime evacuation plan and the capacity to transport 1,000 people a day on commercial cargo ships. Do we have partnerships with these countries, or with France, for example, which already has military ships in the region and has had an evacuation plan for several months, but has just not issued an evacuation order yet? Is Canada working with these countries?

Finally, not everyone still has family or a home base in Canada or Quebec. Is there a plan in place to welcome these people who have left their country? This can also affect their decision to leave a country in a state of war.

In short, many questions remain unanswered. In the meantime, I would like to remind the House of the Bloc Québécois' attitude on this issue. On the one hand, we support the Minister of Foreign Affairs' calls for Canadian nationals to leave the country. We are asking citizens to do so as much as possible while they can. We pledge not to play needless partisan politics on the evacuation issue. Our speeches tonight show that we will keep a very close eye on this issue. We hope that we have offered some food for thought regarding what still needs to be done on the evacuation front. Right now, we are seeing only the tip of the iceberg, and unfortunately, the situation may deteriorate.

Above all, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our best wishes to the Canadian nationals and Lebanese population as a whole who are currently living through an appalling situation that they are not responsible for and that may deteriorate considerably in the days to come.

● (2015)

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Bloc for raising a lot of great questions about the evacuation and the role the Canadian Armed Forces will play. She and I work very closely together on the national defence committee and want to ensure that the resources and capabilities are there to support the evacuation of Canadians from Lebanon.

As someone who has constituents with family in Lebanon, I want to reiterate, as many colleagues have, that if people have family there who are Canadian citizens, they should come home and find a way out as quickly as possible.

Based on the recent information about UNRWA that the leader of Hamas, who was killed in Lebanon, was working for UNRWA,

does she believe that UNRWA should be defunded by the Government of Canada?

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset that I had no intention of playing partisan politics with the matter before us this evening.

However, since I am being asked the question, I will say that what is unfortunate when we start debating whether or not to cut funding to UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, is that, ultimately, the people who would be penalized by these decisions are the ones who need our help the most.

In this context, the very question may betray a certain lack of empathy for people in extremely delicate situations. In the context of the evening's debate, I might even say it is appalling, to say the least.

[English]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a lot of good questions about things the government needs to absolutely respond to.

My question brings this back to the civilians who are being hurt amidst all of this. I have been told that many Christian villages that have no evidence of Hezbollah leaders or activists within their borders are being devastated. I wonder if she has heard the same from some of her constituents and what she has to say about that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, fortunately I have not heard such accounts, but I know they are out there.

Unfortunately, this goes back to what I was saying earlier. Civilians are usually the first to be affected in a conflict. We have heard about the fact that the strikes are not surgical, and not just in Lebanon. There is always collateral damage. The term "collateral damage" used in the context of war is a euphemism. Unfortunately, the situation will likely escalate in the future. Conflicts harm the innocent and non-innocent alike.

I did not mention it this evening, but the Bloc Québécois has made a number of de-escalation proposals. We have called for a ceasefire in the ultimate aim of reducing the number of civilian casualties. Sadly, I am not necessarily feeling hopeful tonight. The context of the discussion we are having now does not suggest that the situation is likely to improve in the coming days.

S. O. 52

[English]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, immediately prior to coming to this debate, I was at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, where we are having hearings on the terrible situation in Sudan. The connection between those events and these events, and frankly much of the violence we see around the world, is the role being played by the Iranian regime, which is seeking to expand its control. It is now terrorizing the people of Lebanon through Hezbollah and the people of Palestinian territories through Hamas. It is terrorizing the people of Iran through its continuing control of Iran. It is present in Iraq, Yemen and many other places. We should have acted much earlier.

Does the member support listing the IRGC? Why was action not taken earlier?

• (2020)

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I was not at the committee that my colleague sits on. However, we heard similar things at the Standing Committee on National Defence about the state of the world. It is becoming a regional conflict with various implications. We can think of the role that Iran plays in the war in Ukraine. Everything that is happening right now is sprawling.

It would be a mistake to think that we can only look at this through the lens of two countries that are firing at one another. It is much bigger than that and it involves answers that cannot be binary. It is multifactorial. We cannot allow ourselves to take such entrenched positions, either. It is much bigger than that.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to be as eloquent and relevant as my colleague from Saint-Jean. She gave a bit of a preview of what the Bloc Québécois will be talking about this evening. We really want to set aside all partisanship in tonight's debate. This is an emergency debate on how we can have an impact on peace in Lebanon and on the populations affected there. I commend my colleague on her speech. I will try to live up to what she has just said.

I will begin this speech by expressing my sincere and profound thoughts for all the families and people affected by the conflict we are discussing this evening. Our thoughts are with the people affected, who are all too often the first victims of these armed conflicts. As my colleague from Saint-Jean said just before me, the situation in the Middle East is alarming and getting worse by the minute.

Following a week of heavy Israeli bombing, Israel has just launched a ground offensive in Lebanon, a targeted offensive as we understand it. Thus far, Israel's air strikes have reportedly killed nearly 1,000 people and wounded more than 2,770 people as of yesterday. Earlier today, the deaths of two Canadian nationals were reported. That is what we feared the most, that the conflict would flare up at the regional level. That obviously seems to be happening. Once again, the federal government is failing to show any leadership.

I will explain. As my colleague from Saint-Jean said a little earlier, in 2006, the federal government evacuated approximately

15,000 Canadians, mainly by sea. At the time, there were between 40,000 and 50,000 Canadians in Lebanon. This intervention by the Canadian government was criticized, not for the nature of the evacuation, but for the way in which the federal government contacted and informed nationals. In 2006, the Government of Canada relied on telephone lines and Internet messaging, while a large part of the country was without power. As for the telephone lines, we were told that they were in operation only on weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., which is bordering on indecency.

This poor choice of communication channels seems to be a recurring problem at the federal level when an international crisis is developing, be it an armed conflict or a natural disaster. We need only think of Haiti in 2010. It is as if the government does not learn from its mistakes.

The situation sadly unfolding before our eyes today is very similar to the one we saw during the evacuation of Afghanistan. I was on the Special Committee on Afghanistan in 2022. My fear is that Canada has not learned from its mistakes, as I just said. Once again, we are witnessing Canada's lack of leadership on the international stage.

At the risk of repeating myself and at the risk of repeating what my colleague said, I would like to say that last May, the Bloc Québécois proposed 10 measures to the Canadian government regarding the conflict in Gaza. They are as follows:

Reiterate Canada's support for an immediate ceasefire and the free flow of medical, food and humanitarian aid throughout the Gaza Strip;

Support the Arab League in its call for the creation of an international peace-keeping force to be deployed to the occupied Palestinian territories until a functional Palestinian state is established;

Adopt a full moratorium on the export of any potential military-use technology to Israel;

Apply Canada's sanctions regime to target Israeli ministers who are openly calling for crimes against humanity in Gaza and to target more extremist settlers in the West Bank;

Immediately exclude occupied territories from the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement in order to stop providing trade benefits to the illegal West Bank settlements, contributing to their economic prosperity;

Join the many countries that have recently recognized the Palestinian state by recognizing Palestine, while reiterating the support for a two-state solution;

Support the International Court of Justice and possibly the International Criminal Court to uphold international law and commit to arresting any person against whom an arrest warrant is issued and who may be on Canadian territory;

Reiterate that any deliberate obstruction of humanitarian access to Gaza is a war crime and will lead to Canadian sanctions against those responsible;

Develop and state a clear and predictable policy by Global Affairs Canada on Gaza;

Reiterate the rejection of Hamas and consider new sanctions against countries that provide logistical, financial or other support to that terrorist group.

Those are the Bloc's proposals.

• (2025)

We add our voice to those of the G7 countries that support the ceasefire proposal put forward by the United States and France, in the hope that a break in fighting will enable a diplomatic path to be found.

That said, this will require a sustained effort from Canada. The conflict is currently spreading to Lebanon, and Israeli air strikes are reaching as far as Beirut. Israel is scaling up its attacks and, according to many, is preparing for a ground invasion. Not only is it preparing, but it has already begun, albeit in a targeted manner. Even so, Israel is conducting ground operations in Lebanon. It is an alarming situation.

Many airlines have suspended their flights to Lebanon, which has greatly reduced the opportunities for many people, including Canadian nationals, to leave the country. According to Global Affairs Canada, there are 45,000 Canadian nationals in Lebanon, and evacuation efforts so far appear to be modest. Canada is apparently content to reserve seats on commercial flights. The federal government reported that it has reserved 800 seats on commercial flights, while, as I mentioned earlier, several airlines have cancelled their flights to Lebanon for obvious security reasons.

The Canadian government has reportedly negotiated an agreement with an airline to keep flights going, but if the airport becomes dysfunctional, I do not see how it will be possible to continue evacuating people by air. What is more, as my colleague from Saint-Jean said, Canadian nationals will have to pay full price for the reserved seats. Given the economic situation in Lebanon, that will not necessarily be easy, especially for large families. Since the Beirut airport is the only major airport in Lebanon, I am worried that many people will have to pay a lot of money and will still not be guaranteed a flight back to Canada. People will have to take the risk of paying and perhaps not being able to leave, which may make them reluctant to book flights to leave the country.

We also know that evacuation by ship could be an alternative, but only when ships are available, and we do not have any information about that. To make matters worse, Lebanon has been in the midst of an unprecedented socio-economic crisis since 2019. On August 4, 2020, an explosion devastated the city of Beirut and destroyed Lebanon's biggest port, which was also the main point of entry for the country's food imports.

I therefore have serious doubts about the ability to safely evacuate nationals by sea, given that the situation has only worsened since then. In a country already facing economic insecurity and a refugee crisis, now there are also air strikes and ground attacks.

As I said at the start of my speech, the situation is alarming and, as we have seen throughout the day, it has been steadily deteriorating. As these events unfold before our very eyes right now, my thoughts and, I believe, the thoughts of everyone in the House and those who are not here, but who sit here, are with the people who are currently living in fear, real fear. These are people who are all too often and sadly the first victims of armed conflict and who deserve to see us do everything in our power, as parliamentarians, to help them.

I urge all the parliamentarians taking part in this debate tonight to try as hard as they can to imagine a family currently hunkered down in an apartment in Beirut. I ask them to imagine a father and mother trying to protect their children. I doubt that they are aware that we are having this debate tonight. I urge all of my colleagues to think about these people and perhaps set aside some attacks that might let them score political points.

*S. O. 52*

Rather than do that, I sincerely call on all my colleagues, and without any animosity, to think of these people who fear for their children's lives. I think that we can answer some of the questions asked by my colleague from Saint-Jean today if we really want to. Can we work productively with these people in mind and try to have even a small impact, even if we are thousands of kilometres away from this conflict? Are we able to sit down together, work together and save lives? That is basically what should be our greatest concern tonight. I urge my colleagues to think this way and to think of those people who are currently fearing for their lives.

● (2030)

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague to be a strong defender of human rights and a very serious member of Parliament. His constituents are lucky to have him.

I spent today speaking to Edmontonians and Lebanese Canadians who are very desperate to get more information on how to get their loved ones out of Lebanon. Unfortunately, right now, a lot of the application process happens online. Their loved ones have no power and no Internet access, so they are not able to complete the forms. It is chaos. Their loved ones are in a war zone, and they are so desperate to get them out, but they do not know who to turn to.

The response of the government depends, as it always does in these war situations, upon a level of stability that is currently not available in Lebanon. I am wondering what my colleague thinks the government could do to help those individuals.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, with whom I have the pleasure of working on a number of international human rights files. I know how sincere and committed she is when it comes to human rights.

To answer her question, I hope that the government realizes just how urgent and alarming the situation is. I hope the government has listened to the speeches of all my colleagues in the House today. The questions that the member for Saint-Jean asked are relevant. If we have answers to these questions, we can help the people on the ground.

I worked with my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona on the Special Committee on Afghanistan. One of the recommendations in the committee's report indicated that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Global Affairs Canada should have a permanent emergency mechanism if a conflict erupts around the world.

*S. O. 52*

This mechanism has still not been put in place by this government, which promised to do so. It is not in place yet. The government should think about that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, I had the opportunity to connect with people representing the “we want to live” movement. This is a movement that should have gotten, and should still get, more attention and publicity. They are Palestinians living in Gaza who are opposing Hamas. In the summer leading up to October 7, there were significant protests of Palestinians speaking out against Hamas as part of the “we want to live” movement. They are saying that they do not want their lives to be instrumentalized in this violence. They want to be able to have normal lives where they are not constantly being instrumentalized in this struggle.

They have asked for the opportunity to not be under Hamas' oppression, to have safe spaces where they can start to build an alternative infrastructure of governance, without Hamas' oppression. I would be curious about this member's comments on that. Are there ways we could support these movements by supporting efforts to rid Palestinian territories of terrorist organizations such as Hamas?

● (2035)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, this is a question that I find a bit troubling because, in the same question, my colleague says that there is a group that is tired of being instrumentalized and wants to confront Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which I support wholeheartedly. These are people who have the courage to say things and who do not want to be instrumentalized.

Now, this evening, we are engaged in an emergency debate that calls on us to have an impact on peace in Lebanon and to do something about populations in danger, especially Canadian citizens in Lebanon. How can we help them get out of there?

What I have just heard is my colleague instrumentalizing a group for partisan purposes in a debate that has nothing to do with the question that I was asked.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that there are tens of thousands of Canadians at risk of death or injury in Lebanon. Why has this government not done what is necessary to prevent this invasion and this bombing?

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her question in French.

I think that the current federal Liberal government has failed in recent international crises. We are having a debate tonight, and there is a chance for them to do the right thing. They should seize this opportunity, listen to the proposals from the opposition parties and get to work.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Brampton Centre.

In light of today, I want to start my comments tonight by stating that Canada unequivocally condemns Iran's reckless attack against

Israel. This attack demonstrates yet again the Iranian regime's disregard for peace and stability in the region. It has put civilians at risk, forcing millions across countries into bomb shelters in search of safety, and it only seeks to further escalate the conflict. Israel has the right to defend itself and its people. Canada fully supports Israel's right to defend itself against this attack, and we call for the safety of all civilians in Israel and Lebanon.

We are only a few days away from the one-year anniversary of October 7, the day of the deadliest attack on Israeli soil. We continue to feel the immense pain and grief experienced by so many on October 7, and in the devastating 361 days since, when eight Canadians lost their lives at the hands of Hamas. We mourn their loss, not only as a Jewish community, but also as Canadians.

For 361 days, daughters, sons, sisters and brothers, mothers, fathers and grandparents have been held hostage in Gaza by Hamas. Their families, and we all, demand for them to come home. There can be no resolution without the return of the hostages.

On October 7, that tragic day, 1,100 lives were lost, and the loss of life every day since has been horrific. So many families have suffered in so many different parts of the world and in so many communities, including here in Canada. As Jon Polin, father of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, a member of my home community in Jerusalem, said so well, “in a competition of pain, there are no winners.” There is only the loss of loved ones.

We continue to call for all hostages to be released, for Hamas to lay down its arms, for international law to be respected, for civilians not to be used as human shields and for the escalating violence in the region to end. The escalation of violence today and over the last several weeks does nothing but further perpetuate the cycle of violence that harms everyone in the region.

The violence and attacks perpetrated by Hezbollah on Israeli soil are unacceptable, but we must remember that this is not a new front to this war. Lebanon has been held in the grips of Hezbollah for decades, impacting the lives of Israeli and Lebanese civilians for years.

Hezbollah is a terrorist organization backed by Iran. This horrific war and its escalation did not happen in a vacuum. Within days of October 7, Hezbollah began launching rockets into northern Israel, escalating the conflict, creating a two-front war and resulting in more than 70,000 Israelis being displaced. This escalation served to upend the lives of Lebanese civilians who live along its border. It created devastation and continues to disrupt the lives of Lebanese and Israelis alike.

It is not enough to say that the violence has to stop and that there needs to be a ceasefire, because if, at the end of this ceasefire and the cessation of violence, Hamas and Hezbollah are still armed, then we have gotten ourselves no closer to ending this cycle of violence. This is why a two-state solution is imperative. This is why recognizing terrorist organizations for what they are is critical to understanding that, in a multilateral world, these are not militias or state actors. These are terrorist organizations that do not play by the rules of what we recognize as a rules-based order. They put civilians at risk.

The cost they exact on civilian populations for their own agenda is what we need to recognize and fight against. They use the lives of civilians, of children and of families. They use their lives and the infrastructure in the homes they live in to wage a war of terror on civilians across the region. That the value of civilian lives is irrelevant in the terror they exact is what we need to recognize and address. The people of Lebanon deserve to live in peace and security, free from conflict and from Hezbollah's Iran-backed terrorism, as do Israelis and Palestinians.

• (2040)

The populations of the region deserve nothing less than our collective support as an international community to end this conflict. The only way forward is a safe and secure future for Israelis and Palestinians and a lasting two-state solution. On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, let us take pause in understanding what needs to be demanded in the context of a ceasefire. It is not as simple as demanding for the violence to stop. It is about ensuring that, in the days after, Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace, security and dignity because all civilians have a right to live within their homes and in their communities.

Tomorrow, Jewish communities will hear the sound of the shofar. It is blown every year to mark the beginning of the new year for all to hear. It is a spiritual awakening of a sort, but the shofar has also been known to be used as a call to war. As we head into the year of 5785, I want to wish for Jewish communities throughout the world that the shofar be blown as a symbol of peace, and that we no longer need the sirens of war. *Shana tova*, and may the new year bring peace and security for all in the region.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member about the role the Iranian regime is playing in instigating violence against Israel, against peoples throughout the Middle East and, of course, against the people of Iran itself.

Six years ago, the House passed a motion calling on the government to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. In fact, members of the government present that day voted in favour of the motion. However, it took six years for there to be any implementation of the motion. Unfortunately, in the intervening time, we have seen the further expansion of that regime's influence, the further empowering of terrorist organizations, which have continued to victimize people throughout the region and, in fact, here in Canada. We never got an answer from the government throughout that time on what its plans were.

In retrospect, does the member believe the government should have listed the IRGC much earlier and that more could have been

*S. O. 52*

done to limit its terroristic reach if it had been put on that terrorist list when the House initially voted to do so?

• (2045)

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks:** Mr. Speaker, I will simply say this: I do not deal in the world of hypotheticals. I deal in the world as it is, and for every decision to list a terrorist organization, there is a very careful and highly secure process of intelligence gathering and preparation that must be done. I trust the government to do that work to ensure that it lists every organization as a terrorist organization responsibly.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned that she does not deal in the world of hypotheticals. I would like to ask her a very non-hypothetical question.

As we speak, there are people in Lebanon who are not a party to the conflict and who are becoming victims of it. They may be wondering how they will be able to leave the country once they have made the decision to do so, regardless of their reasons for staying at this time.

Does she feel that her government has learned from the past? Does she have one priority area that the government should work on, in terms of evacuating Lebanese nationals when they request it?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks:** Mr. Speaker, as in any war situation, getting people out to safety is extremely difficult, as was mentioned by a number of members already this evening. Also, the decision to leave is hard. I grew up in war. I know how hard it is to leave family and loved ones and the place I cherished behind.

That being said, the government has been very clear for months that there was a fear of escalation in the region and for people from Canada who wanted to visit family back home to take pause on that choice, and if they made that choice, that they make plans to be able to leave. This conversation with Lebanese Canadians has been going on for months.

Nevertheless, we understand the responsibility to get civilians out who are Canadian. We are doing what we can, but at this point my understanding is there are still options to get out and we are assisting as much as we can. Can we do more? We can always do more. In a conflict zone, it is challenging.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to express my sadness and sympathy to the member. I know that she has family in Israel and that what she has suffered over the last number of months has been horrific.

*S. O. 52*

I also want to acknowledge that Jewish people, Palestinian people, Muslims and Arabs across this country have faced incredible racism and discrimination. Even within the House, the member has been a victim of discrimination and of horrific hate speech, in my opinion.

I want to give the member my sympathy and express my support for her.

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks:** Mr. Speaker, what is so special about this place is that we talk and debate. We do not always agree, and sometimes we do not agree quite strongly. At the same time, our job as parliamentarians is to build bridges in communities, to see others' pain and help in the process of healing and making our country stronger.

**Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the situation in Lebanon. The armed conflict is intensifying and widening. The first duty of any government is to protect its citizens from harm. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and her department have been asking Canadian citizens and permanent residents to leave Lebanon as soon as possible. For months, she has been warning that the war could expand. Beyond warnings, the minister and her department have also secured hundreds of seats on flights to safety for Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

The Minister of Immigration is also working hard to ensure that Canadian citizens and permanent residents in Lebanon whose documents are out of date will be able to renew their documents and fly out of the conflict zone.

Because of the war, the Canada Border Services Agency is issuing a temporary halt on removals to Lebanon.

According to the Global Affairs website:

Canada and Lebanon have strong ties. The Lebanese community in Canada includes between 200,000 and 400,000 people and an estimated 40,000-75,000 Canadians live in Lebanon. The relationship is strengthened by close cultural ties and common participation in La Francophonie.

Canada is represented in Lebanon by its embassy in Beirut and increased its diplomatic presence there in response to the crisis in Syria. Lebanon is represented in Canada by its embassy in Ottawa.

Since 2016, Canada has committed over \$475 million to support Lebanon's stability and resilience as it copes with the effects of the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and the catastrophic explosion at the Beirut port in 2020. Lebanon now hosts more than an estimated 865,350 Syrian refugees that have been added to the country's already existing refugee population, which also includes Palestinians, Iraqis and Kurds.

It goes on to state:

Between 2016 and 2022 Canada will have committed over \$4 billion [in] humanitarian, development, military, and stabilization and security assistance for the region, including Lebanon, with an emphasis on building stability, governance, and long-term resilience.

In the immediate aftermath of the August 4, 2020 explosion of the Port of Beirut, Canada provided \$30 million in emergency humanitarian assistance and early-recovery support, and then announced another \$20 million in August 2021 to support the economic recovery of Beirut. This funding has helped trusted partners address immediate humanitarian needs and is supporting efforts for early recovery and resilience.

It also states:

Canada's support of Lebanon's security and social stability includes projects that aim to reduce tensions between refugees and host communities under pressures, as well as community security projects that strengthen the capacity of local police services and the Lebanese Armed Forces to prevent and respond to conflict and violent acts of extremism.

I wish that the October 7 attack on Israel had not happened, that those innocent civilians had not been killed and that those innocent hostages had not been taken.

• (2050)

Netanyahu and his regime's focus has never been on making an effort to release hostages; it has been on destruction and the killing of over 40,000 innocent women and children. Now there is the expansion of the war to Lebanon, where over 1,000 people have been killed; we do not know how many more will be killed. Netanyahu and his regime have no respect for international and humanitarian laws. Despite the fact that allies have demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon, he has ignored every call.

Can members imagine being a Lebanese person currently living in Lebanon, which is suffering the worst economic collapse since the 19th century? The Lebanese lira suffered a 90% devaluation. There was the experience, in 2020, of the Beirut explosion disaster. The vast majority of Lebanese people and members of the Lebanese government remained neutral in the conflict that developed in the Middle East. We learned Lebanese history in school in 1967. Unlike some of our region's neighbouring countries, Lebanon maintained neutrality and did not get involved in the so-called Six-Day War.

In 2006, Lebanon experienced hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, in a conflict very similar to what has been happening over the past week. At the outset of the conflict, more than 1,000 Lebanese people had been killed, with more than 3,600 injured. Around a quarter of all Lebanon's inhabitants, close to one million people, have been displaced. The Israeli bombings have turned thousands of homes to rubble.

The resolution called for an end to hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah; the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, to be replaced by Lebanese and United Nations interim forces in Lebanon; and the disarmament of armed groups, with no armed forces other than UN forces and Lebanese military, south of the Litani River. It was unanimously approved by the United Nations Security Council on August 11, 2006. The next day, the Lebanese cabinet unanimously approved the resolution; the Israeli cabinet voted 24 to zero in favour of it.

The situation in Lebanon is devastating, and there is a fear of expanding conflict in the region. We demand an immediate ceasefire to save innocent lives in Lebanon, Gaza and Israel.

• (2055)

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with the elimination of Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon last week, in the member's view, is that justice for the Lebanese people?

• (2100)

**Mr. Shafqat Ali:** Mr. Speaker, in my view, when innocent lives are lost, we should not play politics. We should call for an immediate ceasefire to save innocent lives.

It has been a year since 1,200 Jewish Israeli people were killed by terrorists, and we all condemned that. Over 40,000 innocent people in Gaza have been killed, and now it is Lebanon. We should call for an immediate ceasefire so that innocent people do not lose their lives.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague began by talking about the importance of working with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, to renew the travel documents of Lebanese nationals who would like to come here. However, it seems to me that it is a bit late in the process, especially when we know how slow IRCC is in general.

Knowing that this conflict could unfortunately continue to spread to other countries, should IRCC not already be sending messages to countries where there is a risk of a flare-up? Should we send messages to Canadian nationals to suggest they renew their documents? Should we prioritize applications for documents from places where the situation is expected to continue to escalate?

[English]

**Mr. Shafqat Ali:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question.

Since the conflict started in Gaza, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been reminding people, issuing warnings numerous times, that Canadians and permanent residents should not travel to the conflict zones and that Lebanese Canadians living in the region should come to Canada as the conflict might expand. The IRCC and the Minister of Immigration are working hard to bring Canadians and permanent residents in Lebanon and in conflict zones safely to Canada.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, following up on the question of my friend from Winnipeg, one thing I have noticed in the debate tonight is that there is a certain lack of specificity in responses or explanations from some members. I understand the desire of people to express a hope for peace and a desire for greater collaboration and goodwill, but the way we operationalize that is through specific suggestions. Members talk about Israel having a right to defend itself and about wanting peace and to hold terrorist groups accountable, but members are not willing to specify exactly the mechanics of that.

What does it mean for Israel to have a right to defend itself, for example, in practice.

**Mr. Shafqat Ali:** Mr. Speaker, Israel has a right to exist and defend itself. At the same time, Israel has to live with its neighbours in peace and let them live with dignity. Israel has no right to violate international law and humanitarian law.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, news broke today of another terrorist attack in Tel Aviv. More than 200 missiles were launched into Israel from Iran, with sirens sounding in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and in every major city across the country, as nearly an entire population sheltered in place. There is no better time than tonight to talk about the brutality of the Iranian regime, the most destabilizing force of evil in a region and a puppet master for the proxy armies that have wreaked havoc on millions of

*S. O. 52*

innocent people in Gaza, in Lebanon, in Iran and, of course, in Israel.

The attack appears far bigger than the last one in April, and it should be the clearest of indications that western values, peace and security, and the stability of the entire region are all at risk because of the fundamentalists who have for a generation taken Iran back into the Stone Age. Over the last number of weeks, they were deeply wounded, they were humiliated and they were finally weakened.

It should have been very simple to state unequivocally that Israel, especially on a day when millions were forced into shelters and innocent civilians were killed in a terrorist attack, had the right, the duty and the responsibility to defend itself. It should be easy to unequivocally state that this country should fight to eradicate terror. Instead, we have a foreign minister who is not just naive about terror but outside of her depth on almost every conversation since and before October 7. Quite frankly, it is humiliating for her and humiliating for the entire country.

Instead of giving a comment on fighting terror, her words were the following:

These attacks from Iran will only serve to further escalate in the region. That is why I have been in contact with my Israeli counterpart this morning. I have been in contact with many G7 foreign ministers, as well as Arab countries' foreign ministers.

This is a very dangerous time for the Middle East, and we need to make sure that this war stops.

She went on to tell reporters outside of this place:

We need to make sure that there is no escalation. Of course, Israel needs to be able to protect itself and that's why we'll continue to support its security and we'll support, of course, through the iron dome.

She continued:

At the same time, we need to make sure that parties sit down and the war stops, because we can see that what will happen (is)—there will be even further escalation, more innocent civilians including women and children dying. And that's what I said at the UN yesterday. We need this war to stop.

If we are to understand this, the minister's position now is that Israel can intercept hundreds of incoming ballistic missiles from Iran, but that is exactly where the defence stops. Israel just needs to accept that these attacks happen and that its technological superiority can continue to provide 100% coverage. She is unconcerned with the terror of Hamas and Hezbollah and the mullahs in Iran and only capable of repeating these talking points, which have received high praise from some in her caucus. They have received confusion from others, embarrassment from some. The minister was also thanked by Hamas, a terrorist organization that the country was once unequivocal about wanting to defeat.

She went on to talk about a ceasefire on the day of a major escalation from Tehran. As for her calls for the supposed 21-day ceasefire that the G7 and some Arab countries were touting last week, it is worthwhile to remember, because nobody has said it in the House, that this ceasefire negotiation did not include any of the belligerent actors involved, the ones responsible for the ongoing terror attacks. They themselves were not in the ceasefire talks. It was a ceasefire proposal that did not involve anyone who was actually fighting.

*S. O. 52*

This is the minister who at the UN managed to offend even our most ardent allies of Canada with her inconsistent hum of moral equivalency, her incomprehensible message and the very fact that Canada, at the highest levels, speaks from both sides of its mouth. It is the same minister who, alongside the Minister for Mental Health, the member for York Centre, was proudly photographed caressing the hand of a prolific terrorist and Holocaust denier in the 19th year of his four-year mandate, who set up a martyrs' fund to reward those who killed Jews.

• (2105)

The member for York Centre demanded an apology from members of this House, and she will never get an apology from any member on this side given her dangerous, sanctimonious hypocrisy after she posed for pictures with terrorists instead of denouncing terror. I think her constituents deserve the apology, and I am almost certain that no apology will ever convince anyone from her riding to make her a member of Parliament again.

The Prime Minister came to Jewish communities after October 7. We are almost a year from that date. He and members of the Liberal Party stood tall and promised full support. He gave them his word. What have we seen since? We have seen protests targeting innocent people in Jewish neighbourhoods, Jewish businesses and Jewish places of worship.

They are not protesting Israel. They are not protesting the Government of Israel. They are not even protesting MP offices. They are intimidating Jews, complete with anti-Semitic slogans, flags, chants and banners, in neighbourhoods, in front of synagogues and in front of a seniors home right here in the nation's capital just last week. There was silence from MPs.

We have seen new lows in cancel culture, as Israeli authors and artists are deplatformed, as universities call for ideological purity to promote Hamas talking points, as IDF veterans are shamed and as the leader of one of Ontario's largest unions gets to keep his job while celebrating "resistance" in the Middle East. We all know what that means. His watermelon army of radicals enjoys impunity of the worst anti-Semitism that I have seen in my lifetime in any labour movement.

We have seen unprecedented acts of physical violence too. We have seen them at synagogues and schools in Toronto, synagogues and schools in Montreal, and cities from coast to coast, from Vancouver to Fredericton. This has gone beyond graffiti, which we have all unfortunately gotten used to. It has turned into firebombs. It has turned into bricks through buildings. It has turned into gunshots from guns.

Where has the Prime Minister gone? As the headlines pile up one after another and stories get more and more outrageous, there is nothing except silence and maybe, if we are lucky, the weakest of platitudes, with him trying to say something and nothing at all, all while anti-Semitic hate crimes doubled in less than a year. It is 2024 and they are up by 250%, and the Jewish community has suffered 70% of all religious-based hate crimes despite making up less than 2% of the population.

The Prime Minister is nowhere to be found. His foreign minister cannot muster a coherent thought. His ministers are terrified of giv-

ing even the most basic condemnation. That is on him. He and his government lack the courage to speak out unequivocally and denounce what is happening right now.

There is a lack of courage to take new measures to protect our country by truly banning the IRGC agents who are still here through Samidoun and by properly vetting those who have been caught right before they committed a terrorist attack, either right here in our country's biggest city or south of the border in New York. The government awarded citizenship to someone it arrested on terror charges.

The government lacks the courage to do the bare minimum, such as enforcing the laws in our Criminal Code, all while it denies security funding to the most vulnerable synagogues and community centres, with excuses of red tape or, frankly, incompetence. We have known for a long time that the Prime Minister and his MPs lack any conviction at all, but never has this lack of conviction been more costly and put more people at risk than right now.

The Prime Minister is playing politics because he is out of gas on everything else. He is playing politics with the gravest threat in the Middle East's security in a generation. He is playing politics with the biggest challenge to Canadian religious freedoms since the Holocaust. Let me tell members how he does it. He sends one group of MPs to say one thing to one community and sends another group of MPs to say something else to another community.

• (2110)

He gets members, like the ones for Mount Royal and Eglinton—Lawrence, to put out strongly worded tweets to say all the right things to try to cover up the failures at the top, while being shoved in a back corner of Parliament. Meanwhile, members like the one for Scarborough Centre call for an unequivocal embargo and actively parrot anti-Israel talking points. Two different MPs give two different messages to two different communities.

The Prime Minister sends ministers to denounce UNRWA and announce that the Liberals stopped Canadian funding, but then they quietly resume funding just months later with millions of tax dollars. They cannot even take a stand to condemn the immunity for UNRWA employees who participated in literal terrorism. Let us not forget their impeccable timing to reaffirm their unwavering support for UNRWA, just as UNRWA publicly admitted that Fateh Al Sharif, the Hamas leader in Lebanon, was also running an UNRWA school and heading its school union. He was just buried in Hamas regalia, in case anyone missed it.

At what point does the Liberal government move UNRWA from the willful ignorance column to the willing co-conspirator column and stop sending Canadian tax dollars that are funding terror? The Liberals are doing so because they lack the courage. Like I said, they lack the conviction to do what is right instead of doing what is popular.



*S. O. 52*

They lack the fortitude to stand with our allies through fire and water instead of just freeloading as usual. They lack the moral clarity to stand with the Jewish community, not just when it is easy but also when it is difficult. There is a steep price to pay for this and for our reputation abroad as it continues to crumble in the face of another equivocation, another reversal and another backtrack.

We were once the country that took Juno Beach, that served in Korea and that brought peace to countless nations. We are the country now that cannot even honour its basic commitments and that sends a foreign minister who has a basic understanding of the threats in the region to any podium where the people in the audience are not questioning her own capacity and the words coming out of her own mouth.

It is a steep price to pay for those living in the Middle East as they continue to live under the thumb of oppressive regimes like Hamas and Hezbollah, as they continue to wait for their loved ones to come home and as they continue to yearn for peace and freedom. However, it is also a steep price to pay for the people living here in Canada.

It has not been this hard to be a Jewish Canadian for a very long time. How could it not be when one cannot hang a mezuzah on the door of their home or the door of their university dorm? Frankly, in almost every Jewish neighbourhood, that is happening. How could it not be hard when one cannot wear a kippah without being followed, verbally harassed or even spit on in this country? How could it not be when one goes to synagogue and finds out, again, that it has been vandalized? How could it not be when one sends their kids to a Jewish school and cannot trust that they are going to come home at the end of the day?

These are not just attacks against the Jewish community; they are attacks against everyone. When the inherent rights of religious freedom, speech, assembly or just plain dignity are denied to one group, it is very easy for people to deny them to another group. When we turn a blind eye to injustice happening here at home, it persists and it gets worse.

My parents came to this country for freedom, and I am so glad they did. Millions of others came to this country for freedom. However, if they saw the anti-Semitism here today, I wonder whether they would make that same decision, because it has been taking place in this country for far too long. It is not hyperbole; it is a real thing that is happening, and the other side better wake up.

I get emails from constituents telling me, "I want to stay in Canada, but I don't know if I can anymore." They tell me that freedom, the very essence of our country, is in great peril. They are actually scared, in 2024, as Jews in this country. When we lose freedom, we lose something much bigger than ourselves. It is not too late to get it back, but it is going to take far more effort than the window dressing and the posturing that the government has put forward so far.

• (2115)

Since the members of the NDP have become unrecognizable in their pursuit of division in this country and their lack of respect for western democratic values, and since they are unable to muster even the courage to stand on the side of allies' broader requests to

discuss the carnage in Lebanon, with barely a mention of Hezbollah, let us go through a timeline so they can join us in the real world.

October 7, 2023, was Hamas' attack on Israel, the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Hezbollah immediately escalated the aggression, launching more than 9,000 missiles, rockets and drones on northern Israel, which has been evacuated for the better part of a year. After doing the bidding of the terrorists, on July 27 an attack on Druze children by Hezbollah occurred in the northern Golan Heights. A rocket fired by Hezbollah struck a soccer field where children were playing; it killed twelve teenagers and injured dozens more.

In response to these attacks, Israel has now launched the largest military campaign against Hezbollah since 2006. The operation targets Hezbollah's military infrastructure, aiming to significantly degrade the group's capabilities. We used to be on the side of fighting terrorism, and in this part of the House, we still are.

That brings us to the elimination of one of the most prolific terrorists that ever was, ending a 30-year reign of terror when he dragged his country into one war after another. He was indiscriminate in his terror against Israelis, Americans and thousands of Lebanese and Syrians during his bloody rule, and he enjoyed very little support from his Arab neighbours, the Arab League, the U.S., the EU and Canada, which designated him and his group as terrorists.

To watch the flags fly in the streets without a peep from any member of the House is, frankly, unforgivable. To watch members of the House stand in rallies alongside Hezbollah flags is unforgivable. No one wants to see the loss of life anywhere; it is why we are here talking about this. However, it must be said in this debate that the rulers of Hamas and of Hezbollah, and the tyrants in Tehran, are the cornerstone of suffering, and they must come to an end.

The people of Lebanon, the people suffering in Gaza, the hostages still in the grips of the barbaric terror, and the brave Iranian people who have taken to the streets to weaken the regime should be the people we seek to fight for. This regime is responsible for stoning women in soccer fields and for throwing gay people off roofs. To watch members of Parliament line up at rallies where its flag is being flown is, frankly, unforgivable.

We should not be focused on appeasing the tyrants, not here and not anywhere. We should not be worried about placating the violent, spiteful mob of dictators, murderers and the forces of hatred in power in the Middle East. However, it is what this country has come to; that is what we are doing right now. It is a shame, and it will change the day we elect the member for Carleton as the next prime minister of this country.

S. O. 52

• (2120)

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Thornhill can have her own version of the truth, but she cannot change the truth. Earlier tonight, she tweeted something that took a clip out of what the Minister of Foreign Affairs had said at a press conference and cut it off at only a few seconds. It was a shameful act of misinformation and disinformation.

The minister did call for de-escalation in the situation, as Canadians have all called for, but she also said immediately thereafter that we support Israel's right to protect itself against the attacks. Why did the member cut that part to try to foster division in this country, when we are supposed to heal this country?

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, there is not one person on that side of the House who can explain to me what they mean by Israel's self-defence. What does it mean when they say that Israel can defend itself? This is the same party that has cut off military aid to Israel and military aid to the Iron Dome.

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

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, come on, he had his turn.

Does Israel get to defend itself in using the Iron Dome, and it stops there? The foreign minister cannot answer that question. No one on the other side can answer that question, and as soon as they do, I am sure Canadians can know the truth.

**The Speaker:** Again I would like to remind all members not to take the floor until they are recognized to do so. This is a way we can make sure we have maximum participation by members and also have pointed, passionate, but in the end parliamentary, debates.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

• (2125)

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I think we all agree. I do not think anyone wants to stand with dictators. We prefer to stand with the people and celebrate when dictatorships are overthrown.

That said, I am trying to understand what will change when the member for Carleton becomes prime minister and the government is Conservative, as my colleague said. I am trying to understand exactly what that will mean. Besides saying that we stand in solidarity either with the people or with dictators, I am looking for something concrete.

There was a not-too-pleasant time when the U.S. government was made up of what were called neo-conservatives under George W. Bush, and it said that democracy had to be imposed on other countries by force. That had catastrophic results in Iraq.

Now, what concrete proposal do the Conservatives have to provide some substance in their agenda?

[*English*]

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, the people of the region, the people of Lebanon, the people of Syria and those who have tak-

en to the streets in Iran not only for the last two years since the death of Mahsa Amini but for the last 45 years as the fundamentalists have ruined that country and taken them back to the Stone Age, are the ones who want change. To listen to members of the government apologize for the tyrants, the terrorists and the murderers is, frankly, beyond this country. It is shocking.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member's speech referenced that there is an awful lot of anti-Semitism across this country. That is undoubtedly true and something that every member of the House is appalled by. We should be doing everything we can to limit all anti-Semitism, anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia and all the sorts of discrimination we are seeing increase exponentially right now.

However, I have to say that I was in the House when a member of a Conservative Party used Hezbollah slurs and talked of pagans when addressing an Israeli Canadian member of Parliament. If that is not anti-Semitism and appalling behaviour from the Conservative Party, I wonder whether the member would find that appropriate if it had been directed at another member of the House of Commons.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, we have talked about anti-Semitism. We have talked about the attacks on churches, mosques and gurdwaras. We say in the House that no matter when people came to this country, what language they speak or what colour their skin is, there is no room for this. There is no room for the hatred, and we want to ensure that Jews are part of the story and the denunciation of hate. So far we have seen none of that from the government or from anywhere else.

Members do not have to ask me. I represent one of the largest Jewish constituencies, but I have become a voice for the many people in this country who email me every single day about being terrified of living in this country. It is happening because of the actions of the government and its coalition partner that are driving division in this country.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Thornhill is among the fiercest of voices in Jewish communities. Hundreds of ballistic missiles terrorized millions of Israelis today; can the member say how has this impacted Jewish life in Canada?

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, the impacts were clearly laid out in my speech. As we approach the anniversary of October 7, we will hear from a chorus of voices, Jewish and non-Jewish, that cannot believe what has happened in their country, voices of Canadians who love this country but do not recognize it anymore. It is because of the divisive rhetoric and tens of positions the government has taken, saying one thing to one community and another thing to another, that this is happening.

*S. O. 52*

• (2130)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague from the Conservative Party. We have worked together on a number of files. I simply want my colleagues to ask themselves one question. We are having an emergency debate this evening. Maybe there are people in Lebanon who are waiting to see what solution we come up with to try to get them out of the region. They fear for their children, their wife, their husband, their parents. They are Canadian citizens.

Should we not set partisan attacks aside for this evening and come up with some meaningful proposals for the people watching us, who are afraid they will not be able to leave Lebanon right now since there is an armed conflict going on that puts their children's lives at risk? Does my colleague have an answer to these questions?

[*English*]

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, as the government indicated, Canadian citizens who are in Lebanon should seek an immediate way out. I am not sure we heard any solutions from the government beyond that. However, I suspect the member could ask the government, when the Liberals have their next round of speeches.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I am asking my colleague the question because I do not have any answers from the government. I asked these same questions and I did not necessarily get a response. This is what I would like to ask my colleague, because I know that she is someone who makes constructive proposals. I would like to know if she has any solutions to propose to help these people who need help right now. They need help. That is why we are having this emergency debate.

I would like to know if my colleague has any proposals for the government or solutions for these people.

[*English*]

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, as I said, Canadian citizens should leave Lebanon now.

I can offer solutions to what the government could and should have done since October 7. It should have listed, six years ago, the IRGC as the terrorist group that it is. It should ensure that every single one of those terrorists is sent out of this country. We know there are 700 here who still roam around in our communities.

After the incursions into Israel today, at no time in history has it been more important to show Iranian Canadians and those fighting in the streets for freedom in Lebanon that they are on the side of freedom against tyranny. There is no time in history when the government should have taken this more seriously.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague made one observation that I want to take particular note of, and that is about the constant mixed messages we get from the government. She spoke about different members bringing different messages to different communities. It is worse than that. We have ministers and parliamentary secretaries

giving contradictory explanations of the conflict here in the House, even tonight.

It is clear that the government cannot actually get a handle on taking any consistent position or defining the positions that it has taken. It is simply trying to have a kind of management of diversity of opinions on this without reference to any clear principles. I wonder if the member could reflect on what that does for Canada's credibility when the Government of Canada is literally taking contradictory positions in the course of tonight's debate and in general.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, the government has taken contradictory positions since the beginning of this, starting on October 9 when the Prime Minister stood with the Jewish community, saying all the right things.

He sent one group of MPs into synagogues and community centres to say all the right things about how the Liberals support one side of this conflict. Then he sent another group of MPs into mosques and other locations within other communities to say the exact opposite.

It is not an issue of principle; it is an issue of—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume the debate.

The hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Halifax West.

Just over 11 months ago, we had an emergency debate on Gaza, and now here we are again in another emergency debate as this conflict continues to escalate, from Gaza to the West Bank and now to Syria and Lebanon. I said it then and I say it again now: There must be a ceasefire. The violence must end.

This is a very dangerous moment in world history that threatens to pull in more countries and put more innocent civilians at risk. I am very worried about this continuing pattern of escalation. From the start, my heart and my worry has been with the innocent civilians. The innocent civilians in Gaza, in the West Bank, in Lebanon and in Israel want no part of this war. They just want to be able to live their lives, to make a living and to raise their children without the fear of bombing, rockets, missiles or ground invasions. This should be the right of every person, no matter where they live or call home.

I visited the West Bank in January, and I met small children who go to bed every night fearful of sniper bullets. I saw the bullet holes near their bedroom windows. No one should have to grow up like this.

Scarborough Centre is home to a vibrant Lebanese population, and I have been on the phone and at in-person meetings with them nearly constantly over the past week. They are beside themselves with worry for their loved ones back in Lebanon. Communication with them has been spotty and unreliable. As these members of my community watch the news of days of Israeli bombing that has killed hundreds, they hold their breath, waiting for a message from their loved ones to know if they are alive or not.

*S. O. 52*

No one should be forced to live with this fear. No people, in any country, deserve this. Community members told me of one family in Lebanon who drove from the south to Beirut with their baby and small children, looking for safety. Israeli bombs hit the road ahead of and behind them. They say the children will forever be scared by this experience. They tell me schools are being used as shelters, with people gathering mattresses, food and water.

With the news of today's missile attack by Iran, the pattern of escalation continues and the danger for the innocent people of the region increases. I condemn all attacks that target innocent civilians.

This conflict did not begin 11 months ago. These are not the first bombings of Gaza or Lebanon. These are not the first rocket or missile attacks against Israel. The roots of this conflict are deep, and they must be addressed substantively.

However, what must be abundantly clear is that Israel's actions are not making anyone safer: not the people of Palestine, not the people of Lebanon and not the people of Israel. Instead, this widening conflict is only making everyone more unsafe. The pattern must end.

In December, Canada called for a ceasefire in Gaza. Last week, Canada joined the United States, the European Union and nine other allied countries in calling for a ceasefire in Lebanon. Unfortunately, last week's call for a ceasefire has been ignored, as was the one in December. Repeating the same thing that has failed again and again, and expecting different results, is a strategy proven to fail. It is time to move beyond statements; it is time for action.

Canada must implement a clear and unambiguous two-way arms embargo. No Canadian-manufactured weapons should be used to kill any innocent civilians, and there must be no loopholes, such as shipping weapons via the United States.

I welcome the recent comments by the global affairs minister regarding an arms embargo, but I am asking the government for a clear statement that brokers no confusion: a clear and unambiguous two-way arms embargo with no qualifications, exceptions or asterisks for existing contracts.

• (2135)

We must go further still. Calling for a ceasefire and an arms embargo is the least Canadians expect.

Let us look at the on-the-record, public comments of Netanyahu and his cabinet, who have a habit of saying out loud what would ordinarily be kept quiet. On Israeli TV, education minister Yoav Kisch said Lebanon and Hezbollah are indistinguishable, "Lebanon will be annihilated" and the people of Lebanon will pay the price. That was the latest in a pattern of disgusting and dangerous comments by ministers in the Netanyahu cabinet. Deputy Speaker Nissim Vaturi made a call to "wipe Gaza off the face of the earth" and added that "Gaza must be burned." He went on to say, "There are no innocents there [in Gaza]", and, referring to the Palestinian people, he said, "I have no mercy for those who are still there. We need to eliminate them". These are just a few of many examples. These are not the words of a government that Canada can call a friend or ally.

Canada cannot accept pro-genocide comments by any government. Officials advocating for genocide must be banned from entering Canada and there must be sanctions against a Netanyahu government that refuses to even consider peace.

Last week at the United Nations, Jordanian foreign minister Ayman Safadi said Arab and Muslim countries would guarantee Israel's security if Israel agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state. The proposal was dismissed outright by Netanyahu. He has shown no willingness to achieve a just peace that will bring safety and security for Palestinians, Israelis and Lebanese.

It is past time for Canada to recognize the Palestinian state. It does not need to be studied at committee. The government can stand up today, in this House or outside it, and declare that Canada recognizes the Palestinian state. This would show that Canada believes in the right of self-determination for all people, and it would send a clear message to Netanyahu's ministers who want to "wipe Gaza off the face of the earth": Canada will not stay silent in the face of genocide.

I also worry deeply about the impact this conflict is having on people here in Canada. It is tearing communities apart. I see the rising incidents of anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism and I worry about the walls being built between Canadians. This cannot continue. It is very important that we make sure this conflict does not further increase anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Semitism or Islamophobia here in Canada. This summer, I heard from Canadians, from Scarborough to Vancouver, on anti-Palestinian racism, and I heard very clearly that this needs to end.

I want peace for the people of Lebanon, Palestine and Israel. I urge Canada to use all of its diplomatic tools, including sanctions, to exert pressure for an end to this conflict. Too many innocent civilians have already paid with their lives. If this is allowed to continue, many more will die as well. It needs to end. We need to make sure innocent civilian lives are protected. We have seen enough.

• (2140)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, at the end of her speech, our Liberal colleague mentioned an openness to sanctions. So far, her government has done nothing like that.

Since she is obviously involved in discussions with her colleagues, I am curious to know why the Liberal Party has done nothing on sanctions so far.

[English]

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Madam Speaker, we have seen some sanctions on illegal settlers, but I agree that more needs to be done. I will continue to push for sanctions on those people who posted some of the comments I read in my speech about eliminating Gaza and eliminating the people of Palestine from the earth. It is very important to have more sanctions.

Action needs to be taken. Canadians are sick and tired of words. They need to see action and I will continue to push for that.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, at least 1,000 Lebanese people have been killed by Israeli bombs in the last few days. One million people have fled their homes. Almost 45,000 Lebanese Canadians currently live in Lebanon. They are worried and terrified. They want Canada to stand up and protect them, but where is Canada? It used to be a champion of peace and justice, including in the Middle East. Instead of that, it has been part of the problem, failing to stand up to Netanyahu's far-right, genocidal government. The Liberals have been speaking from both sides, playing politics with communities and people's lives.

Why has Canada failed to call for a permanent ceasefire now and to bring in a full, two-way arms embargo that does not include loopholes? Why has it failed to apply sanctions on Israel to the fullest extent and refused to recognize a Palestinian state? Why is it dithering while Lebanon is invaded and bombed?

The Lebanese people, Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live in peace. When will the Liberals take a stand for the peace and justice the world desperately needs?

• (2145)

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Madam Speaker, I agree. We have lost so many innocent lives. The people of Palestine are not Hamas, just as the people of Lebanon are not Hezbollah. They are like any one of us. They want to live their life. They want a place to call home, where they have safety and protection. They are our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters. It is very important that we stand up. Canada should play the role of peace-builder, for which it is known; make sure we ask for a ceasefire; and show through action that this violence needs to end, that this escalation needs to end. We have seen so many people lost.

I was in the West Bank in January; I was shocked to hear that there are no schools for the kids and that their books are being used to light fires to cook food.

**Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member opposite about the arms embargo she would like to see placed on Israel. If she is calling for this, it must be her position that everybody should put an arms embargo on Israel, which would leave Israel exposed and open to attack from its adversaries.

Is that the way the member would like to see the world go, to have no arms in Israel so that it cannot defend itself?

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Madam Speaker, I am concerned about the loss of innocent lives and for everyone. This needs to end. Canadian arms should not be used to kill innocent civilians, period. There

*S. O. 52*

should be a complete arms embargo, with no loopholes, to make sure that those arms are not used to kill innocent civilians.

It is really important that we stand up to save the lives of innocent civilians. We have never seen the number of casualties or killing of children that we have seen in the last 11 months. It is incumbent on us, as elected representatives, to stand and make sure that we fight for the rights of innocent civilians.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise tonight with sorrow and pain, and with a heavy heart, to join in this emergency debate and to use my voice. There is a political, social, economic and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Lebanon, my beloved homeland, a place that many thousands of families in my community have ancestral ties to.

As we stand here today, many fear that this is the beginning of a full-scale invasion that will lead not only to further loss of life in the Middle East but also, possibly, to a third world war. We are witnessing the destruction of buildings and infrastructure. Many civilians have died, including two Canadians; their sons say they were fleeing to safety on a congested highway. I grieve alongside their family and loved ones. These are unnecessary, avoidable deaths. These people should be with us today.

According to Lebanon's acting Prime Minister, the number of displaced Lebanese people is nearing one million, the largest number the country has had to handle. We know that there are tens of thousands of Canadians in Lebanon, and that is why the minister and the Government of Canada have been urging Canadians to leave Lebanon for almost a year now. I do not know how many times I have repeated that call in Halifax and beyond.

The escalation of war in the region would be catastrophic. Lebanon already has the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. The Lebanese people are at risk of losing their lives, livelihoods, sovereignty and independence. Canada must do what it did in 1956 and be a leader in establishing an international force to stabilize Lebanon and the region, act as a peacemaker and help address the displacement of people in the region. I presented a petition last week from hundreds of Lebanese Canadians calling upon the Government of Canada to do just that, and I know many thousands would echo them.

I have been clear and consistent in my own position, and this informs the advocacy I have been doing, particularly over the last number of months. We must call, and continue to call, for all parties to de-escalate. War will not help anyone achieve their objectives. We must protect civilians, the elderly, children and women. We must safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, a beautiful, diverse and proud nation that we should remember is smaller in size than Prince Edward Island, at 10,452 square kilometres. That number is etched in the hearts and in the minds of all Lebanese people. Growing up, we used to buy necklaces that have those numbers on them. We still do. This is our Lebanon; nothing less.

S. O. 52

I have been seeing posts all day today from people in my riding and people I know, and they break my heart. There are posts saying, “In Lebanon, we survive in pieces, yet somehow remain whole” and “It’s why we think of Lebanon as the land of heartbreak and hope intertwined.”

I was fortunate enough to live a number of years in Lebanon and attend elementary school there. In 1975, the fighting started, and then it escalated. Schools closed, medication and food started to get scarce, people were killed, roads were destroyed and the airport closed. My family was one of those who ended up escaping in the summer of 1976. It was devastating, and the journey was tough and rough; however, we were some of the lucky ones. Once we eventually reached Halifax, we had a home and my parents had an existing business. The trauma was real, but we were safe.

I learned the English language and, years later, was one of the top students as I graduated grade 12. I was a young girl of 10 years and 11 years of age at the time, and I blocked out a lot of the trauma in my older age. However, every time I heard about the deaths, the destruction and the hostilities in the region, the pain was there.

● (2150)

In 2006, I was a mother of four children ranging in age from five to 18. We had planned for over two years to take a family trip in July to see our family and homeland. Two to three days into our trip, missiles and bombs began to drop. As Canadians, we were terrorized. What would happen? How long would it last? We had work to return to. The kids had school. We had commitments. Countries called their nationals and told them, “Come, be evacuated by sea.” We were registered with the Canadian embassy and received the call. I will say, it was a nightmare.

That is the truth that I and many survived. This is the lived experience that informs me in this moment.

Canada has a duty to use every tool in our diplomatic tool box to prevent this destruction of lives; indeed, Lebanon is a country we have had strong relations with for over seven decades. We must make all diplomatic contacts possible to mobilize the G7 to respond to this crisis. We must facilitate negotiations at the UN Security Council. Canada must pressure all sides not to bomb the airport in Beirut, the port and the critical infrastructure that people there depend on.

In the face of a dire shortage of medication, Canada must respond with humanitarian aid and match donations to trusted organizations, such as the Lebanese Red Cross. The Lebanese ministry of health has released a list of needed medications, and I believe we must do everything we can to help ensure that supplies are provided and distributed as quickly as logistically possible. Over the weekend, new support was announced for Lebanon; I am grateful to the minister and his team for that.

I know better than most how disastrous an evacuation could be for Canadians in Lebanon. According to the Canadian embassy, Canadians are the largest foreign community in Lebanon. We must do everything we can to avoid reaching that point, but we must prepare for the possibility as well. I also believe we have a duty to streamline IRCC processes in order to assist Lebanese citizens who are currently in Canada but cannot return to their home country at

this moment. These are all points I have made in my conversations in the last several weeks, and I am grateful to have had the chance to discuss them personally with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and many colleagues.

As an MP who has publicly called for a ceasefire in Gaza for almost a year now, I was deeply relieved to see Canada stand with many of our allies to call for a 21-day ceasefire at the Israel-Lebanon border. This is a recognition of a growing consensus. Too many civilians have suffered because of the violence in the region, and it must stop. Lebanese and Israeli people deserve nothing less than peace and security. A ceasefire is the only way to reach that goal.

I would tell Canadians in Lebanon that they should please prioritize their safety. They should leave while flights are available; it is the safest and easiest way to do so. While Canada is not evacuating Canadians in Lebanon at this time, we are helping Canadians who want to leave to take advantage of available commercial flights. I recognize there are some who may not wish to leave. Canadians in Lebanon should register with the registration of Canadians abroad at our embassy in Beirut to receive critical information. We know that some airlines have temporarily suspended service, and that is why the Government of Canada has assisted with seats on airplanes. If people register as wanting to leave, they will get a call and have all that information. There is assistance if they need travel documents and cannot find them. There is a line to assist with the required electronic travel authorizations.

In closing, I want to thank the member who called for tonight’s debate. I want to say that the people of Lebanon do not want war. They want peace and security. May God bless Lebanon and this country.

● (2155)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I have been listening to the debate, and I am concerned that the Conservatives are equating a call for a ceasefire as an attack on Jewish people. Can the member explain that asking Netanyahu and the extremist government to be held accountable through things such as sanctions is not an act of anti-Semitism and that we are actually looking for peace?

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Madam Speaker, the Lebanese people believe that the road to peace exists in a diplomatic solution. De-escalation and diplomacy will lead to peace. We are losing far too many lives, far too many civilians, and there is far too much destruction. Lebanon has been destroyed and built, even in my lifetime, many times. Lebanon cannot withstand that anymore.

• (2200)

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I first want to take a moment to thank my friend and colleague from Halifax West for sharing her story.

I wonder if the member could elaborate a bit on the importance of the humanitarian aid that Canada is providing to Lebanon and what difference that is going to make in the lives of people in Lebanon.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Madam Speaker, my colleague represents Moncton, a city that also has a Lebanese population, and I know she shares the heartache and sorrow her constituents feel at this time.

Medication is critically needed at this time, as it always is any time there is fighting and war, but not more so than now. Many people have suffered quite a bit. There are stories of so many people losing their eyes and different limbs that the hospitals cannot cater to all of them. There are many crises where medication is needed. Food is becoming scarce and many people from the south have now started to move to other areas in parts of Lebanon. I have seen on Facebook, even in an area where I grew up, that churches everywhere have opened. They are bringing people in and collecting food, just like we do here as Canadians, but it is happening now throughout the country.

Humanitarian aid is desperately needed because many people want to stay in their homes and in their country.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Halifax West for her speech. I think it is good that the speeches we are hearing this evening are more human, especially from someone who has lived through situations like the ones currently facing the people of Lebanon. I think it is unfortunate that the parties are using this evening's emergency debate to sling mud at each other rather than debate forward-looking solutions.

I would like my colleague to comment on that. Is there anything, in her opinion, that should be a priority at this moment for all parliamentarians, like measures for evacuating Canadian nationals in Lebanon, information sharing, or mechanisms for fast-tracking travel documents? What priority would she like to mention this evening that would allow us to provide tangible help to the people who need it now?

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very important question. I think that as parliamentarians, we must work together to communicate with citizens here in Canada who have friends or relatives in Lebanon and to give a clear message. I was very happy to hear the minister say that today, 1,200 Canadians left Lebanon safely thanks to Canada's efforts. We also booked 100 seats—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Unfortunately, I must interrupt the hon. member as her time has expired.

S. O. 52

[English]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley has the floor.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have to say that the letter written by the NDP calling for this debate is completely one-sided and unfair to our great democratic ally and the only truly pluralistic society in the Middle East: Israel. Of course, I should not have expected anything different from the anti-Israel members over there on the NDP bench.

I will pause for a second to say that I will be sharing my time with the great member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

There used to be a time when the NDP actually cared about workers. In fact, one could say that the NDP's *raison d'être* was promoting workers' right. That simply is no longer true. The mantle of workers' rights has been taken up by Conservatives. Instead, the NDP is now the party of the radical left, which is obsessed, absolutely obsessed, with Israel and its right to exist. It feels like that is all its members ever think about. They wake up in the morning and think, "How can I attack Israel today?"

Last week, it was a ridiculous motion at the foreign affairs committee calling for a Palestinian state without negotiation or conditions. Today, it is this anti-Israel emergency debate, even as the tyrants of Tehran are raining down missiles on all of Israel—

• (2205)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Nunavut is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji,** I am taking offence to the way the member is accusing me of who I am being when I am not. I hope he could be asked to apologize for labelling me the way that he is.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is a question for debate. We have to proceed. I understand that it can touch on some sentiments, but that would be a question of debate.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

**Mr. Marty Morantz:** Madam Speaker, even as the tyrants of Tehran are raining down missiles on all of Israel, even while millions of Israelis, including children, from the north to the south in Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, are seeking shelter from the bombings and even while Canadian citizens are seeking shelter from the bombings in Israel, the NDP blames Israel.

It would be nice, for once, for Israel not to be blamed for being shot at. It would be nice, for a change, for Israel not to be labelled a villain for protecting itself. It would be nice if the House stopped living in a perverse inverted reality where Israel is framed as bad. It would be nice if Liberal members would stop saying one thing to one community and something completely different to another.

It would be nice if the House recognized that as a liberal democracy, Israel is on the front lines of protecting western values and our way of life. We should do all we can to help in this pursuit or, at the very least, not make it more difficult for them.

*S. O. 52*

On October 7, 2023, the evil death cult Hamas invaded Israel without provocation. It attacked multiple communities, as well as the Nova music festival. It targeted and murdered 1,200 innocent Israelis and took 250 more hostage, which is a war crime to be sure.

Since that time, Israel has been drawn into a conflict it did not seek and it did not want. Shortly after those attacks, the Iranian-backed terrorist group, Hezbollah, based in Lebanon, began raining down rockets on the people of northern Israel, over 11 months ago, forcing 60,000 Israelis to flee their homes.

These innocent Israelis were made refugees in their own land. I ask members to imagine if this happened in Canada. Imagine if tens of thousands of Canadians could not go back to their homes because of attacks like this by an invading force. How long would it take our government to respond? Would it be a day, a week, a month? Israel has waited patiently for almost a year.

Any sovereign nation has an obligation to protect its citizens, to protect its territory, to safeguard its security, and to defend itself and its citizens. Israel is no different. For this conflict to end, the aggressors, Hezbollah and Hamas, must immediately stop attacking Israel and lay down their weapons. Hezbollah is a terrorist group backed by the tyrants of Tehran.

The truth is, the Iranian regime, through its proxy, Hezbollah, is holding Lebanon hostage and deepening the suffering of its citizens. Canadian citizens have been warned for months to leave Lebanon immediately while commercial options exist. Conservatives reiterate that call and encourage Canadians to please get out now. As long as Hezbollah is raining terror down on Israel, as long as it is causing suffering among the people of Lebanon, it is not safe to be there. We call on the government to immediately provide a full and transparent update on the contingencies in place to evacuate Canadian citizens.

At home, since October 7, we have seen an unprecedented rise in anti-Semitism in Canada. B'nai Brith reports in its anti-Semitic incidents report that anti-Semitic incidents have increased by 109.1%. In 2022, there were 2,799 reported incidents, and in 2023, that number was 5,791, which is a staggering increase.

We see it in our streets. There are anti-Semitic mobs calling for death to Jews and death to Israel. Synagogues and schools have been shot at and vandalized. Jewish-owned businesses have been targeted, only because their owners are Jewish. Hospitals founded by Jewish communities have been targeted. The anti-Semitic Hamas death cult fan club has been going into Jewish neighbourhoods and demonstrating outside of seniors' homes. This madness must come to an end. It is just not the Canadian way.

What have the Liberals done to help? They have done nothing. In fact, they have made it far worse. When the conflict first began, they publicly scolded the IDF for ostensibly bombing a hospital in Gaza, when it did not do so.

● (2210)

The Liberals voted for and passed a motion in the House that punished our democratic ally Israel by blocking arms sales and rewarded Hamas by reinstating funding to UNRWA, even though its employees participated in the October 7 attacks. When that motion

passed, they got up and gave themselves a standing ovation. They were proud of what they had done.

It should go without saying that Canadian tax dollars should not be funding terrorism. The Liberals voted for a one-sided, anti-Israel motion at the United Nations. Even after Iran launched a direct attack with hundreds of missiles and drones, they did not remove the arms ban. Just today, Iran attacked Israel once more, but will they remove the arms ban? No, of course they will not. They say that Israel has the right to defend itself, but then they deny Israel the means to defend itself. With friends like the Prime Minister, who needs enemies?

All of these actions taken together signal to the anti-Semitic mob that the government gives them the green light. UNRWA directly contributes to the radicalization of Gazans. It has been known for years that UNRWA school material promotes the hatred of Israel and Jews and the culture of violence that has poisoned the minds of young Gazans and made a lasting peace so much more difficult.

What was not expected is that employees of UNRWA, which is part of the United Nations, participated in the slaughter, killing and kidnappings on October 7. Canada gives tens of millions of hard-earned tax dollars to UNRWA each year. Knowing about the anti-Semitic school materials alone should have been enough to cut it off, yet we are still paying. Just last week, a senior Hamas official in Lebanon was killed. He was also the head of the UNRWA teachers' union. A high-ranking UNRWA official participated in the October 7 slaughter, yet we are still paying. UNRWA should not be receiving tax dollars from Canada.

Last November, I travelled to Israel with some of my colleagues. I had the opportunity to meet with family members of those who were murdered and those who were taken hostage on October 7. I had the opportunity to see Kibbutz Kfar Aza, one of the communities that was attacked. I saw the burnt up, shot up blackened homes, a sight indelibly and forever etched in my mind. I promised those families that I would bear witness to their plight. I am doing that here right now, so I say that ours is a promise to keep, to bear witness and to work until every hostage is home and every Jew, no matter where they live, work or go to school, once again feels safe.

● (2215)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, that speech was incorrect and false on many fronts. I could go through some of it, but in the speech I gave earlier today and in the speech that my colleague from London—Fan-shawe gave, we were very clear that we are able to hold within ourselves the ability to be very critical and horrified by the actions of Hamas and Hezbollah, while also recognizing that Israel is not adhering to international law. Israel has killed 40,000 people in Gaza and razed Gaza to the ground.



The member speaks about the rising anti-Semitism we have seen across the country, and I have expressed my horror at that. However, he is part of the Conservative Party that has not only targeted Israeli Canadians within the House, but has had three members meet with the far-right, fascist party from Germany. This is the same party that has had members of caucus stand in front of Nazi flags. We have seen time and time again that the Conservatives refuse to take ownership for the people within their caucus who bring up things like Hezbollah pagers to people within the House. It is disgraceful.

**Mr. Marty Morantz:** Madam Speaker, that is a bit rich coming from a member who claims that Israel has the right to defend itself, but at the same time thinks that every country in the world should ban arms sales to Israel. We cannot have it both ways. Israel is on the front lines of protecting and defending western values and democracy. As a country that also values those things, we should be doing everything we can to help and, in any event, not get in the way of Israel doing what it needs to do.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley for his strong advocacy for Israel and his ongoing strength in speaking on behalf of the Jewish community in Canada.

Truth to power is key to making sure that we get to the bottom of this situation. The member clearly laid out that the ongoing attacks by organizations that we recognize as terrorist organizations, Hezbollah and Hamas, backed by the Iranian regime, is at the heart of the attacks on Israel, and Israel has the right to defend itself. He mentioned the issue of the government's self-imposed ban on any arms that support Israel. It is like asking a boxer to go into the ring and fight with one arm behind his back. We have to make sure that Israel, a democracy, a pluralistic society that respects human rights, has every tool in its ability to defend itself.

Does my colleague believe that with all the rhetoric coming from the NDP and the doublespeak coming from the Government of Canada, from both the Prime Minister and the Liberal foreign minister, at the heart of this is that they are anti-Zionists and that anti-Zionism is another term for being anti-Semitic?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I would warn the hon. member not to use those characterizations.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

**Mr. Marty Morantz:** Madam Speaker, I cannot get into people's heads and understand what is motivating them. I can only presume this from what they say and what they do. However, as I said in my speech, we cannot say that Israel has the right to defend itself and then advocate for every country in the world, including Canada, not to give it the means to defend itself. That in itself is inherently hypocritical.

As I said, I think it would nice if for once Israel could not be blamed for being shot at.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that we rise this evening to discuss this topic, which is creating a lot of despair. I come from the Thet-

ford Mines area, in the riding of Mégantic—L'Érable, where there are no large Jewish, Palestinian or Lebanese communities. However, there has never been so much talk about everything happening in the Middle East.

First of all, I must say that I very much appreciated the speech tonight by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills, our foreign affairs critic. I do not want to repeat his entire speech, but I invite Canadians and Quebecers to take a few minutes to listen to it. He reminded us what it was like for Canadians who lived through the two great wars. Countries were forced to take up arms to defend themselves and, more importantly, their people against deadly attacks from authoritarian states.

As I said, I do not often get a chance to talk about the conflict. The conflict is not a simple one. Many of the constituents I meet ask me to explain what is really going on in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and Iran, and what the roots of the conflict are. I do my best to answer their questions. It really is a lot more complex than it appears at first glance.

A year or so ago, I could have provided the beginnings of an explanation about the situation in the Middle East, but on October 7, 2023, that explanation broke down. The horrors of October 7 will be etched in the memories of Jewish communities around the world for a long time, as well as international rights advocates and all those who are directly or indirectly interested in the rich history of the Middle East. It will be etched in my memory for a long time.

On October 7, a liberal, democratic state came under attack. Israel was attacked by the terrorist group Hamas. Israel was invaded by 2,500 Hamas terrorists, who crossed a sovereign state border established in 1949 to kill more than 1,100 civilians. Over 1,100 people died. These poor people were not killed by accident or as collateral damage. They were systematically, deliberately targeted and murdered by the terrorist group Hamas. They were slaughtered. On October 7, entire families were executed, innocent babies and children were killed, together with mothers, fathers and young people. Imagine parents in Canada sending their children to a big festival attended by youth groups, where the only goal is to have fun and enjoy life. Now imagine the festival being targeted by a terrorist attack, and most of the participants being hunted down and killed by terrorists. Imagine the horror. In fact, it is impossible for us to imagine it.

On top of that, some victims were paraded around the streets of Gaza. Their mutilated bodies were displayed like trophies at a parade. Canadians were among those who were deliberately murdered or taken hostage by Hamas. Some hostages are still being held captive a year later, those who have not already been killed by the terrorists, that is.

*S. O. 52*

That is the origin of the war we are talking about and witnessing right now in the Middle East. It was a brutal terrorist attack on the sovereign land of Israel, and these terrorists are responsible for the situation we are in today.

Unfortunately, other groups have decided to join Hamas. Ever since Hamas launched its attack against Israel on October 7, 2023, Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic of Iran have deliberately chosen to commit terrorist acts against the people of Israel. Since October 7, 2023, Hezbollah has launched some 8,000 rockets at Israel over the past 12 months, forcing the displacement of 60,000 people. These 8,000 missiles filled with explosives were fired for the purpose of killing civilians.

● (2220)

All states have a responsibility to defend their citizens and their territory, and the State of Israel is no different. Israel is at war. As my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills said, and I quote: “This is a legal war under international humanitarian law. The war the State of Israel is conducting against Hamas, against Hezbollah and against the Islamic Republic of Iran under international humanitarian law is a justifiable war.”

I agree with my colleague that war is never pretty, but it is sometimes justified. This war against terrorist groups and a regime that sponsors terrorism is justifiable. Israel has the right to defend itself against the 8,000 rockets that Hezbollah has fired into its territory over the past year. Israel has the right to defend itself against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which launched hundreds of missiles into its territory just last night. Israel has the right to pursue this war against Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic of Iran to protect itself and, above all, its citizens.

Imagine for a moment what would happen if Canada were attacked by terrorist groups. There is no doubt that all of us here would agree to defend our families and our children, and to use whatever means necessary to do so. That is what Israel is doing right now.

However, we have to recognize that war is war. Millions of innocent civilians are suffering as a result of the war in Gaza, Lebanon, and Israel. Obviously, we mourn the loss of innocent civilians, especially women and children. All combatants in this conflict must be careful to distinguish between fighting forces and civilians. Every possible precaution must be taken to minimize the harm caused to civilians.

To end this war, Hezbollah and Hamas must lay down their weapons to protect the innocent Lebanese and Palestinians who have been subjected to these brutal terrorist entities for decades. The citizens of Israel are not the only victims of these terrorist groups and regimes. Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and Iranians have been and continue to be victimized by Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic of Iran regime.

Allow me once again to quote my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills: “For too long, these regimes have suppressed democracy, human rights and freedoms, and the rule of law through brute force.... If there is any ray of hope in recent events, it is that they mark the end of the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah, and the

beginning of the end of the Islamic Republic of Iran's hold on much of the region.”

I share my colleague's opinion and I wish from the bottom of my heart for these peoples to find a lasting peace, free from these authoritarian terrorist groups and regimes.

In Canada, we value the freedom that our democracy affords us. It may not be perfect, but it safeguards our freedom and the rights of every citizen of this country.

Unfortunately, what is happening in the Middle East is a battle between our liberal democracies and authoritarian states and groups, such as the People's Republic of China, which is baring its teeth at Taiwan, the Russian Federation and its illegal attacks on Ukraine, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which supports terrorist groups against the State of Israel and which has just taken up arms against it. What do Taiwan, Ukraine and Israel have in common? They are democratic states, like us, that are being threatened and attacked by the authoritarian regimes I just mentioned.

Canada must defend democracy, human rights, freedoms and the rule of law as set out in international law. To end the war, the hostages must be released. Hamas must release the hostages. Hezbollah must stop its attacks on the people of Israel. However, more is needed. These terrorist organizations must be dismantled. They must cease to exist.

The Conservatives support the State of Israel. Israel has the right to defend itself and to use all of the legal means necessary under international humanitarian law to ensure its peace and security. Clearly, when there is a choice to be made between authoritarian and democratic states, Canada should have no trouble choosing what side we are on.

● (2225)

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am sorry that I am going to ask this question in English, because I do not have enough control of my French to be able to speak to the complexity of this issue.

The member spoke about the horror. He painted a picture of the horror that Israelis felt on October 7, and I think everyone in this House felt that horror. I am a mother. My children are the same age as those children would have been who had gone to that music festival. We were all horrified by that.

However, from my perspective, when he does not recognize that there are at least 40,000 Palestinians who have also been killed and have also lost their lives, what he is doing is dehumanizing Palestinians and dehumanizing others, and that is terrible.

They keep talking about not giving weapons to Israel. Does the member understand the way the arms trade treaty and Canadian law work? Canadian law says that we are not able to send weapons to any country that may be perpetrating a genocide. The International Court of Justice has said there is a plausible case that genocide is being perpetrated, so it is against the law for Canada to send weapons right now to Israel. It is against the Canadian law. He should know that.

• (2230)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I will speak in English, because I think the member did not listen to my speech.

First, this is just false. The genocide was never recognized by the International Court of Justice. Second, when was the last time that member asked Hezbollah to stop firing rockets into Israel? When was the last time she condemned Hamas for taking all the hostages? When was the last time she did something to prove that she cares about both sides?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I do not want the member to mislead the House. In fact, it was today that I said those things and today that I actually asked for the hostages to be released. Today that I asked—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We are getting into debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Quebec is home to one of the largest Lebanese communities in all of Canada, and I wanted to ask my colleague if he had a chance to speak with members of the Lebanese community in Quebec and ask them what their thoughts are on the bombing of their country and the major mass displacements of people having to flee their communities because of the bombing and incursions.

Did he have a chance to listen to their responses? Can he share with the House what he heard, speaking to Lebanese Canadians in Canada, in Quebec and in his community?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, they want to get rid of Hezbollah.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I believe that, if we look at it, Hezbollah and Hamas are terrorist organizations funded, backed and armed by the terrorist regime in Tehran. We hear all the time here that we want to have a ceasefire, but I never hear from the Liberals or the NDP about the government in Lebanon. Why can it not stop Hezbollah? Why does the Palestinian authority not stop Hamas? They have not been able to, so that does not leave any other option to the Government of Israel but to go and defend themselves and protect themselves, which means that they actually have to go and hunt out the terrorists who are attacking their country and their citizens.

My question to my colleague is this. This government continues to take Canadian taxpayer dollars to fund UNRWA, which has been sheltering terrorist operators in Hamas in both Gaza and in Lebanon. Should the government continue to fund UNRWA, or should we actually stop taxpayer money from being used to support terrorist operations against Israel?

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, Canada must stop funding UNRWA, a terrorist group whose workers are known to have been involved in the October 7 massacre. That has been clearly demonstrated. There is real, concrete evidence. Not only do we need to

S. O. 52

stop funding UNRWA, but we also need to ensure that the 700 or so Iranian Revolutionary Guards are expelled from the country. I believe that Canada must do more to counter the terrorist groups that are trying to impose their vision and their way of doing things in an authoritarian manner on people who just want to live like Canadians, that is, to live in peace and enjoy their freedom.

• (2235)

[English]

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mount Royal.

I rise in this House to talk about the situation in Lebanon.

[Translation]

As we know, Lebanon is the country of cedars, often referred to as the “Switzerland of the Middle East”. Lebanon is a founding member of the United Nations and was represented at the time by Charles Malik within that organization. It is a country of builders and an active member of the international Francophonie. This beautiful country invented the alphabet and built the first ship in history to better export its knowledge and share it with the rest of the world.

Canada, its parliamentarians and the international community cannot remain silent in the face of the bloody conflict in the Middle East. We must continue to take action. We must continue to promote a just and lasting peace. Above all, we must ensure that the most vulnerable, the innocent, do not continue to be preyed on in this terrible war.

[English]

A week ago, on the first day of this conflict in Lebanon, when the pagers exploded, in one single day there were 600 dead. Among them were doctors and nurses who worked in the medical field at hospitals. More than 2,000 were wounded and the hospitals were not able to meet the needs of those patients. The day after, there was another explosion of walkie-talkies, which caused more than 400 deaths and a couple of thousand injuries.

In the operating room at the hospital, there was a doctor who is an ophthalmologist and president of the University of Balamand. I know him very well and I spoke with him. In an interview with BBC News, he said, “Unfortunately, we were not able to save a lot of eyes.” Dr. Elias Warrak added that more than 60% to 70% of the patients ended up with at least one eye removed. He said, “Some of the patients, we had to remove both eyes. It kills me. In my past 25 years in practice, I’ve never removed as many eyes as I did yesterday” in one single day. That kills me too. I am sure if any of my colleagues in this chamber witnessed such a situation, it would kill them too.

*S. O. 52*

• (2240)

I would like to assure members that neither the Lebanese people nor the Lebanese government wants war. They are seeking peace. They are people who deserve to live in dignity, to live in prosperity and to have everything they need in their daily life. I believe the best and quickest solution is to apply United Nations Resolution 1701. It was agreed to on both sides in 2006. That resolution must be applied and respected by both parties to the conflict. That would put an immediate end to this war and let peace prevail.

I condemn the killing of any human being. I am not a religious man, but I was born and raised in the church as a Christian, and I respect all religions in the world. I respect Jews, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and all human beings. Our Christian religion orders us to love even our enemies. How can someone ask me to approve a killing? I have a deep feeling that it is criminal, it is terrorism, when any human being, politician, leader, prime minister, president or state kills or orders the killing of a human being. We do not approve of that; we have to condemn it. We have to work together and see peace prevail.

Last week, I was touched when I spoke to one of my Jewish colleagues after our national caucus. He is the member for Winnipeg South Centre. He asked me to do a video with him, asking for peace. I am happy and proud that I did it.

I would also like to thank the people of Canada, the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister of Canada for rapid financial aid to those people who are in need. In a single week, more than one million people have been displaced, most of them in Beirut. They need drinking water, food and shelter; our government practically, and fortunately, is not there. Corruption and terrible mismanagement have also crippled the country and the population. I would like to appeal to our government and every government in the world to send the money directly either to the Red Cross or to NGOs that are registered with, approved by and reporting to the United Nations in order for the money to reach the people who are in need.

I end by saying that I hope to see a permanent, lasting peace among Jews, Muslims and Arabs in our lifetime. I hope to see peace prevail in all corners of the world; this will pave the way for generations to come to live in peace, to live in security and to enjoy life. I have a lot to say, and I will be more than happy to answer questions from my colleagues.

• (2245)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member spoke of the humanitarian aid that needs to go across to people in Lebanon. In my riding there is an incredible organization, Cedars of Hope, that does that. It started that work during the explosion at the port of Beirut. I know how incredibly resilient Lebanese people are, and they continue to rebuild. The situation is truly devastating.

My question is focused more on all the supports that the Canadian government continues to say exist, but I have heard specifically from constituents who cannot get on a flight, who cannot afford a \$15,000 airplane ticket and who cannot even get a space on a flight if it does take off. All of these things are very logistical.

Could the member speak to what he has heard from constituents and the major problems they are facing just to get to some sort of safety and to the places where humanitarian aid could be provided?

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** Madam Speaker, for more than eight months, I, with the government and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, appealed to all Canadian Lebanese who were in Lebanon to leave and to come back. We asked Canadian Lebanese in Canada not to go to Lebanon. For eight months, they did not listen to us.

Nonetheless, now we are doing our best. We are reserving seats on commercial planes, trying to help them come here. However, I can tell the member that, in this particular case, as a Lebanese Canadian and as one who spread the message, I would prefer that the money went to the displaced people, because they are mostly much more in need than the people we are talking about.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I know that my colleague has a very kind heart. Like me, he is deeply worried about so many Lebanese Canadians right now. So many people across this country are grieving and are so afraid of what is happening in the region and of the risk of escalation.

We have heard from the Jordanian foreign affairs minister that Netanyahu does not want a two-state solution. If we ask Israeli officials what their end game is, what is it other than just war and more war?

What we have seen is that the escalation, the counterattacks and the back and forth have done nothing except hurt civilians, hurt innocent people, traumatize populations and destroy cities and communities. Rightly, the people in Lebanon are deeply worried that their cities and their communities will be flattened the way that Gaza has been. I wonder whether the member could talk about what he has heard from his constituents about that.

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** Madam Speaker, my colleague's question touches my heart.

If we watch the news, we see that in Israel there are daily demonstrations, sometimes with hundreds of thousands of people, against the government, asking it to make a deal to free the hostages and to make peace. We see that on both sides. I can assure my colleague that Lebanese people have the same feeling. Lebanese people do not want war. The Government of Lebanon does not want war.

However, the only path to end this is to work together, and this will be the responsibility of the United Nations, and mainly of the most powerful country in the United Nations, the United States of America, to do their utmost in order to bring both sides, without any conditions, to the negotiating table to work together. When we think about the future generation, everyone has to come with a hard compromise for a few countries to believe in a healthy economy, healthy—

• (2250)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It is time to resume debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there is one party that does want war. It is the Islamic Republic of Iran. This summer, I was in Argentina. It was the 30th anniversary of the bombing of the AMIA, the Jewish community centre in Argentina, which was the deadliest attack on Jews between the Holocaust and what happened on October 7. That attack in 1994 killed 85 people and wounded 300.

Who was the attack carried out by? An Argentinian court ruled this year that the attack was directed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and carried out by Hezbollah, an organization that has killed and terrorized people around the world, not only in Israel, where millions of Israelis are being terrorized by the Hezbollah rockets being fired on their country on a repeated basis, but also in other countries as well.

Why does Iran want this? It is because Iran wants division. Iran wants its horrible regime to be able to get away with human rights violations in its own country, so it creates chaos abroad. One of the ways that it creates chaos is by attacking what it calls the “Zionist regime”, a regime that the supreme leader of Iran believes should be eradicated. Iran finances terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, to rain rockets on Israel and to do things like the massacre of October 7, where over 1,200 people were murdered, hundreds were injured and hostages were taken, many of whom are still in tunnels in Gaza. That is the situation that Israel faces.

I do not think that there is anybody in the chamber, in any party, that has a monopoly on virtue. Everybody cares about the civilians who are going to be harmed in any country, whether it is Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Gaza or Iran. Nobody wants harm to happen to civilians. The issue is the moral clarity of saying who is responsible for what is happening.

There has been an attempt this evening by some speakers to blame Israel for all of the events that have happened, when Israel was attacked on October 7 last year and has had, for years, missiles fired upon it by Hezbollah from Lebanon, because the Lebanese government, which may very well be of good faith, is unable to fulfill its obligations under a UN resolution saying that Hezbollah has to vacate south Lebanon.

Israeli civilians would be killed in drastic numbers if it were not for Iron Dome. We keep forgetting that. We keep pointing to the mass casualties in one place and not another, but the reason for that is the Iron Dome. Israel is fighting terrorist organizations on every single front. It is not a country that has just suddenly decided to start bombing here and start bombing there. The idea that we can assign all of the blame in a conflict that has started more than any of our lifetimes ago, and not even in 1948, as it started before then, but let us say, going back to 1948, to one side is absolutely irreconcilable with factual history.

*S. O. 52*

I decided to come back to speak tonight because I wanted to make sure that, on this side of the House, there were some people who would say that because it is not right to claim that Israel is entirely responsible for what is happening. In fact, I think it is pretty clear that Iran has a huge amount of responsibility for what is happening.

• (2255)

I also wanted to say in this debate that we all hate hate. Hate is a horrible thing against any group, whether it is against Muslims, Jews, gays, Christians, people of colour or anybody, but it has to be said that, over the last 11 months, the Jewish community in Canada has faced hate in epic proportions, which has not been seen in any of our lifetimes. Jews constitute about 1.4% of Canada's population, while more than half of hate crimes, in some cases up to 70%, are against Jews.

It does not make sense that we have people in our streets who are yelling support for and flying the flags of terrorist organizations, and who are telling Jews to go back to Poland. That is horrifying. The fact that the police are not enforcing the law when they see people crossing that line, flying the Hezbollah flag and screaming at people to go back to Poland, is absurd.

I want to propose some solutions that would make it a lot easier to say that governments at all levels are combatting hate because right now no government in the world is combatting anti-Semitism enough. In Canada, the federal, provincial or municipal governments have not done enough to confront the epidemic of anti-Semitism in our midst.

Policing is a municipal jurisdiction. Enforcement of the Criminal Code is a provincial jurisdiction. It is not right to blame the federal government for all this happening, as some are trying to do. However, that does not mean we cannot show leadership. It does not mean that the federal Attorney General and the Minister of Public Safety cannot convene the provincial ministers of public safety and attorneys general to have a discussion about hate and anti-Semitism, to say that we need specific hate crime prosecutors who are geared toward hate crimes, to ensure that police have proper training, to ensure hate crime units are set up across the country, to ensure that police know that politicians at every level in the country, federal, provincial and municipal, will have the backs of the police when they enforce the law. That is what we need.

We need the Samidoun and the Houthis to be designated as terrorist organizations, the same as we have designated the IRGC. We need the Parliament of Canada to create a new intimidation offence, what I would call bubble legislation, to say that, if someone were to try to block people from entering or leaving a school, community centre, community building or a place of worship, they would be breaking a very specific provision of the Criminal Code. Again, that does not mean it would not be better done by the provinces. The provinces and municipalities could easily create buffer zones around these buildings. It is a shame they have not done so.

S. O. 52

Over the last summer, university campuses were my priority. Since last June, I have been talking to universities across the country. I worked with Deborah Lyons, Universities Canada, the U15 and university presidents to set out a group of things that universities needed to do. We worked together to make sure that universities are committed to enforcing their codes of conduct and ensuring Jews were included in DEI programs so that anti-Semitism programs are to be given by groups that are representative of the mainstream Jewish community and support the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Even though it is a provincial jurisdiction, our justice committee has gotten involved. We have done hearings. We are going to do a report.

There are things that we can do to confront this problem. I call on all of us to work together to make sure that we have a fair understanding and balance of what is happening in the Middle East and that we confront anti-Semitism and hate in Canada.

• (2300)

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I always enjoy the member's speeches. It is nice to know that there is at least one voice of common sense in the entire Liberal caucus.

I do have one question. It has to do with the issue of his government saying that Israel has the right to defend itself, but that it is not going to help it defend itself, it is not going to sell it arms. I just think that is so hypocritical. It cannot say, on the one hand, that Israel has the right to defend itself, but on the other hand, that it is not going to give it the means to defend itself.

I know we could argue that it would get its arms somewhere else, but the point is what Canada does sets an example for the world. What this policy really means is that the people who brought it forward want every country in the world to follow suit, which would be a disaster for Israel and really be a problem. I would like the member's comments on that one particular issue.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, I voted against the NDP motion in March. That was one of the reasons I did so. I do not agree that there should be a restriction on licensing shipments to Israel.

A perfect example is that, today, Iranian rockets fell on Israel. It is an absurd idea that Israel is a friend and ally but that we would not give it the opportunity to defend itself against Iranian and Hezbollah rockets.

I have called upon my government to rethink this restriction and to eliminate it, to make sure that our ally, Israel, is able to defend itself against the numerous terrorist organizations that are constantly threatening it. I will continue to do so. I have maintained the position that I advocated and that the hon. member, I know, agreed with back in March.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, who is a member from Montreal.

In Montreal, there have been many acts of terrorism against the Jewish community in recent weeks and months. How can the mem-

ber explain his government's ambiguous position when it comes to standing up for Montreal's Jewish community?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, I can certainly say that there is no ambiguity when it comes to defending Montreal's Jewish community. The federal government has absolutely no tolerance for anti-Semitism in Canada. Unfortunately, the problem is that the Conservatives are trying to blame the federal government for decisions made by Mayor Plante, decisions made by municipal authorities and decisions made by the province.

I should point out that the Prime Minister has asked me to look into these issues. I will be working closely with the various levels of government to try to improve things in Montreal and across Canada. More specifically, I have been working with McGill and other Quebec universities to try to improve the situation for students on campus.

I think the situation is better this year, although it is definitely not perfect.

[English]

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, could the hon. member expand a bit on the bubble legislation he spoke of and give us a little more information about how that would work and how it would be effective?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, one issue had to do with a number of Jewish community buildings this year, including in Montreal in my own riding, where people gathered around the buildings, screaming hateful things and blocking access to or exit from them. That was totally unacceptable.

Municipalities and provinces can do a better job of controlling that by passing zoning bylaws at the municipal level, or laws at the provincial level, setting out safety perimeters.

We cannot do that, but what we can do federally would be to amend the Criminal Code to create an intimidation offence that says a very specific Criminal Code infraction will be levied against any person who blocks access to, or exit from, one of these buildings. That would make it easier for the police to use a very simple tool to stop that from happening.

• (2305)

**Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

My thoughts are with the families and the innocent people who are in harm's way right now, while war wages in the Middle East. To our Jewish community in Toronto, across Canada and globally, *shanah tova*.

This is not the kind of world we want, but this has been the case since October 7, 2023, when Hamas went on its violent rampage in Israel. I have been listening closely to the debate tonight, and I have appreciated the comments from hon. members on both sides of the House. This is a serious issue for us to discuss, and we are all concerned about the devastation in the Middle East and for Canadians who are in the region. I urge them to get out.

*S. O. 52*

Like all Canadians, I am extremely concerned for those caught in the maelstrom of violence, particularly in Lebanon, where people are only looking to live their peaceful lives. However, there are other inhabitants of Lebanon as well, those who do not have this same purpose. Their purpose is one of destruction. Their purpose is to destroy Israel. I am speaking of the militant terrorist organization Hezbollah.

Hezbollah exists with the aim of destroying Israel. Let us be clear on this: Hezbollah is not the Government of Lebanon, nor does it represent the Lebanese people. What it represents is hate. It is an evil proxy for the Islamic Republic of Iran and it carries out its heinous wishes. It is a terrorist organization, working in league with Iran, with an aim of eliminating our ally and friend Israel. Hezbollah has been raining rockets on the people of northern Israel for over 11 months. Hezbollah has forced 60,000 Israelis to flee their homes. Hezbollah, through its actions, has made life miserable for people across the Middle East, and it must be stopped.

Meanwhile, Israel, as we should know, like any state, has as its first priority the defence and security of the citizens of its country.

I want to talk about why we on this side of the House are steadfast in our support for Israel. Five years ago, former prime minister Stephen Harper was asked, “Why do you support Israel?” His response was, “Why wouldn’t I support Israel?” He went on to say:

Why wouldn't I support a fellow democratic nation where open elections, free speech, and religious tolerance are the everyday norm? Why wouldn't I support a country with a vibrant free press and an independent judiciary? Why wouldn't I support a valuable trading partner and a well-spring of amazing technological innovation? Why wouldn't I support our most critical ally in the Middle East, and in the international struggle against terrorism?

In a rational world, in a world where simple common sense prevailed, the question “why do you support Israel?” would be like asking “why do you support Australia?” or... “Canada?” But we don't live in that rational, common-sense world. So the case for Israel has to be made over and over. I, for one, am happy to make it.

Former prime minister Stephen Harper was right. He showed clear principles. We on this side of the House believe Israel has the right to defend itself from Iran, which today launched 181 ballistic missiles at 10 million Israeli civilians.

Unlike the Secretary-General of the UN, I will name the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah and Hamas, which must put down their arms and commit to ceasing their aggression against Israel. Remember, it was Hamas that made its incursion and raid into Israel almost one year ago today. That barbaric raid, which has been unequivocally condemned by all civilized humans, included the massacre of 1,200 people and the capture of 251 civilians, of whom 101 are still in captivity, not all amongst the living.

Let us not forget those captives even as this conflict escalates, precipitated by the evil axis of resistance commanded by the Islamic Republic. By many accounts, Hezbollah has been weakened, but it is not defeated. Israel has destroyed Hezbollah's munitions and rocket depots to defend the people of Israel.

● (2310)

The Hezbollah leader and several senior members of Hezbollah have been killed to reduce the effectiveness of the organization, and still there is no indication of a willingness to entertain a ceasefire. That is because they are a proxy for the Islamic Republic of Iran,

which can tolerate many Hezbollah deaths and many Lebanese civilian deaths before thinking about a ceasefire. This is a shame.

A rational adversary would surrender or call for a ceasefire before a land invasion was undertaken, but rational is not what these terrorist organizations are. There is no negotiating with terrorists, and that is a long-standing policy of Canada, but we do not see the rockets stop.

Some hon. members have been calling for diplomacy, but how do they think diplomacy works with terrorist organizations? We all want the fighting to end, and we have seen that from the comments made by hon. members, but in the absence of a firm commitment from Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran to cease firing their missiles and rockets, I do not see how the fighting comes to an end.

I want to address one issue that is still leaving me scratching my head. In today's question period, the Leader of the Opposition asked if the government would declare that Israel has the right to defend itself. After all, the Islamic Republic of Iran sent some 200 missiles into Israel. The answer from the foreign affairs minister said nothing about Israel's right to defend itself. Instead, she said she had merely been in contact with her Israeli counterpart. Yes, she condemned the attack by Iran, which is the obvious thing to do, but the rest of her answer could hardly be construed as a robust support for our ally.

I would like the House to think about the declining state of our society here at home, with violence, non-peaceful protests, anti-Semitism and crime. What happens abroad deeply affects us here at home.

A number of hon. members have been rightly talking about how recent events have been affecting their constituents. In my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's, the terrible events in the Middle East have had a significant impact. The people I represent have told me that their kids are afraid to go to school, they do not feel safe in our streets and they are saddened and horrified by the repeated violence in the Middle East. There are some who stand against Israel, or at least the Israeli government. That is to be expected in a pluralistic society, but they are all united in their want of peace, their wish for a world without terrorist. A ceasefire is what they want, then peace.

Some hon. members will know from my first speech in this place that I do give considerable value to our country's history. That is why I was particularly impressed by the speech in this evening's debate by the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

To that end, I would like to invoke the words of our former prime minister, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, as I conclude my remarks. He too was a steadfast defender of Israel. As recently as last year, he said, “I think that Canada could have only one position—complete, blanket support for Israel and unrelenting denunciation of a jihadist criminal group, namely Hamas.” We can certainly add Hezbollah to that list as well.

*S. O. 52*

Let me be clear: No one wants war, no one outside the Islamic Republic of Iran, as we heard earlier tonight, but no one wants to be left open to the terrorism of Hezbollah either. These terrorist organizations have brought destruction and devastation across the Middle East for decades. It is time for them to end their attacks.

We stand with Israel, the only democracy in the region. Where I come from, democracies stick with each other.

• (2315)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have been speaking a lot tonight, I would say, incorrectly about international law. Article 2.4 of the UN charter states, “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon released a statement saying, “Any crossing into Lebanon is in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a violation of resolution 1701.”

Does the Conservative Party of Canada not consider Lebanon's sovereignty important?

**Mr. Don Stewart:** Madam Speaker, as some may also agree, Hezbollah has been described as a state within a state. In Israel's right to defend itself, it is going against that state within a state, which we are calling Hezbollah, and the war is not against the people of Lebanon but against the terrorist group Hezbollah.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to come back to the last question. What I understand from it is that we are now interpreting the UN as saying that if a country has missiles being thrown at it in an attack by another country, it is not allowed to respond. Does the hon. member think that is a logical thing for the NDP to be proposing?

**Mr. Don Stewart:** Madam Speaker, I would agree with the hon. member that if a country is attacked by another country, and as we know, Hezbollah has thrown some 8,000 rockets at Israel in the past several months, there is only thing that country can do to defend itself, and that is to go back in the direction of where the missiles came from.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to quote article 51 of the United Nations charter, which states, “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations”.

I am wondering whether the member would comment on the state of Israel's right to defend itself under article 51 of the UN Charter.

**Mr. Don Stewart:** Madam Speaker, yes, Israel would have every right to defend itself under that article of the charter, as it is doing now.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, of course the charter would only apply for Israel to be defending itself within its own sovereignty. It does not apply to actually hurting civilians.

The member asked earlier in the evening about the arms embargo that New Democrats have been calling on the government to undertake. There is arms trade treaty legislation in this country because

we are signatories to the genocide convention, which says that we are in fact not able to send weapons to any country that may be engaged in a genocide. The international justice system has said there is a plausible case for genocide. The genocide convention does not require proof of genocide; it requires a plausibility or a likelihood of genocide, so it is against the law for Canada to send weapons to Israel at this time.

I wonder whether the member has any comments on that or whether he needs some help from the backbench to help him interpret international law.

**Mr. Don Stewart:** Madam Speaker, the NDP member clearly does not side with Israel in this. With Israel being the only democracy in the Middle East, it is quite surprising that we cannot stand up for our ally there.

Israel is protecting itself, it is protecting western democracy and it is protecting every member who sits in the House.

• (2320)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as I rise tonight, millions of Israelis are watching the sun rise after spending their night in bunkers after the criminal regime in Tehran launched nearly 200 ballistic missiles at them. I am here to argue for our duty as Canadians in this conflict.

First, it is our duty to support and proclaim Israel's right to defend itself. There is no ambiguity in this fact. Israel is the indigenous homeland of the Jewish people, and the state of Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people. This is an unambiguous fact. On October 7, the terrorist regime in Tehran and its proxies violated international law and started a war in the Middle East. It was they who broke the ceasefire and chose to keep the conflict alive. The only groups who deny this fact are extremist regimes that want to see the destruction of the Jewish people.

Second, it is our duty to acknowledge that the suffering, instability, death and destruction in the Middle East are caused by terrorist entities: Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and the IRGC. They reject the right of Israel to exist, seek the death of the Jewish people and seek the end of democratic nations. These are groups responsible for the deaths of countless Israelis, Canadians, Americans and people from around the world. This is also an unambiguous fact.

Third, it is our duty to acknowledge that even though we are a world away here in Canada from the physical reality of this conflict, we are nonetheless in its orbit. Resisting the genocidal regime in Tehran and all its terrorist proxies, like Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and others, cannot be left to Israel alone. These terrorist groups do not want to negotiate or de-escalate this position. They want to kill Jews and end Israel.



*S. O. 52*

It is dangerously naive to believe that these groups, which have for the entire history of their existence killed Jews and subjugated women and sexual minorities, will somehow now, because someone asked politely, change their goals. These terrorist groups know that de-escalation is a modern-day euphemism for appeasement. They know that appeasement has never before stopped a Jew-killing regime.

As the wife of a combat veteran who has a military family in more than one sense, and a shout-out to CVMA OK-1, I know this fact all too well. I know this in my heart, and I know this in my family. These regimes will not stop if we ask nicely. This is also an unambiguous fact.

Fourth, it is so easy for us here in the comfort and safety of our country to revel in our decadence and to take academic positions on this conflict. We do not sit in bunkers or have to fear for the lives of our families, that they will be murdered, kidnapped or raped by terrorist organizations.

We must support those who are fighting against this terror, those who support the right of Jews to exist in their indigenous homeland and the freedom that democratic values of human rights bring. That is because to do otherwise is the antithesis of Canadian pluralism. If those in this place are not willing to fight against murderous terrorist regimes that want to end our democratic values and kill Jews, then I fear for more than the state of Israel. I fear for the sustainability of Canada's own sovereignty.

Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, we must call for an end to the crass politics with which the federal government has approached this conflict. Canada has a diverse pluralism of people from around the world and from every faith, but instead of projecting a national identity that would knit this nation of many people together, the Liberal government has long purported that there is no such thing as a national identity and no common values for the people who live on these lands to rally around. I reject that notion.

The Liberals have attempted to wedge the various diaspora groups of this country apart. This conflict has shown the lengths to which the Liberals are willing to go to achieve this political goal. Instead of instantly condemning the atrocities of the criminal regime in Tehran today and their proxies against the Jewish people and the innocent civilians living in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon, they wait. They wait for a very long time.

The Liberals take hours to test the waters and have focus groups to see which group they can curry the most favour with. Then they send out backbench members of their caucus to take diametrically opposite positions. That is not fair either. Then the foreign minister makes a weak statement, sometimes inferring that Israel does not have the right to defend itself. Only then, hours or days later as the case may be, does the Prime Minister weigh in with a sanitized statement that leaves so much room for interpretation.

• (2325)

Why do the Liberals do this? They do this because they are failing in the polls and they have lost the ability to inspire Canada with a stand that takes a courageous position. They do this because their caucus is divided behind a failed and feckless leader and their foreign affairs minister who is planning a leadership bid to replace

him. She first considers the calculus of how many memberships she can sell within diaspora groups, as opposed to doing what is right for any of the people affected by this conflict: Palestinian, Lebanese or Israeli alike. It is disgusting. There are names for the type of people who do what the Prime Minister and the foreign affairs minister are doing right now. None of them would be considered parliamentary language.

The net effect of this Liberal fecklessness has been felt by minority communities here in Canada. In Calgary, my home city, the federal government's inability to stand for what is right is a clear reason and it is the reason for the rise in anti-Semitism in this country. If the federal government, the Prime Minister and the foreign affairs minister continue to say that it is okay to give a wink and a nod or turn a blind eye in moments when courage is needed, when they turned a blind eye to the genocidal regime in Tehran and their proxies, then what is to stop those who hold extreme beliefs here and act upon them here in our own country? The answer is "nothing", and that is exactly what we are seeing on the streets across this country and it is why, as the Calgary Jewish community goes into the high holidays tomorrow night, instead of being able to focus on their Jewish new year dinner with friends and families, they need to focus on efforts of security to ensure their community can go to synagogue and gather safely. It is why university students in the Calgary Jewish community say that they do not want to promote Jewish events on campus for fear of retribution, in Calgary. These people should be allowed to be proud to gather as Jews as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are upon them, without feeling the hate and fear that has constantly surrounded them for the last 11 months.

Therefore, I stand here in proud solidarity with them to demand the following: that the federal government recognize that the suffering of the Palestinian, Israeli, Lebanese, Iranian, Syrian and Yemeni people is directly and solely due to the murderous actions of the genocidal terrorist regime in Tehran and its proxy groups; that the federal Canadian government demand the immediate release of Israeli hostages and that the regime in Iran and its proxies immediately lay down their arms and cease their attacks against Israel; that the Canadian government support unequivocally the right of Israel to defend itself, which means unambiguously rejecting calls to end arms support to Israel; that the Canadian government unilaterally reject the anti-Semitic boycott, divest and sanctions movement; that the Canadian government publicly recognize the failure to enforce UN Security Council resolution 1701, which was designed to disarm Hezbollah and prevent its re-arming, which it has clearly failed to do; that the Canadian government reject recognizing a Palestinian state while Hamas, a terrorist organization responsible for the death and destruction of countless people, reigns, and without condition; and that the federal government immediately cease funding to UNRWA, whose workers took part in perpetrating the October 7 massacre.

*S. O. 52*

This afternoon, someone I know in Israel sent me a picture of her and her daughters in their bunker. What struck me was the eyes of her girls, filled with normalization of daily assaults on their nation, their ethnicity and their faith; but also embedded in their eyes was a look of defiance and confidence. That look in the eyes of the Israeli people is an ember of hope; not just for Israel but for the entire world and every one of us in this place. In their eyes, I saw peace born in strength. May each of us see the same.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in the member's speech just now, she spoke about October 7. That was a horrific day. We all agree that was a horrendous terrorist act that was perpetrated against Israel. However, it is not where it started. I think we can all agree that things have happened and that there has been conflict in that region for a very long time. I know that the ICJ has brought forward a ruling that said that the occupation of the West Bank by Israel is illegal.

I would like to know from the member what the Conservative Party's position is with regard to international law. Do the Conservative Party of Canada and this member support the ICC and the ICJ in all circumstances and not just pick and choose as we have seen from other administrations?

• (2330)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada absolutely supports international law. That is why we reject, denounce and condemn Iran, the terrorist genocide regime in Tehran, sending missiles at innocent civilians in Israel. Hamas murdering thousands of Jews sounds like a pretty big violation of international law to me. I reject that. I absolutely reject all of that.

We need international law to enforce things like UN Security Resolution 1701, which the UN has clearly failed to do. The UN has failed to enforce any law that would protect the right of Israel to exist. What the member opposite has consistently failed to do is start her questions by saying she supports the right of Israel to exist and rejects the regime in Iran, all its terrorist proxies and the terrorist activities they have subjected Jews and the entire Middle Eastern region to for years, and Canadians, Americans and countless others they have blown up in terrorist attacks that are direct violations of international law.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the ICJ has a ruling, not on the West Bank but on the genocide claim, that has been cited multiple times by the member for Edmonton Strathcona. I want to quote from a BBC article: The interpretation "that the court had concluded that the claim that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza was 'plausible'" was disputed and discounted by "Joan Donoghue, the president of the ICJ at the time of that ruling[. She] said in a BBC interview that this was not what the court had ruled."

Can I ask the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill if she has any knowledge of that allegation and how it is being interpreted by the NDP versus what it is in reality?

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, here is what I know is not up for debate. The terrorist regime in Tehran has said death to all Jews; end to the state of Israel. That sounds like a geno-

cidal intent to me. Then you have Hamas, which also said death to all Jews and then it decided to kill a few thousand Jews. Then it said, no, we still want to kill more Jews and we do not want Israel to exist. Their supporters, including those here in Canada, mourn. They are out there essentially saying that what happened on October 7 is justified. To me, that is genocidal activity. That is what this place needs to be concerned with, and we need to support Israel and its right to defend itself.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to say to the member for Calgary Nose Hill that I appreciate her advocacy, and I know the entire Jewish community right across the country appreciates her advocacy and her steadfast support when times are good and when times are bad.

I have one simple question for her that I hope she can answer for the House: Why does she do it?

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, as a legislator in this country, it is not about one group or another for me. It is not about Jew or Muslim, Christian or Hindu. It is about the fact that for us to maintain our pluralism in this country, we have to focus on our sovereign rights as Canadians. That means upholding democratic values around the world and not equivocating or pretending we can appease regimes that have stated intent to destroy our pluralism.

I love every member of my community deeply. I know how much the Palestinian community is hurting and I understand how much fear the Jews in my community feel; however, for me to represent them as a Canadian legislator, I have to first stand for their sovereign rights, and that means standing with democratic allies, like Israel.

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank all colleagues who have participated in this evening's emergency debate on the situation in Lebanon. Time and again we have witnessed crises engulfing the Middle East escalate and consume countless innocent civilians. Many Canadians, some with family ties to the region, are paying close attention to the current crisis and are rightly demanding that our government take any action and all diplomatic action to de-escalate the conflict, to collaborate with other members of the international community to secure an immediate ceasefire, and to ensure that all Canadians and their loved ones in the region are assisted to safety.

We are blessed to have a sizable Lebanese community in our country, a long-standing one that has settled in every community across our vast country. Lebanon is also a focus country of Canada's Middle East strategy, and for that reason, Canada has committed over \$548 million to Lebanon since 2016 in humanitarian assistance, development assistance and counter-terrorism capacity-building programs.

Several days ago, our Minister of Foreign Affairs stood before the General Assembly of the United Nations to explicitly call for de-escalation and the protection of civilians from the horror of the escalating violence in Lebanon and Israel. To quote Minister Joly, the conflict—

• (2335)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The member knows we cannot use the names of members.

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi:** Madam Speaker, the minister said, “The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah is intolerable and presents an unacceptable risk of a broader regional escalation.” Given the missile attacks launched by the Iranian regime today, I think we can agree that the minister’s statement was prescient and accurate.

The minister also went on to add, a few days ago, in the same address to the UN, “We are concerned that a war between Israel and Hezbollah would have devastating consequences, while adding to the already severe humanitarian, economic and political crises in Lebanon.” The minister was also prescient on that particular point.

Over the past week, over one million people have been displaced in Lebanon. In addition, we have also witnessed tens of thousands of Israelis having to evacuate their homes in the north of Israel. The suffering on all sides needs to end. All parties must respect UN Security Council resolution 1701. The UN’s Blue Line buffer zone has been violated, and it is integral that Israel and Hezbollah agree to an immediate ceasefire that would allow Israeli and Lebanese civilians to return to their homes and live in peace.

Such a humanitarian situation is clearly unsustainable. The longer the conflict rages, the more innocent lives will be scarred by it and the deeper those scars will be. At a time like this, we must all take a moment to reflect on the devastation we have been watching in the region over the past year after the heinous terrorist attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023, and Israel’s invasion of Gaza that followed. We should all be horrified to see innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians pay the ultimate price for the failure of a much-needed ceasefire. We have been watching extremists on all sides dictate the course of the conflict.

Over 100 Israeli hostages have yet to return home from captivity at the hands of the terrorist entity Hamas. In addition, the fighting has displaced practically the entire population of the Gaza Strip. If there is one lesson to be learned from the experience of the past year, it is that innocent Palestinians, women and children, should not have to bear the price of defeating Hamas. By the same token, Lebanese civilians should not bear the consequences of Hezbollah’s terrorist actions. Rather, the Lebanese should have the right to live in peace and security throughout Lebanon.

Therefore our government must remain steadfast in affirming our wholehearted commitment to an immediate ceasefire and to ensuring that we are taking concrete diplomatic steps to achieve the same. This includes leveraging our influence in the region to pressure all sides to de-escalate. We should all remain committed to humanitarian relief and medical aid for all displaced civilians in the region. Canada should never aid and abet violence. We owe it to the Lebanese—

*S. O. 52*

• (2340)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, the member is sharing his time. He just needs to put it in his speech.

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi:** Madam Speaker, I was about to say that we owe it to the Lebanese, Palestinian and Israeli people to join our allies in the international community to secure peace and stability in the region, as well as that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Don Valley West.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Willowdale for sharing his time with me.

I start out tonight by saying that there are few countries that are closer to my heart than Lebanon. There have been few people closer to my heart than the Lebanese people since my very first trip, when I spent time there in 1982, and experienced the war with people in Lebanon. The most recent outbreak of violence that has happened there is part of a long-standing cycle of some 50 years of chaos, interruption, war, civil conflict and international conflict, which has continued to plague the people of Lebanon.

October 7, however, was a watershed moment. The attack by Hamas on Israel and Israelis was a heinous, horrendous crime against humanity and a crime against the people of Israel. Hezbollah, its sibling terrorist organization, has been launching rockets at Israel ever since. Today’s attack on Israel by Iran, a state sponsor of terror, is devastating.

We have reports of hundreds of long-range ballistic missiles, some of which have hit Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. As a government, we unequivocally condemn this new and unprecedented escalation, which has forced millions of Israelis and Lebanese, as well as Palestinians, to take shelter. We want it to be absolutely clear in the House that we affirm Israel’s right to defend itself within international law. Attacks by Hezbollah, Hamas and Iran against Israel kill not only Israelis but also civilians in other countries; they destabilize the region, and they risk turning this into a wider regional war.

Canada will do everything in its power to continue to hold Iran accountable for its role in funding terrorist organizations. We are one of five countries that have named the IRGC as a terrorist organization. We urge all parties involved to respect international humanitarian law, to protect civilians, to protect humanitarian workers and to avoid any action that could ignite this war further.

We are gravely concerned about civilians in Lebanon tonight, thousands of whom are Canadians. The safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad is our top priority. This does not mean we value one human life over another; rather, as a government, we have a particular responsibility to protect Canadian citizens.

*S. O. 52*

We were devastated by the death of two Canadians, Hussein and Daad Tabaja, who were killed by an IDF air strike while fleeing Beirut. All they sought was to live in security, with peace and dignity. We will continue to help Canadians escape Lebanon, to ensure that they reach safety and peace and to give them advice and warnings to get out of the country as quickly as possible, before this conflict spreads even further.

This is a conflict that has been going on, as has been said in the House, for decades. We owe it to the people of Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and the region to make tangible progress towards peace and stability. How do we do this? It is more than words, but we begin with diplomacy.

War kills people, not ideas. Diplomacy allows people to change their minds, for ideas to develop; ultimately, diplomacy does lead to peace. This past year, Canada has been exploring every possible avenue to ensure a diplomatic solution to the crisis in the Middle East, and it will continue to help solve the problem between Hezbollah and Israel. Immediate action to stop the violence is urgently necessary. We are committed to working with the international community to help advance peace in the region. Alongside our allies, we have called for a 21-day ceasefire along the Lebanon-Israel border to provide space for diplomacy and conversation.

We are also pushing for full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon. Our Prime Minister has been working this issue, working the phones and having conversations with leaders around the world, in search of a diplomatic solution. In just the last few days, the Prime Minister has had the opportunity to discuss the problem between Hezbollah and Israel, as well as the attack on Israel by Hezbollah, with the Prime Minister of Lebanon and the King of Jordan.

- (2345)

Last week, our Minister of Foreign Affairs was in New York for the 79th United Nations General Assembly. She called upon all parties, including the governments of Israel and Lebanon, to endorse a temporary ceasefire immediately. We are dealing with terrorist organizations, so diplomacy is particularly challenging, but rhetoric in this place does not change that reality. We still need to use all the tools we have in the diplomatic tool box to find a solution to a long-standing, generation-after-generation conflict.

Our foreign affairs minister continues to talk to the Prime Minister and foreign ministers of Lebanon, the G7 foreign ministers and the Israeli foreign minister, and her message has been consistent and clear: We must see a de-escalation of tensions at the border between Lebanon and Israel, and we will continue to defend Israel's right to protect itself.

While we have been doing this diplomatic work, we have also been engaging in humanitarian assistance. The conditions in Lebanon are worsening every day. We have been working in a way to try to get humanitarian aid into Gaza. We are continuing to work in the West Bank, we are continuing to work with women, particularly victims in Israel, and we will continue to work in Lebanon.

On Saturday, the government announced an additional \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to address the urgent needs of civil-

ians affected by this conflict. This funding will provide food, water, emergency health care, protection services and other life-saving aid. In addition to the \$10 million already allocated by the United Nations central emergency response fund, Canada's total humanitarian assistance for Lebanon in 2024 is \$37 million.

We are working at this diplomatically with conversations every day. We are working at this in defence of Israel and working to combat terrorist organizations, which are a scourge on this planet. We are also working with Canadian citizens to help get them out of Lebanon. We have done that in Gaza with great difficulty. We have done that in Israel. We have done that in the West Bank, and we are now trying to do that in Lebanon. It is not easy with a terrorist organization like Hezbollah, but we have been very clear with Canadians that they should get out while commercial flights are available. We have announced an additional 800 seats today over the course of the next three days that Canadians, permanent residents and immediate family have access to. There is a flight scheduled to depart today.

We will continue to work through every possible channel for the safety of civilians in Israel, West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon. The situation can deteriorate, so we will continue to provide diplomatic solutions and offer the best that Canada has to offer to ensure that we find ways for this conversation to continue.

There are no easy solutions to this problem. There are no easy answers to it. There can be rhetoric, there can be name-calling and there can be blaming, but rest assured that everyone on this side of the House, and I believe on that side of the House too, believes in Israel's right to defend itself within international law. We believe in the right for civilians to have safety and peace and humanitarian assistance and the right to live a good life. We all share that.

This conflict will not be solved by this debate tonight, but what can be solved tonight is to find a way to bring Canadians together to look at the needs of every person living in the region and to understand that we have to find a way to do that. Rhetoric that divides will not help. Rhetoric that brings us together will help. We will continue to do that.

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

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, heckling aside, the Prime Minister and the foreign affairs minister are working day and night, not making speeches in this House and not giving facile answers like the Conservatives, but trying to find ways to heal broken people, to solve an intractable situation and to have the community of nations build peace for each other. We are going to do that on this side of the House.

I believe that members of goodwill on every side of the House can work together. We promise to do our best. Let us find a way to do that together.

• (2350)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member just said that Israel has a right to defend itself. Israel was attacked by terrorist entities, Hamas and Hezbollah. Today, during question period, a very simple question was put to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs refused to answer it during question period, so I would like to give my hon. colleague an opportunity to do so. It is a very simple question: Does Israel have a right to destroy the terrorist organizations that have attacked it? In other words, does Israel have a right, in the government's view, to destroy Hamas and Hezbollah?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I have been around here too long to fall into traps set by the Conservatives on this issue. The reality is that Israel has a right to defend itself, and there are international laws that they also need to follow. Israeli citizens tell me that every day. Jews in Canada tell me that every day. They understand the rule of law.

Israel is a democracy. Israel will follow the rule of law. Israelis have divided opinions at times, as does any democracy. However, we will continue to defend Israel's right to protect itself within international law.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, so many Lebanese Canadians are watching what is happening, and when I spoke to some this afternoon, they were telling me how horrified they were that there were components and military goods still being shipped from Canada. There is still a need for an arms embargo on Israel so that those weapons cannot be used against innocent civilians.

I believe the member wants to stop the bloodshed, stop the war and work toward peace. However, the minister has promised an arms embargo, yet she has still not made public a notice to arms exporters. I am wondering when Lebanese Canadians and all Canadians can expect to see that posted. It should take about 30 seconds for the minister to put that online.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I believe the minister has actually been very clear on this issue. She has been very clear that, when it comes to export permits, we have absolutely not given any new export permits since January 8. However, we will also always support Israel's security, and that includes permits for the Iron Dome.

This is a complex situation. Again, we will make sure that there are no new permits. However, we also recognize that there are safety and security concerns, and Canada will be mindful of them as well.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Madam Speaker, does Israel have the right, within the confines of international law, to destroy the terrorist organizations of Hamas and Hezbollah?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, Israel has a right to defend itself within international law.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, there have been quite a lot of attacks this evening against

*S. O. 52*

the UNRWA funding from the government. As a member of Parliament who actually got to visit and see the direct impact that these schools can have, I am interested to hear the member's comments on the continued support for UNRWA from the government.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, our government's position has been very clear. While UNRWA is an imperfect organization, it is the best organization to provide aid and assistance to Palestinian refugees around the world. That includes education and essential services. We need to ensure the safety of every one of their employees to make sure that they can do their work.

It is a UN organization. Canada is a proud member of the United Nations. We will continue to support UNRWA.

• (2355)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I just want to point out how disappointing it is that a government that tries to present itself as an ally of the only democracy in the region, of standing shoulder to shoulder with a people and a country that have been subject to the worst attacks that human beings have been able to conceive of, will not unequivocally and clearly state that the country, Israel, and its people have a right not only to defend themselves, but to destroy those who attack it over and over again. We are not talking about squabbles over natural resources or where borders should be drawn. We are talking about terrorist organizations that deny Israel's right to exist at all, and that state in their charter that they not only want to dismantle the state of Israel, but they want to end Jewish lives.

When this member, this foreign minister and this government cannot unequivocally state that, when faced with those types of threats and attacks, Israel does not have the right to destroy terrorist organizations is to deny to Israel what every other state in the world would claim for itself. Let us make no mistake, if Canada or our NATO allies were continuously subjected to terrorist attacks, rocket launches and missile launches, not only would we defend ourselves, but we, as a people, would demand that our government destroy those who are perpetrating such acts of terror.

However, this is a pattern from this government. We saw this when the head of Hezbollah, Nasrallah, was eliminated. World leaders around the globe, who have a wide range of views on the conflict in the Middle East, were all united on the idea that Nasrallah headed up a terrorist organization, that he was responsible for the loss of many innocent lives, including 240 American lives and dozens of French lives, and the list goes on and on. We do not have time in the short amount of time left to us to enumerate all the atrocities that Hezbollah has committed and all the innocent lives that were lost at its hand. However, this Prime Minister basically put out a statement, which was probably was written by AI or copied and pasted from Wikipedia. It made no mention of the justice that was done and the relief that many people felt that this terrorist leader had finally been eliminated.

*S. O. 52*

I grew up in Ottawa, and there is a very significant Lebanese population in Ottawa. I have known many people whose families fled here after Hezbollah started to destabilize that country. Lebanon had a long history of a wonderful quality of life and relative peace and security. Beirut used to be called the Paris of the Middle East until IRGC-backed terrorist entities like Hezbollah started to infiltrate Lebanese society, weaken the Government of Lebanon and basically act as a parallel state, handing out its own form of perverse justice to those who opposed its radical agenda and perpetrating crimes against its own people. Hezbollah and Nasrallah himself aided the genocidal and psychopathic regime in Syria that had committed so many war crimes against its own people. Yet, we see this moral equivalency from the government after the news of Nasrallah's death was made public, and we see it again tonight on display here.

In closing, I will just basically say that it is very clear that on this side of the House, we stand for human rights, we stand for the rule of law and the rule of international law, and we recognize Israel's right to exist and Israel's right to dismantle those entities that have

their stated purpose as the elimination of Israel and the death of Jewish people. On that side of the House, we have a Prime Minister who says one thing to one group of people and another thing to a different group of people, because he will not take a principled stand. That is the choice that Canadians have, and we know where the Canadian people stand. They stand on the right side of history, they stand on the side of innocent human beings who are just trying to defend themselves, just trying to carve out a small place on the planet where the Jewish people can live in peace and security, and that is where the Conservatives stand as well.

• (2400)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It being midnight, I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until later this day at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(Motion agreed to)

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

---







# CONTENTS

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Petitions

#### Public Safety

Mr. Mazier ..... 26013

#### Telecommunications

Ms. Gaudreau ..... 26013

#### Road Safety

Mr. Morrice ..... 26013

#### Housing

Mr. Morrice ..... 26013

### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Badawey ..... 26014

### Request for Emergency Debate

#### Situation in Lebanon and Israel

Ms. McPherson ..... 26014

#### Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker ..... 26014

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Business of Supply

#### Opposition Motion—Request for a Royal Recommendation for Bill C-319

Mr. Blanchet ..... 26014

Motion ..... 26014

Mr. Lauzon ..... 26016

Mr. Godin ..... 26017

Mr. Green ..... 26017

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 26017

Ms. Larouche ..... 26018

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26018

Mrs. Roberts ..... 26019

Mr. Savard-Tremblay ..... 26019

Ms. Barron ..... 26020

Mr. Lauzon ..... 26020

Mr. Deltell ..... 26021

Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné ..... 26022

Mr. Morrice ..... 26022

Mr. Deltell ..... 26022

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26024

Mr. Perron ..... 26024

Ms. Barron ..... 26024

Mr. Gourde ..... 26024

Mr. Perron ..... 26026

Ms. Chagger ..... 26026

Ms. Barron ..... 26026

Mr. Morrice ..... 26027

Ms. Zarrillo ..... 26027

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26028

Mr. Perron ..... 26028

Mrs. Roberts ..... 26029

Ms. Barron ..... 26029

Mr. Boulerice ..... 26029

Mr. Morrice ..... 26030

Mr. Savard-Tremblay ..... 26031

Mr. Green ..... 26031

Ms. Chagger ..... 26031

### Business of the House

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26032

Motion ..... 26032

(Motion agreed to) ..... 26032

### Business of Supply

#### Opposition Motion—Request for a Royal Recommendation for Bill C-319

Motion ..... 26032

Mr. Perron ..... 26032

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26033

Mr. Deltell ..... 26033

Mr. Green ..... 26034

Mr. Savard-Tremblay ..... 26034

Ms. Sgro ..... 26035

Mrs. Vien ..... 26035

Ms. Barron ..... 26036

Mr. Sorbara ..... 26036

Mr. Savard-Tremblay ..... 26037

Mrs. Roberts ..... 26038

Mr. Cannings ..... 26038

Ms. Chagger ..... 26038

Mrs. DeBellefeuille ..... 26040

Mr. Cannings ..... 26040

Mr. Perron ..... 26040

Mrs. DeBellefeuille ..... 26041

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26042

Mr. Godin ..... 26042

Mr. Morrice ..... 26042

Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné ..... 26043

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 26044

Mrs. Vien ..... 26044

Ms. Gazan ..... 26045

Mr. Perron ..... 26045

Mr. Blois ..... 26045

Mr. Perron ..... 26046

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Canadian Coast Guard

Mr. Rogers ..... 26047

### King Charles III Coronation Medal Recipients

Mr. Caputo ..... 26047

<b>Retirement Congratulations</b>	
Mrs. Romanado .....	26047
<b>Académie Ste-Thérèse Student Council</b>	
Ms. Chabot .....	26047
<b>National Seniors Day</b>	
Ms. Lapointe .....	26048
<b>Hugh Michael Greene</b>	
Mr. Calkins .....	26048
<b>Canadian Heritage</b>	
Mr. Jowhari .....	26048
<b>Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Vaudreuil-Soulanges</b>	
Mr. Schiefke .....	26048
<b>Seniors</b>	
Mrs. Roberts .....	26049
<b>National Seniors Day</b>	
Ms. Taylor Roy .....	26049
<b>Bloc Québécois</b>	
Mr. Gourde .....	26049
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Williams .....	26049
<b>Dental Care</b>	
Ms. Gainey .....	26049
<b>Anti-Semitism</b>	
Mr. Garrison .....	26050
<b>Seniors</b>	
Ms. Larouche .....	26050
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Kelly .....	26050
<b>Anti-Semitism</b>	
Mr. Housefather .....	26050

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

<b>New Member</b>	
The Speaker .....	26051
<b>New Member Introduced</b>	
Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun)...	26051

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	26051
Ms. Freeland .....	26051
<b>Forest Industry</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	26051
Mr. Duclos .....	26051
<b>Finance</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	26051

Ms. Freeland .....	26051
<b>Carbon Pricing</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	26052
Ms. Freeland .....	26052
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	26052
Ms. Joly .....	26052
<b>Seniors</b>	
Mr. Therrien .....	26052
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26052
Mr. Therrien .....	26052
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26052
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Ms. Idlout .....	26052
Ms. Hajdu .....	26053
Ms. Gazan .....	26053
Ms. Hajdu .....	26053
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Chong .....	26053
Ms. Freeland .....	26053
Mr. Chong .....	26053
Ms. Freeland .....	26053
Mr. Chambers .....	26053
Ms. Freeland .....	26053
Mr. Chambers .....	26053
Mr. Champagne .....	26054
<b>Seniors</b>	
Mr. Berthold .....	26054
Ms. Freeland .....	26054
Mr. Berthold .....	26054
Mr. Champagne .....	26054
Ms. Larouche .....	26054
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26054
Ms. Larouche .....	26054
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26055
Ms. Larouche .....	26055
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26055
<b>Government Accountability</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	26055
Ms. Gould .....	26055
Mr. Barrett .....	26055
Ms. Gould .....	26055
Ms. Rempel Garner .....	26056
Ms. Gould .....	26056
Ms. Rempel Garner .....	26056
Mr. Holland .....	26056
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Ms. Barron .....	26056
Mr. Anandasangaree .....	26056
<b>Housing</b>	
Mr. Desjarlais .....	26056
Ms. Hajdu .....	26056

<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Mr. Carr .....	26057
Mr. Anandasangaree .....	26057
<b>The Economy</b>	
Ms. Lantsman .....	26057
Ms. Freeland .....	26057
Ms. Lantsman .....	26057
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26057
<b>Carbon Pricing</b>	
Mr. Barlow .....	26057
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26057
Mr. Barlow .....	26057
Mr. MacAulay .....	26058
<b>Seniors</b>	
Ms. Chabot .....	26058
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26058
Mr. Sauvé .....	26058
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26058
<b>Carbon Pricing</b>	
Mr. Moore .....	26058
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26058
Mr. Moore .....	26059
Mr. Wilkinson .....	26059
Mr. Williamson .....	26059
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26059
<b>Housing</b>	
Mr. Scarpaleggia .....	26059
Mr. Duclos .....	26059
<b>Forestry Industry</b>	
Mr. Martel .....	26059
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26059
Mr. Martel .....	26059
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26060
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	26060
Mr. Guilbeault .....	26060
<b>Seniors</b>	
Ms. Thompson .....	26060
Mr. Holland .....	26060
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Mr. Johns .....	26060
Ms. Hajdu .....	26060
Ms. Ashton .....	26060
Ms. Hajdu .....	26061

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Business of Supply</b>	
<b>Opposition Motion—Confidence in the Government</b>	
Motion .....	26061
Motion negatived .....	26062

<b>Points of Order</b>	
<b>Oral Questions—Speaker's Ruling</b>	
The Speaker .....	26062
<b>Alleged Unparliamentary Language—Speaker's Ruling</b>	
The Speaker .....	26063
<b>Business of Supply</b>	
<b>Opposition Motion—Request for a Royal Recommendation for Bill C-319</b>	
Motion .....	26064
Mr. Scarpaleggia .....	26064
Mr. Thériault .....	26065
Mr. Godin .....	26065
Ms. Zarrillo .....	26065
Ms. Larouche .....	26065
Mr. Arya .....	26067
Mr. Godin .....	26067
Ms. Zarrillo .....	26067
Mr. Lemire .....	26068
Mr. Arya .....	26069
Mr. Gourde .....	26069
Mr. Boulerice .....	26070
Mr. MacKinnon .....	26070
Mr. Thériault .....	26073
Mr. Godin .....	26073
Mr. Boulerice .....	26073
Ms. Larouche .....	26074
Ms. Chabot .....	26074
Mr. Deltell .....	26075
Mr. Long .....	26075
Ms. Collins (Victoria) .....	26076
Mr. Thériault .....	26076
Division on motion deferred .....	26077
<b>Privilege</b>	
<b>Alleged Failure of Witness to Respond to Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics—Speaker's Ruling</b>	
The Speaker .....	26077
<b>Request for Witness to Attend at the Bar of the House</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	26078
Motion .....	26078
Mr. Lamoureux .....	26080
Mrs. Vignola .....	26081
Mr. Calkins .....	26081
Mrs. Roberts .....	26081
Mr. Thériault .....	26082
Mr. Lamoureux .....	26083
Mr. Genuis .....	26084
Mr. Deltell .....	26084
Mr. Villemure .....	26084
Mr. Genuis .....	26085
Mr. Deltell .....	26085
Mr. Julian .....	26086

## EMERGENCY DEBATE

### Situation in Lebanon and Israel

Ms. McPherson .....	26086
Motion .....	26086
Mr. Genuis .....	26088
Mr. Morrice .....	26088
Mr. Vuong .....	26088
Ms. Mathysen .....	26089
Mr. Genuis .....	26090
Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	26090
Ms. Barron .....	26090
Ms. Damoff .....	26090
Ms. Lantsman .....	26092
Mr. Singh .....	26092
Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	26092
Ms. Vandenbeld .....	26092
Ms. Khalid .....	26093
Mr. Genuis .....	26094
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	26094
Ms. Collins (Victoria) .....	26094
Mr. Chong .....	26094
Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	26096
Ms. McPherson .....	26096
Mr. Carr .....	26097
Mr. Morrice .....	26097
Ms. Lantsman .....	26097
Ms. Normandin .....	26097
Mr. Bezan .....	26099
Ms. Mathysen .....	26099
Mr. Genuis .....	26100
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	26100
Ms. McPherson .....	26101
Mr. Genuis .....	26102
Ms. Barron .....	26102
Ms. Saks .....	26102
Mr. Genuis .....	26103
Ms. Normandin .....	26103
Ms. McPherson .....	26103
Mr. Ali .....	26104
Mr. Morantz .....	26104
Ms. Normandin .....	26105
Mr. Genuis .....	26105
Ms. Lantsman .....	26105

Mr. Oliphant .....	26108
Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	26108
Ms. McPherson .....	26108
Mrs. Roberts .....	26108
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	26109
Mr. Genuis .....	26109
Mrs. Zahid .....	26109
Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	26110
Ms. Ashton .....	26111
Mr. Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's) .....	26111
Ms. Diab .....	26111
Ms. Idlout .....	26112
Ms. Petitpas Taylor .....	26113
Ms. Normandin .....	26113
Mr. Morantz .....	26113
Ms. McPherson .....	26114
Mr. Bezan .....	26115
Mr. Berthold .....	26115
Ms. McPherson .....	26116
Mr. Kusmierczyk .....	26117
Mr. Bezan .....	26117
Mr. El-Khoury .....	26117
Ms. Mathysen .....	26118
Ms. McPherson .....	26118
Mr. Housefather .....	26119
Mr. Morantz .....	26120
Mr. Berthold .....	26120
Mr. McKinnon .....	26120
Mr. Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's) .....	26120
Ms. McPherson .....	26122
Mr. Housefather .....	26122
Mr. Chong .....	26122
Ms. Rempel Garner .....	26122
Ms. McPherson .....	26124
Mr. Housefather .....	26124
Ms. Lantsman .....	26124
Mr. Ehsassi .....	26124
Mr. Oliphant .....	26125
Mr. Scheer .....	26127
Ms. McPherson .....	26127
Ms. Mathysen .....	26127
Mr. Scheer .....	26127
(Motion agreed to) .....	26128



Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>