



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 151 No. 347**  
Wednesday, October 2, 2024

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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[English]

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

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for the third year, the Government of Canada and Area X.O, which is part of Invest Ottawa, hosted GCXpo, the epic smart mobility demonstration day, in my riding of Nepean.

GCXpo brought together more than 70 Canadian companies to host live technology demonstrations at Area X.O. GCXpo created an exclusive opportunity for invited guests to experience the power and impact of cutting-edge Canadian technologies, including many preparing for global markets. Throughout the day, over 1,400 participants from industry, academia, government and investment communities experienced live tech demos from 78 innovators and companies from Canada's capital and across the country, from cargo air vehicles to drones, robots, low-speed automated shuttles, the Internet of things, smart city solutions and more.

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### RIC MORROW

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Richard Blair Morrow, beloved husband of Sandy and devoted father to Tanya and Alana, passed away at the age of 84. He was elected to Halton Regional and Town of Halton Hills councils in 1974, the year they were formed. In fact, the name “Halton Hills”, which the municipality still has today, was Ric's suggestion. The name won in a resident vote for the newly merged municipality.

Ric made many other contributions beyond elected office. He graduated from RMC in 1962. He joined Air Canada as a pilot in 1965 and became captain in 1973. He was instrumental in expanding GO service to Georgetown and was appointed commissioner of Halton Regional Police Service in 1981.

We are grateful for Ric Morrow's lifetime of service and wish to pass along our deepest sympathies to Sandra, Tanya and Alana.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CYPRUS

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Cyprus is celebrating the 64th anniversary of its independence, I am thinking about my first visit there in July, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Turkish invasion.

This tragic event caused death and destruction and displaced thousands of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, who left the island.

[English]

Those who remained in the Greek Cypriot area built a democratic nation with a thriving economy as part of the European Union, welcoming both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. I visited the UN buffer zone and met two Canadian peacekeepers by the monument honouring the 28 Canadians who lost their lives in Cyprus. The Canadian flag we brought with us is now flying proudly next to the monument. Canada and Cyprus established strong diplomatic relations 64 years ago and continue to focus on peace and stability.

[Translation]

Canada continues to support the two communities' efforts to find an acceptable path toward reunification for an inclusive future, making Cyprus a beacon of hope and prosperity in the region.

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### 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF POINTE-AUX-TREMBLES

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to mark the 350th anniversary of Pointe-aux-Trembles, which is known for its rich history, heritage sites and larger-than-life personalities.

*Statements by Members*

Local luminaries include authors Robert Chevalier, Claire Wojas and Serge Bouchard, athletes Rodrigue Gilbert and the Dufour-La-pointe sisters, artists Marie-Claire and Richard Séguin and Christian Bégin, and the Léger family of politicians. Other Pointe-aux-Trembles residents, including 16-year-old Marc Campbell, made a name for themselves by participating in the Patriote movement of 1837-38.

Over the years, the people of Pointe-aux-Trembles have faced their share of adversity, such as when the British army landed in what is now Clémentine-De La Rousselière park in 1760 or when a fire destroyed half the town in 1912.

To everyone from Pointe-aux-Trembles, I wish all of us a wonderful 350th anniversary.

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#### 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF CIBPA

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pelland, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, I attended a gala celebrating the 75th anniversary of CIBPA, the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association.

This extraordinary milestone testifies to the commitment and success of this association, which was founded to serve as a resource for business people and professionals. Over the decades, CIBPA has become a fixture in the business community, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and viewpoints.

[English]

I am deeply honoured to witness CIBPA's continued efforts in advancing the business, cultural and social interests of its members, going beyond traditional networking.

In its 75 years, CIBPA has provided valuable services and activities that enhance professional growth and interpersonal connections, fostering a network of motivated leaders. It has supported both individual and corporate growth, building a community that values teamwork, integrity and innovation.

I say congratulations to the chair, Mr. Rick Sassano, and cheers to many more years of excellence.

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#### SALVATION ARMY

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago, an outpost of the Salvation Army was established in Chilliwack. Its mission was to share the love of Jesus Christ, to meet human needs and to be a transforming influence in the community. Today, the Salvation Army's Care and Share Centre operates a multitude of social service programs, including a food bank, homeless shelter, soup kitchen, thrift store and homeless outreach program.

To celebrate its 100th anniversary, the Salvation Army launched a "March to \$1 Million" fundraising campaign, which will help purchase food to keep up with soaring demand, upgrade aging facilities and provide even more support to those needing help in our community.

Many people in Chilliwack are hurting, with a growing population of hungry and homeless people. Food bank usage has increased by over 40% in the last year alone. The needs in our community have never been greater.

The Salvation Army has been there for Chilliwack for the last 100 years. I ask all who can to support them now so that they can continue to do their life-giving work in our community.

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● (1410)

#### KITIGAN ZIBI CHIEFS

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to express my gratitude to the former chief of the Kitigan Zibi community. He stood by his community during difficult times, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, and he worked towards making his community one of the most vibrant in Canada. Like me, Dylan Whiteduck is a fan of *The Lord of the Rings*, and he made me smile one day when he said that he wanted his community to be like the Shire, one of the most beautiful places in Middle-earth.

[Translation]

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to the new chief of the Kitigan Zibi community, Jean-Guy Whiteduck, who was a mentor to Dylan and has contributed a great deal to his community. He will continue to make Kitigan Zibi one of the most beautiful places in the Outaouais.

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[English]

#### HELLENIC COMMUNITY OF VANCOUVER

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hellenic community in Vancouver Granville.

With a proud history that spans over a century in Vancouver Granville, this community has profoundly enriched our country and Vancouver's cultural landscape. This past weekend, I was especially honoured to receive its highest award: honorary lifetime membership. This recognition also reflects the collective commitment of Vancouver Granville's Hellenic community to unity, compassion and resilience; these traits make us proud as Vancouverites and as Canadians.

The Hellenic Community of Vancouver's commitment to philanthropy and community service, to providing a space for many diverse groups to gather, is a testament to the great things we can all do when we come together. Its commitment to community reminds us of the importance of helping those in need and ensuring that no one is left behind.

As we seek to build a more inclusive Canada, let us celebrate and learn from Vancouver Granville's Hellenic community.

### ROSH HASHANAH

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tonight, at sunset, marks the beginning of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year.

Rosh Hashanah is one of the most important holidays in the Jewish calendar. This holiday allows family and friends to come together to appreciate the struggles and triumphs of the previous year, as well as to reset and refocus on the year ahead. It is a time of hope and encouragement that has inspired Jewish people for millennia, comforting them even in times of unimaginable hardship.

Rosh Hashanah is particularly important this year as the Jewish community faces so much uncertainty and hatred. In the 10 days leading up to Yom Kippur, I hope that not only the Jewish community but also all of Canada commits to fighting hatred and anti-Semitism.

To everyone celebrating Rosh Hashanah, I say *Shanah tovah u'metuka* to them and their family. Canada's Conservatives wish them a peaceful and prosperous new year.

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### COMMUNITY SERVICE

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I wish to honour an extraordinary advocate and environmental champion in the Humber River—Black Creek community, by the name of Edith George. For over 20 years, Edith has been a relentless hero for the historical recognition of a red oak tree, a magnificent 300-year-old landmark located in the immediate vicinity of the Toronto Carrying Place trail. Her unwavering dedication not only underscores the importance of preserving our natural heritage, but also deepens our connection to our shared history.

Edith actively participates in various boards, always striving to uplift and engage our community. Her passion and leadership inspire those around her, demonstrating the profound impact one individual can have in making our world a better place.

We are thankful to Edith for her steadfast advocacy and for being a beacon of hope for both Humber River—Black Creek and the broader community. Her efforts truly make a difference. My thanks to Ms. George.

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• (1415)

[Translation]

### BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal government, the results are devastating. The cost of living is up, taxes are up, crime is up and Canadians' frustration is up too. Quebeckers have clearly shown that they are fed up with a Liberal government that does nothing but waste Quebeckers' money and interfere in provincial jurisdictions.

The Bloc Québécois has run out of excuses for keeping this Liberal Prime Minister in power. Just yesterday, the Bloc Québécois had the opportunity to vote in the interests of Quebeckers by sup-

### Statements by Members

porting our motion of non-confidence in this government. Once again, the Bloc Québécois chose instead to turn its back on Quebeckers and support a government that has made their lives a misery for the past nine years. What did the Bloc get in return? It got nothing, not even the cancellation of the Liberal order that could wipe out Quebec's forestry industry. The reason is simple: The Bloc Québécois does not serve Quebeckers. It serves the Liberal Prime Minister. How very strange for a sovereignist party.

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[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Canadians are fed up with the government's economic vandalism. Since 2019, Canada's GDP is down 2% per capita, whereas in the U.S., it is up by 8%. Trevor Tombe, economist, wrote that "If Canada had simply kept pace with the U.S. over the past two years, our economy would be 8.5 percent larger". That means every Canadian would be \$6,000 richer.

Enough is enough. A common-sense Conservative government will reverse this economic vandalism, bring home powerful paycheques for Canadians, and cut taxes and red tape. A common-sense Conservative government will fix what Liberals broke and restore the promise that is Canada.

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### CANADIAN MALNUTRITION AWARENESS WEEK

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, next week, from October 7 to 11, Canadian Malnutrition Awareness Week will be taking place. Malnutrition is a serious challenge that has deep and long-lasting developmental, economic, social and medical impacts on individuals and communities. From under-nourishment to poor diet, millions of children across the world suffer serious consequences each year.

[Translation]

Here in Canada, our government has fortunately taken concrete action to address this problem with our national school food program, which will enable thousands of children to go to school with full bellies so they can reach their full potential.

My Bill C-252 is also an important step toward a future where all children in Canada will be assured of high-quality food that protects their health and their future.

[English]

There is still more work to be done. Therefore, let us continue to improve and promote a healthy diet.

*Routine Proceedings***MY SISTER'S PLACE**

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I join with Londoners to celebrate the 20th anniversary of My Sister's Place, which provides a safe and inclusive centre that supports women and those who identify as women. It helps vulnerable people who may experience gender-based violence, trauma, chronic mental and physical health challenges, homelessness or housing instability, substance use and extreme poverty.

Through drop-in and wraparound services, in partnership with CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services, and many other organizations throughout London, My Sister's Place creates a welcoming, non-judgmental culture, what they call a reprieve from the stigma that women so often feel when they need support.

I cannot thank the incredible workers, volunteers and supporters of My Sister's Place enough. For the past 20 years, they have been the heart of our community. They welcome women in with such warmth and open arms. They provide a sympathetic ear, a shoulder to cry on, supports to get people into safety, into shelter and into programs. They show such kindness and generosity of spirit. I give my thanks and congratulations.

\* \* \*

• (1420)

[Translation]

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM NEW MEMBER**

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to use my first statement in the House to thank the voters of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun for placing their trust in me on September 16. I made only one promise, and that was to give my all to prove myself worthy of that trust.

I thank my leader, the member for Beloeil—Chambly, for his unwavering support throughout the campaign. I would also like to thank Mr. Duceppe and Mr. St-Pierre Plamondon for their speeches at our big rally.

My heartfelt thanks go to all the volunteers who believed in the Bloc Québécois. Special thanks go to my campaign manager, Stevens Héroux, and the members of the election committee for this victory.

Thanks to all of them, southwest Montreal now has a member on the ground who is here to serve the people. Thanks to them, I will be working on local priorities like housing, homelessness, the cost of living and the fight against climate change. Thanks to them, I will continue to work toward the only real power: Quebec independence.

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[English]

**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week Parliament has ground to a halt with Liberal corruption. No government bills are being debated. The Liberal Prime Minister who said his government would be open by default is now causing the House to deal

with his own Liberal government withholding documents from the RCMP that it has been legally ordered to produce. Why would the Liberals do that? It is a case of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars stolen in countless conflicts of interest by Liberals appointed by the Liberal Prime Minister. Common-sense Conservatives will not stop until the Liberals turn over all of the documents to the RCMP.

Then we have the Liberal minister from Edmonton's business partner in breach of a House order for refusing to turn over key documents and provide answers on the infamous "other Randy". Evidence ordered by a House committee proved the falsehood from the Liberal minister from Edmonton that he was not communicating with his business partner, and we know that is against the law.

Canadians do not have confidence in the Prime Minister, twice found guilty of breaking ethics laws himself. It is time to call a carbon tax election so Canadians can fire the corrupt Liberals and Conservatives can restore accountability.

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**LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, cha-cha-cha, olé, olé, olé.

October is Latin American Heritage Month. It is so exciting to know that we have a whole month to celebrate the unbelievable music, literature, food, talent, creativity and culture of over 20 diverse and beautiful Latin American and Hispanic cultures in Canada.

It is also a month to acknowledge the many contributions of Latin American and Hispanic Canadians to our country. They are leaders in virtually every sector of our nation. This large and growing community enriches our national fabric with its contributions and it plays an important role in Canada's growth and prosperity. *Gracias* to all the members of the Hispanic and Latin American Canadian community. They are an inspiration not only within the community, but to all Canadians.

This evening, I invite everyone to join the Latin American and Hispanic community to celebrate this amazing month at the John A. Macdonald building from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Come out for tacos, empanadas, vino, mojitos, *música alegre* and so much more.

*Viva los Latinos en Canadá.***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**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 Ms. Leila Dance, member for the electoral district of Elmwood—Transcona.

## NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Ms. Leila Dance, member for the electoral district of Elmwood—Transcona, introduced by Mr. Jagmeet Singh.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

### HOUSING

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in nine years, this Liberal government, supported by the Bloc Québécois, has managed to triple the cost of housing in Montreal. A report published by Point2 shows that it now takes 14 years for a young Montrealer to save enough money to buy a home with a small down payment.

When will the government call an election so that the people can elect a government that will build the homes by cutting red tape and approving construction?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the Conservative Party leader does not understand is that slogans do not build homes and do not meet Canadians' needs. The only solutions are to work hard and be there to work with the municipalities.

Instead of insulting the mayor of Montreal like he did, we need to work with the municipalities, work with the provinces and work with the non-profit organizations to build housing and fix these problems.

We are here to do serious work. He is here to toss out slogans, offer no solutions and get himself elected. Canadians deserve better.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we saw the solutions when I was the minister responsible for housing. We built 200,000 housing units, and rents in Montreal cost a third of what they do now.

By engaging in inflationary spending supported by the Bloc Québécois, by breaking our immigration system and by adding more red tape that blocks construction, the Prime Minister has managed to triple the cost of housing in Montreal.

Will he call an election so that we can have a government that will build the homes by getting rid of red tape and taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does not seem to want to get rid of taxes, because he voted against our proposal to eliminate the GST on low-income housing construction. We are there to lower the cost of housing construction.

If any housing was built while he was the minister responsible for housing, it was no thanks to him, because he created only six affordable housing units the entire time he was the minister responsible for housing in Mr. Harper's government.

We are there to deliver affordable housing, deliver results for Canadians and build a better future for everyone.

## Oral Questions

### CARBON PRICING

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he is hiking taxes on housing construction by increasing the capital gains tax, all with the support of the Bloc Québécois. The margin created by removing the GST from construction has been swallowed up by municipalities that have increased their taxes with this government's consent.

Clearly, it costs more to build.

[*English*]

It costs more to finance our social services because the Prime Minister's carbon tax is forcing new and unjustifiable costs on New Brunswick schools and hospitals that Canadians cannot afford.

Will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election so that we can save our schools and hospitals from this tax?

[*Translation*]

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition started out by expressing his disapproval of our new capital gains tax because, once again, the Conservatives are there to defend tax cuts for the rich and service cuts for everyone else.

[*English*]

Once again, the Leader of the Opposition talked about his opposition to our bringing in an increase on capital gains. We know that asking the wealthy to do a little more so we can deliver more homes for young Canadians to build a future is what we need to do, but the Conservatives continue to be there with cuts on taxes for the wealthiest and cuts on services for everyone else.

• (1430)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is hiking taxes on home builders, on doctors, on job creators and on farmers. He is also raising taxes on hospitals and schools. The New Brunswick premier is taking the Prime Minister to court because of the unconstitutional quadrupling carbon tax and the costs it will impose on snowplows, ambulances and the heating of hospitals and schools, meaning the loss of countless police officers, nurses, doctors and teachers.

Instead of defeating the carbon tax in court, why can we not have a carbon tax election so that Canadians can axe the tax?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for the past number of years, multiple Conservative premiers have gone after the price on pollution in courts and have lost at the Supreme Court. Canadians have decided that a price on pollution is the right thing. We have won multiple elections on that because Canadians know that the only way to build a strong economy is to fight climate change at the same time. The Leader of the Opposition does not get that, does not accept that and does not understand that abandoning the fight against climate change would hurt Canadians, would hurt our institutions and would hurt people and economic growth right across the country.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister concealed, from both the courts and Canadians, his plan to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre. Now Premier Scott Moe of Saskatchewan says this will hit schools with \$204 million in carbon taxes and hospitals with \$175 million in carbon taxes, meaning we will lose doctors, teachers and other necessary workers serving Canadians.

Instead of forcing premiers to fight to axe the tax in court, why can we not have a carbon tax election so Canadians can axe the tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader is proposing that we abandon the fight against climate change. He wants to take away the Canada carbon rebate, which puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians, the middle class and people working hard to join it, even as we fight climate change, reduce emissions in this country and create growth and opportunities in cleaner jobs and cleaner careers.

These are the issues that Canadians are preoccupied with. How are they going to have jobs in the future when the leader wants to take away the fight against climate change?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SENIORS**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, an extremely shocking and inappropriate remark was made in the House yesterday.

The Minister of Labour and Seniors basically said that either the associations representing all Quebec retirees are naive, or they are conspiring with the Bloc Québécois, the nasty separatists, the sovereignists and the Conservatives to overthrow the government. Not even Jean Chrétien would have said such a thing.

Does the Prime Minister condone that remark? Will he call his minister to order?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has always been there for seniors.

We are here to invest and we are here to support them, but unlike the Bloc Québécois, we are not here to play partisan games. The Bloc is making threats and trying to pick fights. We are here to work constructively with anyone in the House to provide services to seniors, invest in those who need it and build a better future for everyone within a united Canada.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at various times and in various places, the House of Commons has voted in favour of a bill that increases the purchasing power of pensioners aged 65 to 74. The Minister of Labour and, God help us, Seniors says it is a plot that the separatists hatched with the Conservatives to take down the Liberals.

Can members stop talking nonsense in the House? Will the Prime Minister call his blundering minister to order?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the House that when our government chose to bring the retirement age back down to 65, after Mr. Harper raised it to 67, the Bloc Québécois voted against seniors. When we chose to increase the GIS by \$1,000 for the most vulnerable seniors, the Bloc Québécois voted against seniors. When we chose to invest in dental care, which has now helped over 800,000 Canadians, including many seniors in Quebec, the Bloc Québécois voted against seniors.

\* \* \*

● (1435)

[English]

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats believe in lower rents, not higher. When the Conservatives were in power, they let big, greedy corporations buy up affordable homes and convert them into luxury cash cows. They allowed that to happen over 800,000 times. I will ban it. The Prime Minister has allowed it to happen over 370,000 times. Every single time that happens, it means a family gets evicted. It means rents go up. Why?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, we have worked hand in hand with municipalities, provinces and non-profit organizations not only to build more affordable homes, but to ensure that apartments or homes that were built as affordable get to stay affordable long into the future. We have done that with funds put forward to purchase, by non-profit organizations, deeper affordable homes, and we will move forward on converting public lands into affordable homes that will be kept affordable for decades and even a century to come.

These are the kinds of things that we are going to continue to do and focus on in this House.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader's chief adviser is also the chief lobbyist for corporate landlords, but what is the Prime Minister's excuse? For decades, Liberals and Conservatives have failed to ensure that indigenous communities have safe and affordable places to call home. Now over 300,000 indigenous people live in unsuitable housing.



*Oral Questions*

For the Prime Minister, it is delay, delay, delay. When will he realize that he is failing indigenous people?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have tripled investments in indigenous communities since 2015, including \$32 billion in investments expected in 2024-25 alone. We are moving forward on investing in and with indigenous communities to build more homes, to create more economic opportunities and to create the kinds of partnerships that I got to see just a couple of days ago in Inuvik, where the Inuvialuit are moving forward on ambitious plans for the future.

This is reconciliation in action, not just pretty words, but actions that are delivering for Canadians. There is a lot more to do, but we are going to keep delivering for indigenous people.

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**CARBON PRICING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost of food. The “food professor” estimates that between 2022 and 2025, the cost of food will be up 34%. That is a time that coincides exactly with the NDP-Liberal coalition. Coincidentally, the NDP leader's chief spokesman and brother has a company that lobbies for Metro, but the “food professor” blames the increase on the carbon taxes placed on farmers and truckers, who bring us our food.

Before Canadians go hungry, why will the Prime Minister not allow a carbon tax election so Canadians can axe the tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, farmers across this country are feeling the impacts of the extreme weather events that come from climate change. Whether it is with droughts, wildfires or floods, we are seeing the costs of climate change every single day.

We put forward a price on pollution that not only brings down emissions and creates more solutions and economic growth, but also puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians right across the country. It is the Parliamentary Budget Officer who said that.

We are going to continue to fight climate change while the leader opposite wants to abandon the fight against climate change.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister loves to blame the rest of the world for the rampant food price inflation here at home, but the “food professor” proves that narrative false. He has calculated that food prices have risen 36% faster in Canada than in the United States of America. What does Canada have that the Americans do not have? It is two words: carbon tax.

Instead of forcing Canadians to line up at food banks, why will the Prime Minister not let them line up to vote in a carbon tax election?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I did not dare say anything after the last question because I could not believe my ears, but here we have the Leader of the Opposition quoting some sort of expert, which is a brand new thing for

this House of Commons. To rely on facts and data is an excellent thing to hear.

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will listen to the hundreds of economists and scientists who have pointed out that putting a price on pollution, particularly one that puts more money back into the pockets of the middle class and those working hard to join it, is the best way to both fight climate change and grow the economy. However, the leader opposite just wants to play politics—

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

**The Speaker:** I would ask all members, including the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, to only take the floor when they are recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have more expert information for the Prime Minister from the “food professor”, Sylvain Charlebois, who finds that 13% of Americans live in food insecurity while in Canada it is 23%. In other words, Canadians are twice as likely to live in food insecurity, as food price inflation is one-third higher under the Prime Minister's carbon tax regime.

Instead of blaming others or forcing Canadians to go hungry, why not have a carbon tax election so that Canadians can axe the tax and afford their food?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition is playing politics, we are focused on delivering solutions. We are delivering a national school food program that is going to help 400,000 kids have fuller bellies at schools across the country and save Canadian families \$800 a year on grocery bills.

If the Leader of the Opposition actually cared about food security in this country, we might imagine he would have voted for that. Instead, not only did he vote against it, but he pretends it does not exist. He pretends it has not happened. He is gaslighting Canadians on the things we are doing to fight affordability challenges. Instead, he is just offering political games.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a food program without food. It has not served a single ham sandwich or a single bowl of Kraft Dinner. Not even a piece of broccoli has been forced upon an unwilling kid. It is meant to feed bureaucracy, not feed kids. Meanwhile, there is a 42% increase in the food bank use in Mississauga, and two million Canadians are lined up at food banks. One quarter of children are going hungry after nine years of the Prime Minister's carbon taxes.

*Oral Questions*

Why can we not have a carbon tax election?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition actually cared about vulnerable Canadians, he would be offering solutions, not just more politics. He stood against the price on pollution—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, colleagues.

I'm going to ask the right hon. Prime Minister to start from the top.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the campus Conservative who turned career politician does not actually care about Canadians. What he is actually doing is proposing to take money out of the pockets of eight of the 10 Canadians who do better with the Canada carbon rebate, while we fight climate change. He stood against dental care that is delivering for over 800,000 people across this country, something he still says does not exist. He is standing against the school food policy that is helping 400,000 kids get better food across the country. He stood against child care. He has stood against affordability measures.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when one quadruples the tax on the farmers who grow the food and on the truckers who ship the food, one taxes all who buy the food. The Canadian Trucking Alliance has calculated that the carbon tax will cost \$20,000 for every long-haul truck this year alone. Now the Prime Minister wants to quadruple the tax, which will grind those trucks to a halt, meaning empty shelves in grocery stores, no parts for factories and no paycheques for our workers.

Instead of doing that, why not call a carbon tax election so Canadians can axe the tax and save our economy?

• (1445)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suspect that, like me, members have noticed that the Leader of the Opposition is particularly full of shameless slogans today. The reality is that he has nothing to offer Canadians. He has nothing but political slogans and easy attacks on politics, no actually moving forward on delivering on programs that are going to help Canadians, and no stepping up to put more money in people's pockets. He is offering tax breaks for the wealthiest and cuts for services and programs to everyone else. That is not what Canadians need right now.

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind the right hon. Prime Minister and all members of the House that this is not an avenue we want to go down. It can easily get out of control, and I would suggest that we do not go that close to the line.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every time I mention a carbon tax election, the Prime Minister becomes so panicked and erratic that he loses control of himself and starts spitting out incomprehensible insults. Canadians deserve our focusing on them. The fact is that after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, there are two million people lined up at food banks, a record-smashing number. After nine years, one in four kids is going to school hungry.

Before more kids go to school hungry, why can we not have a carbon tax election so Canadians can axe the tax and afford their food?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada carbon rebate puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians right across the country. It supports the middle class and people working hard to join it while we successfully fight against climate change, reduce emissions and grow the economy.

The leader opposite still does not understand that we cannot have an economic plan if we do not have an environmental plan. His plan is to abandon the fight against climate change, leave Canadians to their own devices, lower taxes for the wealthiest and leave everyone else to fend for themselves. That is not what Canadians do.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SENIORS**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not only is his minister a laughingstock in the eyes of the Quebec media, but the Prime Minister is also saying that we voted against adjusting the age of retirement from 67 to 65 and against enhancing the GIS. In both cases, however, the vote always included jurisdictional interference and other issues that are unacceptable to Quebec. The Prime Minister and his minister are misleading Quebecers.

Will the Prime Minister admit that a separate vote on the GIS and retirement age was never held in this Parliament under his watch?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we can plainly see the Bloc Québécois leader's defensiveness when we point out that the only reason they are here is to pick fights and stand in the way of measures that can improve the well-being of Canadians and Quebecers. They do not want the Government of Canada to work for Quebecers. That was why he voted against a dental care program that is currently providing hundreds of thousands of seniors across Canada and Quebec with dental care that was once beyond their means.

We are here to invest in Canadians and Quebecers. The Bloc Québécois is here to bicker.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is defending Halloween-style horror stories, when this coming Halloween may be his last as Prime Minister.

Up to one million Quebecers and up to four million Canadians are affected by the Bloc Québécois proposal. By refusing to clearly answer questions and by letting his minister insult the intelligence of people from pensioner associations, does he realize that he is creating serious insecurity for up to four million people in Canada and one million people in Quebec?

*Oral Questions*

• (1450)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have demonstrated that we are always there to invest in seniors and the most vulnerable. We chose to do so by increasing the GIS by \$1,000 for the most vulnerable seniors. That is what we are doing to give older seniors a little more, because people are living longer and their savings do not always last as long as they hoped, as costs go up.

We will always listen and reflect on how we can better support seniors. We will always be there for seniors, but we will not get involved in the Bloc Québécois's squabbles.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, The Economist magazine asked this question this week: "Why is Canada's economy falling behind America's?". It goes on to note that national income per person in Canada was 80% of that in the U.S. in the decade before the pandemic. It is now just 70%, the worst gap in decades.

The Prime Minister has not answered my questions. Maybe he will answer The Economist's questions: Why is our economy falling so far behind the Americans'? Is it because of the Prime Minister's quadrupling carbon tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, one of the reasons why foreign direct investment is up by 60% since 2015 is that, contrary to what the Harper government put forward, we are actually leading on the fight against climate change, on green energy and on responsible building for a sustainable future that means countries around the world want to invest.

In fact, last year we were the third largest recipient in the world of foreign direct investment, after the U.S. and Brazil, which makes us number one in the G20 for people investing in Canada. We are going to continue to invest.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's workers get 55¢ of investment for every dollar an American worker gets, and only 65¢ for every dollar an average OECD worker gets. For a net, 450 billion more Canadian investment dollars have poured into the U.S. than have come back, under the Prime Minister's nine years.

The Economist points out that our GDP per capita is now lower than Alabama's. It says, "Catching up to Alabama may soon seem like a distant dream." Why?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are facing difficult times right now, which is why we made the choice to invest in things like dental care and to cut child care fees in half for families right across the country, to \$10 a day in six jurisdictions across the country. It is why we have chosen to step up on dental and why we are choosing to step up on pharmacare to deliver free insulin and prescription contraceptives to people who are having to make choices between their health and their rent or their food.

These are the things we are choosing to do because we are putting the best balance sheet in the G7, the lowest deficit in the G7, in service of Canadians who need support.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has the worst mortgage debt, the worst housing inflation and the highest consumer debt in the G7.

Now The Economist is asking the following question: Why is Canada's economy falling behind America's? As is pointed out, Canada's per capita GDP is only 70% of the United States'.

I will repeat The Economist's question: Why is Canada's economy falling behind America's?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the International Monetary Fund projects that Canada will have stronger growth than the United States next year. We are leading the G7 with the lowest deficit, the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio.

We have a healthy macroeconomic situation, and we want to make it work for Canadians with programs that will help them, such as the dental care program and the school food program. We are here to invest. The Conservative Party is here to make cuts.

• (1455)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's per capita GDP, or per capita economic output, is lower today than it was 10 years ago. That is the worst growth per capita of any Prime Minister since the Great Depression. Canadians are also experiencing the biggest drop in per-person income of all the G7 countries. Now, The Economist has pointed out that our GDP per capita is lower than Alabama's.

How is it that Americans are getting richer while Canadians are getting poorer?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in recent years, Canada has been experiencing a much higher population growth than other G7 countries. At the same time, this has brought growth to our economy in general. We are growing faster than the United States is projected to grow next year. We are moving toward the best fiscal balance and the best fiscal position of all the G7 countries.

We are not choosing austerity and cuts like the Conservatives are proposing; rather, we are choosing to invest in the programs and services that Canadians need, because that is how we are going to get through this.

*Oral Questions***HOUSING**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, homelessness kills. That is not a metaphor, it is a sad reality. People are dying in the street.

That is why the federal housing advocate urged this Liberal government to take meaningful measures to deal with the encampment crisis. Not a single thing has happened since. The minister has done nothing. People continue to spend the night in their car or on the street. It is a real crisis, but not for this government it seems.

What is it going to take for the Liberals to offer a roof, a bed and security to the homeless in this country?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in municipalities across the country to help them invest and assist those who are experiencing homelessness. We are taking action. However, we understand that this is a shared jurisdiction between the provinces and the municipalities. Yes, the federal government can be there to invest and that is what we are doing.

No one should have to sleep on the street in Canada. That is why we are there to make the necessary investments with the municipalities and the provinces. Unfortunately, the Conservatives want to make cuts in these areas.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that answer is woefully inadequate.

[*English*]

There are over 2,600 veterans in Canada without a home. Legions and community organizations in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are doing what they can, but they need support.

Shamefully, the Liberals promised funds in the 2022 budget, but veterans have yet to see a dime. Liberals break promises and Conservatives cut help. Veterans and their families deserve better. Why is the Prime Minister, just like the Conservatives, okay with leaving veterans in the cold?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after the Conservatives nickelled and dimed veterans and shuttered veterans services offices, we not only reopened them, but also invested tens of billions of dollars in more supports for veterans right across the country. We have continued to work with veterans organizations and municipal authorities to deliver on more housing and greater supports for veterans.

We know there is more to do, but we have invested tens of billions of dollars into the issue, and we will continue to be there for veterans, unlike the Conservatives, who keep using them for photo ops while nickel-and-diming them at the same time.

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**SENIORS**

**Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 27% of the residents in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt are seniors. They remember when the previous government cut their pensions, increased the retirement age and made life more difficult for them. Since 2015, our government has provided much-needed relief for seniors. Can the Prime Minister remind Canadians of the

concrete vision we have taken to support seniors across the country?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her hard work. She is right. Seniors remember the Harper era.

One of the very first things we did when we got elected was restore the retirement age to 65 after the Conservatives raised it to 67, and we monumentally boosted seniors' benefits, both GIS and OAS. Today, 800,000 Canadians, many of them seniors, have been able to see the dentist thanks to our dental care program. While the opposition leader would bring seniors back to the Harper era, we have chosen fairness for every generation.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his government have not only taxed Canadians into poverty, but his former environment minister has also called single moms and small business owners arsonists because they oppose the carbon tax. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister ignored the warnings of his own parks department that the Jasper valley had turned into a tinderbox. These are warnings that go back to 2017, seven years ago.

There were repeated warnings to clear the brush and do controlled burns. Why did his government not do the job to prevent or mitigate this disastrous fire?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always astonishing to hear the Leader of the Opposition talk about the impacts of the extreme weather events related to climate change, while he opposes any climate action at all. He has no plan to fight climate change, which means he has no plan for affordability and no plan for the future of the Canadian economy. We have a price on pollution that is putting more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians, where it applies. It is bringing down emissions and creating growth and jobs. That is what Canadians need.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister pretends that we can put out forest fires with taxes. Clearly, that has not worked.

Rather, the Prime Minister should have listened to his own officials, who had said that the mass buildup of fuel in the Jasper valley as a result of dead trees needed to be addressed through controlled burns and other clearing methods. This would be preparation so that we would have the ability to fight the fire if and when it ever started. All of this is documented in email correspondence and, now, testimony at a parliamentary committee.

Instead of taxing Canadians into poverty, why did he not fight forest fires?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Jasper is one of the most fire-smart communities in the country. Over the past years, residents and leaders within Jasper have been exemplary in making sure they were doing everything they could to protect their community. This fire was a treetop fire. It jumped from treetop to treetop and threw flaming pine cones kilometres ahead of it, which is what set the burn. It is a result of climate change, climate change that he does not want to fight.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that kind of erratic screaming and hollering about flying pine cones is not going to tackle the problem of forest fires. It is true that the people of Jasper were fire smart. The problem is that the government in Ottawa was fire stupid. It was warned. The government was warned repeatedly over seven years that it needed to clear the dead wood to prevent the spread of a future fire.

Why, instead of bringing in a crippling carbon tax, did the Prime Minister not clear away the wood and stop leaving a tinderbox to explode?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the jewels of Canada's natural beauty burned because of climate change, and the Leader of the Opposition's focus is trying to blame Ottawa for that. That is completely irresponsible and shameful, but we have all seen that from the Conservative leader, who would rather try to rile people up and point fingers than actually solve any of the challenges that Canadians are facing, either today with affordability, or tomorrow with climate change. That is not leadership.

• (1505)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the House what is not leadership. It was not leadership when, in February of this year, email correspondence within the government confirmed that it had cancelled a controlled burn specifically for political optics. It did not want to do controlled burns. It did not want to do the same kind of forest management and maintenance that indigenous people had done for thousands of years and that had been recommended by both people on the ground and officials in the department.

The reality is that the Prime Minister did not do his job. He should be accountable and explain why he let the valley go up in smoke, and why he used a carbon tax to hide behind it all.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this era of droughts, rising temperatures and climate change, there are certainly reasons for which most reasonable people could imagine why the opting for a mechanical removal of underbrush, instead of setting it on fire, might be a better option.

### Oral Questions

The Conservatives continue their attack on experts and on science, as well as continue to refuse to understand that, but if we do not act in fighting against climate change with everything we have, then there will be no economy of the future. There will be no Jasper to rebuild. There will be no future for Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister, one that will allow him to keep trying to stay in the job. Bill C-282, the supply management bill, has been in the Senate for a year and a half. The bill contains just one section. The unelected, illegitimate Senate seems to be leading the Prime Minister around by the nose.

It is his senators, the ones he appointed, who are standing in the way. Will he instruct them to respect democracy and our choices as elected representatives?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, time and time again, including when we voted for this bill, we assured farmers, producers and all Canadians that we would always protect supply management. That is what we are doing. That is what we will always do when renegotiating any future free trade agreements. We will protect supply management.

The Senate is independent, and it is doing its job. We are going to allow democracy to function without interference. However, we have always been clear. We will defend supply management.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I always believed the Prime Minister had a hard time understanding the concept of independence.

I think the problem with all that is that the two bills that we will be discussing between now and October 29 come from the Bloc Québécois. Everyone here has already voted in favour of these bills. When something is an issue, money and time are no problem. The only majority that this Prime Minister has is a majority of his MPs at risk of losing their jobs.

Will he get on board, do what democracy demands and muster up what little leadership he has left?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have always worked for Canadians. We are going to continue doing the necessary work. While the Bloc Québécois tries to pick fights and play political games, we will go on keeping our commitments for the good of Canadians, dairy producers, seniors, and people who count on a government that is not there just to collect a salary or a pension, or be part of the opposition, but to fight every day for Quebeckers and all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is voting to keep the most centralizing and costly government in history in power. This government is bad for Quebec and tramples all over Quebec's jurisdictions, notably with a radical Liberal order that will kill thousands of jobs in the forestry sector.

Quebec's environment minister said the Bloc Québécois has not defended these jobs strongly enough in Quebec's regions.

Will the Prime Minister call an election so that a future Conservative government can reverse the orders and defend jobs in Quebec's regions?

• (1510)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every day in the House, the Leader of the Opposition continues to prove that he does not understand that we cannot have an economy unless we also protect the environment at the same time. That is exactly what we are doing, working with the forest industry and the Quebec government to ensure that we protect endangered species, but that we also protect jobs and good careers, not just for today, but for decades to come.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he is not protecting jobs or the environment. In Mauricie and the Outaouais, 280 workers are going to lose their jobs, in part because after nine years and three U.S. presidents, this Prime Minister has not managed to resolve the softwood lumber tariffs issue, when Mr. Harper managed to do it in 80 days.

Will the Prime Minister call an election so that Quebeckers can elect a government that will get an agreement and protect forestry jobs?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the NAFTA renegotiations, when aluminum worker and steelworker jobs were in jeopardy across the country, we stood our ground to negotiate in the best interest of Canadians, while the Conservatives encouraged us to take whatever the Americans were offering, because we had to avoid upsetting the Americans at all costs.

We are here to keep our commitments, not to give in. We are here to fight for Canadian workers and the Canadian economy. We will continue to do so.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he agreed to give in. He signed an agreement without protection for the forestry sector.

It is the same thing with spending. This is the most costly government in history. It has doubled the national debt. However, the Bloc Québécois is keeping this Prime Minister in power by voting confidence in him 180 times and by voting for \$500 billion in infla-

tionary and centralizing spending that led to the recruitment of 100,000 additional federal public servants.

Why does this "Liberal Bloc" government keep collecting money from Quebeckers, hoarding it in Ottawa and wasting so much of it?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers are well aware of the cost of austerity and Conservative cuts. They experienced that during the Harper years. They chose a government that had confidence in Canadians and would invest in Canadians. That is exactly what we are doing.

That is why we are putting money in Canadians' pockets with our strong fiscal record in the federal government, a record that the Conservative Party denies, while it is proposing cuts to services and, of course, tax cuts for the wealthy. That is not what Quebeckers and Canadians want.

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**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's small and medium-sized businesses keep our country's main streets alive, create well-paying jobs and make the dream of entrepreneurship a reality. These businesses need to thrive so that they can continue to be the foundation of our communities and our economy.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians what measures have been taken to support small and medium-sized businesses?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Ottawa—Vanier for her leadership and hard work.

Yesterday was a very good day for small and medium-sized businesses in Canada. Thanks to the Canada carbon rebate for small businesses, we announced that nearly 600,000 Canadian businesses will receive more than \$2.5 billion before the end of the year. This means that Ontario's small businesses will be able to invest in their operations, create good jobs and strengthen our economy. While the Leader of the Opposition would like to take these cheques away from Canadian businesses, we are standing up for entrepreneurs, who are working hard and driving our economy forward.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, carbon tax Carney, at the moment of his appointment as the head of the economic task force of the government, said he wanted to do something and not be something. What has he done? He is now sending out fundraising letters to raise cash for the Liberal Party. He has asked for \$10 billion in corporate welfare to help his multinational corporation take over the pension funds of Canadians. He has gotten his pal a \$2-billion loan.

Did the Prime Minister, yes or no, clear all of these actions of carbon tax Carney with the lobbying commissioner?

• (1515)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things we are seeing right across the country is experts and people who have succeeded in all sorts of different backgrounds stepping up to push back against the cuts and little vision that the Conservative Party has been putting forward. The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition is offering cuts to services that Canadians are relying on and offering tax breaks to the wealthiest, like Conservatives always do. We are there to invest for every generation. It is no wonder that Canadians from all backgrounds are stepping up to be part of pushing back against the Conservative leader.

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### INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, you have said that the Prime Minister is violating the rules of the House by refusing to hand over SDTC documents on a corporate welfare scandal of \$400 million that the Auditor General says involved 186 conflicts of interest, where bureaucrats, top officials in the Liberal government, were giving millions of dollars to their own companies.

Will the Prime Minister hand over the information to the police, and if not, what has he got to hide?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader just mentioned both the police and the Auditor General. Let me say what they have said. Both the RCMP and the Auditor General have raised concerns about how this motion jeopardizes their independence in serving Canadians. The Conservative Party wants to play politics with Canadians' charter rights. We will not support that.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's idea of a charter right is the right for a top government executive to take \$400 million of other people's money, give it to their own company and then hide the criminal evidence from the police. Canadians have the charter right to know where their money went.

Will the Prime Minister accept the Speaker's order and the vote of the House to turn over the documents to the police so that we can put the bad guys in jail and get back the money that was stolen?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives have demonstrated that they are willing to upend the independence of institutions like the RCMP and the Auditor General for political gain. That is what they are proposing to do. They want to direct investigations. They want control over judicial processes and their details. The reality is that this is banana republic-style behaviour that the Conservative Party is pushing.

We will always stand up for Canadians' charter rights and the independence of our institutions.

### Oral Questions

#### CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome to Parliament Hill everyone joining us to celebrate the vibrant Latin American and Hispanic community in Canada. We proudly recognize the contributions of Latinos to every facet of Canadian society, from business and journalism to the House of Commons. Their diverse voices and talents are woven into Canada's social fabric.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how our government is honouring the traditions and cultures of fellow Canadians of Latino and Hispanic descent and delivering programs to support families and businesses while growing an inclusive economy?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to thank the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his excellent work representing his constituents.

Many Latin Canadians came here as immigrants or refugees, strengthening our cultural mosaic and contributing to Canada's growth and prosperity. While the Conservatives want to cut supports and programs for Latin Canadians and their families, we are lowering rents and building affordable homes. We are investing in \$10-a-day child care, dental care and the Canada child benefit. We are supporting businesses and festivals, and we are combatting hate with community-driven approaches.

Happy Latin American Heritage Month.

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

• (1520)

**The Speaker:** I would ask the hon. member for Lakeland to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

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#### HOUSING

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to hear the Prime Minister taking credit for all the wins that the NDP has brought to the House.

Starlight Investments, a corporate landlord, is targeting its tenants with unfair rent hikes, and the Conservatives and the Liberals partnered to help Starlight's CEO avoid coming to committee to explain why he is pricing Canadians out of their homes. It is no surprise, because this CEO is a major donor to the Conservative Party.

Why is the Prime Minister, like the Conservatives, protecting the companies that are fuelling the housing crisis?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons on progressive politics from a party that ran away when the pressures got hot from the Conservative Party of Canada.

*Business of Supply*

The reality is that we were able to work constructively as progressive parliamentarians to deliver big things for Canadians over the past few years. However, the NDP choosing to turn its back on pricing pollution and putting more money in people's pockets, perhaps turning its back on pharmacare, which we will be debating over the coming months, is a real shame.

Yes, it is tough to be a progressive in this time, but we will continue to stand strong for progressive values in this House.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, last year, the Minister of International Development defended UNRWA as one of his “trusted agencies”. He did not even wait for the UN to report on UNRWA's complicity in the October 7 massacre and reinstated funding. This “trusted agency” is now requesting immunity for staff who took part in the terrorist attack that killed over 1,200 people. UNRWA was also forced to confirm that an employee killed in Lebanon was a Hamas leader.

Does the Prime Minister share his minister's trust for an agency that employs terrorists?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring full accountability, decisive action and the implementation of necessary reforms to UNRWA.

Right now, we need to respond to the horrific humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. We are also calling for a ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel. We condemn Iran for its horrific attack. Israel has the right to respond, but we certainly hope that there is not a further escalation of this conflict as it spreads further and further and harms more civilians.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Kent Smith, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture for the Province of Nova Scotia.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

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

The House resumed from October 1 consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 3:24 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Beloeil—Chambly relating to the business of supply.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

• (1535)

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

*(Division No. 866)***YEAS**

## Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Arseneault
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Dalton	Dance
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Hoback	Idlout
Jeneroux	Jivani
Johns	Julian
Kelloway	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	MacGregor
Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Masse
Mathyssen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McLean
McPherson	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys



Nater  
 Patzer  
 Pauzé  
 Perron  
 Poilievre  
 Redekopp  
 Rempel Garner  
 Roberts  
 Rood  
 Sauvé  
 Scheer  
 Seebach  
 Shipley  
 Sinclair-Desgagné  
 Small  
 Steinley  
 Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)  
 Strahl  
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 Simard  
 Singh  
 Soroka  
 Ste-Marie  
 Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)  
 Stubbs  
 Therrien  
 Tochor  
 Uppal  
 Vecchio  
 Vien  
 Vignola  
 Vis  
 Wagantall  
 Waugh  
 Williams  
 Zarrillo

**NAYS**

**Members**

Alghabra  
 Anand  
 Arya  
 Badawey  
 Baker  
 Beech  
 Bibeau  
 Blair  
 Boissonnault  
 Brière  
 Chagger  
 Champagne  
 Chen  
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
 Dabrusin  
 Dhaliwal  
 Diab  
 Drouin  
 Duclos  
 Dzerowicz  
 El-Khoury  
 Fisher  
 Fragiskatos  
 Freeland  
 Gaheer  
 Gerretsen  
 Guilbeault  
 Hanley  
 Hepfner  
 Housefather  
 Hutchings  
 Ien  
 Joly  
 Jowhari  
 Khalid  
 Koutrakis  
 Lalonde  
 Lamoureux  
 Lattanzio

Ali  
 Anandasangaree  
 Atwin  
 Bains  
 Battiste  
 Bendayan  
 Bittle  
 Blois  
 Bradford  
 Carr  
 Chahal  
 Chatel  
 Chiang  
 Coteau  
 Damoff  
 Dhillon  
 Dong  
 Dubourg  
 Duguid  
 Ehsassi  
 Erskine-Smith  
 Fortier  
 Fraser  
 Fry  
 Gainey  
 Gould  
 Hajdu  
 Hardie  
 Holland  
 Hussen  
 Iacono  
 Jaczek  
 Jones  
 Kayabaga  
 Khera  
 Kusmierczyk  
 Lambropoulos  
 Lapointe  
 Lauzon

*Routine Proceedings*

Lebouthillier  
 Longfield  
 MacAulay (Cardigan)  
 Maloney  
 May (Cambridge)  
 McKay  
 McLeod  
 Mendicino  
 Miller  
 Murray  
 Ng  
 O'Connell  
 O'Regan  
 Powlowski  
 Robillard  
 Romanado  
 Sahota  
 Saks  
 Sarai  
 Schiefke  
 Sgro  
 Sheehan  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
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 Sudds  
 Taylor Roy  
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 MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
 Martinez Ferrada  
 McGuinty  
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
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 Miao  
 Morrissey  
 Naqvi  
 Noormohamed  
 Oliphant  
 Petitpas Taylor  
 Qualltrough  
 Rogers  
 Rota  
 Sajjan  
 Samson  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Serré  
 Shanahan  
 Sidhu (Brampton East)  
 Sorbara  
 St-Onge  
 Tassi  
 Thompson  
 Turnbull  
 Van Bynen  
 Vandal  
 Virani  
 Wilkinson  
 Zahid

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

I wish to inform the House that the volume of the earpieces will now be reset.

[*Translation*]

Members using their earpiece at this time will have to readjust the volume.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[*Translation*]

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Commonwealth Conference on Parliamentary Scrutiny and Oversight of National Security from November 21 to 23, 2023, and the 72nd Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments from March 11 to 15, 2024.

*Privilege*

[English]

## PETITIONS

## PARKS CANADA

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand on behalf of residents of the Bolsover area in Ontario, who would like to present this petition about their concerns with Parks Canada in terms of the bridge owned by the Trent-Severn Waterway.

This bridge has been out for well over three years, probably going past four now, and there is still no word on what the Trent-Severn Waterway, through Parks Canada, would like to do with this bridge. Therefore, these signatories call upon the Government of Canada to immediately reinstate the heritage asset, with Parks Canada listing it as the Boundary Road Swing Bridge, and to resume the repair project on the bridge in a timely manner, ensuring a swift completion of this essential piece of infrastructure.

● (1540)

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition on a subject that is of concern to constituents and others: the Northvolt battery plant. This is a Swedish company that intends to build a battery plant in Quebec, but there are many concerns about the nature of the site, which is contaminated because of an explosives plant that was formerly on the location. There are concerns about harm to species, including species that are at risk, such as the copper redhorse and the beluga whale, as well as general concerns for the ecosystem of the region.

The undersigned petitioners are asking Parliament to ensure that there is a full public environmental assessment, with hearings, to ensure transparency and public engagement in the review of this plant before it proceeds.

## UKRAINE

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to present a petition on behalf of folks who are raising a concern about additional humanitarian aid for Ukraine, particularly Ukrainian children. They note that a significant number of Ukrainian children are left without their parents' care, and they are residing in orphanages. The petitioners are calling for the federal government to step up to provide a variety of supports for these children.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

## PRIVILEGE

## REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from September 27 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, we are debating the Liberal government again snubbing its nose at Parliament and at members of Parliament. A parliamentary committee rightfully requested documents on Sustainable Development Technology Canada, otherwise known as the \$1-billion green slush fund.

What we know already smells terrible, and I will get more into this. The Liberals produced documents, but what they presented was all censored, all blacked out. Why is this? We have to believe it would be even more incriminating for the Liberals than what we know already.

The Auditor General found that 80% of the contracts she examined were awarded to people on the board. This equals \$380 million. If we extrapolate that to the entire fund, it equals about \$800 million, including the money in the contracts she did not examine.

The Liberals have been known to be very extravagant in their spending, but one thing they decided to tighten up was the Auditor General's budget. Why would that be? It is because this office holds government to account, and the Liberals are not too keen about this.

What happened? In 2019, the minister of industry appointed someone as chair of Sustainable Development Technology Canada, and this person's companies had received contracts, money from the government. The minister was warned not to do this, because it was improper. However, that does not seem to be of concern to the Liberals, and he went on to appoint the chair and other people on the board.

What did members of the board do? They awarded contracts to each other for hundreds of millions of dollars. One appointment made by the Prime Minister was that of Andrée-Lise Méthot, who owned Cycle Capital. This was very curious. She received \$250 million in grants for her company. That is a quarter of a billion dollars, and about half of that money was awarded when she was on the board.

*Privilege*

Someone very interesting worked for Ms. Méthot for many years as a lobbyist with Cycle Capital. This person lobbied the Prime Minister and the Liberals for the company 25 times before getting elected. Who might that be? It is the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

We have heard in the House how the minister continues to have shares in this company. Do the redacted documents incriminate him and other Liberals? We do not know. Canadians have a right to be suspicious and to be concerned.

The Liberals, who are kept in power by the NDP and Bloc, have a long rap sheet, right from the top down. I am sure the Speaker has taken blood tests. I have, and most people have. When someone gets a blood test, they get a sample of what is in the system and they can then find out if there is a disease. This right here, from what we can see and have seen, is throughout the body. What we see with this scandal is symptomatic right across the board.

We saw that with the WE Charity. In June 2020, the Prime Minister announced that he had chosen the WE Charity to run the \$912-million Canada student service grant. Why would he do this when there was already a system within government paid by taxpayers to run it? The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister's immediate family benefited from hundreds of thousands of dollars in speaking fees. There was public uproar that led to the Liberals hastily cancelling the contract with the WE Charity.

• (1545)

Apples do not fall far from the tree. There is the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, the member for Edmonton Centre, who has a company called Global Health Imports. He received \$120 million in government contracts, including while he was a minister. Time does not allow me to talk about other former Liberal MPs, like Frank Baylis, who got hundreds of millions of dollars in sole source contracts. There is also the ArriveCAN scam. The problem goes all throughout the government.

We need the documents, and we need them today.

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, time and time again we have seen scandal after scandal and more and more corruption, probably the most corrupt government in the history of our country.

I would like to ask our hon. colleague whether he has more examples than just what his six minutes afforded him to provide. I wonder whether he has seen more scandals that he would like to bring forward.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, rather than six minutes, I suppose I could be here for six hours. I think of the Winnipeg lab scandal, where, again, the House committee ordered papers to be released to show what was happening there because there was a scandal. The Liberals said no. They were not going to release the documents, so what did the Speaker do? He actually ordered them to produce the documents. What did the Liberals do? They took their own Speaker, a Liberal member, to court to block him from releasing those documents. Then they hurried to call an election.

That is one example; maybe I will get a chance to give another one.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this foundation, like all the others, was created by the Liberal government at the time because all transfers to the provinces were cut back and they ended up with a surplus. To save face, the government put that money into arm's length foundations so that it would not appear on the government's balance sheet.

Was it not a bad practice from the outset to want to invest so much money without having any control over these foundations?

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, I think the program had good objectives when it was established. The Auditor General conducted an investigation in 2017, when the person in charge of SDTC had been appointed by Mr. Harper. The Auditor General concluded that it was working very well at the time. Then the Liberals started meddling in this to see how they could personally benefit from taxpayers' money.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recognize that what the Conservatives are asking for specifically is that information be gathered and then be provided directly to the RCMP. There are very serious issues related to our Constitution and our charter, to such a degree that the RCMP and the Auditor General have expressed extreme discomfort with regard to what the Conservative Party is attempting to do.

Does the member not at least care enough to address those points in his comments?

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, I would say that the truth is that the Liberals are having the most discomfort with producing the documents. Let me give an example. There is carbon tax Carney, who was appointed as a special adviser to the finance minister and who wants to be the next Liberal leader. However, he directs an investment firm called Brookfield Asset Management and is trying to get into talks to access billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars and pension assets.

Is this more of the same? It is of great concern.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether the hon. member will comment on the fact that nothing in what was being proposed contemplated the redaction of the documents, and that there actually seems to have been a concerted effort on the part of the Prime Minister's office and the Privy Council Office to conceal the information that was requested by Parliament.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, it is a parliamentary privilege, a right of the committees, to be able to examine the documents, and we are being stymied as far as Parliament. We are very concerned with what we have seen, and there is much more beyond that. We want to see the documents produced as soon as possible.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Cariboo—Prince George.

I rise today to speak to a serious violation of the privileges of parliamentarians stemming from the government's refusal to comply with a Conservative motion passed on June 10 of this year. As the Speaker unequivocally stated, the House of Commons holds the undeniable right to compel production of documents necessary for fulfilling its duties. Exercising this right, we ordered the government, Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the Auditor General to submit specific documents within 30 days.

The documents, created or dated since January 1, 2017, include all correspondence among government officials regarding SDTC, contribution and funding agreements involving SDTC, financial records of companies where current or former directors had ownership or financial interests, all conflict of interest declarations, minutes from the board of directors and project review committee meetings, all correspondence between directors and management, and additional documents used by the Auditor General in preparing her report presented to the House on June 4.

Interestingly, the Liberals were the only party to vote against the motion. Now, over 30 days have passed since the adoption of the motion, and members of the House, along with Canadians, are still left questioning how the government's green slush fund improperly dispersed around \$830 million in taxpayer dollars. The lack of compliance in providing requested documents completely undermines Parliament's ability to conduct a thorough oversight, especially regarding taxpayer money management and government programs.

Such shortcomings erode public trust and hinder effective governance, something the Liberals are far too comfortable with. In a democratic system, it is paramount that the government remain accountable to the people it serves. The people are not here to serve the government. The ruling should serve as a wake-up call for the Liberal government to respect, once and for all, parliamentary protocols and to ensure transparency when using taxpayer money.

I want to remind the House of the mandate letter written by the Prime Minister himself to Canadians in 2015, which expressed his deep commitment to our nation and gratitude to those who placed their trust in him. He stated, "I am committed to leading an open, honest government that is accountable to Canadians, lives up to the highest ethical standards, brings our country together, and applies the utmost care and prudence in the handling of public funds." What an abject failure and what a joke on Canadians that was.

Fast-forward to today, and we see a stark contrast between those aspirational words and the actions of the government. If the Prime Minister were truly committed to the promises he made, he would stop evading accountability, listen to the concerns of the House and release all unredacted documents. Instead, the government is taking unprecedented steps to withhold information related to the green

slush fund. All that the letter does is serve as a testament to his litany of broken promises.

The motion follows the AG's damning and explosive report on the SDTC, also known as the Liberals' green slush fund. The Auditor General took only a sampling of the funding and found that 82% of that sample was marred by conflict of interest totalling \$330 million. Clearly there are secrets that the Liberals do not want Canadians to uncover. I wonder why.

● (1555)

The Auditor General also found that SDTC did not follow conflict of interest policies in 90 cases, spent nearly \$76 million on projects connected to the Liberals' friends appointed to run SDTC, spent \$59 million on projects that were not allowed to have been awarded any money, and spent \$12 million on projects that were both a conflict of interest and ineligible for funding. In one instance, the Prime Minister's hand-picked SDTC chair siphoned off a whopping \$217,000 to her own company.

The Prime Minister knew, and he refused to stop the Liberals' friends at SDTC from engaging in this blatant level of corruption. The AG made it clear that the blame for the scandal falls squarely on the Prime Minister's industry minister, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to Liberal insiders. There is no such thing anymore, under nine years of the current government, as ministerial accountability.

The scandal is not merely about mismanagement; it also raises serious concerns about how taxpayer money is being funnelled to Liberal insiders. The findings indicate a systemic failure in oversight and governance within SDTC. The AG pointed out that significant funds were allocated without proper scrutiny, allowing conflicts of interest to flourish. The implications extend beyond just financial mismanagement; they highlight a culture within the Liberal government that seems to prioritize loyalty and connection with insiders over transparency and accountability to Canadians.

SDTC was intended to support innovative projects that would benefit Canadians, but instead appears to have been transformed into simply a tool for political patronage. The fact that 123 million dollars' worth of contracts were awarded inappropriately only compounds the concerns. How did the Liberals respond? They responded the only way they know how: mislead and deflect.

Just last week, the government House leader posted a video in response to our motion demanding the release of the documents and exposing the massive corruption we have called upon the RCMP to investigate. Instead of addressing the elephant in the room, which is the misuse of taxpayers' money, the member resorted to denial and deflection, absurdly claiming that by insisting on transparency and accountability, the handing over of the documents, we as Conservatives are somehow attacking Canadian charter rights. This is a blatant attempt to shift focus away from the Liberals' reckless spending and corruption.

To clarify for those at home who might be puzzled by the member's comments, let me make it clear: The motion is solely about demanding the release of documents; it is not related to Canadian charter rights. Since when has anyone on the Liberal benches shown any real concern for defending the charter rights of Canadians? Where was the supposed commitment when the Liberals invoked the Emergencies Act in 2022, only to be severely embarrassed by Justice Mosley in his federal court ruling that claimed there were serious violations of the charter—

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Beauport—Limouilou on a point of order.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt my hon. colleague's speech, but unfortunately, a phone is vibrating near the microphone, so the interpreters cannot do their job properly.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The phone on the table can just be put on the seat.

Hopefully we will now have the translation.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant has the floor.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, I was talking about Justice Mosley's decision, stating clear violations under section 8 and under section 2(b). The government claims that it is appealing this, perhaps all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. That remains to be seen.

We have other scams. Let us not forget that this is not a one-off when it comes to scandals with the current government and, very similar in relation to withholding documents, the Winnipeg lab scandal is a classic example.

Parliament explicitly demanded unredacted documents related to the firing of two scientists at the National Microbiology Laboratory reportedly involving national security concerns and yet, again, the government refused to comply with orders of the House. The government even took the unprecedented step of suing its own Speaker to block the release in another blatant attempt to cover its tracks, silencing stories that could embarrass it. The government's constant dodging of transparency reeks of corruption, and Canadians are left wondering what other secrets it is hiding behind closed doors.

However, unlike the Winnipeg lab scandal, it does not appear that a federal election will be covering the government's tracks this time. This scandal surrounding SDTC is not just about lost funds. It represents a broader erosion of trust between the government and

### *Privilege*

the people it serves. It is a stark reminder of the consequences when transparency is sacrificed for political expediency.

It is time for the government to stop the obfuscation and the cover-ups, and deliver the documents that this House has ordered. Conservatives will get answers. We will continue to fight for the rights of Canadians who deserve better than the blatantly incompetent and corrupt government. The ask is simple: Hand over the documents.

• (1605)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the ask is very simple coming from the Conservative Party. It is to get the documents to the RCMP. The member's professional background, I would have thought, would have raised some flags about the Charter of Rights. Also, we have the RCMP and the Auditor General indicating that they are not comfortable, extremely not comfortable, with the tactic that is being used.

What the member does not make reference to is the internal audit that was done, the audit by the Auditor General and the questioning put forward in standing committees. Rather, in its preoccupation with hunger for power, the Conservative Party is prepared to do whatever it takes, even if it is overriding the charter. Is the member not concerned at all about the behaviour of the Conservative Party with respect to that?

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, the hunger that I proudly represent as part of this Conservative Party, the next governing party of this nation, is the hunger for transparency and accountability, a term that is completely lost on that member, the Prime Minister and his front bench because we have gone down this road time after time.

There is some misconception that somehow assisting a law enforcement agency with investigating criminality surrounding this scandal is a breach of charter rights. That is hogwash. The police seek resources to receive information all the time. Parliament, the supreme authority when it comes to releasing documents, has that power. We are simply assisting the RCMP officers to do their job. We are not directing them to do their job, as some might argue. We are merely assisting them.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

We know that these foundations were created by the Chrétien government in the late 1990s. When the government made major cuts to provincial transfers, it ended up with significant surpluses, which it hid in arm's-length foundations.

*Privilege*

In 2005, former auditor general of Canada Sheila Fraser published a scathing report, one chapter of which was entitled “Accountability of Foundations”. She found that the federal government had transferred \$9 billion to 15 foundations from 1998 to 2002 alone. That is equivalent to \$17 billion today. She also found that the government had no control over \$7 billion of that \$9 billion.

That report was published in 2005. It is now 2024. Has this not been going on for long enough?

[English]

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. Perhaps the member and his entire caucus will think twice about continuing to show confidence in this corrupt government. How many more scandals do we have to be exposed to as parliamentarians and Canadians? Let us not forget the very damning commentary that was captured on a secret tape between the whistle-blower who exposed this corruption and, I believe, criminality, and the assistant deputy minister for industry, who claimed that this had the makings of yet another sponsorship-like scandal that brought down the Chrétien and Martin government.

I would hope that all opposition MPs who are listening to my comments and have heard those of the assistant deputy minister will reflect upon that the next time a confidence motion is presented to this House to end this corrupt government once and for all.

• (1610)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are supporting the privilege motion. We do not believe in supporting Liberal scandals, any more than we believe in supporting Conservative scandals.

It is a bit rich for any Conservative to rise in this House and talk about transparency. When the Harper regime was in power, the Conservatives blocked many investigations into these scandals: the anti-tourism funding of \$3.1 billion with no paper trail; the Phoenix pay system at a cost of \$2.2 billion; F-35 procurement, which cost billions; G8 misspending at a cost of \$1 billion; and the ETS scandal that involved \$400 million. Conservatives blocked each one of those investigations.

How can they talk now about transparency when they were so deplorable when they were in government?

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, if the member is concerned about transparency and accountability, he will vote to bring down the government.

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for the rousing round of support.

What brought us here today is another day with yet another scandal by the government. It was nine years ago, and it seems like a long time ago, when the member for Papineau was campaigning to be the next Prime Minister of our country. He told Canadians that, under his governance, Canadians would see the most open and transparent government in the history of our country. He said that sunshine would be the best disinfectant. I believe he said sunny ways would be brought back to this country.

What have we seen in the last nine years? We have seen “elbow-gate”, the cash-for-access scandal, Aga Khan, cultural appropriation, “gropegate” and sole-source contracts. This is like K-TEL best hits. There was also the WE scandal and clam scam. I will remind Canadians who are paying attention, and all those who are in the gallery today, what the clam scam was.

The former fisheries minister, now the Minister of Public Safety, and the Prime Minister's most trusted confidant, awarded a contract to a group being managed by a cousin or a brother-in-law of that minister. The company was also run by a former Liberal minister and the brother of a sitting Liberal member of Parliament. That essentially took almost 500 jobs from the town of Grand Banks in Newfoundland and awarded it to another group. Luckily, we exposed it and we were able to get those jobs back for the town of Grand Banks. I still get letters of support and thanks because we were the only ones who stood up for that town.

Time and again, we have seen the Prime Minister and his ministers evade accountability. It is always somebody else's problem. It is always somebody else's fault. It is scandal after scandal, corruption after corruption. There was the Winnipeg labs scandal, GC Strategies, 72 secret orders in council, and skipping the very first Truth and Reconciliation Day to go surfing in Tofino. That is what our Prime Minister did.

The Prime Minister, when he was the member for Papineau campaigning to be the next Prime Minister, put his hand on his heart and said that reconciliation and relationships with our indigenous people was the most important relationship for the government. What have we seen since that time? I remember the Prime Minister standing up and thanking indigenous protesters for their donation when all they were asking for was clean drinking water in their communities.

There were \$6,000-a-night hotel rooms in London for the Queen's funeral. We saw some of our worst criminals, Paul Bernardo and Luka Magnotta, receive prison transfers in the darkness of night. They were transferred from our most secure prisons to our medium-security prisons. Most recently, the government bought a \$9-million condo for the Prime Minister's friend in New York City.

We should never forget the other Randy. A company owned and run by one of the ministers here, who happens to have the same first name as Randy, and his partner in that two-person company, received millions of dollars of federal funding, which all kind of disappeared and there was lots of kerfuffle around it. There were discussions between the two partners. The one partner who was called before committee to testify said it was another Randy, but he could not remember the name of that Randy or was not going to provide the other Randy's last name.

• (1615)

Then there are the lavish vacations with wealthy donors. The government has repeatedly violated public trust and lost the moral authority to govern.

Now I will go into why we are here today.

All those who sit in this House are elected by the people, by Canadians. All 338 members are elected to be the voice of the Canadians who elected us. This is the House of Commons. It's the people's House. When the House mandates that something be done, we would think the Prime Minister and ministers would follow those orders.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada is a federally funded not-for-profit that approves and disburses millions of dollars in funds annually to clean technology companies. SDTC was established in 2001 by the Government of Canada through the Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology Act to fund the development and demonstration of new technologies that promote sustainable development. It is an arm's-length, not-for-profit organization that was created to support projects that develop and demonstrate new technologies that address issues related to climate change, air quality, clean water and clean soil.

It should be noted that in 2017, SDTC received a clean bill of health. All the findings at that point showed that everything was above board. Then along came the Prime Minister and his ministers. They hand-picked the board members and the chair, who then proceeded to spend almost a billion dollars of taxpayer funds. There were 186 times that the Auditor General found conflicts of interest, meaning the board of directors and the chair hand-picked where funding was going. Some of that funding went to their very own companies.

This House ordered an investigation and that the papers be delivered so the RCMP could have a look to see if indeed there was some criminality involved. That was an order from the Speaker. That was an order from this House. The Prime Minister ordered that those papers would be delivered, but they would be heavily redacted so that no investigation could be done. It begs the question: What more are the Liberals hiding?

Up to that point, SDTC continued to operate, but all of a sudden, its annual reports have ceased and it is refusing to answer questions. Over \$330 million of taxpayers' money were directed to companies where the very board members who approved the funding had clear conflicts of interest. Additionally, the Auditor General found that the board authorized another \$59 million in projects that were beyond the foundation's legal mandate.

The Prime Minister's hand-picked board members, including the chair, found themselves in positions where they could directly benefit their own companies. We mentioned that. They funnelled taxpayers' dollars, unaccounted for and unchecked, to their own companies. Nine directors were found by the Auditor General to be responsible for the 186 conflicts of interest. It is unbelievable.

The Conservatives want to get to the bottom of this. We want to hold the government accountable, and it is only the Conservatives who are doing this. The Canadian people deserve to know how their money has been misused. The NDP-Liberal government must finally be held accountable for the actions of its hand-picked appointees, and the Conservatives will be the ones to do it.

• (1620)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the

### *Privilege*

time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove, Mental Health and Addictions; and the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon, Carbon Pricing.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to be very clear that the Conservative Party is blurring the issue of judicial independence. In fact, in the last question I asked, the member for Brantford—Brant said that the Conservatives are assisting the RCMP. That is how they justify summoning this information and then giving it directly to the RCMP. One could say that we are on a slippery slope. Are we next going to assist the RCMP by suggesting they arrest someone, or assist the justice system by saying we should put someone in jail?

What a slippery slope the Conservative Party is on with this affront to the Canadian Charter of Rights. The only parliamentarian I am aware of who went to jail was Conservative Dean Del Mastro, the parliamentary secretary to Stephen Harper. Is that where they are getting their constitutional directions from?

**Mr. Todd Doherty:** Mr. Speaker, there were 186 conflicts of interest. The member wants to stand up and point fingers, but just as the Liberals do all the time, they say it was not them or that the Conservatives are worse. They are not going to take any blame. That is all they say: Do not look here; there is nothing to see here. There were 186 conflicts of interest, with over \$390 million in taxpayer funds.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, of course the Bloc Québécois supports the principle of the motion. What bothers us is the wording.

The Conservative motion does actually identify a serious problem, namely the mismanagement of Sustainable Development Technology Canada. However, the motion is problematic in its current form. The first item, calling for all documents to be tabled within 14 days, is completely unrealistic. I will explain why.

When the government tables documents in Parliament, it is required to do so in both English and French. Translation times alone are longer than the 14 days set out in the motion. By including this deadline in the motion, are the Conservatives not trying to put the government in a situation of contempt and provoke a political crisis?

I have to wonder what the real purpose of this motion is, because the Conservatives could have worded it differently and, in principle, it would have been reasonable. However, by demanding that all these documents be translated in 14 days, they are definitely ignoring or flouting the Official Languages Act. Coming from the Conservatives, that would not surprise me. I would like to know what is going on.

*Privilege**[English]*

**Mr. Todd Doherty:** Mr. Speaker, I will draw my hon. colleague to the original order of the House from back on June 10, which would have provided enough time, 30 days, for documents to be produced. However, we still have not seen them.

● (1625)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, the NDP is supporting the motion. We believe in getting to the bottom of the SDTC scandal. The reality is that the misspending needs to be explored, and we absolutely believe in transparency, whether it is a Liberal scandal or a Conservative scandal. We also thank the Auditor General's department for having exposed the possible misspending.

Members will recall that under the Harper regime, Conservatives slashed funding to the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, in other words constraining the ability of those independent officers of Parliament to do their jobs. We saw the results. We lived through a number of Conservative scandals under the Harper regime that Conservatives blocked investigations on, such as the anti-terrorism funding of \$3.1 billion, with absolutely no paper trail, and the Phoenix pay system, at \$2.2 billion. We continue to pay for that today. There was also the F-35 procurement scandal, the G8 misspending of \$1 billion and the ETS scandal of \$400 million. That is not even including the Senate scandals and all the other scandals that we saw over this period, with Conservative members of Parliament, at least in one case, going to jail.

Why did Conservatives block all of that transparency, refuse the investigations and refuse to have Canadians know the truth about Conservative scandals?

**Mr. Todd Doherty:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind my hon. colleague from the NDP that this is not only the current government's record. The NDP has supported and propped up the government for the last five and a half to six years, so this is also its record of scandal and corruption.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, am very glad to rise for the motion of privilege in front of the House today. I want to thank my colleagues, the member for Cariboo—Prince George and the member for Brantford—Brant, for their speeches today.

I have been working with my colleague from Brantford—Brant on the ethics committee, and this issue came before it almost a year ago. That is when we started looking into the SDTC scandal. However, even then, we were just scratching the surface of what was to come and what has led us to this point today.

I want to go back to August 12, 2020, just over four years ago. Of course, the world was dealing with the uncertainty of COVID at that time. The House was operating as a committee of the whole, and I remember that I gave a speech. We were just starting to really understand the extent and scope of some of the sole-source contracting that was going on. In particular, there was an issue with CMHC and Frank Baylis's ventilators. We were seeing insider cronyism start to take root within the Liberal Party, and sole-source contracts related to COVID matters, COVID equipment and so on were being given to Liberal-connected insiders.

I want to go back to what I said on August 12, 2020. I said, sitting right over where the hon. member for Edmonton Manning is right now:

The sponsorship scandal will look like a speck of sand in a desert when this is all over. When this is all over, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance [Bill Morneau] will be just fine.

I have a question to ask on behalf of every Canadian before more stories surface, because they will. How many more Liberal-connected friends, families and insiders have had their palms greased and have personally financially gained from this pandemic at the expense of Canadians who have suffered so much during this crisis? Will the Liberals be honest for once or do we have to wait for the Auditor General to tell us?

Well, the Auditor General has been telling us. Several investigations later, we have landed on the SDTC scandal, and what a scandal it has become, with Liberal-connected insiders and cronies greasing their palms to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars without any thought of conflict of interest and somehow without any thought to putting measures in place that would stop the fleecing of taxpayer dollars by the board of directors running SDTC.

It is important that we remember what got us to this point. It was the Auditor General who found that the Prime Minister had turned Sustainable Development Technology Canada into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. I remember being at the meeting where she presented her report and how she talked about the malfeasance that was going on within SDTC and the fact that there was very little oversight and a whole lot of conflict of interest going on.

I have heard some of the questioning today from the Liberal side about criminality. It was not the Auditor General's task or role at the time to look into criminality. What she was looking for was how taxpayer dollars were landing in the hands of Liberal insiders without any regard for conflict of interest rules. That is what she was looking for, that is what she was reporting on and that is what shed light on the extent and scope of the scandal that the ethics committee was looking into almost a year earlier.

● (1630)

The other thing the Auditor General found was a recording of a senior civil servant who slammed the outright incompetence of the government, which gave out 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately. The whistle-blower was speaking about the very things that were going on. I recall that we had Doug McConnachie at the ethics committee. He had been recorded by the whistle-blower. They were talking about this scandal, and even Doug McConnachie was saying that this was a sponsorship-level scandal. The sponsorship scandal was \$40 million, which is enough money, and we all know what happened there. It led to the Chrétien government being brought down. This is upward of \$400 million of taxpayer dollars being funnelled to Liberal-connected insiders and cronies without any oversight.



*Privilege*

The Auditor General found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects and that it, on occasion, could not demonstrate an environmental benefit, not one environmental benefit, or the development of green technologies. Over 186 cases, \$334 million went to projects for which board members held a conflict of interest. It is unbelievable that \$58 million went to projects without ensuring that the contribution agreement terms were met.

I think of the coordinated effort that it takes among those boards of directors and the people involved to distribute that amount of money to what we now know, in many cases, were companies that they had a financial interest in. If that does not border on criminal, there is nothing that does, quite frankly.

The Auditor General also made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the Prime Minister's industry minister, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to Liberal insiders, so it was common-sense Conservatives who really started the process of trying to get to the bottom of this. We had the industry minister in at the ethics committee, and we had an audit report that was done on this that we had asked for. We got it back, and it had been redacted. Then, the ethics committee had asked that we get the report unredacted and that the report actually come to us, and it did, finally, after a lot of push and pull.

However, I think it is important to really talk about why these oversight committees are so important to Parliament. The standing committees on ethics, public accounts and government operations, or "the mighty OGGO", as we like to say, are important because they are chaired by opposition members. I have been the chair of the ethics committee now for two years, and that is why I am glad to speak to this. In my role as chair, there is a level of neutrality that is required, and we have to make sure that we are operating in a neutral way, in a neutral function, and giving a fair chance for all members.

However, these committees are run by the majority opposition members, and their intent is to hold the government to account. In the case of the ethics committee, we deal with ethics issues, and we have been dealing with a lot of ethics issues. I refer to it as the "shooting fish in a barrel" committee because of the amount of ethics scandals that we have been dealing with, and I will touch on those a bit later.

The mighty OGGO deals with government operations and contracts. Through OGGO, we found the arrive scam scandal and how that played itself out. Of course, there is public accounts. Quite frankly, this issue has been touching many committees, not just the oversight committees that are led by the opposition. We have been trying to do our job, our constitutional responsibility as His Majesty's loyal opposition, to get to the bottom of the many scandals that have been occurring, and we have been doing a very good job at that, sometimes with some opposition from the opposition.

We have not always had team players within other parties. We certainly saw that when the coalition agreement was on between the NDP and the Liberals. The NDP would provide cover in many cases for motions that we were trying to pass to shed light on many of these scandals.

• (1635)

We have seen, what I would call hopeful, signs that they have backed away from that, and we are getting to the bottom of many of these scandals, not the least of which is the "who is Randy" scandal that the ethics committee, and now Parliament, is currently seized with. When we look back on SDTC and we look at what its mandate was, it was, and still is, a federally funded non-profit that approves, and was supposed to disperse, \$100 million in funds annually to clean technology companies. The key problem, of course, as I mentioned earlier, is that SDTC executives awarded projects, for which they held conflicts, amounting to over 330 million dollars' worth of taxpayer funds.

In 2019, when there were not any scandals in relation to the fund, former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains began removing Conservative executives from SDTC and started replacing them with Liberal-appointed executives. The Prime Minister's newly appointed board began voting in companies for which the executives of held active conflicts of interest in SDTC funding. Governing standards at the fund deteriorated rapidly under the leadership of the new chair Annette Verschuren, who was appointed by the Liberals, and who we had at the ethics committee.

In July, the Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner initiated separate investigations after those whistle-blowers came forward with allegations of financial mismanagement at the fund. The Auditor General's investigation, as I said, found severe lapses in governance standards and it uncovered almost \$400 million in funding that was awarded to projects that either should have been ineligible to receive funding or were awarded to projects in which board members were conflicted during that five-year audit period. This is just incredible stuff.

I wanted to talk a little about history. It is not just the SDTC scandal that we or Canadians should be focused on. It is a myriad of other scandals as well. As I said, as chair of the ethics committee, I have had a front-row seat over these last two years to many of these scandals. I also had a front-row seat when I was opposition House leader under our interim leader, Candice Bergen. At that time, we were really dealing with the Winnipeg lab document scandal. The government had not provided documents that were asked for by Parliament. In fact, it dug its heels in so much that the government took the Speaker to court to prevent these documents from being released.

*Privilege*

We are seeing a very similar situation here. There was nothing in the order by Parliament, and Parliament is supreme. When committees ask for documents, there is an obligation on behalf of the government to provide those documents, and if documents are asked for in an unredacted manner, there is an obligation, because of the supremacy of Parliament, to provide those documents unredacted. That was not the case here with the SDTC scandal.

When I go back to the Winnipeg lab scandal, almost the exact same thing had happened. The documents were not provided. What did they have to hide? Who was connected? Who is further connected to the SDTC scandal that the government does not want us to understand or know about? Why would the Liberals not want the potential criminality to be exposed in this scandal? These are questions that the government and its members are going to have to answer when, and if, we get to an election.

However, it was not just Winnipeg labs or SDTC, it was also the arrive scam scandal. Over \$60 million was given to Liberal-connected insiders for the arrive scam application. There were no answers, and the government pushed back. We had to call Mr. Firth to the bar, proving the supremacy of Parliament and the fact that we are the arbiters of what we need to determine and what we need to get to the bottom of. There is also the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, which we have been dealing with at ethics committee, and foreign interference.

● (1640)

Oversight committees are intended to hold the government to account. Whether the government likes it or not, that is our constitutional role, and it is our constitutional role as His Majesty's loyal opposition to push and fight to make sure that government is on the up and up and that we are the stewards of taxpayer dollars. We will continue to do that.

Now, we are dealing with another situation, as I said earlier, which Parliament is now seized with, and that is the ruling of the Speaker on the question of privilege that was brought up by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, whom I sit with on the ethics committee.

However, we are dealing with another question of privilege, which I am sure the House will be seized with over the next few days, and that is with respect to the “who is Randy” scandal and the fact that the minister was seemingly operating his business while he was a minister. The conflict of interest in that is palpable. The illegality of that is real, and we need answers to that.

Back in July, the ethics committee had a meeting. We had requested documents from a witness, Mr. Anderson, who failed to provide those documents to the committee. We gave him a timeline for when we needed them, and he failed to provide the information that was requested. Again, asserting ourselves and the supremacy of not just the committee but Parliament, I reported to the House what had happened, as was the committee's wish. The member then rose on a question of privilege and the fact that the privileges of the committee and the privileges of its members were not adhered to by Mr. Anderson. The Speaker ruled that the question of privilege is now before the House and the motion has been duly moved. It is a motion that we will be debating, likely over the next couple of days and perhaps even into next week.

Part of that motion is to have Mr. Anderson come before the bar of the House to not only be admonished by the Speaker, but also, more important, to answer the questions that parliamentarians have been asking for him to answer. That is our job, not just on ethics, but on the mighty OGGO and, of course, on public accounts as well.

As I know members have heard a couple of times, it all goes back to 2015, when the Prime Minister stood up before Canadians and said that the government will be transparent and open by default. In fact, it was in the throne speech of 2015. All of the examples that I have been citing over the last few minutes prove that it is a government that has not been transparent, accountable and open by default. In fact, it has been anything but.

Part of our responsibility on the ethics committee is to deal with access to information. We issued a report on access to information a few months back after studying it and having experts come in, including members of the media who have been involved in the access to information system, and it is broken. Often, the wait times for access to information documents are months, if not years. Information comes that is redacted. That is not open, transparent and accountable by default. That is anything but.

Therefore, as I conclude, it is not just the system that is broken in this country in many ways, such as the affordability system, housing and the fact that young people have lost hope and are despondent now of a prosperous future for themselves. The division that the Prime Minister has sown in this country along regional lines, race lines and faith lines, pitting neighbour against neighbour, are all things that are broken. The worst part about what is going on right now is that we have a decline in democracy as a result of the government's not being open, transparent and accountable by default. It really speaks to the diminishment of our institutions and the ability of Parliament to ask for the information that it requires to protect the people of this country and to protect their money.

● (1645)

I will conclude by saying this: I am extremely disappointed that we are on this path once again. The only thing that is going to change it is a change of government to a common-sense Conservative government. I hope that happens soon.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Brantford—Brant said that what we are doing is assisting the RCMP.

The question I have for the member opposite is this: How many times did the Conservative Party assist the RCMP when it came to the Conservative corruption in dealing with anti-terrorism, as was pointed out, as well as the Phoenix scandal, the G8 spending scandal, the ETS scandal, the F-35 scandal and the Senate scandal? These were all Conservative scandals, and I know I am probably missing another 30 or 40.

*Privilege*

Let us talk about today. The member referred to foreign interference. What about the foreign interference in the Conservative leadership that enabled the current leader of the Conservative Party? Should we get the RCMP some documents or, as the member for Brantford—Brant said, should we be assisting it in dealing with that corruption in the Conservative leadership?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, I think if there had been any evidence of that, we certainly would see it playing itself out.

What we have seen evidence of is foreign interference on the part of the Liberal government. We see a Prime Minister who was informed many times, in fact, and the foreign interference inquiry is just shedding light on that this week. He was told about the foreign interference situation that was going on and how many of his members were involved in it. Therefore, if the member wants to shed light on foreign interference, I would suggest to him that we name the 11 members in this place who were involved in foreign interference. That would be a terrific start.

The other day, I met with one of the commissioners of the European Union. We agreed that the only way to deal with foreign interference is to shed light on it so that we are not looking at one another and casting suspicion on one another. If we name the 11 MPs who were complicit in foreign interference, as a result, this country will be in a better position to deal with it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil, who blames the government for not being transparent or open.

I would like to remind my colleague of Quebec's motto, “je me souviens”, or “I remember”. I would also like to remind my colleague of the following facts. In 2010, during the G8 summit, former Conservative minister Tony Clement diverted \$50 million to pay for infrastructure projects in his riding.

The 2011 report by the Office of the Auditor General reads, “the government did not clearly or transparently identify the nature of the request for funding”. A public servant with the Office of the Auditor General, John Wiersema, wrote, “I personally in my career in auditing have not encountered a situation like that where there is absolutely no paper trail behind this.”

My question for my colleague is quite simple. How can a party like the Conservative Party, which aspires to form the next government, ensure that Quebecers and Canadians can fully trust it given its lacklustre record when it comes to transparency and the management of public funds?

• (1650)

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, I also remember all the Liberal Party scandals in 2015.

[*English*]

We saw it come up almost immediately with the Aga Khan scandal. We can look at history all we want, but the reality is that we have had nine years of a government that said it was going to be different. It said it was going to be open, transparent and accountable by default. It talked about sunny ways and how sunshine is the

best disinfectant. I remember the Prime Minister saying it all with his hand over his heart. What did we get? We saw scandal after scandal and a divided country along all the lines I talked about earlier. We have debt and deficit. We have a young generation of people who have lost hope in this country.

We need to restore the promise of Canada. That is precisely what Canada's common-sense Conservatives are going to do, including upholding ethical standards. If the member wants any evidence of that, he can look at the bill the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has proposed and support that as a start. It is a signal of what our intention is going to be in the next government.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the motion under debate has to do with the failure of government to produce documents, and I share my colleague's commitment to accountability and the doctrine that Parliament is supreme.

I was in the House in 2011 when Speaker Milliken found the Conservative government in contempt of Parliament for refusing to hand over documents, just as this motion is calling for. The documents would have revealed to Parliament the costs of corporate tax cuts, criminal justice measures and the F-35 program.

The last Conservative government refused to produce documents when Parliament, through a majority vote, demanded them. On the principle that the best indication of future performance is past behaviour, would a future Conservative government commit to being different from the last Conservative government?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, from some of the debate I am hearing today, I think hon. members need to get back into a DeLorean, try to be like Marty McFly and go back to the future.

We are talking about scandals that are seizing Parliament right now involving the Liberal government, not the least of which is a \$400-million scandal. If the NDP would stop propping up the government, we might just get to the bottom of this. Better yet, let us have an election so that Conservatives can prove to Canadians that we are going to be a much better common-sense government than the Liberal government has been over the last nine years. We will not cause the despair and the misery that is facing our nation right now.

Let Conservatives prove to Canadians what good government is all about.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to crawl into the DeLorean for a moment. There have been a number of references to the sponsorship scandal as a marker or a comparator. If I recall that era, a former Liberal cabinet minister, David Dingwall, stated, “I'm entitled to my entitlements.” Is that what is going on here? Has this now been extended to government appointees, not just to cabinet ministers and prime ministers?

*Privilege*

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, that is a loaded softball question that we need to hit out of the park. I know we are in the major league playoffs here, but I do not know what it is with these guys. It has to be in their DNA. We have seen scandal after scandal come up, where Liberal-connected insiders and cronies have benefited as a result of the relationships they have with the Liberal government.

I mentioned a few of them off the top. Probably one of the most absurd ones was former MP Frank Baylis getting a sole-sourced contract for hundreds of millions of dollars for ventilators that were not even used. It was a sole-sourced contract, which means that the Liberals did not put it out for other bids. They gave it to Liberal-connected insiders.

We have seen these palms being greased since the beginning of the Liberal government. We saw it with the Prime Minister setting the example with his trip, the ethical violation, to the Aga Khan's island. I think it is in the Liberals' DNA. I do not think they can help themselves when it comes to breaching ethics laws and code of conduct laws in this country. That is why we are seeing it.

When that example is set at the top, it disseminates throughout the entire organization. In this case, it has disseminated throughout the entire part of government. This is why we are dealing with these scandals. It is having an impact, effecting a decline in our democracy and trust in our institutions by Canadians. We have to restore that trust, and the only way we can do it is to replace the tired, corrupt government with a common-sense Conservative government.

• (1655)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let us stick with that theme. If we travelled with the DeLorean from 1867 to today, we would see all kinds of scandals. There would be only two guilty parties: the Liberals and the Conservatives. Since 1867, we have become used to it.

Let us come back to October 2, 2024, because I am being magnanimous with my esteemed colleague on the Conservative side. My question is very simple. What does he think is the primary reason behind the government not producing the documents being requested today?

[English]

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, I think this goes much deeper than what is on the surface. I think there are many more people implicated who are connected to the government, and they are guilty of being complicit in what went on. I think the government is afraid of the information being released and the impact that this is going to have, not just politically but criminally as well.

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in this chamber. Interestingly, my great friend from South Shore—St. Margarets, whose office is directly across from mine in the Confederation Building, has been talking about this scandal now for the better part of a year. When we begin to look at the sordid details that exist in this particular case, it is very disheartening for me, as a Canadian.

I would also suggest that it is disheartening because there have been so many scandals from the NDP-Liberal government that

Canadians have tuned them out. It is \$50 million, \$100 million or \$300 million; sadly, Canadians have said, “Well, whatever.” Another thing I wonder is how the Prime Minister continues to get a free pass on these scandals. It is absolutely shocking to me.

I realize I have only been in this place for three years, so I am not going to get in the DeLorean that my wonderful friend from Barrie—Innisfil was in. That is not the road I want to go down. However, that being said, I would suggest that we need to prosecute the issues that are in front of us at this time. Certainly, the SDTC scandal is front and centre, and it involves hundreds of millions of dollars, perhaps almost a billion dollars.

If I might, I would like to go back a bit to look at the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund. It was established in 2001, and when we look at the mandate of the actual fund, it seems to make sense. It is a federally funded non-profit that approves and disburses over \$100 million in funds every year to clean technology companies. We are in an era when we understand that there are certain things we need to do to help protect the climate. A theme that has resonated on this side of the House forever is that we need to use technologies and not taxes. This is a fund that would actually seem to make sense.

The ISED website states, “through the Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology Act, [SDTC is used] to fund the development and demonstration of new technologies that promote sustainable development.” As we look at the set-up of this fund, it makes sense: “It is an arm's length, not-for-profit...organization that was created to support projects that develop and demonstrate new technologies that address issues related to climate change, air quality, clean water and clean soil.” In my estimation, these are all good things.

The website also says, “SDTC is responsible for the administration of the SD Tech Fund in accordance with the...guidelines per the Funding Agreement with ISED.” As we look at those things, on the surface, we would say that this makes sense. I was a family physician before I came here, so politics was not top of mind, and one always wonders about these things. We hear about people being appointed to boards, and we wonder what they do and whether they make money doing this. People really have a difficult time understanding this.

From my perspective, this brings forward a significant underbelly of what everyday Canadians hear about someone serving on a board. People wonder what they do. What did the people who have served on this board do, including the chair? I am not entirely sure, but as I read the documents, it would appear that they used their influence, sadly, to award at least 330 million dollars' worth of taxpayer funds to corporations they control. This created significant conflicts of interest.

*Privilege*

As we look at that, we wonder how board members make money if they do not get paid to be on a board. Apparently, this is one way they do it: They prop up a company that they have a significant financial interest in and award it taxpayer dollars.

What else happened here? We know, as I said, that this fund has been ongoing since 2001. Indeed, the Auditor General did an audit on SDTC in 2016 and praised it for its great work and how well it was run. It had 15 years of being run very well. Things changed thereafter.

● (1700)

Many people here would know who Jim Balsillie is. He was the chair of this committee and he began speaking out against certain legislation that the Liberal government at that time was bringing forward. It would have caused a scandal to get rid of him. That being said, when his contract came to an end, the Liberals decided not to renew his contract. Of course, that left them in a bit of a quandary to appoint someone else.

In 2019, former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains began appointing conflicted executives to be in charge of SDTC. He was warned against this. He was warned that Annette Verschuren would have significant conflicts because the companies she historically had some dealings with had already received funds from SDTC and continued to receive them on an ongoing basis. As we look at this, we begin to understand the troubles that existed from the very beginning of the appointment of the new chair.

What happened then? The Auditor General and Ethics Commissioner initiated separate investigations because whistle-blowers came forward. If we have time, we have some testimony from whistle-blowers that is actually shocking and needs to be read into the record. They had allegations of financial mismanagement and that is why those investigations were initiated. I will have more to say about the Ethics Commissioner as we go forward. I took an opportunity to sit on committee and hear the testimony of the Ethics Commissioner, which, in my mind, was quite shocking.

The Auditor General's investigation found a severe lapse in governance standards and uncovered that \$390 million in funding was awarded to projects that either should have been ineligible to receive funding or was awarded to projects in which board members were conflicted, and that was only during a five-year audit period. As we begin to look at those numbers, we are talking hundreds of millions of dollars.

Realistically, the change began in late 2018-19 when former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains decided that SDTC needed a new CEO and chair, even though he was warned that there were significant conflicts. The Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office, who were warned about appointing a conflicted chair, decided to move forward with that regardless. There was not just one warning, but there were repeated warnings to say this was going to cause chaos and conflict.

The new chair went on to create an environment where conflicts of interest were tolerated and "managed by board members". What happened then? Of course, SDTC went on to award funds to companies in which board members held stock or positions. That is allowing the person who has the keys to the cabinet to go ahead and

disburse the funds for their own benefit. I am not sure there are many things that are worse than that.

As my esteemed colleague from Barrie—Innisfil said repeatedly, we are charged with several things here in this place, and one of them is to be good stewards of taxpayer money. It became very clear here that did not happen.

As this conflict of interest environment went on, Minister Bains appointed two other controversial board members who engaged in unethical behaviour in breach of the Conflict of Interest Act by approving funds to companies in which they held ownership stakes. Not only do we begin to see that the chair of the board allowed this environment to cultivate, but we see other members of the board who saw that this was done and benefited from it themselves. As an elected official, I find that this is very unsavoury behaviour.

● (1705)

Officials from ISED were also there watching what was going on. They observed these 186 conflicts of interest and also, sadly, did nothing. In November 2022, whistle-blowers started raising concerns with the Auditor General about these unethical practices, and the Privy Council was also briefed by whistle-blowers about these allegations.

As I said, I have been hearing about this from my friend from South Shore—St. Margarets for more than a year now. In September 2023, the whistle-blowers took the allegations public, and the minister agreed to suspend the SDTC funding. Is that a good thing? It is, until we come to the rest of the story, which we will in a few minutes.

In November of last year, the Auditor General announced an audit, and then in June of this year, the Auditor General's report was released, finding severe governance failures at SDTC. Of course, in June, there was the motion adopted in this place for the production of various documents, to be turned over to the RCMP for review. In response to the motion, and this is actually shocking, departments either outright refused the House order or redacted documents turned over, citing provisions of the Privacy Act or Access to Information Act.

Certainly, here in this place, we did not contemplate that there were going to be redactions. We would also argue on this side of the House that the House itself enjoys the absolute and unfettered power to order the production of documents that is not limited by statute. These powers, of course, are rooted in the Constitution Act of 1867 and the Parliament of Canada Act.

### *Privilege*

In response to this failure to produce documents, the Conservative House leader raised a question of privilege, arguing that House privilege had been breached due to the failure to comply with the House order, and subsequently, of course, here we are arguing the point over and over again. Realistically, in terms of a charge of corruption and a lack of transparency, certainly on this side of the House we believe there is ample evidence to prove that charge.

I might just cite some examples that are a matter of public record but I think are very important. I will talk briefly about the environment that was cultivated at the top by the chair of the committee, Annette Verschuren. There were two other people who were appointed by Minister Bains and by the Prime Minister. They were both directors.

One was particularly aggressive, appointed in 2016 by the Prime Minister: Andr e-Lise M thot. She runs a venture capital firm that is called Cycle Capital, and this story gets to be very interesting. Cycle Capital, of course, invests in green technologies, and when we begin to look at this, her company, before her appointment, had received \$250 million in grants from SDTC. This is already, obviously, a conflict when someone says, "my company has already benefited from being here, so I think I will get on this gravy train". When she became part of the board, what did she do? She allowed \$114 million more to go to green companies that she had invested in.

During Ms. M thot's time on the board, the value of her company, Cycle Capital, tripled, because it was getting money on a regular basis from SDTC, stamped by the Government of Canada, and that allowed that company to profit. It could raise other funds, and, as I said, the value of her own company tripled in that time.

The other strange part of it is that, sadly, her in-house paid lobbyist for 10 years before he was elected to this place was the current radical Minister of Environment. While he was a lobbyist for this company, Cycle Capital, he received, shockingly, and I know that everybody in this place will gasp when I say it, \$111 million.

• (1710)

Yes, it is incredible. The minister, according to the registration of lobbyists portion of the Lobbying Act, lobbied the Prime Minister's Office before he came to this place. As for the industry department, he lobbied all of these folks 25 times in the year before he was elected. All of this is shocking. We cannot even believe it. Of course, for all of this hard work, he also owns shares in Cycle Capital, and, not surprisingly, he still owns the shares in Cycle Capital.

When the question is put to the minister as to the value of these shares, as we all know that, of course, they have likely gone up in value because they were granted before the company was given the incredibly generous support of SDTC, the minister refuses to provide the value of those shares. It is shocking.

As we begin to look at the depth of what is happening here, it is way beyond what anybody would actually expect. The amoeba of this culture of entitlement and thievery from the government came forward and said that the director, Ms. M thot, went on to the Canada Infrastructure Bank board. The first thing that she did there was award \$170 million of Infrastructure Bank money to a company owned by the chair of the green slush fund. Talk about not just

patting ourselves on the back but patting our friends on the back, and, for the friends who sent us someplace, giving them a gift as well. There are gifts for everybody.

Annette Verschuren sought \$6 million for the creation of the Verschuren Centre at Cape Breton University, because it was failing. Not only do we raise the money for it but we name it after ourselves. It is all incredibly strange. Maybe this is a little tiny shining match of a light: SDTC said no when they went through the process because there was a conflict. However, there is more to the story. In emails, it said that SDTC would help her find the money from other government departments. Soon after that, the Verschuren Centre received \$12 million from ACOA and ISET, sadly enough.

Her other companies received \$50 million from Natural Resources Canada, and then, of course, there was the Infrastructure Bank money as well. If at first we do not succeed, as the old saying goes, try, try again. As I said, these stories are actually beyond belief and there are many other things that we could talk about here.

A gentleman named Guy Ouimet admitted in the committee that \$17 million of green slush fund money went to companies that he has a financial interest in. He said it was a small amount of money. I do not think \$17 million is a small amount of money. Interestingly enough, his actual shares in those companies, and this is an investment that anybody would love to have, went up 1,000% since that investment was made in 2019. It is gobsmlacking. It takes our breath away when we hear these actual numbers.

In this place, I would suggest that we are charged to look at these things. I would say that one of the saddest days was when I went to watch the committee in action for a very short period of time. The Ethics Commissioner was there and was giving witness testimony and was questioned by my friend from South Shore—St. Margarets. My friend from South Shore—St. Margarets asked the Ethics Commissioner why he had not investigated the other eight Governor in Council appointments put out in the Auditor General's report as having conflicts of interest, where money flowed to companies they had an interest in.

Shockingly, the Ethics Commissioner asked what the point would be of investigating these Governor in Council appointments of people who are no longer on the board because he could not influence what happened to them. We now have an Ethics Commissioner who says that because they are gone now, he does not think we should investigate them, even though we know that 186 conflicts of interest happened, and now at least almost \$400 million worth of taxpayers' money is gone and we need to shine a light on this.

*Privilege*

● (1715)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to SDTC in itself, I think it is important to recognize that when the allegations were made and the department was made aware of them, significant actions were taken, like the freezing of new funding to the separate independent inquiries, not one but two of them. The government has already been clear on the position of supporting what the Auditor General has said.

There have been numerous meetings at standing committees about it, yet what we find ourselves in is something that is causing the Auditor General and the RCMP to feel uncomfortable, because the Conservative Party wants to be the data collection agency for the RCMP and have the information gathered and just handed over to the RCMP. The whole issue of the independence of our judiciary system is being called into question.

Does the member not have any concern whatsoever with that fact?

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, when we begin to look at the actual problem, I think it is very simple. For my friend who owns a company, if there is wrongdoing inside the company, I would say that it would be in his best interest to gather all the documentation and hand it over to the RCMP to allow it to make the appropriate decision to say whether wrongdoing actually happened.

When we hear some of the testimony of whistle-blowers, whistle-blowers have said to bring in the RCMP, and if it does an investigation, it finds something or it does not. The public would be happy with that. The public needs to understand what happens. It behooves us here in this place to allow the folks who are able to do it.

Here is some other whistle-blower testimony:

Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization.

As we begin to hear the statements over and over again, what we are asked to do, in my estimation, is to shine the light, the best disinfectant in the world, on the happenings, which clearly have a flavour of mismanagement and perhaps criminal wrongdoing. Then the public gets to hear the entire story and not be left wondering where the \$500 million of taxpayer money, at least, has gone. Perhaps, as we look at the numbers, it is all the way up to 800 million dollars' worth of taxpayer money. I personally think that is a lot of money, and we have the opportunity to understand where the money has gone.

Another whistle-blower says:

The true failure of the situation stands at the feet of our current government, whose decision to protect wrongdoers and cover up their findings over the last 12 months is a serious indictment of how our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference. It should never have taken two years for the issues to reach this point. What should have been a straightforward process turned into a bureaucratic nightmare that allowed SDTC to continue wasting millions of dollars and abusing countless employees over the last year.

I will certainly take more questions related to this terrible situation.

● (1720)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate working with the member on the health committee, and the motion is something that the NDP is supporting. We believe in getting to the bottom of the SDTC spending scandal. It is important to have transparency. It is important to know how taxpayers' money was spent.

I want to flag, and the member has flagged as well, the important work of the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budgetary Officer, independent officers of Parliament. They get the straight goods to Canadians. This is vitally important. We can never forget this, but it was forgotten during almost a dismal decade during the Harper regime, where the Harper Conservatives basically slashed funding to the Auditor General, funding to the PBO and funding to independent officers of Parliament.

We know why. It is because the Harper Conservatives, unlike now when we are getting to the bottom of things, did not want the Canadian public to actually know about their spending scandal. My colleague talked about the money involved here with the SDTC as being a lot of money, but it pales in comparison to what the Harper regime misspent. I will flag just a certain number of figures: the anti-terrorism funding, no paper trail, \$3.1 billion; Phoenix pay system, \$2.2 billion; the F-35 procurement scandal, billions; the G8 misspending, a billion; the ETS scandal, \$400 million. I could go on.

Why do Conservatives say, "Do as we say, not as we do"?

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, as the member said, we do have the opportunity to serve on the health committee together, and I would say that probably more often than not we disagree, which often creates interesting times at the health committee.

That being said, we are all here today to talk about SDTC. That does not in any way limit the great work of the Auditor General, who of course came forward. The Auditor General said that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that on occasion could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or the development of green technology. It also gave \$334 million in over 186 cases to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest. It also gave \$58 million to projects without ensuring that contribution agreement terms were met.

We are beginning to look at the size of the scandal. As I have said, I have been here only three years, but my friend, the member for Barrie—Innisfil, warned us against taking the DeLorean back in time to try to litigate the terrible ghost of Mr. Harper, which seems to plague my friends on the Liberal side; he is the bogeyman under their bed all the time.

*Privilege*

We know clearly that the scandals that the current government has been involved in start at the top with the Liberal Prime Minister, who has been convicted twice of ethics violations. Again, in the case of SDTC, when there is a chair who created an environment, a culture, of breaking the rules, then that filters down to everybody who is involved in the decision-making efforts. This is what we want to shine a light on and say, “Bring forward those documents and let's make the right decisions for Canadians so they know where their taxpayer dollars went.”

• (1725)

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we are talking about the alleged failure to produce documents pertaining to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada project that the government has brought forward with the people it appointed to the board. I listened intently to my colleague for Cumberland—Colchester, and I also want to thank my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets for his work on this. It has been about a year or a year and a half in the making to get it to this point.

It is a travesty that the witnesses who came forward were not able to provide the documents and requirements that were asked of them. I wonder whether my colleague could expand on the proportion of the scandals compared to the many other scandals that the government has had since 2015.

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, knowing that the scandals continue on and on. I will say right out loud, and many may find this shocking, that I did read Jody Wilson-Raybould's book. It of course began with the SNC-Lavalin scandal and the pressure that the Prime Minister put on the first indigenous woman minister of justice and attorney general here in Canada, who, it certainly appeared from her book, was poised to do very good work on behalf of Canadians. I am not entirely sure why this set the Prime Minister off and made her very unwelcome in his cabinet.

As we look more closely at some of the things related to SDTC, there is one more comment from another whistle-blower in committee that I think is always quite fascinating. It reads:

I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to address the House today, as always, on behalf of the people I respect in Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, and to do my best to advance the common good for Canada.

We are here in the House of Commons, which is appropriately named because we are here to represent the common people and advance the common good, which is the history and the mission of this place; and to represent the common people possessed of common sense, which is the wisdom that is accrued through normal life, and the common good, which is the good of the common people; as well as policies that are for the common benefit of all citizens.

I want to observe at the outset of my speech that in the course of the history of democracies, there has often been a tension between the interests and concerns of the common people and those of gov-

erning elites. These tensions are actually deeply embedded in the rituals of this very place. When a Speaker is first elected, he or she is dragged from their place. The history of that is that early on, Speakers were reluctant to take their place because there was significant risk of their being beheaded by the monarch.

Now there may be other reasons why the Speaker is reluctant to take his or her place, but they are different than they were in the past. The earlier reason is based on the fact that the Speaker, as the servant of the House, represented the efforts of the chamber of the common people to challenge the monarchy in its efforts to exercise what it saw as its own privileges.

In all democracies, and this continues today, particularly in large representative democracies, the existence of some kind of governing elite is always inevitable. If we look back at history, we can see how monarchs, aristocrats, parliamentarians, public servants, public intellectuals, recognized media commentators, corporate managers, identified experts and so on have fulfilled some kind of elite function. Whether they have been praised or criticized, depending on the circumstances, every society has had something like elites.

This is because most people, normal people, have busy lives and by necessity focus on taking care of their families and contributing to the work of the productive economy. A society would not work very well if it were not the case that most people are focused on the work of production in an economy and on taking care of their own family and the well-being of their own immediate community.

While most people focus on their own life and well-being, the day-to-day operations of governing institutions, even in a democracy, fall to a group of representatives and experts whose lives, paradoxically, are not representative of the lived experience of most people. This is the reality of the relations that exist in a representative democracy and to some extent that exist in all societies. There are challenges built into this very reality that will be largely unavoidable in any place and time.

However, a good society is one in which governing elites understand their function as being that of serving the common good. In properly ordered societies, the common sense that has accrued through normal common life, the common sense that is the natural wisdom of the common people, provides the North Star that governing elites pursue. Elites in a democracy should always recognize, as the end of their activities, the advancement of the common good, noting, of course, that if they fail to advance and serve the common good, representative democracy provides the tools for removing governing elites from their positions.

With that in mind, I would observe that, sadly, over the last nine years, the relationship that should exist between governing elites and the people has gone way out of balance. The current Liberal government, along with its circle of managerial elite insiders and friends, has sought to use its power to advance its own elite interests and to protect its own elite privileges rather than to advance the common good.



*Privilege*

Liberals have sought to control the various parts of our social and political elite. They have sought to reduce the corporate sector to a high degree of dependence on government. They have sought to bankroll like-minded civil society organizations while punishing civil society organizations with different opinions.

• (1730)

They have sought to buy off traditional media through subsidies, undermining its independence. They have sought to elevate their corporate capitalist cronies in exchange for the willingness of those cronies to use their corporate power to push leftist causes. Liberals have sought to capture the elite and use the elite to advance their own ideological interests and causes, and to do it at the expense of the common people and with no regard for common sense.

Liberals have sought to insulate themselves from the realities of life in Canada under their watch. Taxes are up, costs are up, homes are becoming increasingly unaffordable and crime is out of control, yet Liberal elites remain removed from these realities, protected by the walls of their gated communities, protected by their public subsidies and protected from the realities of the cost and pain that have resulted for most people from the government's policies. This is why we feel the urgent need to bring common sense and the voice of the common people speaking for the common good to this House.

Liberals have the audacity to complain when we critique the failures of governing elites. They complain because they do not like it when we give voice to those who have lost trust in their decisions. Paradoxically, the Liberals even try to suggest that the criticism of insider elites is an attack on democracy. However, the ability to critique and replace a governing elite is the very essence of representative democracy. It is what it means to be a representative democracy. The common people should have the capacity to insist through elections that the governing elite is representative and responsive. The need to remove the current Liberal government from office is why so many Canadians want a carbon tax election now.

This breakdown in the relationship between governing elites and the common people, in particular the betrayal of trust by the Liberal elites, is causing the corruption of our government. I want to therefore reflect on the word corruption. It is obviously a sensitive term, but one that we must attach to the activities of the NDP-Liberal government over the last nine years.

Corruption has two distinct meanings. One way of understanding corruption is as the transgression of some established rule or the breaking of a defined rule of conduct. This is, in practice, how we most commonly use the word corruption to describe instances where the rules that are supposed to prescribe the conduct of those in power are broken for some personal advantage. That is one meaning or understanding of corruption. Another meaning of corruption, though, and also an important one, is a process of degeneration, when something becomes corrupted and the rules that are supposed to hold an institution or an entity together themselves no longer uphold any kind of rational purpose. We can therefore think of corruption as describing both the transgression of established rules and the process of degeneration whereby the actions of those in power, even when they conform formally to established rules,

nonetheless are clearly contrary to any rational purpose and in particular are contrary to the pursuit of the common good.

When I reflect on corruption under the current government, we should notice that we are talking about corruption in both senses of the term. We have clear cases where rules have been broken, and they start at the very top with the Prime Minister and flow throughout government. There are various scandals where we can see that particular kind of corruption. We also see more broadly a tendency within the government to define the objective as being the advancement of its own elite interests and those of its friends.

Before I talk about the specifics of SDTC, I want to highlight one other contemporaneous example, and that is the situation of carbon tax conflict of interest Mark Carney.

• (1735)

It has been very interesting to hear the exchanges about Mark Carney's role in government during question period. Conservatives have critiqued the fact that Liberals have tried to find a way around the rules by making Mark Carney an economic adviser to the Liberal Party without him nominally officially having a role within the executive exercise of power of the Government of Canada. That is their way of trying to get around the rules that require certain kinds of disclosures and protections from conflicts of interest for someone who is entering government formally as a public office holder, a senior staff member, an elected official or a parliamentarian. Certain conflict of interest rules would bind his activity if he were to take on a formal advisory role for the Government of Canada.

The Liberals think they have come up with something very clever to try to skirt the rules. They claim that he is not an adviser within the government; he is an adviser to the Liberal Party of Canada. Most Canadians are aware of the fact, even if they do not like it, that the Liberal Party of Canada is in government. When we have a well-connected member of the elite with specific personal economic interests that involve decisions being made by the Government of Canada who is also able to advise the Prime Minister, cabinet and senior decision-makers throughout the party, it is clearly an effort to skirt the rules to protect the interests of elite insiders. It allows Mark Carney to continue to get the advantages of his business position while having close access to government and being able to use that access to advocate for policies that may benefit his private interests without any kind of proper disclosure or transparency. This may not be corruption in one sense of the word, but I think it demonstrates corruption in another sense of the word, which is a degeneration of respect for the common good in the exercise of public functions by the government.

We are here debating a question of privilege, and the need to raise a question of privilege is in itself a demonstration of a kind of corruption within the relationship between Parliament and the elites. Questions of privilege have to be raised not in every case where something inappropriate has happened, but in cases where Parliament has certain entitlements that it is not able to see fulfilled.

### *Privilege*

In this case, we are dealing with Parliament having ordered that certain documents be handed over, and the government has refused to hand over those documents. This is not the first time this has happened with the Liberal government. Many of these privilege issues have been raised at various parliamentary committees. I believe this is the second time that a question of privilege specifically relating to the government handing over documents to Parliament has had to come before the House. The last time this happened, the government tried to bring the sitting Speaker to court over it and then called an early election, which had the effect of avoiding that order. Then it made its coalition deal with the NDP, and the NDP covered for it to prevent the further request of those documents. I am talking about the Winnipeg lab documents affair.

There have been multiple instances where the government has refused to hand over documents, where officials have refused to appear or where insiders, be they contractors or other officials, have come to committee and point blank refused to answer questions. This is a demonstration of corruption within a governing elite. There is a lack of respect for basic democratic principles and norms when government officials and well-connected insider friends and contractors feel that they can defy the orders of Parliament and get away with it. It is as if they are not acquainted with the basic principle that the House of Commons, the representative body of the common people, is supposed to be able to direct the actions of elites.

● (1740)

The fact that there have been multiple instances of people called to the bar, with likely a third coming, and many instances of refusal to hand over documents demonstrates the basic problem that our governing elites under the Liberal government increasingly feel that they do not have to follow the direction of the common people's House and the elected representatives of the common people. This is a corruption of the proper relationship that should exist between governing elites and the common people.

The common people's House, the House of Commons, should be recognized as supreme in our system of government, and under the Liberals, it is not. They think they can defy the direction of the House of Commons. We will hear in debates the Liberals offering various reasons why they did not like the motion that ordered the production of these documents, and they are welcome to that opinion. They are welcome to vote against motions of the House or motions at committee to order the production of documents. However, whether they like the motion is a different question from whether they should recognize the supremacy of the House of Commons and the obligation of governing elites to adhere to the wishes of the representatives of the people's House acting in concert.

Of course, we need to talk not just about how we got here with this privilege question or the broader issues of corruption in the government, but the outrageous and salacious details of this particular green slush fund scandal. What happened with the green slush fund, very simply, is that a group of elite insiders, on behalf of the government, were allocating money to various companies and were, outrageously, voting to allocate government money to their own companies. In some cases, the direct beneficiaries stepped out of the room for that vote, and in other cases, they did not. The Auditor General found \$58 million went to 10 ineligible projects

and \$334 million in over 186 cases went to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest.

Imagine a bunch of people sitting around a table deciding which companies get taxpayers' money. Bob says he would love for his company to get \$20 million and they should all vote on it, but he will abstain. Next they vote on giving money to Bill's company, but he will abstain, sometimes. We cannot make this up. A group of well-connected, elite insiders had a massive pool of taxpayers' dollars, money worked for and earned by everyday Canadians that was given to the government in taxes, and this group, appointed by the Liberals, was sitting around deciding how to give out that money, in some cases giving it to ineligible projects and in many cases giving it to companies and projects that were directly benefiting those same people sitting around the table. This is outrageous. This is a clear demonstration of a basic corruption in the operations of the government.

Did it violate established rules? Yes, it violated established rules, but moreover, how could anyone think it was acceptable? Regardless of what the specific rules said, is it plausible that anyone could think it was acceptable to cast a vote to grant taxpayers' dollars to their own company? It is utterly insane. However, this is demonstrative of where we are with the corruption that has been sinking into the Government of Canada over the last nine years, whether we are talking about this particular scandal or other scandals that are currently being investigated.

There was the arrive scam scandal, where senior public servants are still blaming each other because a former minister said he wanted someone's head on a plate over it. We are currently investigating the outrageous abuses of the indigenous contracting program. Non-indigenous elite insiders were able to take advantage of this program, in some cases by pretending to be indigenous, taking money that was properly supposed to benefit indigenous people.

We in the common-sense Conservative caucus are here to stand up for the common people, to stand up for the common good against Liberal elite insiders who have corrupted our government. This is why we need a new government that would bring common-sense—

● (1745)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** 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, I want to pick up on the member's comments about corruption in a different sense, and he was talking about Mark Carney. I want to do a bit of a shift here and talk about Jenni Byrne.

*Privilege*

There is a foreign interference allegation against the leader of the Conservative Party. Did Jenni Byrne not co-manage or manage his leadership campaign? Did Jenni Byrne not lobby with Loblaw? When did Loblaw acquire Shoppers Drug Mart?

I am wondering if there is something that might be there, and if we should follow the Conservative lead, ignore the Constitution, just ask for all the information we can get, advance it to the RCMP and say we want it to take this information because there are a lot of concerns about foreign interference and we believe the leader of the Conservative Party is corrupt.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, just parenthetically, I would say to the member, if he is going to make things up, to at least get the names of the people he is making things up about correct.

To his ridiculous allegations, I would simply say this: The member understands that the exercise of executive power by the government requires certain particular conflict of interest protections because, in the exercise of executive power, we have access to information and we have access to decision-making authority that is very particular. This is why there has to be those kinds of conflict of interest protections.

These kinds of protections have to be in place. The government has completely failed to put those protections in place, and this is what we are rightly critiquing in carbon tax conflict of interest Mark Carney.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am going to take the liberty of refocusing the debate on the subject at hand and not on name dropping, which may or may not be harmful depending on the situation.

My question is about Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC. Should the processes for appointing people to government positions not be reviewed? This would ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. It would also pave the way for preventive action when there is a potential conflict of interest, instead of having everything blow up and always having to play catch up with those mistakes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, should the rules be revised to triple emphasize that there should not be these kinds of conflict of interest? If there were ambiguity before, should additional measures be taken? I think probably, yes, there should be. I would also say that someone once told me when I was younger that the primary function of a lock is to keep an honest man honest. What was meant by that is that, if we have someone who has clear dishonest intent, they are going to try to circumvent any locks that are in place.

As such, I would say to the hon. member that, yes, we need to work on providing those clear protections for conflict of interest, but we see clearly with the government how they are consistently looking for ways to get around any kind of rules, and I think we need to have both good rules and good character-informing decision-making.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, throughout this debate, the Conservatives continually do not want any focus on their last time in government, which just ended in 2015. They were the government before this one.

What happened in that government? Twice the Conservatives were found in contempt of Parliament, for the first time in history. They had a multi-billion-dollar loss of taxpayer dollars in the Phoenix pay scandal. Former cabinet minister Tony Clement directed a \$50-million slush fund, funnelling millions to his Muskoka riding, including a \$100,000 gazebo, only to leave the House after a sexting extortion scandal. They shovelled hundreds of millions of Canadian tax dollars to Conservative ridings after the 2008 recession, often displaying them on Conservative Party logo cheques. The PM's chief of staff paid for Senator Mike Duffy's legal fees, and there were four Conservative senators who had to be suspended without pay.

My question is this: Is it common sense for Canadians to re-elect a party with such a horrible record of corruption and misuse of taxpayer dollars? Is it common sense to just forget about that?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry to say there is more nonsense in that question than I think I have time to wade through. Let me try to go in order and see how far I get. He said "contempt of Parliament", right? This was a motion from the opposition that the opposition parties voted in favour of that criticized the government. This was not a finding by some objective body. This was opposition parties voting an opinion in the government, so that happened, but it was not a demonstration of anything other than the fact that other political parties in this place were not keen on what Conservatives were trying to do.

The Phoenix pay system was launched by this government and this government was responsible for the decision to push the button on that. Yes, Conservatives in government made spending decisions that benefited all parts of this country, regardless of who represented them. What became the major focal point for the opposition parties was apparently a scandal about how money was paid back to the taxpayer in the wrong way. Compare that to the scandals we are seeing under the Liberal government where hundreds of millions of dollars not being paid back is considered a normal day under the Liberals. There is absolutely no comparison—

• (1755)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to have two more questions.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I do want to go back to Mark Carney, who absolutely loves the carbon tax. He is acting in the shadows right now of the Liberal government. We are hearing about contracts of \$10 billion. We are hearing about other contracts that he is trying to get from the Liberal government, acting in the shadows, not being open, not being transparent. We have actually seen this before. Dominic Barton was a special adviser to the Prime Minister on finance in 2017. McKinsey ended up with \$120 million in contracts.

*Privilege*

How important is it that Mark Carney be held to account?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, this is indeed the application of the kind of McKinsey model to Mark Carney. This is the model where we have very close relationships between elite insiders and the government. Those relationships may not be defined in traditional ways that trigger traditional conflict of interest mechanisms; nonetheless, they are close relationships that allow these insiders to have access to power and also to benefit personally and to have their company benefit. We saw this with Dominic Barton at McKinsey, and how Mr. Pickersgill, who was the leader of Canadian operations, was both supplying analysts to the government for work on the Advisory Council on Economic Growth and selling to the government, so he was able to drive up McKinsey's take from the government. It is the same model for the last nine years, benefiting well-connected insiders at the expense of the common people.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member spoke about the House of Commons and the fact that we do represent Canadians in this place. What I find interesting is the double standard when it comes to the common-sense Conservatives, because they believe that we represent Canadians here, yet they oftentimes do a lot of name-calling of people who are not in this chamber and unable to defend themselves, for example, Mark Carney.

Today, I think, was the first time that they were able to use Dominic Barton's name without adding names to it. I noticed the member for Winnipeg North did reference somebody who participates in their caucus meetings, but without additional names. The Conservatives know that people who are not elected cannot be in here. They know it is the House of Commons, but time and time again, they add names.

Why are the common-sense Conservatives okay with name-calling when common citizens cannot be in here to defend themselves? Would the member call his party leader to account to say, "Let us actually remember who we represent here. Let us raise the bar in how we act."

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I make no apologies for engaging in debate about how powerful people who are not accountable influence government. However, if the member's concern is that Mark Carney is not able to be in the House to defend himself, I have a great idea: How about he run in a by-election? Given that he is effectively the finance minister anyway, he would be here on the floor to actually answer questions from the opposition.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like it noted that the Conservative member would rather do name-calling than actually remove name-calling.

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

The hon. member for Simcoe North has the floor.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to rise this evening and to see you in the chair. I hope that over the course of my speech, I will be able to elicit a smile or chuckle, because that is a little thing we have going.

Before I start, I will put government members on notice. If they are going to make accusations during questions and comments that the parliamentary privilege motion offends the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or that the Auditor General is very uncomfortable with the document production order, I would invite them to table the document or read specifically from whatever they purport to be quoting so we can determine whether they are stretching the truth.

If I look at the motion, it says, "the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall provide forthwith any documents received by him, pursuant to this order, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for its independent determination of whether to investigate potential offences". It is completely up to the RCMP whether it looks at the documents. It is completely up to the RCMP whether it decides to conduct an investigation.

Now that I have put government members on notice, I will get into my remarks, and I will ask the Chair for her indulgence. I will bring it home for members and put it all together, but to start, I will note that I had the great pleasure of being with a group of individuals at the Present Island beach club for what is called the muskie weekend. What do we do there? We share food, we share fellowship and we share fishing.

The individuals who were there, well-esteemed members of the community and great Canadians, had two challenges. One was about the capital gains tax, which is not the purpose of tonight's debate, so we will park that for now. The other was about corruption. A couple of members pulled me aside and asked me why it seemed that well-connected insiders have an inside track to government contracts. When regular, everyday Canadians are asking questions about corruption and about well-connected insiders having an inside track to government contracts, that pretty much tells us all we need to know.

I would note, from the letter the law clerk provided, that it is well within the right of the House to request documents. Page 2 of that letter reads, "I note that the Order is an exercise of the House of Commons' power to send for documents. This parliamentary privilege is rooted in the Preamble and section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, as well as section 4 of the Parliament of Canada Act."

The Parliament of Canada and this chamber are able to ask for documents. They are able to ask for documents to be produced and are able to ask for documents to be made public. However, the Liberals do not share a great relationship with following House orders. We need only think about the Winnipeg lab documents, where they took the Speaker to court to prevent those documents from being made public. The documents have subsequently been made public, but the government was willing to take the Speaker of the House to court over them.

By the way, this motion was supported by a majority of members in the House. However, we can wonder why we would include the ability to send these documents to the RCMP should it wish to receive them. It is because the RCMP has identified multiple occasions where it has not been able to get documents from the government.

Do we need to remind government members about SNC-Lavalin? Do we need to remind government members about WE Charity? Do we need to remind government members about waiving parliamentary privilege to provide documents for the foreign interference scandal or, again, the Winnipeg lab documents, as I already mentioned?

• (1800)

There are Criminal Code provisions for breach of trust by public officials. It would be completely up to the RCMP whether it chooses to look at the documents and whether it chooses to allow those documents to inform an investigation if an investigation exists. We are not confusing “directing” with “making sure that the RCMP is informed”.

This is a government that has a challenge with the definition of the word “directing”, when we think about the Prime Minister directing an Attorney General to provide a break for a well-connected Liberal firm or the minister of public safety directing the head of the RCMP to improperly release documents with respect to the tragic shootings and killings in Nova Scotia.

This speaks to a broader issue of disrespect for Parliament. The government seems to treat this place like an inconvenience. Liberals seem to treat the House of Commons like an inconvenience and parliamentary committees as an inconvenience. Ministers routinely do not show up to committees when invited.

Let us just take a step back, regarding the respect for this place that the government does not have. During the pandemic, the government tried to shut this place down and give itself unlimited taxing and spending powers without the oversight of Parliament for two years. It prorogued Parliament in the middle of a scandal investigation of the WE Charity issue in order to prevent that investigation from being completed.

I already mentioned that it was willing to take a Speaker to court to prevent the release of the Winnipeg lab documents. How could we forget the Emergencies Act, which the government invoked? It provided no evidence to Parliament and had ministers going out and giving press conferences, giving misleading and false information to members of the press on the basis of which the Emergencies Act was invoked in the first place. This is a government that has no respect for the House, no respect for the chamber and no respect for the orders or motions that are passed in this place. The House is merely an inconvenience for the government.

If the government cared about institutions as it says it does, it would abide by motions passed in the House by a majority of members. It is no wonder that Canadians are losing faith in their institutions. The government does not even have faith in this chamber or this institution itself. Why should it expect that Canadians would continue to have faith in this institution?

If conflicts of interest were cookies, the government would have found its hand in the cookie jar way too many times: the Aga Khan conflict of interest; spouses of ministers or spouses of very senior staff lobbying improperly for their clients, especially during COVID; SDTC, the entire purpose of this debate tonight, where the AG found 186 conflicts of interest and called into question al-

### *Privilege*

most \$400 million of that fund that was spent. The self-dealing at SDTC is completely unacceptable.

• (1805)

I have a theory about why the government has a problem understanding what conflicts of interest mean. I believe that Liberals believe that everyone, under all circumstances, will always act in the most altruistic fashion. That is, they believe that if someone's intentions are pure in their heart, they can do no wrong. I actually think that, instead, temptation overcomes those altruistic intentions. That is reality.

Conservatives believe that, even when altruism and pure intentions are present, we have to protect against the temptation for people to act improperly. It has nothing to do with whether there is an actual conflict of interest, even though the Auditor General identified 186 conflicts of interest. Rather, it has to do with whether there was a perception of a conflict of interest. There is no better example of this than when the Prime Minister tried to appoint former governor general David Johnston as a special rapporteur. Mr. Johnston is a great, eminent Canadian, a wonderful person and a good man. However, he was a very wrong choice for the role that the Prime Minister believed he could fill. Why was that? It was not because there was an actual conflict of interest, although there might have been, but because there was a perception of a conflict of interest.

When reasonable people ask why well-connected insiders are getting rich, it tells me all I need to know. A conflict of interest exists. It is not about whether someone's heart is in the right place, whether their motivation is pure or whether there is an actual conflict of interest; it is about whether there is a perception, whether a reasonable person could perceive there to be a conflict of interest. The other side has a lot of lawyers. I have a hard time understanding why members of the government, time and time again, fail to grasp a very basic legal concept about conflicts of interest, because they continually offend it. It is a simple legal test. Whether a conflict exists is a question of law. It is whether there is a perception of a conflict by a reasonable person. As I mentioned, regular Canadians are asking why it looks as though well-connected Liberal insiders have the inside track in getting rich off government contracts. They are reasonable people.

In the United States, there's something called the False Claims Act; under this act, whistle-blowers can get financial compensation for pointing out frauds on the taxpayer, when money is then recovered. We should seriously consider whether Canada needs its whistle-blower protection laws to be enhanced so that they would provide financial compensation. Given the frauds that we have seen exposed and the fact that the government did not support a very reasonable Bloc bill on enhancing whistle-blower protections, this is something we should look at. We can think about arrive scam. Maybe we would have found out about that and recovered government money sooner. Maybe we could have prevented more money from being wasted.

*Privilege*

Let us go back to SDTC for a minute and talk about the actual conflicts of interest that existed. As I mentioned, the Auditor General found 186 conflicts of interest. An individual, Ms. Andrée-Lise Méthot, was a board member at SDTC. I do not enjoy naming individuals in the House, so I try not to on most occasions. To be fair to that individual, I have never met her. For all I know, she is a very wonderful person and took on that role to do a great thing for the country when she was asked to sit on the board of the SDTC.

● (1810)

However, the Auditor General found conflicts of interest where this individual was present and voting in favour of awarding money to companies in which this individual had a financial interest. It would appear that the temptation to enrich oneself overcame the initial pure intentions, and it gets worse. Even in the face of an investigation by the Auditor General and an internal investigation, this individual, Ms. Méthot, was given a promotion. She was appointed to the board of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Why would the government appoint an individual who was the subject of an investigation for self-dealing and conflicts of interest to another job? The facts were well known to everyone at the time of the appointment and, even if they were not well known to people in government at the time, those facts were made public eventually and everybody knew. The government did not have to wait for the end of the investigation to see the documents that show that this individual was present at board meetings where she approved, or partially approved, money going to companies in which she had a pecuniary or financial interest.

Getting these documents is a right of Parliament, the House and the chamber. It is a right of all of us as members in this place to request documents. We have established that it is a right of the House to request documents. They can be made available to the media. They can be made available to the RCMP. When those documents are provided to the House, maybe some members will post them online. If the RCMP wishes to ignore them, that would be up to its officers. If the RCMP officers believe they may not be able to rely on those documents in an investigation, that is their choice. If a member from the justice department, who is being consulted on a breach of trust, a breach of fiduciary duty or a breach of trust by a public official, which are Criminal Code acts, chooses not to rely on those documents, that is up to them.

Nowhere in the motion today, or in the original motion, does it suggest that the RCMP take any action or that the Auditor General take any action. It is up to them. Even though she has said she did not find any criminality, that is not what the Auditor General was looking at. The Auditor General was looking at whether there were conflicts of interest and, boy, did she find a lot of them. She found 186 of them, calling into question up to \$400 million of the fund that may have been improperly paid through self-dealing or to ineligible recipients.

I would completely defer to law enforcement officers on how they choose to deal with the information should it be made available to them. That is unlike the government, which tried to strong-arm an Auditor General in a criminal investigation to help its friends or, whether it was directed or not, or whether it was wise for them, tried to improperly pressure the commissioner of the RCMP

to release information about the firearms that were used in the absolutely disgusting tragedy in Nova Scotia while that investigation was under way because the government had a piece of firearms legislation, and it wanted to benefit politically by having that information made public.

I would welcome the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader's questions on any of these matters. If he wants, we can go back and forth for the full ten minutes.

● (1815)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would be happy to go back and forth for the full 10 minutes and would give the member leave to do so.

Having said that, I do not think the member really understands what the Conservative Party is asking. The government understands what has taken place and the need to freeze funding, replace the board and have the two internal audits. We recognize that the Auditor General has good recommendations, which we support. We will ensure there is a consequence for those actions.

The issue at hand is the motion, which says the Conservative Party of Canada believes that it should gather information through the privileges of the House and then submit it directly to the RCMP. Many legal experts would challenge the Conservative Party on that idea. At the end of the day, it could have charter and constitutional impacts, and all the Conservatives will say is to name them. The Conservatives have lawyers within their own caucus who should have a sense of what they are doing.

The provincial auditor and the RCMP have felt uncomfortable with this. Why does the Conservative Party not feel uncomfortable with it?

● (1820)

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, I invited the member, before my speech started, to bring up a quote or fact he could rely on and he did none of that. He could not even name an expert who would back up his point. He just says there are experts who might, like maybe lawyers in the Conservative caucus. There are a lot of lawyers in the Liberal caucus, and they have been real quiet on what it means to be in a conflict of interest.

I welcome additional questions from the member. I always enjoy getting on my feet to answer them, no matter how unbelievably out of touch they are.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, all the foundations, like the one in question, were created in the late 1990s. They were the brainchild of Marcel Massé, who was president of the Treasury Board under Jean Chrétien.

*Privilege*

The government chose to impose austerity on the provinces, cutting transfers by 40% over three years. Ottawa was left with large surpluses. It looked bad on the balance sheets, so they chose to put those billions of dollars into arm's length foundations, creating all these problems we now know about.

Way back in 2005, the then auditor general of Canada, Sheila Fraser, published a damning report. It is now 2024. Is it not time to put an end to all these arm's length foundations, once and for all?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, I thank my friend kindly.

[*English*]

I serve with him on the finance committee, and he does an excellent job on that committee. We have a great working relationship.

He raises a very interesting point. The myriad of separate funds, boards of directors and organizations that give money out invite conflicts of interest and corruption. We should reconsider having all of these organizations and institutions that have significant control over the public purse.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Simcoe North for his remarks on an amendment to a motion that we are supporting, which is a good thing.

My question is at a higher level. The member did an excellent job of enumerating the Liberal government's many ethical breaches, and we have heard other colleagues in this House, both from the NDP and across the way, list the many ethical breaches of the former Conservative government.

For an average citizen watching this debate and reflecting on successive Liberal and Conservative governments that seem to have trouble acting ethically, what are they to take away from that? Is one of the messages that the protections against such ethical breaches are not strong enough? Is that one of the messages that people should take away from watching successive Liberal and Conservative governments not act in the public interest and break the ethical code that is supposed to govern this place?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, the question from my hon. colleague was a very good one, and I will quite simply say that if anyone breaks the law, there should be consequences. If anyone breaches the Conflict of Interest Act, there should be consequences. If anyone breaches the public trust under the Criminal Code, they should be charged.

It does not matter to me what party a person belongs to. It does not matter to me what position they currently hold, have held or might hold in the future. If there is the breaking of a law, the breaching of public trust or a breach of the Conflict of Interest Act, there should be consequences.

By the way, I will add that I support fully increasing the penalties for breaches of public trust or of the Conflict of Interest Act.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the fact that there have been so many breaches of conflict of interest leads to the corruption conversation here. It seems like corruption is becoming a culture in the Canadian government system on the federal level.

How dangerous can that be to the institution and the way we do things? How can we continue to govern with the trust of the people if this level of corruption is taking place in this country?

• (1825)

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, we are entering a culture of corruption, maybe even a culture of kleptocracy. What we are overseeing here are well-connected Liberal insiders who have the inside track to government programs. We see self-dealing. The Auditor General could not have been more clear. There are 186 examples of conflict of interest.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, could the member explain to me what appears to be the lack of confidence the Conservative Party has in the RCMP institution?

Does he believe that the RCMP does not have the ability to do what it has been asked to do in terms of investigation of authorities and working with the independence of our judicial system so that the Conservatives feel obligated to go out and get information and direct it using their privileges as parliamentarians and give that information directly to the RCMP? Does he not have confidence in the RCMP?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, artificial intelligence is getting so good. That cannot be real, what this member just asked. Do we have confidence in the RCMP? Of course we do, but let us remember the record of the government: not waiving cabinet confidence with respect to the SNC-Lavalin and not waiving cabinet confidence with respect to the invocation of the Emergencies Act, which by and large ended up preventing the RCMP from getting documents.

That is the record of the government. We, of course, have great faith in the RCMP, but the government has frustrated the RCMP's ability to get documents to prevent itself from being investigated.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I just want my colleague to expand on what we are talking about here, regarding the alleged failure to produce documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada. This was all supposed to be about sustainability, and here we are with a government that is showing some of the largest corruption of any government in Canadian history. We are here to get to the bottom of accountability.

I asked about the size of this scandal, which seems to me to be the largest I have ever heard of in Canadian history. Could he elaborate on that?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, I think my kids might have stayed up to watch this, so I will just say goodnight to them, Davie and Cooper.

The Auditor General has called into question almost \$400 million of payments out of this fund. That either went as a matter of conflict of interest and self-dealing, or to recipients who were ineligible to receive the funds in the first place. The sheer size of this boondoggle is quite massive, the likes of which we have never seen before.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join the debate today on the current scandal. I am going to start with a quote from Andy Warhol: "I wake up every morning. I open my eyes and think: here we go again." It is another Liberal scandal. It is another case of Liberals benefiting Liberal insiders, Liberals blocking the legally ordered production of documents and the Liberal government disrespecting Parliament.

Those watching at home ask, "Which scandal are we talking about?" This includes my colleague's son, who is probably one of two or three people still watching on CPAC. They want to know which scandal; there have been so many. Are we here talking about the SNC-Lavalin scandal, in which the government interfered with a justice case so that their preferred company, SNC-Lavalin, would escape being banned from bidding on government procurement projects?

Are we here talking about the WE Charity scandal, in which the government used taxpayer dollars to hire and pay off the Prime Minister's family? They bailed out the broken company of the creepy WE founders, who were famous Liberal Party promoters. The new Quebec Liberal lieutenant, the current Minister of Procurement, who was the Treasury Board minister at the time, broke and violated the Official Languages Act to ensure that a sole-sourced \$950-million contract was given to WE Charity.

We can think about that. A man from the government, someone who was supposed to be representing Quebec interests, violated the Official Languages Act so that a unilingual company made up of friends of the Prime Minister got a sole-sourced contract.

Of course, we remember that the finance minister at the time, Bill Morneau, received a \$47,000 gift from WE Charity to fly his family on a luxury vacation. This is the same WE Charity he was funnelling money to with his budgets and that also employed his daughter.

Is it the Prime Minister's vacation scandal? We ask, "Which one?" I should be more specific. Is it the billionaire island scandal, in which the Prime Minister received a free trip from a registered lobbyist? Is it perhaps the surfing holiday scandal? On the very first officially recognized Truth and Reconciliation Day, the Prime Minister headed off to Tofino to go surfing. Perhaps it is the most recent Christmas scandal, in which the Prime Minister went on vacation to Jamaica. He received a \$9,000-a-night gift from a friend who is also, of course, a donor to the Trudeau Foundation. Luckily, this time, it was not a Trudeau Foundation donor linked to the PRC, at least not that we know of.

Is it perhaps the ArriveCAN scandal, in which the government gave millions to companies to do no work for an app that did not work? The app sent 10,000 Canadians into quarantine by mistake. When we had the government in the mighty OGGO committee, we actually heard that they did not even test the app upgrade that they paid millions for before releasing it and inflicting it upon Canadians.

I would like to continue with some of these scandals. How much time do I have for this speech? I only have 16 minutes, so I do not have enough time to cover the rest.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** You have nine minutes.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Madam Speaker, I am going to move on. I am going to talk about the green fund spending scandal. However, again we ask which one. Only the Liberal government could actually have a scandal with subsets to it. We are looking at three different green spending scandals right now: scandal A, scandal B and scandal C.

There is the environment green grants audit scandal, in which the internal audit audited the grants and contributions of the department of the environment. We found that the government is giving out millions to superprofitable companies that have been cited for massive pollution problems.

● (1830)

In fact, I have the last couple here. Rio Tinto, which is worth billions of dollars, received millions from the Liberal government with very little oversight. Lafarge Canada, another foreign company, received millions from the government, again without oversight.

The government funded, it subsidized, foreign universities in the U.S. that have billions in endowments. Taxpayers, through the Liberals, decided that we were going to subsidize those universities. It also gave money to a foreign country to study fauna. I think that was to New Zealand. What that has to do with the Canadian environment is beyond me. What we found out through the audit is that the government did not provide proper oversight and governance. Of course, there is the green net-zero accelerator fund scandal, as shown by the environment commissioner, who works with the Auditor General, at \$8 billion of Canadian taxpayers' money.

At the same time, in my riding there is an association, a not-for-profit charity, called the Veterans Association Food Bank, which serves veterans, RCMP veterans and police veterans. There is actually a food bank in a city as wealthy as Edmonton, in a country as wealthy as Canada, for veterans who cannot feed themselves, but Canada has an \$8-billion accelerator fund.

The Auditor General reports that the Liberal government did not track value for money, the ability of any of the companies receiving \$8 billion, and whether they were actually using the money to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Think about that: \$8 billion to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but we were going to give it to companies that we were not actually going to ask to prove that they were using the money to reduce greenhouse gases.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

Twelve of the 17 companies provided zero plans to actually reduce greenhouse gases. This is a comment from the Auditor General's office to the environment commissioner: "Due diligence was not followed by the Liberal government before shovelling Canadian tax dollars out the door." If we think about that, billions of dollars were given away. We received a list of just eight of the companies that received money through the fund and that had not provided any proof that they were going to use taxpayers' money to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The total market capitalization, which is the value of the companies, exceeds \$1 trillion.

Canadians are struggling at home, and 25% of them, I understand, are under the poverty line now. Two million Canadians go to a food bank every month. We cannot provide our soldiers with ammunition or even sleeping bags, and there are veterans going to food banks in Edmonton. However, the government has \$8 billion to give to corporations worth over \$1 trillion, and it cannot even bother to say, "You know what, for this \$8-billion gift, could you like maybe, please, prove to us that you're actually going to reduce greenhouse gases with the money?". Of course not; the current government does not do that.

Of course, now we are on to the third scandal of the green spending money, the one we are debating here tonight: the green slush fund. I will summarize the scandal. The Auditor General found that the Liberals turned Sustainable Development Technology Canada, SDTC, into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. A recording that was leaked, of a senior civil servant, slammed the "outright incompetence" of the Liberal government, which gave 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately. Where have we heard this before, money given out inappropriately?

The Auditor General found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that on occasion could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or development of green technology. Again, where have we heard that? Oh, that is scandal number two. But at least this time, and I give the government credit, it was only \$58 million it gave away for no reason, down from the \$8 billion it gave away. Mind you, it is from the same department, which is unfortunate.

• (1835)

A third of a billion dollars was given out in over 186 cases to projects in which board members had a conflict of interest. We would think that if the Liberals had a third of a billion dollars to hand out, they would make sure the people receiving the money were not the same people deciding who receives the money. Some \$58 million went to projects without ensuring that contribution agreements and terms were met.

This is the same issue we had with the audit of the administration of grants and contributions at Environment Canada, where money was given out without proper oversight. To quote from that report:

The structural and strategic foundations needed to support the program delivery model—such as governance, processes, systems, compliance framework, training, and capacity-building...did not adapt in a manner that effectively supports the scale and complexity of the current number of programs...

It also noted, "inconsistent financial management approaches that do not fully support...efficient program delivery."

We have had this issue before after a parliamentary committee has demanded documents. Members may remember the McKinsey

scandal, which I forgot to cover earlier. Dominic Barton was a friend of the Prime Minister, and his company received 10 times the number of contracts than under the previous government. It is the same McKinsey responsible for "supercharging" the opioid crisis in Canada, probably one of the most vile companies in the entire world. The government operations committee demanded documents from the government and the government refused.

We have various levels of the government stating why, saying that Parliament, much as we are hearing from the Liberals, is apparently not supreme. We heard government officials at the the Privy Council Office, the Prime Minister's own department, telling us that information and privacy laws supersede the will of Parliament.

Here we are back again. It is the same issue, the same attitude from the government the same cover-up. This time, at least, unlike with McKinsey, we have the Bloc and the NDP supporting us. We will get to the truth of part three of the green slush fund.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1840)

[English]

### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is the time of the parliamentary day when we change agenda items. We go from discussing one Liberal corruption scandal to discussing a different corruption scandal, so it is a completely different mind frame. Previously, we were talking about the Liberal green slush fund scandal. Now I am going to follow up on a question I had asked about the arrive scam scandal. There is an expression: same stuff, different day. We see so much corruption under the NDP-Liberal government.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We continue to see new revelations in the arrive scam scandal. Right now, the government operations committee is doing a study on the Liberal indigenous contracting scandal. This is a scandal involving how Liberals misused the indigenous contracting system to allow well-connected, in many cases non-Indigenous, elites to take and benefit from resources that were supposed to be going to support indigenous communities. We had testimony from the AFN that suggested that a very small percentage of those allotments for indigenous contracting are actually going to real indigenous companies. This is another contracting scandal the government operations committee is investigating, but it comes out of the arrive scam scandal.

The arrive scam scandal, which revealed just how broken government contracting was, involved \$60 million being spent on a glitchy app that did not work very well. A company was hired to build this app, GC Strategies, which is not an IT company. It does not actually build apps. The Liberals thought they would hire someone to build an app and went to a company that does not build apps. It was two people in a basement. What they did was receive the contract and pass it on, so the government went and hired someone who went and hired other people. One of the companies that got business as part of this was Dalian Enterprises, a company on the government's indigenous contracting list, but also a company that did not actually do any work on it. It simply received contracts and subcontracted. Part of the corruption we are seeing is that the government is using tiny companies, made up of well-connected insiders, that receive contracts and then subcontract.

The concept of this is very simple. Hypothetically, let us say that I needed to have someone come in to replace my bathtub, so I went out and hired someone. I pay them a certain amount of money, but they do not actually produce bathtubs or know anything about them. This person simply gets the contract from me and goes out to subcontract it, to buy a bathtub from someone else and then sell it to me for a markup.

That is what happened with ArriveCAN. A company was hired. It took the contract, hired someone else to do the work, and got the contract at a markup. It does not make a lot of sense in the interest of taxpayers that this would happen, but well-connected insiders have continually profited under the government. The Liberals have ran a government with the purpose not of serving Canadians in general, but of allowing well-connected elite insiders to take advantage of programs that are supposed to be benefiting Canadians as a whole. We see this with ArriveCAN, an app that did not work very well, and that accidentally sent over 10,000 Canadians into quarantine. It is an example of these tiny middleman companies being able to make massive markups.

Now we are seeing the same thing in the abuse of indigenous contracting, where non-indigenous, elite insiders are able to take advantage of the program and take for themselves money that should be benefiting indigenous entrepreneurs and indigenous communities across the country. The contracting system in the government is broken. Well-connected insiders are taking advantage of it, and it is not producing value for money. Will this government apologize for the arrive scam scandal and commit to real meaningful change, or will it take a Conservative government to replace—

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleague's concerns about the ArriveCAN app.

As he knows, the Canada Border Services Agency launched an internal investigation as soon as it became aware of allegations of inappropriate contracting practices. The matter was also referred to the RCMP for investigation.

Contracts with three companies involved, including GC Strategies, were also halted through a work stoppage order issued by Public Services and Procurement Canada. We expect procurement procedures to be followed properly, and anyone who does not follow the rules should face the appropriate consequences. That has always been, and will always be, the case.

Reports from the Office of the Procurement Ombud and the Auditor General have identified unacceptable gaps in management processes, roles and controls. Some recommendations have already been implemented, and the Canada Border Services Agency is taking additional action to ensure that practices align with policies and meet Canadians' expectations.

[*English*]

The government is taking steps to ensure all departments are better positioned to undertake projects of this nature in the future.

While the RCMP cannot comment on specific investigations, it can confirm that significant coordination is under way. The member can rest assured that investigators have access to the resources, tools and supports necessary to advance an investigation. It is examining this matter carefully, with all available information, including the Auditor General's performance audit report, and will take appropriate actions as required. However, it would be inappropriate for us to provide any further comments on this matter at this time. The government has full confidence that any RCMP investigation will be pursued with integrity and efficiency.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary read from a prepared legalese attempt to deflect all responsibility for the government's failures.

Here are the facts we know them. A former minister, according to testimony at the government operations committee, said that he wanted someone's head on a plate, wanted someone to blame within the public service. This spawned intensifying conflict between senior civil servants trying to blame each other and not be the government's chosen fall person. The government has failed to take responsibility for how, under its watch over the last nine years, it has broken Canada's contracting system and allowed well-connected elite insiders to make off like bandits, providing no benefit to the Canadian people.

Will the government take responsibility for the mess it has created?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Speaker, we understand and take all the concerns expressed by the hon. member very seriously. The RCMP also takes all complaints it receives seriously, and all the decisions made reflect the rigour, diligence, and independence of its actions.

The RCMP is assessing available information, including the Auditor General's performance audit report, and will take appropriate action. Allegations have been referred to the RCMP, and the government welcomes these ongoing investigations.

Since this is an ongoing investigation, the RCMP can only provide limited details. We are confident that the RCMP has access to the resources, tools and support it needs to advance these investigations.

• (1850)

[*English*]

#### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it was on May 10 of this year that I posed a question about the Liberals' risky and failed experimentation program in British Columbia with the free distribution of hard drugs to our most severely addicted neighbours. Specifically, I wanted to know whether the Liberal members of Parliament would be voting with us, the Conservative members of Parliament, on a common-sense motion that we had put forward a couple of days earlier to ban hard drugs and offer recovery and hope instead.

I thought it was a fair question because, at that time, it had become abundantly clear that the free drug experimentation program in British Columbia had been an utter failure. Even the left-leaning NDP Premier David Eby was admitting failure and was demanding an immediate stop to the pilot project. The vote came up a couple of days later and the Liberals and the NDP, of course, voted against our common-sense motion, because that is what they always do. They always vote against our common-sense motions.

However, I wonder, if that same motion were tabled today, whether they would vote with us now, being five months later. I ask it in this context. Looking at how these two parties and their counterpart in British Columbia, the NDP provincial government, have been flip-flopping on issues relating to the toxic drug crisis, it is hard to say how they would vote today. They really believe in harm reduction, safe supply and decriminalization, even if those beliefs are based more on ideology than on evidence and data.

#### *Adjournment Proceedings*

The harm reductionists, the academics, the leaders and even the government's own professional advisers were calling on the government not to abandon the project, but to expand it to make more government-issued narcotics available for more people in more parts of the province. It is hard to shake people from their ideologically held beliefs, even if the evidence is clearly contrary to those beliefs, because it is just so easy to dismiss inconvenient evidence to the contrary as misinformation. That is what the Liberals tend to do, except, of course, when the evidence is the latest polling data showing many formerly safe NDP and Liberal seats leaning Conservative if an election were to be held today.

This is particularly worrisome for provincial Premier David Eby, who is facing the fight of his political life right now. An election is just a couple of weeks away. Therefore, what does he do? Well, he takes a look at what the Conservatives are doing right, at what is moving them ahead in the polls. He adopts some of their policies and now he is trying to convince British Columbians that this is what he believed all along anyway and, this time, it really is going to work. I am hoping, together with many other people, that British Columbians are done with the NDP experiment altogether.

Now, I will get back to our Conservative Party motion, here in the House of Commons back in May. I am going to read just a small part of it. The motion states that:

...the House call on the Prime Minister to...

(d) end taxpayer funded narcotics and redirect this money into treatment and recovery programs for drug addiction.

That is a motion that the Liberals and New Democrats voted against. How would they vote today? Would they change their mind, given that their counterpart in British Columbia flip-flopped on the radical decriminalization program earlier this year and how now, in the heat of an election campaign, he is flip-flopping on what he calls compassionate intervention programs, treatment? The emphasis is now on treatment. Therefore, I am wondering how Liberals would vote today, and their NDP counterparts—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the overdose crisis is one of the most significant and complex public health threats that Canada has faced in decades. There is no simple solution. The factors driving the crisis are complex and interrelated. They include the contamination of illegal drugs with potent synthetic opioids, underlying socio-economic disadvantages, and challenges in connecting people with the appropriate services. We need to work together to stop the harm done and the needless deaths of people across the country.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1855)

[English]

No one government can address this crisis alone. That is why we are working closely with all orders of government, partners and stakeholders to implement a comprehensive approach to addressing substance use and related harms, focused on health, social well-being and protecting public safety.

[Translation]

Working with the provinces and territories and other partners across the country means implementing new solutions, monitoring them closely and making the necessary adjustments along the way. We cannot keep trying the same thing over and over again and expect different results. We have to be audacious and open to finding new solutions to get out of this crisis.

[English]

The amendment to B.C.'s exemption for personal drug possession demonstrates this point. In May 2024, we granted B.C.'s request to prohibit the possession of controlled substances in public spaces because the province identified a concern and sought to adjust its approach. We have always maintained that this exemption, granted at the request of the provincial government, will be closely monitored and amended if needed.

[Translation]

Public safety has remained an absolute priority for the Government of Canada, which continues to work on finding innovative solutions to the current drug toxicity crisis.

We are working in close collaboration with our national and international partners, including Public Safety Canada, the RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency and Canada Post, to disrupt the illegal drug network, equip border officers with the tools they need to intercept illegal drugs and precursors and counter, with our private sector partners, the money laundering that comes with illegal drug trafficking.

The government will also continue to invest in other evidence-based services and supports to counter the crisis. For example, in budget 2024, we announced a new commitment of \$150 million for a fund to support the municipalities and indigenous communities. This funding will allow them to provide a rapid response, especially for the hard-hit communities with urgent and critical needs related to the overdose crisis.

With the ultimate aim of providing Canadians with timely access to the prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services and supports they need, we will continue to work with municipalities, provincial and territorial governments, law enforcement agencies, indigenous communities and people with living or lived experience in order to take urgent action and leverage our tools and collective expertise to tackle this national public health crisis.

[English]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary might not be aware of the recent case in British Columbia of a 13-year-old girl, Brianna MacDonald, who died in a homeless camp from a toxic drug overdose. She was in and out of the hospital many times, and despite her family urging the hospital to keep her

for treatment, the hospital administration decided that at 13 years old, Brianna was able to make her own health decisions. A few weeks later, she was dead. The family is now calling on the government to support involuntary treatment for people who cannot make responsible health decisions for themselves.

Will the government support a move toward treatment for people like Brianna?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Speaker, yes, I am aware of this file.

People use substances for a variety of reasons, including for medical purposes and to cope with stress, trauma or pain.

[Translation]

We need to consider the wide range of individual needs and remember that everyone deserves access to supports that work for them. That is why reducing stigma remains a priority for our government, to ensure that all Canadians have access to appropriate services. Stigma directly harms people who use drugs. It creates barriers to services and lowers the quality of care. It also encourages people to conceal their drug use and keeps them from seeking help.

We want to encourage policies and programs that focus on health and compassion in the hope of creating a society where substance use disorders are seen as a chronic health condition that deserves non-judgmental care.

[English]

## CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to question the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry about the effect of the carbon tax on steel. It was incredible to hear the answer the minister tried to pawn off on us, saying that the government has stood up for steelworkers.

I have met with steelworkers and the steel industry, and I am sure the minister has as well. What the steel industry has said unequivocally is that if the carbon tax goes up, as it is scheduled to, there will be no steel industry left in Canada. The government's plan to quadruple the carbon tax will effectively drive the entire steel industry in Canada out of business. If that is what standing up for steelworkers means to the government, I think it has the definition wrong.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

What we have seen in the steel industry as a result of the carbon tax is that the carbon tax makes Canadian steel very expensive, far more expensive than that of all their competitors. We now see that 61% of steel in Canada comes from foreign countries, they are imports, and every year it gets worse. Why? Because the carbon tax makes Canadian steel far more expensive than any other steel in the world. In fact, the country is now being flooded with very cheap, dirty Chinese steel. Chinese steel is more than two times more polluting with carbon emissions than Canadian steel. The government is driving out the steel business in this country.

Steel accounts for about 120,000 direct and indirect jobs in this country. The carbon tax is going to effectively kill those jobs. We know that the carbon tax has done a whole bunch of things. We now have two million people going to food banks because the carbon tax has made food so expensive. We have tent cities all across the entire country, hundreds and hundreds of them, because housing has become so expensive under the Liberal government.

My question to the minister was that if he thinks the carbon tax is so great and so beneficial not only for Canadian steelworkers but for Canadians in general, why do the Liberals not just call a carbon tax election and let Canadians decide? I think Canadians will unequivocally and resoundingly say they have had enough of the carbon tax.

The carbon tax is driving jobs out of this country. It is making food more expensive. It is making Canadians line up at food banks because they cannot afford food. If the Liberals are so confident that carbon tax is working so well, will they call a carbon tax election and, if not, why not?

• (1900)

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know my colleague knows that I will not be able to answer his question.

[*Translation*]

The costs of climate change are clear. Canadians want to be part of the solution. Businesses are also rising to the occasion. Innovative businesses of all sizes are meeting consumer demand for low-carbon products and investing heavily to adapt their production practices accordingly.

[*English*]

The member opposite should know that Canada's steel producers are leading the way. For example, just this year, ArcelorMittal Dofasco earned ResponsibleSteel certification, recognizing the company's leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, noise, emissions effluents, as well as waste and water stewardship and biodiversity.

In Canada, we use carbon pricing because it works. It creates powerful financial incentives for industries and individuals to take concrete steps to reduce their emissions. In fact, in the member opposite's riding of Dufferin—Caledon, over 80,000 people received the Canada carbon rebate.

[*Translation*]

Canada has put a price on carbon pollution but is taking a flexible approach. Industries across all sectors have said that they support pricing because of this flexibility. They have said that pollution pricing allows them to invest in cleaner processes without the government telling them how to do it.

Carbon pricing is an economic policy that works by ensuring that our industries remain competitive in a decarbonized world. The federal system allows provinces and territories to maintain their own systems if they meet minimum national standards.

Carbon pricing has been in place across Canada since 2019. Many provinces, such as Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec, have had carbon pricing for even longer.

[*English*]

All the money paid by industries gets given right back to the province it comes from to invest in clean-energy projects for industry. For every dollar that has been invested in industry through these pricing proceeds, three dollars have been mobilized, essentially tripling investment in clean industrial projects. By putting a price on pollution, we send a signal across the economy to encourage households and businesses to change their behaviour and find new and innovative ways to use less-polluting energy products and services.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

The industry remains competitive, both through the incentives provided by carbon pricing to develop new technologies and through smart pricing design for heavy industry across Canada. Our approach keeps overall costs low while continuing to drive emissions reductions and keep Canada competitive internationally. That is why economist after economist supports carbon pricing as the cheapest and most efficient tool we have to fight climate change.

Carbon pricing is a central pillar of Canada's climate plan, because it reduces emissions, accelerates the use of clean technologies and fuels, and supports good jobs in a diversified economy, but also because it complements and amplifies the impact of other aspects of our climate plan. Carbon pricing lays the foundation for over 140 measures in Canada's emissions reduction plan, including the clean fuel regulations, which reduce the carbon intensity of diesel and gasoline, and the proposed clean electricity regulations, which will help deliver a net-zero grid.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, it is almost impossible to respond coherently to that answer.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The steel industry has made it very clear that if the carbon tax continues to go up, steel producers will be out of business. I know the investments they have made. They have produced the greenest steel in the world and should be rewarded for that. Instead what the government is doing is punishing them for that by promising to quadruple the carbon tax.

The fact is that the member can say what she wants if she thinks carbon pricing is great. However, the steel industry is on record saying that if the carbon tax goes up as planned, it will be completely out of business. Sixty-one per cent of the Canadian steel market is already taken up by cheap, dirty steel imports. The industry itself is saying, "This will be the end of us."

How can the member stand here and say that it is working, when the industry says it is going to put them out of business?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Speaker, I said that because it is true and because all economists are saying the same thing. Canadians across the country are raising the alarm on climate change.

They can see it with their own eyes: longer, fiercer wildfire seasons; the hottest summers in history; and floods in urban and rural areas across the country over the last few years. I could go on.

Experts tell us that from 2015 to 2025, climate change impacts have shaved \$25 billion off the GDP. That is half a years' growth. Without significant additional actions to reduce emissions, those costs are projected to grow to \$35 billion in 2030. That is what scientists predicted a long time ago.

We need to take ambitious action now to avoid drastic changes to the trajectory of the climate on earth. Pricing pollution is an essential strategy because it simply cannot be free to pollute.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:09 p.m.)

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