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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 25, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1000)
[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House this morning to continue to talk about the ethical failures of the Liberal government. I will start where I left off.

The trade minister also violated ethics rules by awarding unattended contracts directly from her office to her close friend and campaign manager. She too was found in violation of ethics rules, yet we hear very little from the Liberals about these repeated breaches.

Many Canadians are rightly concerned about the recurring pattern of law-breaking within the Liberal government. It is well known that there have been multiple violations of ethics and other laws. The Prime Minister's own parliamentary secretary at the time was found guilty of breaking ethics laws, along with several current and former Liberal MPs, who used their offices to benefit themselves, their family members and their friends.

We are currently witnessing yet another scandal, this time involving the employment minister, a Liberal cabinet member from Edmonton, and his pandemic profiteering business partner. This scandal is so serious that it has prompted a ruling from the Speaker on the right of democratically elected members to receive full, honest answers and information from individuals summoned by the House. In this particular case, the business partner of the Liberal minister from Edmonton Centre refused to provide crucial information about an individual referred to as “the other Randy”.

Why is this significant? It is because it strikes at the core of a scandal involving a sitting cabinet minister who, while serving in government, held a 50% stake in a company that was awarded gov-

ernment contracts by his own government. This is not just unethical; it is deeply concerning.

What exacerbates the situation is that the minister claimed he had no contact with his business partner throughout 2022, a key year in the timeline. He even testified to this in the House. His business partner echoed the same claim. However, what did we discover when the documents were produced? They had been texting and communicating throughout that entire year.

This is the clear problem: The minister's testimony was not truthful and his business partner's testimony was not truthful. They misled the House, the public and the media. Now we know that instead of working for Canadians, this sitting Liberal cabinet minister was actively managing the day-to-day operations of a company profiting from pandemic contracts awarded by his own government. This is the kind of corruption that has brought the House to a standstill. It is about conflicts of interest and a blatant refusal to follow the law. Canadians are expected to follow the law. Why not the Liberals?

Canadians have had enough, and they are demanding that the RCMP fully investigate these scandals. A letter from the RCMP dated October 9 states, “the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) investigation into SDTC is ongoing.” We know that SDTC operated under various governments, including that of Stephen Harper. However, according to Canada's Auditor General, it faced no issues until 2017. It was after 2017, when the Liberal Prime Minister appointed his own choice as chair of SDTC, that the problems began.

What happened next? The most ethically challenged Prime Minister, who has allowed corruption to fester within the government, appointed his hand-picked chair to oversee SDTC. It is no surprise that we have now seen 186 conflicts of interest and \$400 million in mismanaged funds. The Auditor General's report only examined a portion of the deals made under the billion-dollar slush fund, and she found conflicts of interest in 80% of the cases that were reviewed.

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The Liberals continue to claim that they are hiding the truth to protect charter rights, but as the leader of the Conservative Party rightly pointed out, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is designed to protect citizens from the government, not to provide cover for the government to withhold documents from the people. We must uphold the supremacy of Parliament. Parliament, with its elected representatives of Canadians, writes the rules, creates laws and directs our justice system, not the other way around, yet the Liberals are constantly attempting to distort this fundamental truth.

• (1005)

All of this has come to light thanks to a courageous whistleblower who said:

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.

This is absolutely correct. The Liberals have not attempted to comply with the Auditor General's report. They have ignored the recommendations of the industry committee and continue to refuse to comply with the House's order to produce the documents essential to uncovering the truth about how their friends and Liberal insiders are getting rich while ordinary Canadians continue to struggle.

The RCMP will continue its investigation, but it is crucial that it receives all the necessary materials to complete its work. What can we expect from the Liberal government? It will claim it wants this matter referred to a committee, but instead of tabling the documents, it wants the committee to study whether the documents should even be tabled in the first place.

The House has already ordered the production of these documents. That decision was made by a majority of MPs, yet the Liberals, with their shrinking support, refuse to comply. They are hiding behind redactions and claims of cabinet confidence, but Canadians see through this charade. The Liberals are playing a dangerous game with our democracy, and if they are willing to violate this law, what other laws might they be willing to break?

In a piece in the National Post, Christopher Nardi wrote:

The fact that government organizations are still withholding information that was ordered by the House of Commons in June is significant because it appears to fly in the face of a ruling by [the Speaker] last month that they likely had no right to do so.

The Prime Minister not only has failed to lead by example when it comes to ethical behaviour, but has also shown himself unable to ensure that a high ethical bar is met within the government he runs.

The complete disregard he has shown for the will of the House is not surprising. Time and time again, he has doubled down in the midst of scandals instead of fessing up and delivering good, honest government to Canadians. It has certainly been interesting to hear that some of the Prime Minister's own Liberal MPs are finally getting fed up with a Prime Minister who dismissed their concerns and whose leadership has been continuously scandal-plagued. Their concerns echo the sentiments of many Canadians who, after nine years of the Prime Minister, are tired of higher costs, increased crime and government corruption.

We have already witnessed the government repeatedly breach the Conflict of Interest Act. The Prime Minister, ministers, Liberal MPs and insiders have violated the very rules designed to protect Canadians from this type of corruption. Enough is enough. Canadians deserve transparency, they deserve accountability and they deserve a government that upholds the law. It is time for the Liberals to stop playing games with our democracy, hand over the documents and allow the RCMP to complete its investigation. Only common-sense Conservatives will end the corruption and get answers for Canadians.

• (1010)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about corruption. The most corrupt prime minister that Canada has ever seen is likely Stephen Harper. In fact, he is the only prime minister in the history of Canada who has been found in contempt of Parliament. The leader of the Conservative Party today was his parliamentary secretary. No one was a stronger advocate for Stephen Harper than the leader of the Conservative Party, who sat around the cabinet table.

Having said that, nothing has changed. Today, the leader of the Conservative Party, unlike the NDP leader, the Green Party leader and the Bloc leader, says he does not need to get a security clearance. Why should the leader of the Conservative Party not get the security clearance that would enable him to find out what is happening with foreign interference? What is the leader of the Conservative Party hiding?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, there is an easy answer to his question, and that is to show the documents. I do not know what the member for Winnipeg North is afraid of. The Liberals can just put the documents on the table and give them to the RCMP. It is out of our hands anyway. The RCMP is already reviewing this situation, but all the government wants to do is limit the amount of information the RCMP has to work with.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the question of privilege and the bill that my colleague introduced and got through the House. As I recall, the bill concerned the transfer of family businesses.

At the time, the House passed the bill, but the government refused to implement it. It is a bit like what we are seeing here. The House ordered the government to produce documents and the government refused to comply.

I would humbly point out that we, the members of the Standing Committee on Finance, convened a meeting with specialists back in the summer to remind the government how unacceptable this is.

Does the hon. member see a link between the way the government handled his bill and the question currently under debate?

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do see a link. The situation my colleague from Joliette pointed out is that, at the time, the government was completely against my bill. Once it was implemented on the night it passed in the Senate, it became immediate law. However, it has been used across Canada for the last three years and nothing has happened to the tax system in Canada, other than putting people who were jeopardized on the same level as those selling their small businesses to their family, as opposed to a complete stranger, and getting a benefit for selling it to a complete stranger.

The member pointed out that the government was against it, and all of a sudden it was for it when we called an emergency meeting. He pointed out that the government had not been in favour of it for, I think, over 550 days, and I remember his speech well in the committee we had that day. There is a link and it is ongoing.

In my speech, I pointed out the plethora of scandals the government has had. It took most of the time of my presentation, for sure, and that should take care of the concerns of the member for Winnipeg North, who I think is a little jittery about his own seat.

• (1015)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am seeing a pattern of behaviour: Whenever there is a scandal, if it goes to committee, the Liberals filibuster and withhold documents. I wonder if my colleague could comment on whether he thinks the same thing is likely to happen if this ends up at PROC.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. It certainly is a concern. That is why I mentioned in my presentation that all of the information should be turned over to the RCMP. We know that if the Liberals get it into committee, they will try to squelch, or maybe squander, the information that would be there for the public to see. Some of the information has already been heavily redacted. They could quite easily put it in the committee and then adjourn it, which would end the whole charade. They would want that.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said to just hand over the documents to the RCMP. I do not know if he is aware, but the RCMP has written to the law clerk of the House of Commons to say that it is very unlikely the RCMP would use the documents if they came through this process. We all know the RCMP can get access to any documents and has a legal process for doing so. Also, the Auditor General has written that this is highly irregular and has said that the RCMP has a legal process to get what it wants.

Why is the member asking to do what the RCMP suggests not to do?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, RCMP members are already looking at this situation, and all we want is for them to have the full information to work with. They have already asked for it. There has been a House ruling that it should go there. I do not understand why the Liberals keep filibustering, making up things that are irrelevant and providing cover for their cover-up.

We are also in a situation right now where the Prime Minister has been asked to provide the names of the people who are involved in this whole area. The Leader of the Opposition is quite willing to

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take a briefing. He would take the same kind of briefing the Washington Post got on classified information, given by the national security and intelligence adviser and the deputy minister of foreign affairs. He would take the same briefing given to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills under section 12.1 of the CSIS Act, “Measures to reduce threats to the security of Canada”. He would take the same classified briefing the Prime Minister has been all too willing to give to the House when it suits him, such as when he revealed classified information on the floor of the House of Commons a year ago.

Instead of wasting time and playing politics for foreign interference, the Prime Minister should just release the names.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for Brandon—Souris for his excellent speech.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the fact that the member is one of the most experienced members of Parliament in the House. As a parliamentarian, he was first elected in 2013, but before that he served on the provincial legislature. He was first elected there in 1999, so this year we commemorate his 25th anniversary of being in service to the people of Canada. I thank him so much for his experience and his service to Canadians.

Based on his great parliamentarian experience, could the member tell us if he has ever seen a more corrupt government than the one we have today?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague also has a great plethora of history in politics and recording the events that have taken place in this nation, so I thank him very much. Coming from him, those compliments mean a lot to me. It has been an honour to serve this country.

I have never seen anything like this in my life. I referred to that earlier in debates when I was asking questions. One of our colleagues last night talked about the \$16 glass of orange juice from many years ago, when that individual was basically forced out of Parliament. Then we went through the ad scam situation for 40 million dollars' worth of scandal, and this is \$400 million. To put everything into perspective, at a time when Canadians are struggling with gas and groceries and heating their homes, we have a \$400-million scandal going on. This is something the government tried to cover up in the SDTC operations.

I have never seen anything this bad in Canadian history.

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• (1020)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my constituents have a proud motto, “Je me souviens”, or “I remember”. I would like to remind members of some historical facts about the Conservative Party, and especially what our colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent just mentioned, which also highlights the 25 years of service of our colleague from Brandon—Souris.

Members will recall that there certainly was corruption when the Conservative Party was in power. Former Conservative minister Tony Clement misappropriated funds, and not just \$10 million, \$20 million, \$30 million or \$40 million. He misappropriated \$50 million, funnelling it directly to his riding. Members will also recall the corruption scandal involving robocalls. A member of the Conservative Party served nine months in prison for giving false information.

Therefore, I would like my colleague to explain why Quebecers should trust a Conservative government, which has betrayed people's trust in the past.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I think Quebec has done very well being a member of Confederation. Under former Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, the Conservatives did an excellent job of bringing Canadians together instead of separating us. It was a great time in Canadian history, when free trade benefited Quebec as much as it did anywhere else in Canada. I spent a couple of hours last evening with an old friend of mine, Lance Yohe, who was the executive director of the Red River Basin Commission for years and is now a member of the International Joint Commission. These are the kinds of relationships that we need to build. We do not need separation.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see a packed House here this morning to listen to me speak. I am really excited about that. I am always honoured to speak in front of my colleagues, so it is great to be here this morning. Unfortunately, it is such a sad occasion, with what we are talking about. I would love to be talking about housing. I would love to be talking about crime, for sure.

In fact, in my riding of Prince Albert yesterday, there was an emergency notice. Somebody was shot while someone was stealing his truck. My thoughts go out to his family. These are serious events and serious things that we should be talking about, and we could be talking about them, if the Liberals would only provide the evidence as the Speaker has instructed them to do.

I got elected in 2008. I remember back in 2008, my colleague LaVar Payne, the member for Medicine Hat, had a heckle. His heckle was really simple: “Where is the \$40 million?” During question period, the Liberals would try to say something distinguishable and he would just say, “Where is the \$40 million?” Then the Liberals would shrink down in their seats and shrug away. They could not answer his question.

He did that for a year and a half or two years. We never did find out where that \$40 million went to and how the Liberals took that

money and used it for their own personal benefit. That was never really ever accounted for. That money just disappeared, and the Liberals shrugged their shoulders, and on we went. In the meantime, I think they went down to 12 seats, just marginal numbers.

Canadians were mad at the Liberal Party of Canada for what they had done. They kicked them out. They put in an honourable prime minister, former prime minister Stephen Harper. We saw our economy turn around. We saw strong management through a fiscal crisis in the global recession. We saw growth in our communities, even during the global recession. We saw lift stations. We saw water treatment plants. We saw bridges. We saw the Canada West Foundation, through which we built infrastructure in western Canada in the ports. We were actually growing as a country.

By 2015, we were experiencing that boom of growth because of that solid stewardship of the economy and the responsible use of taxpayers' dollars. I could do an announcement in my riding, and I would know that I would be able to touch what was going to be built. If we said we were going to spend \$20 million on a water treatment plant, like we did in Prince Albert, I could take members there to show them that water treatment plant and its benefits. When we did bridges, we could drive a car across the bridge once it was completed.

Those are the things Canadians want us to do. They want responsible use of their funds. If they are going to trust us with their money, then we have a duty to ensure that we handle it with respect and dignity, and that we take their trust seriously.

LaVar was asking about \$40 million. Roughly 18 years later, it is \$400 million. Why have the Liberals not learned their lesson? We would think they would have learned that that is a lot of money. They should not be taking that from taxpayers and abusing taxpayers' trust. That is what they have done with this \$400-million fund. It is disgusting because, like I said, we could be talking about or debating things like housing. How many kids are living in their parents' basement right now? Did we talk about that this week? No.

We could be talking about crime. We could be talking about what we need to do to get serious about repeat offenders. We could be talking about how to deal with auto thefts. We could be talking about how to put violent offenders behind bars to make sure they do not get out and repeat offend. We could be talking about what we can do to stop crime. We could be talking about addictions and mental health.

These are all things Canadians want us here to talk about at this time because these are things they are concerned about, but we are talking about the fact that the Liberals are snubbing Parliament. They are ignoring a direct order from the Speaker. The Speaker should be really upset, and I know he is upset because they are challenging his authority over this body by not providing those documents.

What do they do? They shrug. Their arrogance shows up. They just say, "We do not care about Parliament." That is obvious because they did not care about the \$400 million either. They just went and spent it as they wanted to spend it for their purposes, not for taxpayers' purposes. This resonates right through the whole government and how it conducts its business. It has never been about the people.

It has never been about how it can help the people in British Columbia or help the people in Quebec. It has never been about how it can help the people in Atlantic Canada, how it can get them more prosperity and raise their standard of living. Let us look at what has happened under the current government. Look at our GDP. Look at our standing in the G7. They are embarrassing.

We have known for years now that the port of Vancouver is one of the worst ports in the world. What has the government done? Has it invested in the port? Has it made changes? Has it looked at it and actually done a study to say these types of actions would make this port the best in the world? No.

• (1025)

They say that it is good enough and that we are okay being at the bottom of the list. That is fine. Canadians do not think that is fine. Canadians are upset about that.

Let us circle back to the \$400 million that was squandered. I would like to say stolen, but I do not think that is parliamentary, so I will call it squandered. Just think of what we could do with that \$400 million. How many police officers and how many RCMP officers could we put across Canada with \$400 million? If we think about that, it would be quite a few.

We can think about how we could improve trade with \$400 million or how we could make our infrastructure and supply chains more efficient with the proper investment of \$400 million. In fact, if we did that with the private sector, that \$400 million of investment could probably become \$1.2 billion of actual investment on the ground to help Canadians, improve Canadians' lives for the future and beyond, and address issues for their kids and their grandkids.

What did the Liberals do? They squandered it. They ignored any type of governance. They put themselves in direct conflict of interest. The Auditor General said that 186 direct conflicts of interest showed up in her study. We can think about it: 186 conflicts of interest.

These are professional people managing a big fund and they did not understand governance. I am sorry, but I do not buy that. How did they not understand conflict of interest? If they were not sure, there is a person called the Ethics Commissioner. They could phone them to receive all sorts of advice on conflict of interest. There are all sorts of people and that is what they do. They help boards to avoid situations such as this if there is a desire within that group to maintain purity in how they dispense that cash.

If they had done what they were supposed to do with it, we would probably be better off. Maybe that fund would have been a really good working fund. Maybe it would have had objectives that would have been met. However, they decided to ignore that. They

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ignored it willingly. In fact, their due diligence was lacking. If we were in the private sector, and we had shareholders, and they had seen this type of activity, I do not think they would get board of directors insurance, first of all. Second, I think the shareholders would sue them for neglect of the asset that they owned shares in.

What did the government do? It probably gave them a bonus because they like doing that with other executives, such as those at the CBC. We give them bonuses when they do not meet their objectives, but that is fine. We will just give them money. That is good. It is all good. There is no problem, right? There is no problem. It is not my dollar. However, that is the problem. It is not my dollar. They need to understand that it is not their dollar. It is the taxpayers' dollar. It is given to us in trust to make good decisions with.

Again, to come back to that \$400 million, what could I do with that? That is a huge amount of money. That is crazy. It is actually so big that Canadians cannot get their heads around it. It is also a little bit surprising because they cannot believe that anybody would be that arrogant to try to get away with this. They cannot believe that the government would be willing to back and protect these people by not providing the evidence and not letting the RCMP do its job.

What is the arrogance in that scenario? What are the Liberals saying to Canadian taxpayers? They are saying to not worry, that it is fine, to look the other way. Do not worry about it. It is fine. It is good that our kid lives with us in the basement. It is better for our family. It is all good. Seriously, this is what the Liberals are thinking.

When these people were sitting around the table looking at projects, there were probably some really good projects that they could have funded, but because it did not belong to a Liberal or it did not belong to one of their own companies or a friend of theirs, it got ignored. It is shameful. It is darn right shameful. It is darn right maddening because, if we were doing our job right, if we had put a group together to manage a fund like this and it had done its job, it could have really done some amazing things because that is a lot of money, but it did not.

We are now here today. Instead of talking about housing, crime or what we could do to fix the budget, balance the budget and bring our house in order, what are we doing? We are talking about the NDP-Liberals' inability or unwillingness to listen to the Speaker and take his orders seriously to provide the documents to the RCMP. I cannot believe this. I cannot believe that they have let this go on. This is very simple to fix.

Do members know that Paul Martin, during the ad scam, at least brought together a group that addressed it? It was not pretty for him. It was probably very uncomfortable.

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• (1030)

I will give him credit. At least he did the honourable thing and tried to address it. They changed financier and they brought in Ralph Goodale. He was trying to get to the bottom of it too. I give him credit for trying.

The Liberals are not even trying. They do not want to try. They want to play conquer and divide. They want to shine a light over here and say there is nothing to look at, so move on. That is so sad because Canadians have had enough of that type of activity here in Ottawa. That is why the Conservative Party is sitting at 42% in the polls. It is because Conservatives are talking to people. We are listening.

Canadians are saying they want the Conservatives to deal with the housing crisis. They want us to deal with crime. They want us to make sure their taxes are being spent properly. They want us to make sure they have proper health care and proper funding of health care. How many MRI scanners could we buy with \$400 million? How many hospital beds could have been opened up with \$400 million? What other benefits could we have provided Canadians with for \$400 million? Again, if we use our imagination, it could help a substantial amount of people.

I go back to Mr. Payne. I am sure he is sitting somewhere shaking his head and saying, "A Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal." I still remember coming here with a former MLA from Alberta before I was elected. We were with the wheat growers and the barley growers. He sat down with the parliamentary secretary of agriculture, who is the former member for Malpeque, Mr. Easter, who I think is a fairly honourable person. I enjoyed working with him, and I wish him well in his retirement.

I remember Mr. Strankman saying to Mr. Easter, as they were finishing up their meeting and shaking hands, "Wayne, it is getting really tough to see the difference between a Liberal and a criminal here in Ottawa." I know Mr. Easter took it to heart. I know he was upset, rightly so, but I do not think he was mad at Mr. Strankman. I think Mr. Easter was mad at his own party. I think he was mad at the people who were pulling off this crap. I think he knew what was going on, or had suspicions of what was going on, and could not fix it himself. He wanted to see change, but he was handcuffed because he could not do it. He knew it was going to hurt him. He knew it was going to hurt him both electorally and reputation-wise. He was not mad at the comment. He was mad that people were actually telling him what he already knew.

There should be Liberal members over there saying the same thing. They should be mad. Maybe 24 Liberal members are mad. Maybe that is part of the reason they want a different leader. They are looking at this and saying not another one. When they go to caucus and want to ask questions, they are told they did not make the list this week. When they ask about the next week, they are told they are probably not going to make the list next week either. Can a member ask a question about bubble gum? Sure, they can put that on the list. They can come up to the mike and the Liberal caucus will talk about bubble gum.

That is what is going on and that is why we see discontent among the Liberal Party. Its members are being ignored. I believe there are some hon. members over there who would actually like to

see this dealt with and would like to get to the bottom of this. However, the leadership team is so heavily involved with it and the friends of the leadership team may end up going to jail if it was investigated. I think we should give them the evidence to see what the court would decide. That would be the honourable way of doing it. If the court says, "No, these people are innocent," I guess we will have to accept that. However, the court might come back and say, "Yes, this is corruption. This is illegal." There are consequences to that. That is what should happen then. It is really sad that the voice is not being heard.

The Conservatives have been giving everybody the opportunity to do the right thing here. We have been talking to people here. We have been trying to be progressive and conciliatory, but we cannot forsake our values. We cannot let corruption go on. We cannot sit here and not call it out when we see it so blatantly. We cannot let the Prime Minister, who has had unethical breaches over and over again, get away with another one, nor can we let him throw somebody else under a bus, like he has done in the past with different cabinet ministers. The ministers tend to be female, by the way, which is very disconcerting.

I will go back to Saskatchewan, as I talked a bit about what happened yesterday. People are sitting there. They have been told to stay home. They were told to lock up and to not pick up strangers. Those are scary things and they are happening way too often. People are upset. We should be talking about that today. We should be talking about how to prevent that from happening in the future.

• (1035)

It is really interesting, and interesting may not be the right word, that this has been going on as long as it has. As far as I am concerned, it will continue to go on until the Liberals do the right thing. They know what the right thing is. They have to provide the documents. They have to respect your judgment. If they are not going to respect your judgment now, what happens tomorrow? If you make a judgment tomorrow and they do not respect you tomorrow or the day after, what does that mean? When does Parliament cease to function? When does Parliament actually not operate the way it is intended to operate? That is what is starting to be at stake here.

We are no longer a Parliament that actually debates back and forth. We go to committees and have debates back and forth, bring in experts and witnesses, listen to their advice, produce a proper report, table it in Parliament and get a response from the government. Parliament has not been doing that now for about three weeks. It is embarrassing. The Liberals need to do the right thing so that Parliament can get back on track to do what it needs to do. There are still things that need to be done. If they cannot do that and if they think this is okay, it is not.

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They have one other option that would be honourable, and that is to go to the polls, to go to the Governor General, dissolve Parliament and have a carbon tax election. That is an option that they should strongly consider. If they think that they are so right, if they think their actions are so honourable and that Canadians do not care, then let us put it to Canadians. Let us ask them directly through a vote. That is really the ultimate in democracy. I think Canadians would be very concerned if Parliament was sliding back and not functioning. The honourable thing for the Prime Minister would be to go to the Governor General, dissolve Parliament, call an election and let the people decide. That is something that would be an end to all the stories.

The Liberals have some options. They can take the documents, go to the RCMP, give it the boxes, step back and let it do its work. If there are criminal charges, let them progress. If it goes to court, let the courts do what they do. If they are found innocent, they are found innocent. I do not think they will be, but I am not going to prejudge it. If they are found guilty, then there are consequences to be paid. That is one option.

The second option is to dissolve Parliament, go to the Governor General, put it in front of the people of Canada and let them decide. They can tell the Liberal Party and the members here what they think should happen. The people of Canada can speak, and they are the best spokesmen and the best judges that we have for our Parliament in a democracy. Let us go to them. Let us put it in front of them, even though they will not see all of the information, because the Liberals will still hide it, but at least they would look at the consequences and the things that are surrounding the decision that has been made here. They would look at the way Parliament is not functioning and they would make the changes they see fit, but they would make the changes so that Parliament operates again, so that it gets back to talking about housing, crime, affordability and the things they really are struggling with. We could talk about the cost of groceries and the cost of basic necessities. Those are the things that they want us to be talking about today.

Canadians are ashamed of this Parliament. They are ashamed of the government. There is no question about it. It is showing in the polls. They are ashamed of the antics the government has been playing here in Ottawa. They want change and they are going to get change. They are going to get a new prime minister. I strongly believe that. They are going to get an honourable person for a prime minister, somebody who will make changes, who will respect their tax dollars, who will actually look them in the eye and tell them what needs to be done and make the appropriate changes for their benefit. That is what we are going to see out of a new government.

I will go back to my friend LaVar Payne and tell him today that there is hope. Just like there was in 2006, when we changed government then, there is hope coming here now. There is going to be a change in government. We are going to see honour brought back to the system. We are going to see respect for taxpayer dollars. We are going to see a government focused on individuals and Canadians.

This has been an interesting morning. I wish we were talking about everything else but this. I am glad I had a chance to voice my opinion.

• (1040)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member stated that he knows the negative impact of other important business being stalled in this House.

Conservatives are harming kids. Their inability to get anything done means that the online harms bill cannot get to committee, so it could be improved to protect children. Last week, Amanda Todd's mother came to my office to ask me to ask the Conservatives to stop any delays and to put the lives of kids first.

Will the Conservatives stop deprioritizing kids and let this go to committee?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, the member has made my argument for me. We are not the government. We are not the ones holding back the documents. We are not the people sitting here saying that we do not want to proceed.

We are not the ones who are ignoring the Speaker's ruling. It is the government. That is the reality. To Amanda Todd and her mother, I feel their pain. I want to see that move forward. If we could do that today, it would be great.

The hurdle is not the Conservative Party, though. It is the government that is not willing to actually do the right thing, the honourable thing and turn the documents over, like the Speaker has instructed them to do. Then Parliament could get back to work and the question of privilege could end.

We have to fight for our Constitution. We have to fight for our democracy. We have to fight for this place. It is a shame that she has to be the one paying for it. However, it is not a Conservative issue stopping this. It is right across the aisle with the Liberal Party of Canada.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to read something from the RCMP. This is from the commissioner. He says:

It is therefore highly unlikely that any information obtained by the RCMP under the Motion where privacy interests exist could be used to support a criminal prosecution or further a criminal investigation.

What we have is an issue of what and how. On what, I agree entirely with the member. Let us find out what happened. Let us exonerate or convict. However, how they are proposing to go about doing it could even compromise, beyond redemption, a proper RCMP investigation into this incident.

Why do the Conservatives not trust the RCMP to know how to do its job, rather than trying to impose something on it that could actually ruin the outcome that the member looking for?

• (1045)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, what the member is reading is speculation by the RCMP, because it does not actually have the documents to say yes or no, or confirm whether this would or would not help them.

Privilege

The RCMP does not have it. It is not that it does not want it. The RCMP is speculating what may or may not be in there. If the government gave the documents to the RCMP and the RCMP went through them, it could make that decision. If the RCMP went through the documents and said, "This does not move forward. There is not enough here. It does not make sense," this would all be done.

The RCMP is speculating. The reality is, give them the documents. What harm is there? The RCMP could decide to move forward. If it moves forward with criminal charges, great. However, keeping the documents hidden does not only harm this institution of Parliament, because the government is ignoring the rule of Parliament and the order of the Speaker, but it also undermines the fact that this fund may have actually done some good work. Who knows?

Right now, the fund is under a cloud. The way it looks to me, with what the Auditor General has said, this fund has serious problems, and the people around it have some serious ethical issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is happening right now is really disturbing and makes me uneasy. As a parliamentarian, I have been feeling rather low for the past three weeks because Parliament has been paralyzed.

There are all kinds of problems outside this Parliament that, interestingly enough, my colleagues address in their speeches. They talk about crime, the housing crisis, the underfunding of health care and homelessness. There are all kinds of problems. My colleagues say that we should be talking about those issues. They tell us that Canadians want to talk about them, that Canadians are worried. Of course they are worried. However, for the past three weeks, the Conservatives have been preventing us from talking about these issues and doing our job.

As a parliamentarian, I feel I am being held hostage by the official opposition party, even though we are on the same page. The other opposition parties are ready to vote. Personally, I feel that my fundamental right to question the government and make Parliament work is being denied. I am not at all comfortable with that.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, the member has a right to be mad, but he is facing the wrong party with his anger. The party is across the aisle. What I find even more insulting is when members of one party in the House, the Bloc Québécois, say they are for sale if they get what they want. They will ignore the rule of the Speaker, the rule of law and all that because they are for sale; they will take whatever they can get and move forward. Is that not more embarrassing? In fact, how do they justify that to their electorate?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I ask the hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for a very passionate and reasonable take on the question of privilege that we have been debating for the last little while. I was shocked when I had the opportunity to speak to the motion last week. I wanted to understand what my constituents thought; ultimately, we are all here to represent Canadians right across this great nation.

I sent an email asking two simple questions: first, whether government should comply with your will, Mr. Speaker, and the will of the House to turn the documents over and, second, whether anybody who is found complicit in receiving these funds in an improper manner should have to pay them back. Within four hours, I had over 200 email replies. Within a day and a half, I had 400-and-some emails. Ninety-plus per cent of my constituents absolutely agree that the government should comply with the will of Parliament and that, if anybody is found guilty, they should return that money to Canadian taxpayers.

What is the member's opinion on this, and what has he heard from his own constituents in his great riding?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to acknowledge the great work the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound did in Afghanistan. He did an honourable thing there, and I think Canadians are better off because of what he accomplished. Even with all the challenges, that is something we should celebrate here in Parliament.

I think of the former member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Larry Miller. LaVar Payne would say, "Where is the \$40 million?" Larry Miller would also be up there saying, "Where is the \$40 million?" He was right there with them because he wanted to make sure there was accountability for taxpayer dollars in the House, and that would be the same response I would get from my riding.

If I asked the individuals in my riding, they would look at me and ask, "What is going on? Why is it not functioning?" When we explained to them that the government is refusing to hand over possible evidence, papers and documents to the RCMP, they would say, "Well, how can they do that? We have to be able to force it; we have to be able to do something." I would say, "No, if the other two parties are not willing to stand up with us, they can do whatever they want."

People are ashamed of the current Parliament, the government and the Prime Minister. Whenever he goes abroad, they cringe. Saskatchewan is an exporting province. We rely on markets all around the world, so when we hear that the Prime Minister is going somewhere else, we ask what it is going to cost us. That is usually what happens.

When it comes to this issue, there is no surprise. It is almost becoming expected from the current government. Is that not sad? I think it is.

• (1050)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is sad is when Conservatives stand up as we just saw and say things, in what I would suggest is a very sincere fashion, that are so misleading in every respect. I just do not believe virtually anything that he has said. That is what is so sad. The Conservative Party has made the decision to filibuster a motion that it supports and that everyone wants to vote on. The Conservatives continue to spread misinformation when, honest to God, it is the Conservative Party that is causing this filibuster. They should get off it, start supporting Canadians and stop supporting the Conservative Party agenda.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I am supporting you and your ruling. I am supporting Canadians. I am supporting accountability and transparency. The Liberal Party is not supporting anybody. The Liberals are the ones who should be embarrassed—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising. I hope he is making a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, your instruction to the House was that this matter be sent to the procedure and House affairs committee. Is that not true?

The Speaker: The Speaker will not be responding to questions and, indeed, that sounds like a matter of debate.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, again, this is another example of disrespect for the Speaker. The member knows the rules. He probably has more speeches in the House than any member in Canadian history. The fact that he just did what he did shows us the contempt he has for the Speaker and Parliament. It is embarrassing. He says we are misleading people. He has been misleading people since 2015, and it shows. People are tired of it, and they are going to vote him out. They are going to have an honourable prime minister, and we are going to be happy on that day.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and speak in the House, but I am disappointed that we are on week three of speaking about parliamentary privilege.

Those who are watching at home want to know why we are here and how we got here. It all started with Sustainable Development Technology Canada. This is a fund that was designed to support initiatives for green technology, emissions reduction and things like that. The fund started in 2001, and under Liberal and Conservative governments, it went along just fine until this corrupt bunch of Liberals got involved.

Cabinet ministers decided to give a billion dollars to the fund. They picked their friends to be on the committee to decide who was going to get the money, and the friends gave the money to their own businesses. The Auditor General found 186 conflicts of interest; 80% of the projects had conflicts of interest, and there was a whistle-blower within the Sustainable Development Technology Canada department who said that there was criminal activity involved.

Privilege

As such, as parliamentarians, we wanted to look into the matter. The documents related to this fund were requested in June, but the government, the Liberals, did what they normally do: They delayed. Then, when they sent the documents, they blacked out all the useful parts. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle stood up on a question of privilege because it is our right, as parliamentarians, to get whatever documents we need to do our good work. The Speaker absolutely correctly ruled that, yes, this was a violation of our privilege, and he ordered the Liberals to deliver the unredacted documents so that we can turn them over to the RCMP.

We have been waiting for three weeks and debating this matter of privilege every day. No documents have been delivered. That is why we are here.

I am going to spend my time today talking and pushing back against the Liberals' very weak arguments about why they cannot bring the documents forward. I will start with one of the myths they are spreading. They say that they cannot produce the papers, because giving them to the RCMP would violate the charter rights of Canadians. This is not true at all. The police and the RCMP get tips all the time: They get tips from Crime Stoppers, as well as phone calls and documents alleging criminal activity.

The law says that the RCMP must do due diligence by looking at the evidence presented. If they find evidence of criminality, then they have to go to the court and order those documents through the court in order for them to be used at a trial. That is the law, so it is ridiculous to suggest that the government cannot produce the papers for that reason.

The other thing I would say is that it is very hypocritical of the Liberals to say that they are concerned about the charter rights of Canadians. They have violated nearly every charter right. They are what their record says they are, so let us look at their record.

First, let us start with freedom of expression. There is Bill C-11, the censorship bill, by which the government-appointed CRTC can take down an individual's content if it finds the content objectionable. Let us also talk about Bill C-63, which is the online harms bill. It would put someone in jail for life if the government thought that person might commit a hate crime in the future. That is utterly chill on freedom of expression.

Let us talk about freedom of religion. There are people crying “death to Jews” from coast to coast to coast. The government has done nothing to stem the flow of vandalism and harassment that is happening at synagogues and at Jewish businesses in our country. The Hindus are being persecuted by the Khalistanis; again, the government has done nothing. There are 112 Christian churches that have burned. The government has said nothing. Therefore, there is no protection for freedom of religion from the Liberal government.

Statements by Members

● (1055)

If we want to go down the list of other freedoms, let us talk about mobility rights. Every Canadian has the right to freely enter and leave Canada. That is in the Charter of Rights. However, during the pandemic, Liberals trapped four million people in the country for over two years, even after it was medically proven that people who were vaccinated could get and transmit COVID in the same way as the unvaccinated. Therefore, 90% of vaccinated people were allowed to go wherever they wanted, to leave and enter Canada. However, 10% of people, who were not a higher risk, were trapped in the country. This separated them from their families and caused a lot of trauma.

Then we get to the Emergencies Act, which was ruled by the courts to be illegal. I am not sure why there were no consequences for that. If I were convicted of something, I could appeal, but I would have to appeal from prison; therefore, I am not sure why there has been no action on that. However, Liberals froze people's bank accounts. That is unlawful search and seizure, so they violated another charter right.

When it comes to freedom from discrimination, people are not supposed to discriminate against anybody based on race, religion, age, etc., but we have seen that the Liberals do. The Canada summer jobs program discriminated against people of faith who would not sign the attestation. Moreover, the Liberals discriminated based on age when they decided to give an increase in OAS to people over 75, but not those between 65 and 74.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

*[English]***WORLD POLIO DAY**

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, World Polio Day reminds us that polio is still a threat for too many people in this world, but thanks to champions like Rotary International, we remain close to our goal of eradicating polio through immunization. Polio vaccinations have reached over 2.5 billion children, bringing hope and health to countless families.

At the recent Rotary International conference in Toronto, our government announced \$151 million to support the global polio eradication initiative, funding that will vaccinate over 370 million children annually and prevent 600,000 cases of paralysis and death.

While we celebrate a 99.9% success rate, the final 0.1% remains our toughest challenge. Polio is still endemic in some countries and outbreaks threaten us, particularly in regions affected by war. The continued circulation of polio in this world highlights a crucial truth: Peace is essential for health.

As we observe World Polio Day, let us renew our shared commitment to ensure that no child lives in fear of this disease.

*[Translation]***ANNIVERSARY WISHES**

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Arche le Printemps in Saint-Malachie on its 50th anniversary and the Service d'Entraide in Pintendre on its 35th anniversary.

For five decades, Arche le Printemps has been providing an inclusive and fulfilling environment to persons with intellectual disabilities, while promoting friendship and respect. For its part, Service d'Entraide in Pintendre has been playing an essential role in our community for 35 years, offering support, comfort and community to those who need it.

These anniversaries are an opportunity to pay tribute to the employees, volunteers and partners who have contributed to making these organizations pillars of our community. Thanks to their commitment and dedication, Arche le Printemps and Service d'Entraide in Pintendre continue to enrich the lives of so many families and offer so much hope.

May they continue their mission with the same passion for many years to come. I congratulate them on everything they have accomplished and I thank them for their invaluable impact on the residents.

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MARIE-LÉONIE PARADIS

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Sunday, October 20, 2024, was a day of great joy and gratitude. Thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square in Rome for the canonization of Sister Marie-Léonie Paradis. The ceremony was conducted by Pope Francis I.

By officially declaring Sister Marie-Léonie Paradis a saint, the Church recognized her inspiring simplicity and service to others. Born in Montérégie, Sister Marie-Léonie founded the congregation of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family and settled in Sherbrooke. The congregation, which is still present in Sherbrooke, continues to embody the values that are so dear to their founder. Spending a little time with the Little Sisters of the Holy Family shows us how committed and devoted these women are.

Saint Marie-Léonie's legacy reminds us of the power of humility and kindness in building peace. May she be an inspiration to us all.

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*[English]***FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES**

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's welcoming francophone communities initiative recognizes communities outside Quebec that are going above and beyond to help French-speaking newcomers settle and to build their new life in Canada.

My community of Nanaimo on central Vancouver Island has been recognized as one of two welcoming Francophone communities in the province of British Columbia, thanks to the ongoing hard work and dedication of L'Association des Francophones de Nanaimo.

[Translation]

I am so proud to be the MP who represents this friendly community, where all are welcome and where we all work together to build an even stronger and more inclusive future.

I want to thank the members of the Nanaimo Francophone Association for their dedication, passion and profound contribution to making Nanaimo even more welcoming and diverse.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would just like to check with the official opposition on whether I can speak in French without being told to “speak English”.

Yesterday, in the House, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement was told by the Conservative member for Brantford—Brant to answer in English. I would like to point out that the member's riding includes 4,000 Franco-Ontarians. Barely a year ago, the Minister of Canadian Heritage was told to answer in English by the Conservative member for Lethbridge.

As the years go by, more Conservative members are telling us to answer in English. It is a refrain they use more often than their slogans. It seems that the “speak white” culture is alive and well in the Conservative Party. So far, neither the Conservative Party leader nor the francophone members of the Conservative Party have spoken out against it.

On this side of the House, we will always defend the official languages. Will francophone Conservative members finally muster the courage to call out their colleague or will they just sit back in silence to keep the peace with every Tom, Dick and Harry in the Conservative leader's office?

* * *

• (1105)

[English]

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as colleagues know, I sponsored a private member's bill to make December Christian heritage month. Christians make up over half the population of Canada. Many other major religions have a heritage month, and this helps us to understand the different faiths and their practices and to promote tolerance in our land of religious freedom.

Many people across our nation have been inspired to approach their mayor and council to proclaim December as Christian heritage month. Eighteen cities and areas have proclaimed it so far. My thanks go to Rideau Lakes, Saskatoon, Brampton, Whistler,

Statements by Members

Welland, Ajax, Clarington, Pickering, Durham, Wainfleet, Caledon, Aurora, Milton, Prince George and Orillia.

If someone would like to have their area make this proclamation, my office is happy to help. Together we can proclaim Christian heritage month across the nation.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, we have discovered that several countries, including China, Iran, Russia and India have been engaging in foreign interference in Canada. The Justice Hogue inquiry has made it clear that every member of the House has a responsibility to combat foreign interference. It is time for all political party leaders to put country before party and be vigilant in protecting democracy and the values we hold dear.

However, the leader of the Conservative Party is deliberately choosing to stay in the dark and is refusing to take the necessary security briefing. It is high time for him to step up, so let me put this in simple terms he will understand: Get the clearance, get the briefing and protect the country.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker. Over the last few weeks, my constituents have been asking me why the Leader of the Opposition will not get a security clearance. That is a really legitimate question. I do want to give the Leader of the Opposition the benefit of the doubt, but he is just running out of excuses.

I thought I would look at what the national security experts are saying, because they are the best people to know what should happen in this case. Ward Elcock, who is a former CSIS director, made it really clear that having a chief of staff with clearance is just not enough. Similarly, Richard Fadden, another former CSIS director, also said that being a former privy councillor does not give someone access to classified information.

In order for us to protect the national security interests of the country and in order for the Leader of the Opposition to know what is happening in his own party, it is important that he get the clearance, take the briefing and protect the country. It is that simple.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, across northern Ontario, our health care system is in crisis. Many people are without a family doctor. Emergency rooms have been forced to close, and the great health care professionals we do have are burnt out from working overtime to try to fill labour gaps. This has been caused in part by Canada's red tape and barriers to entry for health care workers.

Statements by Members

Currently, fewer than half of foreign-trained doctors and nurses are working in their profession, meaning there are 50,000 health care professionals who could be working in our hospitals but are unable to do so. That is why common-sense Conservatives will bring in a blue seal national testing standard. This will ensure foreign-trained professionals can work in their field and take their skills wherever they are needed across the country. It will include a 60-day standard so people applying for certification can take a test and receive an answer in a timely fashion.

Our health care system is in need of support. Only Conservatives will remove the red tape and the barriers so we can bring home doctors and nurses.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, leaders from the Green Party, the NDP, the Liberal Party and the Bloc Québécois have all received a top-level security clearance recently, and that is because they take all the attacks on our democracy by foreign interference seriously. However, the leader of the Conservative Party does not. Despite CSIS, the RCMP and the entire security and intelligence apparatus insisting that it is essential for all leaders to get cleared, the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, who has been a member for over 20 years, refuses. The Canadian national security experts who have urged him to get briefed have said that the Conservative leader is playing with Canadians.

The member for Carleton is unserious, reckless, arrogant and unfit to lead Canada. There is a paragraph in the NSICOP report on foreign interference that describes India's alleged interference in Conservative Party of Canada leadership races, so perhaps that explains it. His disdain for science and expertise, his contempt for the media, his appreciation for conspiracy theories and his refusal to get briefed are all emblematic of far-right populist threats that we see from Trump's Republican Party.

He should get the clearance, take the briefing and protect the country, but he will not because he does not care about Canada. He is in politics only for himself.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

● (1110)

The Speaker: Once again I am going to remind all members not to take the floor now. I remind the member for Calgary Signal Hill to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George has the floor.

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OPIOIDS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government's safe supply experiment has destroyed the very communities it claims to help. This week we heard heartbreaking testimony from Masha Krupp, an Ottawa mother who lost her daughter to overdose and whose son is now addicted to government-funded hydromorphone. She revealed that she has personally witnessed so-called safe supply pills being resold right outside the clinic, at times even to teenagers.

The government continues to deny that taxpayer-funded hard drugs are being diverted to children, but now we are hearing reports from Montreal saying that children as young as 11 are getting hooked on diverted drugs from so-called safe supply clinics. Experts are saying that Quebec may become the new British Columbia, where overdose is a leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 18.

Only a common-sense Conservative government will ban taxpayer-funded drug handouts, invest in treatment, invest in recovery and bring our loved ones home.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The Speaker ruled that the NDP-Liberals violated a House order to turn over evidence to the police for a criminal investigation on their latest \$400 million scandal. The NDP-Liberals' refusal to respect the ruling has paralyzed Parliament and pushed aside our work to address doubling of housing costs, food inflation and crime and chaos.

The Auditor General's investigation found that the Liberals' appointees to SDTC gave nearly \$400 million to their own companies, with over 186 conflicts of interest, at a time when Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat their home and house themselves. Responsible government is accountable to the people of Canada; we work for the people of Canada. This is a fundamental pillar of our parliamentary system.

When will the NDP-Liberals end the cover-up and turn over the documents to the police so Parliament can get back to working for Canadians?

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition clearly never tires of telling everyone he can that he wants to be Prime Minister of this country. What is crucial to being a prime minister, first and foremost, is ensuring the country's safety. One of the ways to ensure the country's safety is to have access to vital information ensured through a top security clearance. To get a top security clearance, one has to do background checks. Security agencies carry out background checks on one's family history, credit history and criminal background as well.

Statements by Members

The Leader of the Opposition does not want to do this, and he has never been clear why. He has given many excuses, all of which have been absolutely debunked by security experts. The former head of CSIS, for example, has come out and made very clear that there is no reason for that. I point to Ward Elcock, for example, and others, including former national security advisers to Conservative and Liberal prime ministers, like Dick Fadden.

The Leader of the Opposition is not clear on this at all. What is he holding back? What is he hiding?

* * *

INDIGENOUS DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, November is Indigenous Disability Awareness Month. Indigenous peoples have rates of disability three times higher than the average Canadian, and more often without the supports needed. I raise my hands to Indigenous Disability Canada and British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, which continue to ask Parliament to raise the profile of indigenous persons with disabilities and correct the discrimination.

In 2017, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Canada officially proclaim and recognize IDAM each year. It is time for the government to do that. November should be the time that Canada officially recognizes and appreciates the achievements of indigenous peoples with disabilities, highlighting the valuable contribution they bring to community. This year is the year the government can take action and proclaim November as Indigenous Disability Awareness Month.

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● (1115)

[Translation]

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST-VINCENT-DE-PAUL CONFERENCE IN MONT-LAURIER

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to highlight the 70th anniversary of the St-Vincent-de-Paul Conference in Mont-Laurier.

This flagship organization has played a crucial role in the community for decades, running a second-hand store where clothing, furniture and household items are offered at a lower cost. It also has a community hall that it makes available to seniors and social groups. On top of that, it provides people in need with food vouchers that can be exchanged for food, a program worth a total of \$80,000 a year. This community-based organization hosts weekly dinners and soup kitchens. These full meals help many people overcome their isolation.

I am grateful to the team of volunteers who work so hard to help maintain the social fabric of our community. I thank Claude Ménard and Monique Venne for their 50 years of volunteer work.

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for the Prime Minister. This week, members of his own caucus had the courage to stand up and tell the truth. Canadians cannot afford a single day more of these NDP-Liberals. My constituents write to me every day in disbelief at the state of Canada after nine years. Parliament is paralyzed. New scandals arise every day. Canadians are paying more for everything.

Instead of listening to the brave core 24, the Prime Minister refuses to check his ego, tells Canadians not to believe their own eyes and will continue his ideological path to quadruple the carbon tax, raising the cost of gas, groceries and heating. As winter creeps in, Alberta families will be forced to choose between heat and freezing.

Will the Prime Minister stop treating Canadians like garbage and call a carbon tax election, or do the Liberals want the west to freeze in the dark?

* * *

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the RCMP revealed that agents of the Indian government committed serious crimes on Canadian soil, including murder, extortion and foreign interference in our democratic process. At a time when the members of the House should be united against these appalling crimes, the Conservative leader's decision to prioritize his campaign over national security sends a message to Canadians that he will not protect them and tells the rest of the world that under a Conservative government, there will not be any consequences for foreign interference.

People are rightly concerned. The NSICOP report earlier this year also alleged that India interfered in a Conservative Party leadership race. The Conservative leader would rather let his party be a target of foreign interference than get his security clearance. That does not add up. It certainly lacks the common sense he is so proud of.

Why will he not get his clearance? Canadians have a right to know what the Conservative leader is hiding.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 24 Liberal MPs are calling on the Prime Minister to step down for the same reasons that Canadians are calling for an election, namely, the cost of living, the long lineups at food banks, unaffordable housing and the debt, which has doubled.

The thing that escapes me is that those who should be supporting the Prime Minister are abandoning him while the Bloc Québécois continues to keep him in power. The Prime Minister has failed. He failed to live up to his responsibilities, including in immigration. Can he call an election now?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party sure does a lot of talking about the current problems in the country.

The member keeps talking about people's problems, but where is her plan? The first step is clear, but for the second step there is no plan.

That is what you get from the Conservative Party, a populist party, a right-wing party.

• (1120)

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this government, the country is in chaos. Things are so bad that two million Canadians are turning to food banks to put food on the table. Homelessness now affects ordinary Canadians, and 24 Liberal members no longer support the Prime Minister.

Right now, Parliament is paralyzed by the government's refusal to be transparent in yet another scandal. The Bloc Québécois, which supported the Liberal government 200 times, owes Quebecers an explanation.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to do the right thing and call an election?

That is the plan.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my hon. colleague. She is right. Canadians have been going through tough times, but where was she when we voted to support Canadian seniors? Where were she and her caucus when we cut taxes for Canadians? Where was she when we established a dental care plan for Canadians?

I know what this member and all of the Conservatives did. They voted against those measures. They voted against Canadians.

We are here for Canadians and for all Quebecers.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where were those 24 MPs? The cost of housing has risen, the number of visits to food banks has increased, more homeless camps have sprung up and are now sheltering students and grandmothers who are unable to pay rent or find a place

to live, and the debt has doubled. This is the disastrous Liberal record, all supported by the Bloc Québécois.

The latest blunder on the list is that the immigration system is once again rudderless due to the great Liberal penchant for improving.

One thing is certain: There will be an election. When are they going to call it?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what concerns me is the increasing number of Conservative caucus members who oppose abortion. We have heard it from Conservatives who are still in caucus and we have heard it from caucus members who are no longer there because they have values.

On this side, we will always fight for women's rights, like abortion.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, the cost of housing has doubled, our national debt has doubled and Canadians cannot afford to feed themselves or their families. Now we have learned there are 24 Liberal MPs who are looking for the Prime Minister to resign. After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for the Prime Minister, who cannot fix what he has broken in this country while he is dealing with his revolting caucus, so will he stand up today and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for years we have been hearing rumours about the Conservative Party of Canada's leader, and now it is out in the open: His party is full of people fighting to restrict the freedom of women.

The MP for Richmond—Arthabaska, a former Conservative member, acted with his conscience to stand up for women. Why will the other members of the Conservative caucus not do the same? In fact, what they are doing is fraternizing with the lobbyists who want to attack the rights of women across this country.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, did you hear that? It is the sound of desperation from a government that has broken absolutely everything in this country. It broke housing and it broke immigration. Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves after nine years of the failed NDP-Liberals. All Canadians want is to be able to afford a home and to be able to have a home in a good, safe neighbourhood, where they can retire comfortably. All they are asking to do is to be able to work hard in exchange for that privilege.

It was a promise we made to Canadians and the government broke it. Instead of fighting with his 24 members who want him to resign, why will the Prime Minister not stand up and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that we understand the challenges that families are experiencing in our communities, but those families are right to ask who is actually fighting for them. Seniors who have earned their pensions, not just with their premiums but with decades of hard work, bad backs and busted joints, are facing an opposition leader who has a history of gutting their pensions. The Conservative Party has members who voted against removing the interest on student loans. Families who receive the Canada child benefit should know there is not one Conservative member of Parliament who voted to support them with thousands of dollars every year.

There are two choices: a Liberal government that will stand up for families and a Conservative leader who will stand up for himself.

* * *

• (1125)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is great that the federal government is finally lowering its immigration levels, but the new ones still do not line up with integration capacity in Quebec. To meet the new target of 365,000 people in 2027 without losing political weight, Quebec would need to welcome more than 80,000 newcomers a year. Those who know the situation in Quebec best are the political parties in the Quebec National Assembly, and not one of them is proposing as much as 80,000 newcomers.

Will the federal government consult Quebec and the provinces and adjust its levels to align with integration capacity?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec has more power over its immigration system than all the other provinces and all the other territories in the country since it controls more than half of the immigration of temporary residents. We asked Quebec for its plan to reduce temporary immigration and we are still waiting for that plan.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the new thresholds also fail to address Quebec's biggest issue, namely, asylum seekers. There are 160,000 of them in Quebec alone, and we continue to take in more than our fair share. Quebecers cannot continue to house, care for, educate and teach French to so many new people just because the other provinces refuse to share the burden. It is the federal government's responsibility to create the conditions necessary to ensure that all the provinces contribute their fair share, and yet there has been no progress since the summer. Negotiations have come to a standstill.

When will the Liberals get their act together?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have always worked with the Province of Quebec. Immigration is necessary to grow our economy and strengthen our communities. Canadians want a strong, sustainable immigration system that allows Canada and all those who come here to succeed. That is exactly what we are doing with the announcement we made yesterday about the immigration levels

Oral Questions

plan. We are reducing the number of temporary and permanent residents in the short term to alleviate pressures on housing and infrastructure.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over five million Canadians are left stranded without the health care they need. This is bringing more people into our already overcrowded hospitals for issues that could have been caught earlier and treated earlier. Our health care continues to be in crisis under the Liberals, and the Conservatives want Canadians to pay to get the care they need so CEOs can increase their profits. People deserve quality health care without having to pull out their credit cards.

Why are the Liberals failing to fix our health care system and forcing people to scramble for the health care they need?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we will always stand up for a publicly funded health care system. That is why we are making unprecedented investment in our system, working with provinces and territories, with over \$200 billion over 10 years. We have never seen that kind of investment. That is not to mention investments in dental care and pharmacare.

These are the kinds of things we are doing to build a health care system postpandemic so that no Canadians are left behind and they have access to a good, publicly funded health care system.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals talk about abortion as a right but deny access to that right, Conservatives are actively voting for legislation to end safe, trauma-informed abortion care. We can just ask their former caucus members, who say anti-choice MPs are calling the shots.

Whether they need heart surgery, knee surgery or an abortion, people have a right to access public health care. Will the federal government protect access to abortion care by enforcing the Canada Health Act and save our public health care system?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning I woke up and read the most disturbing article. It was an interview with the former Conservative member of Parliament, the member of Parliament for Richmond—Arthabaska. He said he left the party in part because his conscience could not stand for the attack on women's rights and freedoms that embeds the inroads that anti-abortionists have made with the Conservative Party. What was so upsetting was not that he talked about that but that he also alleged the way they are trying to hide their real selves.

Will the Conservative leader stand up and stand firmly with the rights of women in this country?

Oral Questions

● (1130)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, time is up for the Prime Minister's endless chaos and failures. Let us use his own words on immigration from last year to prove it: "as our government is raising immigration levels to the highest levels they've ever been...people are like, 'Well, we already are facing challenges in housing. Where are we going to house these 500,000 people a year?'" Now, a year too late, the Prime Minister made an announcement that is an admission of a massive failure of his record after nine years.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his flip-flop has caused lasting damage to Canada's housing market, health care and jobs?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have answered that question already this week.

My question, and a question that Canadians from the queer community want to know, is, where was the member, who is a member of the queer community, when it came to the kids living on the street, 50% of whom are LGBT, because their straight parents kicked them out? Where was the member when Blaine Higgs went after trans kids in New Brunswick? Where was the member when Danielle Smith said that she was going to take the rights of trans kids away? Where was the member when Scott Moe was focusing on bathrooms in a Saskatchewan election?

He will not show up at Canadian pride events or when we talk about trans issues. He should be ashamed that he is not defending the queer community of Canada.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of who I am and proud of my integrity. The minister cannot even name the other Randy, so I am not going to take any lectures from him.

Here is what the Prime Minister said just last year about the immigration system: "There are a lot of pressures on our system. Increasing the immigration levels, interestingly, will take some of the pressure off of the system".

The Liberals have absolutely failed. They broke our immigration system. They have doubled housing costs. They did a massive flip-flop yesterday that they are embarrassed to even talk about.

After nine years, why can we not have a carbon tax election to boot the member and the government out of here?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, where is the member's voice and the voices of Conservatives when queer refugees are struggling to come to this country? They are nowhere to be found. Where is the member when he should stick up for trans kids when we have Canadian pride caucus meetings? He is nowhere to be found, nor is the MP for Thornhill.

They try to wrap themselves in the rainbow flag when it is convenient to get Conservative votes. They are simply not truthful with Canadians. They are not truthful with the queer community.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Do you hear the heckling, Mr. Speaker?

The Conservatives cannot handle it when we punch. They cannot handle it when we stick up for the queer community. They do not stick up for the 2SLGBTQ community. We do. We are Liberals. We are the government. We have kids' backs.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that it was the Liberals who fought tooth and nail for an extension of the Rainbow Railroad refugee program that was started under the former Harper Conservative government, and all the while, they allowed countless people in upstate New York to illegally cross the border. That is the record of the government's broken immigration system.

If the minister wants to talk about queer youth or any Canadian, the reality is that the government's inflationary crisis is what is putting people out on the streets.

The Liberals have broken Canada's immigration system. Will they allow for a carbon tax election to allow Conservatives to fix their mess?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigration is key to the economic growth of Canada. This country is full of incredible stories of immigrants, one of whom is speaking right now. They are of a country that has welcomed people from around the world.

The government has always taken a very responsible approach to immigration to make sure that Canada continues to grow. That is exactly the kind of responsible approach we are demonstrating. It was in the work we did to bring in immigrants to keep Canada moving forward during the pandemic, and it is in the work we are doing now to keep up with the pace of Canada's population growth, the housing we need and the infrastructure Canadians deserve.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is that a responsible approach to immigration?

The former immigration minister bragged about increasing international student permits from about 400,000 to 500,000 knowing that shady universities were abusing these students and that they were living under bridges in Toronto. That is the record of the government. The government, with the responsible approach the member talked about, also dropped security clearance certificates from its own background checks for temporary residents.

There is nothing responsible about the government. Will the Liberals allow for a carbon tax election so that Conservatives can fix Canada's broken immigration system?

• (1135)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always rich to hear from the Conservatives when they talk about fake colleges. I hope the member opposite is calling her premier, Danielle Smith, to make sure that fake colleges are not getting credentials. I hope the members from Ontario are calling Doug Ford to let him know that he should not be accrediting fake colleges.

On this side of the House, we will always make sure to take a responsible approach. Immigration is important for Canada, and we did so during the pandemic. Moving forward, we are making sure to make the necessary readjustments so the Canadian population and economy grow on a responsible path.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am reading the Prime Minister's immigration plan at the moment, the plan he submitted to the House yesterday. What is in this plan? Nothing, it is a blank page.

After nine years, the Prime Minister has not only broken the immigration system, he has forgotten his plan. The Prime Minister's regrets lack credibility, just like his hastily photocopied, off-the-cuff plan. Will the Prime Minister admit that he has pushed the immigration system to the breaking point, causing lasting damage to Canada's housing market, health care system and jobs?

The Speaker: Before asking the parliamentary secretary to answer, I must remind members that they are not to show documents held in their hands, which are then considered props.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new immigration levels plan is a transition plan that responds directly to our country's changing needs. That is what Canadians want and that is what they asked us to do. These reductions are needed to enhance our economic and social prosperity, while ensuring that newcomers are able to succeed.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what do you call someone who sets the house on fire and then calls the firefighters after they have watched it burn to the ground? Are they a hero or a pyromaniac?

That is exactly what the Prime Minister did, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, when it comes to immigration. He invited the whole world to come to Canada. He watched as the cost of housing and food doubled and then he expressed regrets when he saw the damage he had done. It is too little, too late, and it is not credible.

When will he call an election so that we can fix everything that he has broken?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after the pandemic, we had to increase our immigration levels to help our economy and businesses recover. Our postpandemic measures reflected what Canada needed at the

time. The new plan reflects what Canada needs today. By slowing down demographic growth in the short term, we will achieve growth and prosperity in the long term.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are appalled by the mistreatment and poor education at Bedford school. Obviously, more needs to be done for secularism in our schools.

However, while we want to do more, the federal government wants to do less. Even though it is clear that Bill 21 does not go far enough, Ottawa wants to challenge it. Bill 21 protects children's right to a secular public education. After what happened at Bedford school, does the government finally understand that to attack Bill 21 is to attack children's rights?

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.): Mr. Speaker, the first important thing to remind everyone, including anyone who may be listening, is that respecting children's dignity and safety is really everyone's concern and everyone's responsibility.

As far as jurisdiction over education is concerned, it is the Government of Quebec's responsibility.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what happened at Bedford school involved adults violating the principle of secularism in our schools and prioritizing their own will over the children's well-being. It is children, not adults, who are the priority in our schools.

Attacking Bill 21 is the opposite. Bill 21, specifically clause 4, protects the right of every individual to receive secular public services. It is Bill 21 that protects children's right to receive a secular public education.

Do the Liberals realize that that is what they are attacking?

• (1140)

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.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague opposite that school is a place where children should be able to learn, grow and develop their critical thinking skills. What is unacceptable is for children in Quebec to be treated the way they apparently were at Bedford school.

We also said that it is the Quebec government's jurisdiction and its responsibility to deal with this issue.

*Oral Questions**[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Prime Minister has destroyed our immigration system through his and his minister's incompetence. He cannot fix what he broke on immigration, housing or anything else because he is busy fighting his own caucus.

The Prime Minister is admitting his policies have been totally incompetent, stating immigration has “grown at a rate far beyond what Canada has been able to absorb.” Will the Prime Minister admit he is destroying Canada's immigration system and accept his own personal failure?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have answered that question already in the House several times.

The real question for me today is, how does the member feel about the anti-abortionists she sits with every single day in her caucus, with a leader who will not march in pride with the LGBTQ community, with a leader who will not stand up for the rights of the most vulnerable in this community and with a leader who attacks the most vulnerable people in this community on a daily basis? How does the member sleep at night?

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada had one of the most well-respected and functioning immigration systems in the world before the Liberal government. However, the current immigration minister has stated that the growing population impacting housing is where we have a “serious issue we need to address”. The former immigration minister, now housing minister, has stated the immigration system is “really disconcerting” and it is “a system that has gotten out of control.” This is an admission of his own incompetence.

Will the Prime Minister fire the former immigration minister, now housing minister, or, if not, will the housing minister resign in disgrace?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite need a reality check.

When the leader of the Conservative Party was part of the Conservative government, do members know what the Conservatives did on immigration? I was the critic when they froze the parents and grandparents program, and when that did not resolve the problem, they cancelled it, saying people could not sponsor their moms and dads to come here. When it came to overseas immigrants coming to Canada, the Conservatives hit the delete button, deleting hundreds of thousands of potential people being able to come to Canada because they could not deal with processing times.

They should not lecture us on broken immigration systems.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Prime Minister has destroyed our immigration system through his incompetence, and he is too busy fighting his own caucus and clinging to power to fix what he has broken. He has now admitted that his policies have failed, but he also took his former immigration minister and put him in charge of the housing crisis. Instead, why does the Prime Minister not simply fire the minister for his incompetence?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, what is shining through right now in this debate on immigration is the far-right Canadian Alliance-Reform Party roots of the Conservative Party of Canada.

Our government is proud of the fact that we have provided over 54,000 Afghan refugees with safe refuge here in Canada. Over 300,000 Ukrainians have come here following Putin's illegal war in Ukraine. When my family fled Soviet Hungary in the 1950s, Canada had its doors open to people who were arriving here to flee from violence and persecution. I really fear that under a Conservative government, with this far-right, xenophobic immigration concept, families like my mom's will be sent away.

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HOUSING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member speaks of some of our history. It is true that Canada had a 150-year consensus on immigration, but the government has destroyed it.

If the government and the Prime Minister were so sure of themselves, they would not have admitted they have failed. The same minister that was responsible for that has now been put in charge of housing, and that has not gone much better. Housing costs have doubled, and young Canadians have given up completely on their dream of home ownership.

Everywhere the minister goes, incompetence follows. When will the Prime Minister fire him?

● (1145)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always defend immigration and make sure that immigration remains an integral part of the Canadian success story. We will also always defend a woman's freedom and right to choose.

What I have not heard from any members on the Conservative benches is an affirmation that they will also defend a woman's right to choose. We know, after hearing from one of their former members, that they have been plotting. They are trying to hide the fact that they want to take away a woman's right to choose. That is unacceptable, and we will fight it every single day for all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, women and gender diverse individuals are fearful of a growing anti-choice movement that has been emboldened by Conservative MPs. While the Liberals have allowed access to abortion to be chipped away, the Conservative leader voted five times for legislation that would take away the right to choose.

Access to abortion is access to health care, so will the Liberals enforce the Canada Health Act to ensure everyone has access to full, safe, trauma-informed abortion care?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree that abortion is health care and that we should have equal access across the country.

What concerns me is the growing anti-abortion caucus on the Conservative side. We have heard evidence of this, and its power on the Conservative leader is growing. We have heard it from the member for Peace River—Westlock and the former Conservative from Richmond—Arthabaska. He was in a recent documentary. He said, “I left the Conservative Party for reasons of values and convictions” because there was “an increase in the number of pro-life MPs inside the [Conservative caucus].”

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SENIORS

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to enforce the Canada Health Act on abortion.

Canada's most vulnerable seniors are seeing hundreds of dollars less every year because the Liberals have created yet another GIS clawback. With grocery bills and rent soaring, every single dollar matters, especially for seniors. Clearly, the Liberals are taking their lead from the Conservatives, who cut pensions and increased the retirement age. Seniors deserve respect and dignity, but with the Liberals and the Conservatives, it is either lose or lose.

When will the Liberals end their cruel and callous clawbacks?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we have been there for seniors from the get-go.

The first thing we did was to reverse the Conservatives' increase in the retirement age from 65 to 67. We brought it back to 65. We enhanced the GIS, taking hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty. We have enhanced the CPP, while the Conservative leader questions its greatness. We are always going to be there for seniors, now and into the future.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP report links the Indian government to serious criminal activity in Canada, such as extortion, interference in the democratic process, spying, arson and homicide. This poses a real threat to our country. National security experts also say that one key

action political party leaders can take is to simply obtain their security clearance, yet the Leader of the Opposition refuses to do that.

Could the government explain why the Leader of the Opposition should join all other party leaders and get his security clearance?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the involvement of Indian government agents in targeting Canadians, particularly Sikh communities, is a grave violation of Canadian sovereignty. Foreign interference costs lives, and Canadians expect party leaders to be informed and seek the truth on matters as important as their safety and national security. It is absolutely shameful that the Conservative Party leader is the only party leader in the House who is refusing to get his security clearance, closing his eyes to foreign interference breaches within his own party.

What is he hiding? Who is he trying to protect? Why does he put his own political interests above the safety of Canadians?

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Crime is up in Toronto, with shootings up 45% and gun-related homicides up 62% since last year. While the Prime Minister celebrates on social media, police associations are condemning his failed handgun policy. The Toronto Police Association said, “Criminals did not get your message.”

Will the Prime Minister stop working against the police and reverse his failed crime wave policy?

● (1150)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is really concerning. All Canadians should be aware that what Conservatives are proposing to make our streets safer is to put more guns on the streets. We have banned handguns and assault weapons that were designed for the battlefield, and Conservatives want to make those guns legal again. We know that investing in crime prevention and in our border to prevent illegal guns from coming into our country, as well as banning handguns, are the solutions to make our communities safe.

Oral Questions

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the member responded on social media to similar claims, the Toronto Police Association said, “We are sharing data about gun violence in Toronto. These facts represent the work of our members and the lives of victims. Shame on anyone who suggests otherwise.”

After nine years, violent gun crime has doubled in Canada. In Calgary, it has quadrupled. That is the Liberal record.

Will the Prime Minister end his self-congratulatory rhetoric and start listening to the police to stop this deadly crime wave?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Conservatives like quotes, let me quote their record on the issue. When Conservatives were in power, they cut \$143 million from CBSA. That was 1,100 CBSA employees. What did the former president for public safety workers say at the time? He said, “more weapons, illegal drugs and child pornography will pass through our borders, not to mention terrorists and sexual predators and hardened criminals.” That is the Conservative record.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think what the member just illustrated is what has happened over these nine years under the NDP-Liberal government. Taxes are up, costs are up and violent crime continues to go up.

The Liberals’ gun ban does nothing to stop violent crime on our streets. In fact, violent gun crime is up 116% across Canada since the Liberal government took power. The Vancouver police association agrees. It stated, “Stopping legal sales won’t stop criminals from getting guns illegally. You’re only restricting law-abiding citizens while doing little to address actual crime and violence.”

When will the Liberals finally listen to police, stop attacking law-abiding gun owners and go after the violent criminals instead?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent 39 years of my life fighting gun violence in the city of Toronto, and one of the things I learned is that cops count. However, today, there are 700 fewer police officers in Toronto than when I was the chief. Those are the same police officers who fought guns and gangs, who gave evidence at bail hearings and who kept neighbourhoods safe.

Just like Stephen Harper, who cut a thousand RCMP jobs, successive Conservative mayors and premiers have frozen police budgets and police hiring. That is the price that we all pay for reckless Conservative cuts. If the Conservatives are looking for causation of the increase in violence, they should look in the mirror.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government and the Liberal minister, RCMP recruitment is at all-time lows. They should be the ones looking in the mirror.

The Liberals’ record on violent crime and car theft is abysmal. The Insurance Bureau of Canada published a report showing that car theft claims are up 138% since the Liberal government took power. Whenever the Liberals get up to brag about their action on car theft, people do not know whether to laugh or to cry. The Liberals are admitting that they failed terribly, but now they are bragging

that they are failing just a little less spectacularly than they were before.

When will the Liberals finally stop targeting law-abiding Canadians and get serious about violent crime instead?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we hear Conservative hypocrisy. They think the way to keep our streets safe is by putting more guns in the hands of criminals. They think reducing workers at the CBSA to inspect illegal imports of guns is going to keep communities safe. Conservatives are all about cuts, including cuts to police forces and cuts to inspections at our border, and they want to ensure that handguns are legal again. We know, and Canadians know, that keeping our communities safe is done by banning illegal handguns.

* * *

● (1155)

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again the Minister of Health is threatening Quebecers’ access to end-of-life care. He says that Quebec should wait before accepting advance requests for medical assistance in dying. He is even threatening to challenge Quebec’s decision, and he promises to clarify his intentions soon.

For Quebec, the road ahead is clear. It will go forward for the sake of those who are sick. Quebecers suffering from illnesses like Alzheimer’s have waited long enough.

Will the federal government just get out of the way?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, MAID is a complex and deeply personal issue, especially when it comes to advance requests. The possibility of expanding MAID eligibility to include advance requests is a very momentous decision. It requires collaboration with physicians, experts and health professionals nationwide.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec will begin accepting advance requests for MAID starting October 30. That is just five days from now. The federal government should be helping to ensure that things go smoothly, instead of making threats. One way it can help is by amending the Criminal Code to reassure doctors.

Just today, La Presse reported that doctors are worried about whether they will be legally protected, even though Quebec has instructed prosecutors not to lay charges.

Will the federal government finally reassure doctors by amending the Criminal Code?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given the complexity of this issue, we are going to take the time to review the details of the Quebec government's announcement. We remain committed to working with Quebec and all provinces and territories to carefully evaluate the next step.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Police across Canada are slamming the Prime Minister and his self-congratulatory social media campaign touting a failed handgun policy that has stopped violent gun crime. The Toronto Police Association had to fact-check the Prime Minister and remind him that 85% of guns seized by their members can be sourced to the United States. After nine years, violent gun crime is up over 100%.

Will the Prime Minister stop working against the police and reverse his crime wave policies?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Conservatives are so concerned about illegal guns entering the country through our borders, then why did they cut 1,100 jobs at CBSA and over \$100 million of that budget?

Let me also quote what the former president for public safety workers had to say. He said, "What the government made us to believe here about the budget cuts not having an impact on direct service provided to our community is wrong." He also said the cuts threatened Canada's public safety and national security. Why should we trust a record like that?

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just this week, the Toronto Police Association specifically pointed out the member opposite for her misinformation. Hopefully this misinformation today will get pointed out again. Police associations in Toronto, York, Vancouver and Surrey have all spoken out against the Prime Minister's failed handgun policy, which has done nothing to stop violent crime.

When will the Prime Minister listen to police, stop going after law-abiding citizens and start going after the gangsters and gun smugglers who are terrorizing our streets?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we promised Canadians that we would strengthen gun control and the Conservatives have promised the gun lobby that they will weaken it.

If we want to reduce gun crime in this country, we have to make it harder to commit gun crime and make it more likely to get caught. We make it harder to commit gun crime by increasing and strengthening gun control in this country. We make sure that criminals will get caught by not cutting thousands of police officer positions from our cities and from our provinces right across this country. We have seen the price that Canadians have paid for Conservative cuts to the essential services that we all rely upon. When they want to know what is really happening, the unions will know, as it was the Conservatives who cut their memberships.

• (1200)

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years with the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Police departments are slamming the Liberal-NDP gun policies. Toronto police report shootings are up 45% and gun-related homicides are up 62% compared to the same time period last year. They also report that 85% of guns seized by the police are sourced in the United States. After nine years, violent gun crime is up over 100%.

Will the Prime Minister stop working against the police and reverse his crime wave policies?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Conservatives will not tell us is that, under the Conservative government, there were cuts to CBSA that have allowed more illegal weapons to cross our borders. Conservative provincial governments have cut and slashed police budgets, which has led to a reduction of police on our streets.

While Conservative governments create cuts, we invest in our police services, invest in our borders and get guns out of our streets.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship presented the 2025-27 immigration levels plan. This plan responds directly to the changing needs of our country. We know that immigration can be a powerful tool for ensuring the vitality of francophone communities outside Quebec.

Can we have an update on our government's efforts to support immigration outside Quebec?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring the vitality of francophone communities outside Quebec is a priority for our government. Under our new plan, francophone permanent residents will represent 8.5% of the overall permanent resident admission targets in 2025, rising to 9.5% in 2026 and 10% in 2027. These targets demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the growth of francophone communities outside Quebec and are consistent with our policy on francophone immigration.

* * *

*[English]***PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost or the corruption. Under the government, GC Strategies, a two-person firm working out of a basement, received a sole-sourced contract for arrive scam. They did no work, the app did not work and they ran off with 20 million taxpayer dollars. It was a total scam.

In the face of that, what specific steps is the government taking to get taxpayers their money back?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said time and time again, we expect our procurement process to be followed with the rules and regulations put in place. The CBSA has already initiated a number of measures to build a more robust system.

I would ask the member opposite how far back he would like to go in terms of these contracts. In just five years under the Conservative government, those two principled employees he speaks of had at least 13 contracts. Would he like that money back as well?

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the government has taken no concrete measures to make taxpayers whole. The RCMP has opened an investigation into GC Strategies and this week the Auditor General announced that she is investigating the \$100 million in contracts awarded to GC Strategies by the Liberals.

If the Liberals will not even try to get taxpayers their money back, then will they get out of the way and call an election so Canadians can elect a common-sense Conservative government that will?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the Conservatives completely misleading Canadians. It was under the Conservative government that these contracts first began with these principled employees. They talk about getting out of the way, but they were the ones who oversaw a procurement process that had these same individuals receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars in contracts.

We have put in place, through the CBSA, a number of measures to ensure that our procurement process is robust, and we will continue to work to make sure that there is transparency in our system, something Conservatives failed to do.

* * *

● (1205)

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The Speaker ruled that the Liberals violated a House order to turn over evidence for a criminal investigation into their latest \$400-million scandal. When Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves, Parliament should not have to focus on ending a Liberal scandal.

Will the NDP-Liberals end this cover-up and give proof to the police so we can get accountability for corruption and Parliament can get working again?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we need is accountability to Canadians and to know why the Conservative Party continues to filibuster the business of the House of Commons.

Nothing has really changed, because when it comes to the business of the House of Commons, one prime minister, Stephen Harper, is the only prime minister to ever be held in contempt of Parliament. Who was his parliamentary secretary at the time? It was today's leader of the Conservative Party. Today's leader of the Conservative Party still refuses to get the security clearance that is necessary so he can become informed about foreign interference.

What is the leader of the Conservative Party hiding? What is he not telling Canadians?

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last year, we have learned that many countries, including India, Iran, Russia and China, are involved in foreign interference in Canada. In fact, last week we learned that agents of the Indian government are involved in serious criminal activity in Canada, including the murder of Canadian citizens. It is time for all parties to put politics aside and show Canadians that we stand together against foreign interference.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice tell the House why it is important for all party leaders to obtain their security clearance and protect Canadians?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned the leader of the Bloc Québécois received his security clearance. The only leader in the House who has refused to get the security clearance, and continues to put his head in the sand, is the leader of the official opposition, the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. Therefore, I repeat, in terms that he can understand: Get the clearance, take the briefing and please help us defend this country.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government continues to ignore the people of Windsor-Essex by allowing hazardous material to cross the Ambassador Bridge in a shady deal. We know the border officers will not even get the proper training they need to deal with the eventual disasters that will occur. Instead of detailed in-person courses to go over what to do in the case of disasters, the officials are learning from two slides in an on-line slide show.

The Liberals continue to cave to the Ambassador Bridge lobbyists to be able to board up homes, to get special privileges and now to line their pockets with hazmat money. Are the Liberals going to choose safety of our environment and economy, or the lobby interests of a U.S. billionaire and his empire?

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, because we have been discussing this issue for the past few months, Transport Canada is in discussions currently not only with the member but also with the province and the city. It is an issue that we are taking seriously and we will resolve.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, a recent article and detailed study in Canada's National Observer pointed out that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency worked hand in glove with the pesticide manufacturer Bayer to stop the impending ban of dangerous neonicotinoid insecticides posing threats to human health and the environment.

My question is simple: Will the government ban these insecticides and do an investigation to stop having our Pest Management

Routine Proceedings

Regulatory Agency defend manufacturers and start defending Canadians?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that pesticides used in Canada are safe for human health and the environment. All pesticides undergo a rigorous scientific review process prior to being approved for sale in Canada, and they are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to meet health and safety standards. We take the concerns raised in the research by Dr. Christy Morrissey seriously, and the PMRA is examining the concerns raised.

● (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you know, during S.O. 31s, or at any other time, members are not supposed to be using props. However, members cannot stand up and challenge a person for using a prop. The member for Bow River was in fact using a prop during his S.O. statement, and I believe you should take a look, see what was being used as a prop and either come back or, at the very least, provide a warning.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for raising this point. If it is necessary, the Chair will come back to the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PETITIONS

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents.

[English]

This is the first time I have presented this petition. It deals with a practice of online gaming companies to implement planned obsolescence. If a consumer buys a product, they want to be able to continue to use it. The online gaming companies will withdraw the service if the consumer does not continue to use their server and Internet provider of choice.

We ask the government to investigate this process and protect consumer rights in the acquisition of gaming devices. Consumers have every right to expect a lifetime of service for the products they have paid for.

Privilege

SENIORS

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to present a petition in two parts from activists for seniors in the North Okanagan, particularly around the city of Vernon. They are calling on the Government of Canada to provide a universal livable income, indexed to the cost of living, for Canadian citizens 65 and over. We think this is probably a way forward to deal with difficulties that our seniors are facing and we trust there will be a good, comprehensive and positive response from the government.

BRAIN CANCER

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with yesterday being Brain Cancer Awareness Day, I am pleased to present a petition on that subject. The petitioners note that an estimated 27 Canadians are diagnosed with a brain tumour each day. Fewer than three in 10 Canadians diagnosed with a tumour survive five years after their diagnosis. Brain cancer research is critically underfunded in Canada. Canada is years behind the U.S. in approving new drugs and treatments. Even when brain cancer therapies are approved, they are not always made equally accessible across the country. There continues to be a shortage of brain cancer drugs.

Accordingly, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to increase funding for brain cancer research; work with the provinces and territories to ensure that drugs, medical devices and new therapies are accessible to brain cancer patients nationwide; and remove unnecessary red tape so brain cancer drugs can be approved more quickly.

OPEN NET-PEN SALMON FARMING

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to table a petition presented by Sonia Strobel, co-founder and CEO of Skipper Otto community-supported fishery, along with 4,645 signatories, asking the government to move ahead with the transition away from open net-pen salmon farming on Canada's Pacific coast. Constituents and stakeholders across sectors have been very concerned about the harms of open net-pen salmon farms and the pace of the government's move to implement the transition by 2025, as promised. Although the government has recently confirmed its plans to move away from open net-pen salmon farms and published a draft transition plan, concerns remain about the substance of this plan and the timelines involved.

This petition was opened before the announcement, but it is still highly relevant as it clearly demonstrates that petitioners, including first nations and commercial and recreational fishers, are coming together to urge the government to move ahead rapidly with the plan and implement it by 2025, as promised, although it is now clear that this date may not be met.

• (1215)

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from about 100 individuals, which has been led by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, with regard to firefighters and the banning of PFAS chemicals in firefighter gear and firefighting foam.

I also want to recognize Windsor Fire and Rescue Services for its hard work. I am in this position because of the good tutelage of Ron Jones, a former district captain and firefighter, who has been supporting me on this issue and other things. I also want to note that these firefighters are opposed to the hazardous material that is now going to be allowed over the Ambassador Bridge.

The chemicals found in the materials of their uniforms and in the foam can cause human health issues. Firefighters often have a higher risk of cancer, respiratory diseases and other types of things because of the service they do. These petitioners are joining with many in other places across the country in the call to reduce the exposure of chemicals in the life of firefighters.

* * *

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.

The 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 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to do a quick recap for anyone who missed the first part of my speech before QP. I started by saying why we have been here for three weeks debating a parliamentary privilege motion. I explained that it is because the Liberals will not produce the documents the Speaker ordered and that it is related to the green slush fund and the \$400-million scandal, so no government business or private members' business can come forward until they produce the documents. That is what we are waiting for.

I started to debunk the myths of the weak reasons the Liberals have given for why they cannot produce the documents, beginning with their claim that giving the documents to the RCMP would be a violation of people's charter rights. This is absolutely not true. The police and the RCMP get tips all the time, for example through Crime Stoppers, phone calls and documents about criminal activity, and they have to exercise due diligence by looking into the evidence that is presented. If they do find evidence of criminality, then they need to go to the courts and request the documents formally so they can be used in a court case.

That is the law, so the argument is just a total red herring from the Liberals.

I talked about the Liberals' hypocrisy in even talking about charter rights, since they have violated every one of them, and I went down the whole list. I did not get to indigenous rights because if we started talking about the way they have violated those, we would be here all day. Therefore I will move along to my second point.

The Liberals have claimed that there needs to be more separation between Parliament and the RCMP. Certainly I agree that there should be separation. The job of the RCMP is to enforce the rule of law for everybody equally. I think that we are what our record says we are, so let us look at the record of the relationship and the separation between the RCMP and the Liberal government.

Let us start with the billionaire's island fiasco. Members may remember that the Prime Minister wasted 215,000 dollars' worth of taxpayer money. It was alleged that if he did not give himself written permission, it was actually fraud. The internal RCMP documents showed that the force considered opening a fraud investigation after details of the trip came to light, but it cited numerous reasons why it did not, including the fact that neither Parliament nor the Ethics Commissioner chose to refer the case to the police.

We can see from that, first of all, that the RCMP does accept documents from Parliament. We can also see that there was no evidence of whether or not the Prime Minister granted himself permission to go on the billionaire's island trip. If he did not, he definitely had committed fraud. The RCMP did not even bother to investigate.

Next is the SNC-Lavalin scandal. We know that Jody Wilson-Raybould was clear with the Prime Minister and Elder Marques that they absolutely could not talk to the prosecutor about getting SNC-Lavalin the deal to get it off the hook. The Prime Minister kicked Jody Wilson-Raybould to the curb and put his buddy David Lametti in place, and voila, SNC-Lavalin had the agreement it needed in order to get off the hook.

Did the RCMP investigate this? No, it did not, until four years after the fact, after Brenda Lucki retired, when the RCMP decided it was going to start investigating. Interestingly, as soon as it announced that, David Lametti was kicked out of cabinet and ended up stepping down as an MP.

Let us talk about the Brenda Lucki situation. In the Nova Scotia massacre, it was clear that the RCMP was working on behalf of Parliament, with the Liberal government. An article from the National Post says:

Privilege

In June, the Mass Casualty Commission revealed disputes between RCMP investigators in Nova Scotia and the commissioner, with allegations Lucki let the politics interfere with the probe.

Notes from the Mountie in charge of the massacre investigation said that on a conference call, Lucki expressed disappointment the types of guns used by the killer had not been released to the public because she had promised the Prime Minister's Office and the public safety minister the guns would be detailed, tied to pending gun control legislation.

There is not a lot of separation there.

Now let us talk about the WE Charity scandal. Subsection 119(1) of the Criminal Code outlines that it is illegal for a holder of public office to take an action that benefits themselves or their family. It is clear to everyone that the Prime Minister took an action by approving nearly a billion dollars for the WE Charity scandal.

• (1220)

We all know that his mother, his brother and his wife were paid by the WE Charity to do speaking engagements. According to a BBC News article, the Prime Minister said, "I made a mistake for not recusing myself from the discussions immediately, given my family's history". He did not make a mistake; he broke the law. Again, the RCMP did nothing. If we look at the history, we see that there is not enough separation; there needs to be more.

If we go on to the next thing, they are claiming there is really nothing to see. However, a whistle-blower said there was criminal activity. We should at least get the documents the Speaker correctly ordered, and we should get to work on that.

However, it is a pattern of corruption. We have seen that with the government from the beginning. Since I was elected in 2015, there has been a history of corruption, not just at the Prime Minister's level but throughout the Liberal Party.

If we recall, there was Raj Grewal, a former MP, who was charged with fraud; Joe Peschisolido, a former Liberal MP, whose company was involved in and charged with a money laundering scam; Hunter Tootoo and Darshan Singh Kang, who were charged with sexual misconduct; the current Minister of Public Safety, in the clam scam, who gave a \$25-million clam quota to his relative and a company that did not even own a boat, which was terrible; and the Minister of Transport, who gave money to her husband's company. It is a total conflict of interest.

The government is showing that it has this pattern of behaviour, and whenever the Liberals are caught, they do the obvious: They delay and refuse to release documents, or they release them all redacted. That needs to stop. Canadians have a right to know what happened to the \$400 million and to get to the bottom of it.

Privilege

The good news is that, while we continue to debate the parliamentary privilege part of this situation, no government bills can come forward. Therefore, the awful legislation the Liberals are trying to bring forward is not going to happen. For example, Bill C-63, which would put someone in jail for life if the government thought they might commit a hate crime in the future, is not going to come forward, nor is Bill C-71, which would take the children of Canadian citizens who live abroad, children who have never lived in Canada, and grant them Canadian citizenship. When they turned 18, they would be able to vote and decide, on their honour, where they wanted their vote to count. That is a new level of foreign interference, so I am happy that one is not coming forward.

Of course, we will also not see the bill that changes the date of the election so that MPs who lose their seat still get their pension. That will not be coming forward either. Nevertheless, it is an absolute disgrace to Canadians that money, \$400 million, has basically been given out with 186 conflicts of interest. They act as though there is nothing to see here. It is totally unacceptable, and if the government wants to get back to work, the Liberals should do the right thing. They should produce the unredacted documents as the Speaker has requested.

Mr. Speaker, is there quorum?

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member for raising the question. There does not seem to be quorum right now. We will check and ring the bells if needed.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We have quorum.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has five minutes to finish her speech.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this green slush fund, I think one of the most disturbing things about it is that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change was part of the cabinet that approved the money for the green slush fund. He was part of the cabinet that chose the committee members who were going to decide who got the money, and the committee members gave the money to a company called Cycle Capital, which he is a stakeholder in. Once again, the Criminal Code in section 119(1) says that no holder of public office can take an action that benefits themselves or their family. I would argue that this is another example that should be looked into by the RCMP.

That said, how do we get Canadians' money back? Many of the companies that were awarded money were not even doing something to reduce emissions or introduce green technology. This was a fund that had existed since 2001 and never had any problems until this Liberal government got involved. This makes me wonder about other funds that it is managing and whether the same level of corruption is happening, because the Auditor General said that 80% of the projects had a conflict of interest. This is simply unacceptable, and I think that we need to get to the bottom of it.

My hope is that we see these documents produced in due time. It should not take long, because the documents already exist. The Auditor General audited them, so they should be able to be produced, and we should give them to the RCMP, because knowing where to look for criminal activity is going to be key. The Liberals have argued the RCMP has the right to request documents, but it does not know which ones it wants, so that is why we have asked for all of the documents that are related to the slush fund so that we can give the RCMP all the information it needs and it can look through it. If it does see evidence of criminal activity, it will then go to court and formally order the documents so they can be used in a criminal prosecution. That is the way things are supposed to work.

The other arguments we have heard from the Liberals have been very weak, and it is the same thing every time that there is a problem with documents. They say they want to send issue to committee and that this is what the motion is all about, but no, the motion is to produce the documents unredacted, because if it goes to committee, what will happen is what always happens, like with the WE Charity scandal, and all the other scandals I talked about. The Liberals will filibuster those meetings to keep the documents from coming forward, or they will work with their NDP partners to adjourn the debate, and that is the way things go. That is why we do not get to the bottom of these scandals; that is why these scandals keep occurring. The number of scandals that we have seen is really unbelievable.

I think the sad part of freezing the Sustainable Development Technology fund because of this scandal and the corruption is that it has impacted people. It has impacted a company in my riding that was getting funding to make green battery technology, which is actually quite interesting technology. It is portable. People can put it in their backpack and use it to charge devices if they are in the military or out in a place where there is no power, and all kinds of interesting things like that. The company is called AlumaPower, but now it is in the valley of death from a commercialization point of view, because of the freezing of this fund, all relating back again to the corruption of this government, which needs to come to an end with a carbon tax election.

• (1230)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am looking for Bill Murray over there somewhere, because we have *Groundhog Day*, as performed by the Conservative Party of Canada.

What we actually have is the threat that the Conservatives are following a route that ended in utter disaster for them when Mr. Harper was prime minister. They brought forward around 11 tough-on-crime pieces of legislation, and by my count, eight of the 11 were tossed out by the Supreme Court of Canada, because they offended the charter. Both the Auditor General and the RCMP have cited this as a really big risk that could happen again if the motion, as amended by the Conservatives, is actually allowed to go forward.

What can the hon. member say about avoiding that problem that has repeated itself here?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, what I would say is this: I have actually sought a legal opinion about whether it is appropriate for us to give documentation to the RCMP. That opinion is that the RCMP gets tips all the time. People present evidence of what they think is criminal activity, and the RCMP can investigate that. It does not put anyone in jeopardy and is not going to affect anything, because if the RCMP does decide to prosecute criminally, it has to then go back to the courts and request the documents formally so they come through in the proper way to do a criminal court case.

However, the thing of it is that if the RCMP does not know where to look, there are a lot of documents involved in the slush fund. We need to help it do its job.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think you are doing a great job.

The one comment I would make in response to my colleague's speech also applies, in my opinion, to the speeches of other Conservative members who have made similar remarks about the motion under discussion today.

First, I want to say that, yes, we want to see the documents. We would appreciate that. I do not think anyone could reasonably object to transparency, especially given the assumption that the funds were improperly managed.

However, I am a little disappointed. Allow me to explain. The Conservatives are good at slogans. We see that during question period and again at this moment. They keep repeating the words "green slush fund". I do not know how this slogan translates into French, but I have some questions, because in 2019, the Bloc Québécois raised the fact that a lot of money had been diverted from this fund into oil. We wanted to explore the matter further, but the Conservatives were not interested at the time.

I would like to know why the Conservatives are unwilling to investigate when money is diverted for the benefit of oil. I am talking about the same fund.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I live in Sarnia, where 30% of Canada's oil is refined, so I am a big fan of oil and gas.

[English]

The reason the Conservatives do not want to eliminate or cut that is that we know that if we replace heavy oil and coal in the world with our LNG, for example, we could cut the 60% of the carbon

Privilege

footprint that China, India and the third world make up. We could cut it by a factor of four.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you are doing great.

[English]

My colleague, whom I have worked with before, talked about a pattern of behaviour. Certainly in the NDP we have fought against the Liberal corruption on the issue. We are supporting the motion. With the WE Charity scandal, of course, and the SNC-Lavalin scandal, it was because of the NDP that we were able to get to the bottom of both.

Tragically, during the course of the Harper Conservative regime, the Conservatives steadfastly stopped NDP MPs and all Canadians from knowing the real details of the various Conservative scandals, which were actually much bigger than the Liberal scandals. The ETS scandal was \$400 million. The G8 scandal was over a billion dollars, and the Phoenix pay scandal was \$2.2 billion. The anti-terrorism funding scandal was \$3.1 billion.

In each of those cases, Conservatives and the Harper regime stopped Canadians from knowing the truth. Have Conservatives learned their lesson, and are they willing now to apologize for all the scandals that took place on their watch?

• (1235)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I think you are doing an excellent job as Speaker.

In response to the question from the NDP, I will say that we cannot fix the past; we can fix only the future. What I would say, as a professional engineer who has to meet a code of ethics or I lose my licence, is that bad behaviour is bad behaviour, whether it happens on the Liberal side of the aisle or on any side of the aisle. We need to get to the bottom of the corruption. We need to clean it up and it needs to end.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains appointed Annette Verschuren as chair of SDTC, notwithstanding the fact that he knew she was in a blatant conflict of interest. The public accounts committee ordered that the Prime Minister's department, the PCO, submit all communications between the PMO, former minister Bains' office and the department of industry. Surprise, surprise, not one email could be found in respect of the appointment of someone responsible for handling a billion dollars.

Does the member find this rather convenient, especially given what we learned this week, which is that a government official willfully destroyed evidence to cover up the government's \$60-million arrive scam?

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Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, let us just keep in mind here that Navdeep Bains was involved in a sketchy real estate deal that the RCMP had to investigate. It is no surprise to me that he put her in place knowing she had a conflict of interest.

At the end of the day, I am not surprised to see records disappear. That is the Liberal playbook, from the Kathleen Wynne gas plant scandal, where everything got deleted, to the latest where the Information Commissioner in our House of Commons is investigating where the ArriveCAN records went that are related to GC strategies.

This is the Liberal playbook. It is get rid of the emails, hide the evidence and the corruption continues.

[Translation]

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend you for your great work.

[English]

My comment is on semantics, and it is meant to be respectful. I do not want to be accusatory in any manner. I believe that we can all improve in this House. Earlier my friend and colleague from Sarnia—Lambton used the term “third world”. We should all commit to using better language when possible. The “developing world” is a better way to describe countries that are less fortunate than ours and that are on a different part of their path to developing.

That aside, my question is also about semantics. We are talking about a fund that has been described as “green and sustainable.” There are a lot of other funds and other governments that fund oil and gas companies. Oil and gas came up earlier. I have been working hard to try to divorce my party from oil and gas a little. Canada is an oil- and gas-producing nation, and we need oil and gas, but I do not think we need to support it to the same degree that we always have.

We do, however, need to support green innovation and the sustainable future of our country to ensure that we can develop more electrification. I wonder if the member has any comments with respect to the semantics, and whether we would be here if it was a \$400-million oil and gas fund?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I can always be trained, so I will talk about the “developing world” in future.

Now, with respect to oil and gas, corruption is corruption regardless of what kind of project it is. When there is a conflict of interest involved and the money is given, that is not acceptable. I would love to see more money invested in emissions reduction. There was an excellent plan in the U.S. that drove emissions down by providing capital incentives to the refineries. This was a huge part of their carbon footprint.

The same could be done here in Canada, and I would love to see that kind of technology advancement put in place.

• (1240)

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for raising the point that she

has companies in her riding that are unfortunately being negatively impacted by this Liberal scandal.

I have a company that is trying to do great work in green hydrogen, and it is still waiting. The company understood that if the projects were pre-approved, they were not going to be impacted. However, it is out a million dollars right now. It still does not have an answer, and that is hindering its capability to move forward.

Could the member expand on whether she had any luck in getting any sort of concrete action moving forward to get the necessary funds moving again—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I must interrupt the hon. member because his time is up.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has a few seconds to answer the question.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the fund has been frozen, because they want to do the investigation.

They need to look, line item by line item, at the projects that have been approved and find the ones that are actually for sustainable technology and not involved in a conflict of interest. Those projects should go forward.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our debate today is happening because the executive branch of government has defied the will of Parliament. Members in this place, some months ago, passed a motion to compel the government to release documents related to \$400 million of funds that were misappropriated. It is entirely within Parliament's purview to ask for documents, particularly if they are documents produced by the government and are related public expenditures. Parliament asked for these documents so that we as members could do our primary job, the reason Canadians pay our salaries, which is to hold the government to account.

Let me remind all colleagues here that our first and primary role as a member of Parliament is to hold the executive branch of government to account. In this instance, on what we are debating today, it boggles the mind that there are members willing to work with the government to help it defy the will of Parliament and prevent parliamentarians from doing their job. It boggles the mind that there are members of the governing party who do not understand that it is not just the privileges of opposition members that have been and continue to be breached, but also the privileges of members of the governing party's caucus.

How a member arrives at the state of being willing to cede the power their constituents gave them to the centre of their party for less than nothing is easy to understand, but it is hard for someone to see in the moment. Allow me to elaborate, for all colleagues here and for colleagues who may follow us in these seats in the future, on what this means and why it is important to the debate at hand today.

Lev Grossman's masterwork, *The Magicians Trilogy*, an exploration of self and identity, ends with this statement: "Fillory is who I used to be, but I'm somebody different now." This passage, profound after reading the entirety of the text, refers to the protagonist, who had structured his identity around reaching a mythical location. He reaches his goal, but the journey and what happens after change that sense of self, just as they change his sense of what power should be used for.

Many of us here have travelled a similar road. It is easy for our quest to earn a seat in this place and keep it to be our identity. Then, the very few of us who are fortunate to sit here are presented with yet another identity-shaping set of dangling carrots. We want a cabinet position. What about a parliamentary secretary position? What about being vice-chair of a committee?

There is inherent oil-and-water-like tension between these two potential identities because in the former, in our first-past-the-post system, power is derived by the people who voted for us to sit in this place. In the latter, power is given by the centre of our parties. The former is the only true power in politics. It is the base of power from which the centre of our parties derives theirs, and it can only be rescinded by our constituents in an election. The latter power, that from the centre of our parties, is illusory. It is derived from a critical mass of members who vote together and form the ability to give out positions and salary increases. It is bestowed at the pleasure of one man, as there have not been many women yet, and can be rescinded at his pleasure.

The most impactful members of Parliament understand the dual nature of power in this place and how to keep that duality in balance. In our partisan system, it is good and necessary to support the centre of the party to which one was elected and lean into the ability to accomplish things like passing a budget as a team. However, if one constantly spends one's time chasing the carrots dangled by the centre of one's party when the needs of constituents are not being served, disaster for a member, their constituents and their political party inevitably ensues. This is a law of power.

How does a member of Parliament put this duality into balance and keep it there? First and foremost, we need a constant connection to our constituents. This means asking our constituents constantly what is important to them and what their opinions are. With that information, we are then able to help the centres of our parties form partisan positions that benefit our communities through policy-making and constructive criticism. The most successful centres of political parties not only relish accepting this feedback but expect it from their members. That is because our communities are constantly changing. They are not homogenous; they are not static, and we cannot develop public policy that ignores their needs and will.

• (1245)

To do this, a member needs a strong grounding outside of their political identity so we can have the courage when the need arises and so we can see a future for ourselves that does not involve being a member of Parliament. This grounding can also be our families, our hobbies, our spiritual practices or, in the best cases, a combination of all three. Without that type of external grounding, it is virtually impossible to discern what our constituent needs are when

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pressed upon by the media, by lobbyists and special interest groups, by our own egos and, yes, by the centre of our parties.

Crucially, a member needs to understand the procedural rules of this place inside and out and have a capacity and willingness to use those rules. Members who do not take the time to understand what their privileges are here as members or how the Standing Orders work are like a carpenter without tools. When all these actions work together, the duality of power is balanced, good public policy is made and successful political careers are established. However, it is also deadly easy to knock this duality out of balance. This happens when a member stops listening to their constituents, starts chasing promotions and cedes the power their constituents gave them to a centre of power that has forgotten that their power, without the support of the people, is an illusion.

Here we are today, and members of the governing party have ceded so much of their constituents' power to the centre of their party that ministers in the government feel no compunction at all about letting a \$400-million spending scandal happen, because they know their partisan colleagues will not force them, or the will of Parliament, to come clean. The leader of the governing party allows his ministers to do this because he in turn knows he will not face any criticisms from his members either. Members are allowing this to happen for fear of losing their green-lit candidate status or are clinging to the hope that they are going to get a car and driver and a cabinet post.

That lack of balance is why we are here today in this place with a Parliament paralyzed by a government made unwilling to accept the rule of Parliament due to the misaligned priorities of the governing party's members of Parliament. It is a shame to see colleagues, many of whom I respect in this place, willingly cede their power given what is possible for any of us and the people we represent when we lean into it instead.

Being a Canadian member of Parliament means that literally anyone in the world will take our call. Any policy change we elect to spend our attention on is possible to enact without limit. We in this place cannot change only our communities, but also the country and the world, so what we do with that power actually matters. It must be used responsibly and with great conscience, wielded with impeccable judgment free of ego and grounded in upholding the rule of law, democracy, Canadian pluralism and freedom.

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If I could go back in time and tell myself these truths when I was first elected, I would. It would have saved me a lot of time and a lot of heartache. The only time I have failed in my role here has been when I ignored those truths. Thankfully, those moments have been few and far between in the years that I have served, and when they have happened, I have been able to recognize them, admit fault and move on. However, when I have embraced those same truths, magic has happened. These same things are possible for anybody in this place.

I am proud of the cross-partisan effort with my former colleague and deputy leader of the NDP Megan Leslie, which resulted in the creation of Sable Island National Park and a national ban on plastic microbeads. I am proud of creating a program that led to the creation of countless high-tech businesses that are thriving in our country today. I am proud to have stood with delegates at our party convention many years ago to change the definition of marriage in our party's policy declaration.

I am proud, after months of blood, sweat and tears, to have forced the current government to recognize the Yazidi genocide and to have forced it to create a program that saw around 1,500 of the world's most vulnerable people take refuge inside our borders. I am proud to have, among much consternation, authored the Buffalo Declaration. It was a spicy piece of business that in many ways spurred a year-long debate over how to champion western Canada's rights and standing in Canada.

I am proud to have brought, written and passed a motion in this place to condemn the anti-Semitic boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. I am proud to have fought for changes to elect more women to this place, see them elected and make it easier for them to work here. I am proud to have uncovered and prosecuted multiple government spending scandals.

• (1250)

I am proud to have enforced, against an overwhelming amount of political pressure, the federal government into closing the loophole in the safe third country agreement, under which it allowed tens of thousands of people who had reached the safety of upstate New York to illegally enter our country. I am proud to have fought and won, through endless political and national pressure, against the government's senseless and useless quarantine hotel system, which brought needless mental and financial anguish to countless Canadians during the pandemic.

I was the first Conservative critic to call for major changes to Canada's telecommunications oligopoly, and faced an incredible amount of push-back from the oligopoly for doing so. I was the first parliamentarian to call for a regulatory framework for cryptocurrency and tabled a bill to do the same. I was the first legislator in any jurisdiction around the world to raise the issue of large language models in any legislature. I also founded the multipartisan Parliamentary Caucus on Emerging Technology, and passed, after a year of work, a resolution, supported by over 100 countries, on the impact of AI and human rights at the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva last week. I would like to give a shout-out to my colleague Neema Lugangira from Tanzania for her work on the same.

At the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I have now thrice chaired the general assembly drafting committee and emerged with consensus-

adopted resolutions condemning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, with Russians sitting at the table. Just last week, I passed a resolution calling for reform to multilateral institutions to ensure their long-term viability and to be able to solve global crises and promote peace.

I have proudly stood with Canada's allied nations against much public pressure to do the opposite in their fight to protect themselves from terrorism and destruction. I have also, in changing times for the media, managed to build a communication platform that allows me to reach no less than a million people every day. I no longer have to rely on the stilted lens of partisan columnists or political talk show hosts to communicate an idea to the public. I can do that on my own.

Accomplishing these things has meant ruffling feathers, sometimes within the public, within opposing parties and even within my own caucus. Conflict is not something that we should strive for here. We should strive for peace, but speaking truth to power is not conflict. Rather, it is the essence of our existence as parliamentarians.

I raise my accomplishments in this place not to boast, but to inspire. Even if colleagues here might not agree with the change I have enacted, the reality is that I have now sat in every position in the House on both sides of the aisle. I have sat as a cabinet minister on the front bench and at the very back corner of this place, with my back touching the curtains. It was when I was in that last seating position that I had dinner with a woman who I very much respect, the Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, who reminded me that I was sitting in a seat that she had once occupied. She reminded me of what she was able to accomplish from that position and where her power came from, and she expected no less from me. This hard lesson was a gift, a dose of humility, that I pray everyone in this place gets to experience at some point in their career and come through with grace.

I am deeply blessed to have had the counsel of Jody and other principled leaders like her. Their actions are reminders to me that no matter where a parliamentarian sits in the House, our power remains the same. I know that my ability to effect change remains limited only by my smarts, my courage, my grace, my knowledge of the rule and my willingness to pay a cost for doing right when right is needed to be done. However, that is the rub of this place, is it not? It is the cost of doing what is right.

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In moments where we, as leaders, can feel in our deepest gut that change is needed, an admission of wrongdoing is needed, we are asked to do something that in our hearts we know we should not be doing, or if we toy with relinquishing jealousies and grudges in favour of peace, but feel like we should not be doing that, we often think about what would be lost if we were to carry through with our actions. Will it cost us our pride? How about a shot at a cabinet spot? Will it mean sitting at the back of the House? Will it mean we do not get to run again? In those moments, I challenge my colleagues to instead think about what they would gain if they were to do the right thing with the ability to effect positive change for our communities, a change in perspective, results and respect, and so we are here today.

I understand why the government is asking members of its caucus to support it in defying the will of Parliament. The release of these documents will no doubt expose wrongdoing on the part of the government, but how are we, as parliamentarians of any political stripe, to force the government to admit wrongdoing and enact change if we cannot exercise our fundamental rights and privileges as parliamentarians?

• (1255)

Members of the government should want the will of Parliament to be upheld in this case as well. Ministers should not be allowed to act without compunction in these matters. We have a fiduciary responsibility to our constituents to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not wasted, that they are not used to enrich people because of their proximity to the government as opposed to their place in an impartial and unbiased procurement system set under parliamentary supply rules.

Bureaucrats within ministries will also act without compunction if they feel as though Parliament's will can be ignored. We have all seen this at committees, where members of departments will sit there and just look at us as though we are ghosts, as though we do not matter. I reject that notion. I represent 120,000 Canadians. I stand here in the full apex of the power they have bestowed upon me, and I will not cede it. I will not let these people not be held to account. I will not let people get rich off the backs of my constituents. I will hold the government to account. It matters not what the topic is.

Colleagues have asked if we would be doing this if it was with respect to an oil and gas company. Absolutely, we would be. Would I be doing this if it was my political party? I absolutely would because there are things that matter more than the centre of our parties, which are the rules that uphold this place. That is why the government must immediately accept the will of Parliament to release these documents and allow itself to be held to account. It is also why the members of the caucus of the governing party should be pushing their visionless, listless, embattled and spent leader to do the right thing by refusing to participate in the government's blockade of Parliament's will.

I am deeply grateful to be surrounded by people who not only expect me to do the right thing but also stand beside me, come hell or high water, while I do so. To Sean Schnell, Kerry and Paul Frank, Dustin and the crew, Denise, Petronella, Cole, Murdoch, Eric and Sonya, my sister, and my husband and children, I say that

not a day goes by when I am not grateful for their expectation of excellence and morality, as well as their support. Their support, along with the support of countless others in Calgary Nose Hill and across the country, makes me believe that, no matter how broken our country is now, better is possible in the future. Our country is worth fighting for. I will not write it off. Our problems can be fixed. I am proud to fight for change alongside my colleagues in the Conservative Party. Our team has gone through a lot in the last several years, but standing here today, after going through that visceral time of turbulence in which we decided where we were going to set our priorities, we are now in a caucus that is filled with peace and is clearly united and focused on enacting practical, common-sense change to fix our country. That fills me with pride and hope.

I guess the moral of the story is this: If members set foot in this place hoping to be comfortable or hoping to be liked, they will fail in their responsibilities to their constituents; they will fail to use the power that constituents have bestowed upon members to do what is right on their behalf. If members seek to appease people rather than to fight for what is right, if they seek to enrich themselves or save their ego instead of rising up for others and if they seek to destroy and undermine the democratic institutions that undermine the miracle that is Canada's pluralistic democracy, they will fail. They can also be sure that millions of others who believe in the beauty that is our country and understand that it only rests upon the rules of this place being followed, including me, will fight to ensure that they fail.

Therefore, the Liberals should govern themselves accordingly, do what is right, respect the will of Parliament and release these documents today.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what the member opposite was saying. I reflect upon myself, personally, and the commitment I have made to my constituents to put them first and foremost in all the things I do. It is one of the reasons I go to my local McDonald's once a week, for hours, just to make sure people know that I am accessible between elections.

What the member does not necessarily refer to is that she is basing her argument on the issue of what is before us today, at least in part. She is saying that we should be providing the documents. She was part of a government, when the leader of the Conservative Party was the parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in which there was an actual finding of contempt. He is the only prime minister in the history of Canada who has been found in contempt. I do not recall any Conservatives standing in their place, after this, to demonstrate any sort of remorse whatsoever in the situation—

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[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Unfortunately, I must interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, after 20 years or so in this place, should understand that tu quoque is one of the worst logical fallacies in debate. For years, the member, who has power given to him by his constituents, has ceded it to stand here and waste countless words and hours spewing the talking points of a government that sued the Speaker of the House of Commons instead of respecting privilege.

If the member was so committed to doing better than something he thinks happened in the past, why is he here today supporting a government that is obfuscating the privilege associated with each member? He is actually saying his own privilege should be violated. All of his constituents should take note, because a member who is willing to have his privilege violated is willing to have his constituents' privilege violated. Mark my words, I know his constituents are taking note, and he should govern himself accordingly.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during question period, mainly, but also on many other occasions, we hear the Conservatives saying that we need to trigger an election to get rid of this government. They are making this their MO and getting all worked up about the fact that the “Liberal Bloc” is supporting the government. When we look at what is happening in the House, however, it is the Conservatives' fault that the government cannot be toppled, because they are filibustering their own motion.

I am wondering whether my colleague agrees with the following. When the Conservatives call loud and clear for the House to topple the government and trigger an election, does it not ring a bit hollow, given the way they are wasting the House's time right now?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, first, here are a few facts. What we are doing is defending the privileges of every member of Parliament and saying that the government must immediately release the documents, as passed by a rule of Parliament. This is part of our parliamentary procedure.

Second, the Bloc Québécois, three weeks ago, voted to keep the scandal-prone, corrupt government alive. Every time the Bloc Québécois has had an opportunity to take the government down, it has not. Why? I think it is worried about electoral fortunes. That is what I was speaking about in my speech. When we put our ego and electoral fortunes forward as opposed to thinking about doing what is right, disaster ensues.

I ask my colleagues from the Bloc to instead help us pressure the Liberal government to release these documents and then vote non-confidence in the government.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, one of my best friends in the House, if not my best friend, for her dissertation today on why we should be here in the House of Commons.

I will share a story about when I was first elected. She put me down harder than most hammers I have ever been hit with on a situation I had in my constituency. She was the one who very much corrected the situation I was trying to deal with in a way that I was not aware could be done. It was more favourable to me in the long run because I learned a long lesson that has helped me for the last 11 years in this part of my political career. It was to do with what she was talking about: Sometimes we have to deal just as harshly with our allies in reply to comments, as she does and we all should do, as we do with those who do not agree with us.

I wonder if she could expand on how important that is for ensuring that we are consistent and constant in our ability to move forward.

• (1305)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, partisanship is important. It allows us to develop cohesive policy positions and then come together under a leader and team to enact political change in Canada. However, we also have to remember that while we are partisans, our first title is not “insert party here”; our first title is “member of Parliament for”. I learned that from Jody Wilson-Raybould, who I understand the government never realized was not a Liberal first. She was a first nations woman first and a member of Parliament second. She understood where her power was derived from. When we understand where our power is derived from, anything is possible in this place, including good and just laws and the respect and upholding of democracy and human rights.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I want to take the member up on a serious gesture, and hopefully she will accept it. Ideally, I would love to have the member come to Winnipeg North and have a discussion on this issue in front of a grade 9 class, whether it is at Maples Collegiate, Sisler High School, R. B. Russell Vocational High School or St. John's High School. If she is prepared to do that, I would love to be able to provide the same reciprocal response and go to one of her constituency high schools, where we could have a discussion on the issue that we have been debating over the last number of weeks.

Is she confident enough in her position that she would take me up on that challenge?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, it has been a hot minute since someone has asked me if I were chicken. My husband is here today, and I do not think he ever would say that I have shied away from a debate. In fact, I think I once told him that he was never going to win a debate with me and to not try.

I would just say this: As a former Winnipegger, I learned how to scap on the streets of North Winnipeg, and giddy up. I am happy to take a debate at any point in time. I will say this, though: I am not sure he wants me in his constituency because I know he does not spend much time there.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since my Conservative friends have been stuck on the same channel for the past three weeks and keep repeating the same speech, I am going to take the liberty of asking the same questions, since we are not getting any answers. I will even try to put my question another way.

My constituents in Longueuil sent me here to solve certain issues. Right now, we are dealing with a homelessness crisis, a housing crisis, a climate crisis and a language crisis. We need money for transportation infrastructure and for sewer system upgrades in Longueuil. My constituents sent me to Ottawa to fix these problems. For the past three weeks, I have not been fixing these problems. I am being robbed of my right as a parliamentarian, of my duty, in fact, and my privilege to work on behalf of my constituents. For the past three weeks, this duty or right has been hijacked by a motion that we agree on. We have said so. The NDP agrees on it as well. We are ready to vote on it.

What does my colleague have to say to constituents of mine who might feel cheated, knowing that I am not doing what they sent me here to do four years ago?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. His privileges have been violated. His privileges have been violated by a government that refused the will of Parliament to submit documents, and the way for his privileges to be restored are for the government to hand the documents over.

Should the constituents of Longueuil not be so happy that the Conservative Party of Canada is fighting to ensure that the will of Parliament is upheld and that the government is held to account?

• (1310)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months the corrupt Liberal government has obstructed a clear and unambiguous order of the House to turn over the documents, and bizarrely, it has wrapped itself around the charter as a basis for withholding the documents. In other words, it is trying to make a virtue out of its corruption.

Could the member speak to that?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, it is the dying days of a corrupt government that does not even have the capacity to put out a caucus revolt right now. That is the real problem that this country is facing. There is such little political will or courage in the Liberal Party, such little talent and such little focus, that everything is falling apart. It is a shame. It is a scandal. Canadians deserve better. It is time for a carbon tax election.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak in the House on behalf of my constituents of Sturgeon River—Parkland. I want to wish every member of the House and the Canadian people a very happy Saint Crispin's day.

I am going to start with a small excerpt from a speech in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, in which the King, before the Battle of Agincourt, said:

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By Jove, I am not covetous for gold....
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.

That is illustrative of the debate we are having here today, as people seem more covetous for gold than they are for their own honour. We have seen that very clearly with the debacle at Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

There has never been a better time in this country's history to be a Liberal insider than under the Liberal government. After nine years, the government has shown no restraint in enriching their friends. As we approach the dying days of the government, the Liberals are more desperate than ever to hide the truth, going to extraordinary lengths to block the release of documents in this terrible scandal. We are talking about \$400 million of taxpayers' money that was misappropriated by Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

We are here today, for my constituents who tuning into the debate, to talk about parliamentary privilege. Members of the House of Commons have something called parliamentary privilege. It is a sacred principle that we inherited from Westminster.

Erskine May's *Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament* defines parliamentary privilege as, "Parliamentary privilege is the sum of certain rights enjoyed by each House collectively...and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals."

The Liberal government has violated the rights of Parliament and parliamentarians by refusing to turn over all the unredacted documents relating to the scandal at the Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

The powers of parliamentary privilege are rooted in the Constitution Act, 1867, and the Parliament of Canada Act. This issue is such a significant issue that it has essentially led to the shutdown of all other parliamentary debate as we undertake the privilege motion.

Some members, including recently a member across the way, have pointed to the previous government's refusal in 2011 to release documents. This issue was taken to a higher power, in fact the highest power of the land: the people. They decided to give that government a majority mandate after an election was fought. The people, the highest power, vindicated the government of the day's position.

The Liberal minority government has no mandate from the people to defy the will of Parliament. If it believes it does, which it clearly does, it should call an election so it can get that mandate from the people. However, the government is not willing to go to the highest power in the land because it already knows what the answer will be. It will be a resounding rejection of the government's decision to defy the will of Parliament and refuse to provide these documents. If the government wants to keep hiding these documents in violation of parliamentary supremacy, it must call an election to get a mandate from the people.

I want to go into how the motion put forward came to be and why we are here today.

Privilege

The Auditor General of Canada, an independent office, investigated Sustainable Development Technology Canada and found that Liberal appointees gave \$400 million of taxpayers' money to their own companies, involving 186 instances of conflicts of interest. The Prime Minister's former industry minister, Navdeep Bains, hand-picked these board members and their chair to manage a billion dollars in taxpayer funds. Then in February 2023, employees at the fund, from within the organization itself, filed a complaint, and that complaint led to an investigation. It was a complaint that Conservatives fought to get an investigation for and that the Liberal government fought tooth and nail to avoid an investigation for.

● (1315)

When the Auditor General's report was made public, it showed that there were 186 conflicts of interest involving the board and the chair. They did a sample and found that 82% of the cases they had investigated had a conflict of interest. This is not just a one-off case where somebody maybe mistook the rules and had a minor interest in something and did not think it mattered. Instead, 82% of cases in a sample taken showed conflicts of interest.

In one case, Annette Verschuren, who was the Liberal-appointed chair of the green slush fund, gave \$217,000 to her own company. It has yet to return the money. According to one of the whistle-blowers from the organization, "our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference". The people who were in the organization itself were saying that there was political interference going on.

This fund operated well. There were a lot of goals to provide funding to promote sustainable development and new technologies. I know that there are companies in my riding that have accessed this funding. However, under the Liberal government, it was allowed to turn into a slush fund.

In fact, under the previous Conservative government, when this fund was looked into, it was given a clean bill of health. It was only under the Liberal government, under the decay and negligence, and with the turning of a blind eye to corruption, that this once pristine organization, was allowed to descend into the mires of this corruption.

Though SDTC should have been at arm's length from the government, it was not. It was found, in numerous cases, that the government had intricate involvements in the day-to-day affairs of SDTC, something that made it ripe for corruption and political interference.

I want to talk about some of the cases here, just to elaborate for Canadians how serious this is. For one board member, who was a board member from 2015 to 2021, their companies, companies they had an interest in, received \$114 million dollars while they were sitting on the board. They did not recuse themselves.

In this case, for the company in question, which was Cycle Capital, the value of this company tripled during this member's time on the board of directors. Do members know who Cycle Capital's paid lobbyist during this time period was? It was the current Liberal Minister of Environment. Talk about strong ties. This board member was appointed to the Canada Infrastructure Bank's board of directors in 2021. No bad deed goes unrewarded under the Liberal

government. They allocated an additional \$170 million to Annette Verschuren's company when Verschuren was the chair of SDTC.

The Minister of Environment, before entering Parliament, was the lobbyist for this company that had tripled in value, and it had received an immense amount of funds from this fund. He lobbied 25 times just in the year before he was elected to the House. The Prime Minister's Office and the industry department gave his client over \$100 million from this fund. When he became a cabinet minister, it did not end. He approved \$750 million in funding through SDTC and \$250 million of that went to Cycle Capital, a company that the minister continues to hold shares in to this day.

In another case, a slush fund board member who was hand-picked by the Prime Minister admitted in committee that \$17 million went to companies in which he had an interest. In another case, a former political staffer who was a political staffer for Liberal environment minister David Anderson, who was a political organizer for the Prime Minister in British Columbia, approved \$5 million for companies in which he had an interest.

There is the board chair, who I have mentioned before. Former minister Navdeep Bains replaced the previous chair of the Sustainable Development Technology Canada council with Annette Verschuren, after the previous chair criticized the government's tech policies. So much for listening to the experts, and so much for muzzling experts. Do members know who that previous board chair was? It was Jim Balsillie, one of the pioneering tech entrepreneurs of our country. He started BlackBerry.

● (1320)

In fact Jim Balsillie warned the government about the conflict of interest in appointing Ms. Verschuren, but the government ignored it anyway. In fact the Liberal minister at the time knew that Ms. Verschuren's companies were receiving funds, yet he appointed her anyway. He ignored repeated warnings from the Privy Council office, the Prime Minister's office and his own office. In fact in one case, Ms. Verschuren herself even told him that she had a conflict of interest.

However, that was not good enough for the Liberal government. It was going to go ahead and appoint its hand-picked chair. Verschuren moved a motion and voted to send \$220,000 to her own company. The Ethics Commissioner found her guilty of violating ethics laws.

I am going to quote from one of the whistle-blowers, because so many whistle-blowers have come forward. People who are watching may want to give the government the benefit of the doubt. Maybe it is just the Conservatives spreading misinformation. Here are some quotes from a whistle-blower from the organization itself:

The true failure of the situation stands at the feet of our current government....Our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference....a straightforward process [became] a bureaucratic nightmare [allowing] SDTC to [waste] millions...and [abuse]...employees....

Privilege

They also said that the current government is more focused on protecting itself from public scrutiny.

The whistle-blower said:

I think the Auditor General's investigation was more of a cursory review. I don't think the goal and mandate of the Auditor General's office is to actually look into criminality, so I'm not surprised by the fact that they haven't found anything criminal. They're not looking at intent. If their investigation was focused on intent, of course they would find the criminality....

I know that the federal government, like the minister, has continued saying that there was no criminal intent and nothing was found, but I think the committee would agree that they're not to be trusted on this situation. I would happily agree to whatever the findings are by the RCMP, but I would say that I wouldn't trust that there isn't any criminality unless the RCMP is given full authority to investigate.

That is what we are debating here: giving the RCMP the full unredacted documents, not just the documents that the government wants to give the RCMP but the documents that Parliament has ordered it to give to the RCMP.

The whistle-blower continued:

Again, if you bring in the RCMP and they do their investigation and they find something or they don't, I think the public would be happy with that. I don't think we should leave it to the current federal government or the ruling party to make those decisions. Let the public see what's there....

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.

They also said:

For all of the information the RCMP received from ISED or the AG, again the question to them is, were any of them looking for criminal intent? It's one thing to say that no criminal intent was found, but the question to ask the AG or anyone else is, were they looking for criminal intent or were they not?

If you look at the scope of the RCGT report or the Auditor General's report, that was not in their scope or mandate....

That is why we need the RCMP to investigate. It was not in the scope of the Auditor General's mandate to look into whether there were criminal actions. On the surface, I think there is evidence that points to possible criminal actions, but that is really up to the RCMP, and the RCMP cannot do its job unless it gets the full documents.

Why must the House obtain the documents? Whistle-blowers claim that criminal intent would be found if the documents were given to the RCMP, so the government should not be withholding the documents in any way. A majority of members of the House passed a motion demanding that the documents be turned over, and the Liberals refused or they sent heavily redacted documents instead. The Leader of the Opposition has argued that Parliament's rights were breached, and the Speaker of the House agreed.

This is not the only Liberal scam. We know that during the pandemic the Liberals gave themselves unlimited taxing and spending powers. We know that the Prime Minister has been found guilty of violating ethics laws four times.

We know that the Prime Minister tried to hand \$900 million to an organization that was paying his own family members. I found it very interesting, going back over the WE Charity debates, to learn that there were many other wonderful people who had wonderful experiences and were speaking at WE Charity events, but they were not getting paid anything. Curiously, it appeared to be only members of the Prime Minister's family who were getting paid. What a

coincidence that was. There are questions that still need to be asked and answers that have yet to be given.

• (1325)

We know that in 2021, the government took the Speaker of the House to court over the Winnipeg lab documents. The House asked for those documents. We fought an election on it. The government was handed a minority mandate with a lower percentage of the popular vote than the Conservative Party. The Liberals do not have a clear mandate. They were given a mandate to work with other parties in this House and the government has refused to work with members. It has stonewalled and refused to give these documents, in defiance of the will of Parliament, a mandate it did not get from the Canadian people in the last election.

We are only scratching the surface. The Auditor General was only able to review half of the transactions in this case. When we consider that 82% of a sample size had conflicts of interest, we know a full review would show even more conflicts of interest. The CFO of the industry department called this worse than the sponsorship scandal. What is the government trying to hide? This is just the tip of the iceberg, and that is how it starts.

I remember my late friend, who, sadly, passed away this summer, John Williams, former MP and former chair of the public accounts committee, who relentlessly worked on a little-known issue called the sponsorship scandal, or ad scam. It happened in the 1990s. Some people started talking about it. It really blew up in the 2000s. It was only because of the relentless work of opposition parties in this Parliament and that committee that Canadians got the truth.

Then there was the Gomery inquiry, which showed the Liberal Party misappropriated funds, was sending funds to ad agencies, funds that were being returned to the Liberal Party in the form of donations. My late friend John Williams always told me the thing that separates a great society from a failing society is accountability. That was his watchword in his life: accountability. Under the current Liberal government, accountability has been allowed to go by the wayside.

We are doing our best here in the opposition. We are standing up here every day exposing the government's corruption and lack of transparency. The Liberals were talking about being "open by default" back in 2015, and about sunny ways. We have come a long way in these past nine years. Canadians would be right to be pretty cynical about the current government. Liberals talk a lot about slogans in the House, but we remember those slogans and they have been tossed to the wayside along with accountability.

Privilege

Accountability is so essential because in great societies, when we have institutions that work as they should, when we have government that respects the rule of law and the will of its Parliament, there is transparency. When there is transparency, there is accountability, and when there is accountability, people do their jobs and do not steal money. They do not covet gold; they covet honour. We should all covet honour in this House. We should all be proud to be the guiltiest person to covet honour.

However, under the Liberal government, after the hundreds of millions of dollars, or billions if we are looking at the broad swath of scandals under nine years of the current Liberal government, we have seen that what has been allowed to fester in this country is the coveting of gold, the coveting of taxpayer money, which has been misappropriated, for the benefit of the few to the detriment of the people. The people are the highest power in the land: the people who send us here, who give us a job to do and who we have to be accountable to at the end of the day.

Conservatives will always push for accountability. We are the people who brought in the Federal Accountability Act, after all. After we form government again, there will have to be some revisions to that accountability act because, after nine years, the Liberals have certainly given us a lot of examples of the ways they could get around those rules and abuse the processes. There are going to have to be a lot of updates to that document because the Liberals have given us a lot of lessons in what not to do and how not to run a government. The Liberal government is comfortable with wasting hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. There does not appear to be any real effort by the current government to recoup that money. The Liberals have broken the trust of hard-working Canadians. The Prime Minister's trust has been broken. The Liberals have broken Canada.

The Liberals do not have a mandate to defy the will of Parliament. They do not have a mandate to withhold these documents from the RCMP. If they want to get a mandate, as I said earlier, it is time to call an election so the Canadian people can decide if they are right or wrong. I am not afraid to ask that question, but I know the members on the other side are afraid to ask that question. Let us get to an election right now.

• (1330)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I respect my colleague very much. I respect his work on the environment committee. I also want to thank him for his service. I know he is a member of the military. We are all wearing our poppies today, and I want to acknowledge that we are wearing them in remembrance of the service of veterans. As he is a man in uniform, I would like to thank him for that work.

I have a pointed question for the member. As we have heard today, the leaders of all but one party in the House, the Greens, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Liberals, have received a security clearance so they can be briefed on something very serious, which is international and foreign interference with respect to domestic democracy and security. As the member is also a member of the military, I can only imagine that the member knows more about this than I do. He is more informed and has an obligation to stand up for

our domestic security, so how can he support a leader who refuses to get a security clearance to get briefed on foreign interference?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate being butted up before giving a response.

I am glad the member asked this question. The Leader of the Opposition would be happy to take a briefing. He would be happy to take the same kind of briefing that The Washington Post received from the government. It appears the government selectively gives briefings to whoever it thinks can benefit it the most politically. It is quite odd.

A very interesting fact was made known to me recently, which is that, when the leader of the official opposition was in government, he received those security clearances, and they had to be renewed every two years. In 2019, the Liberal government changed the rules so that ministers of cabinet do not have to receive regular two-year updates to their security clearances, so members of the Liberal cabinet have not been vetted for national security for the past five years.

I agree the Prime Minister has the right, as the head of government and as Prime Minister, to have access to classified information. It should not be subject to whether he can get a top secret security clearance, but he has not received a top secret security clearance.

An hon. member: He hasn't been vetted.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: We do not know if he has been vetted.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. He said that the Liberal government does not have a mandate to break Canada. I wonder if my colleague's party gave him a mandate to forget the facts and history.

I would remind my colleague that, when his party was in power, Minister Tony Clement personally embezzled \$50 million in public funds in his own riding. This was not some committee with a program embezzling funds. However, he is not saying anything about that today.

What about the Conservative government at the time, which refused to hand over documents concerning Afghan prisoners? We had the same question of privilege situation as today, yet he did not mention it.

I would like my colleague to tell us and the people tuning in why Quebecers should trust this government, which has betrayed the people with corruption scandals and a lack of transparency.

• (1335)

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member from the Bloc Québécois was listening to my speech because I dealt with that issue head on.

Privilege

In 2011, when the government of the day refused to hand over documents, there was a privilege debate in the House of Commons. An election was called, and we went to the people for a mandate. What did the people do? They gave the government a majority mandate. Ultimately the people have the highest power in the land, and they chose to give that government a majority. That is something I do not think the Liberals would be willing to do.

The Liberals would not be willing to test the confidence of the Canadian people in an election to decide whether they are right or wrong in withholding these documents, yet they are in Parliament without a majority mandate. It has been three years now since the last election, an election during which we were not discussing this issue, and they have refused to provide the documents. They have defied the will of Parliament, and it is unacceptable. They should either turn over the documents or call an election.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for really bringing forth and talking about the accountability issue, because I think it is important. Actually, I would like his opinion, because I know I have no time for corruption regardless of the political party or who is in government. We have to do better here.

He mentioned increasing the penalties for conflict of interest, accountability and ethical failures in the House. We ran in the last election, in 2021, on increasing the penalties from the \$200-ish fines that exist right now and taking them up to \$40,000.

Could he expand on that a little and say why other parties are not advocating for something similar? In his opinion, why are they not demanding that every single one of us who is elected to this chamber be held to account if they are not following conflict of interest and ethics laws?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, if we study economics, we study incentives. There are good incentives and bad incentives. Unfortunately, at the time the ethics rules were put in place, it was thought that they would not have to be used very often. Members of Parliament would not want to be named and shamed or to be on the wrong side of ethics rules. Therefore, we have smaller fines.

However, after nine years of the Liberal government, it is clear that having these fines or being named is not really being taken seriously. As such, it is clear to me that we need to look into increasing the penalties so that we can provide that incentive and people know that there are real consequences to violating our ethics rules.

This government needs to know that there are real consequences to defying the will of Parliament and that those consequences will be felt when we get to an election.

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member across says that we are not serious and that we are afraid to ask questions, but he is not afraid. I am curious about this: Is he afraid to ask his leader to go out and get his security clearance?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, nobody in this party is afraid to test the Canadian people in the next election. Nobody in this party is afraid to stand up for what we have been talking about or to fight for what the Canadian people have been desperately wanting, to fight against the corruption of the Liberal government. We are not afraid to keep asking questions and to get down to the truth. We are

not afraid to stand up for what Canadians really want, which is accountable government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague quoted several whistle-blowers in his speech. We know that whistle-blowers have to be protected.

Does my colleague think it is unusual that a bill designed to protect whistle-blowers originated with the opposition, not the government? In this case, the bill in question was introduced by my colleague from Mirabel.

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, whistle-blowers are an essential part of democracy. Any time we have whistle-blowers who know something is going wrong in their department, there are always appropriate channels. Maybe going to the media is not the first thing they do, but in these cases, I am sure that these people have exhausted all the possible avenues that they have to try to get things right within their organization.

When they have been stonewalled, whether it be from the processes or from corrupt people who are preventing them from doing that, they need to have the knowledge that they are free to speak without penalty and without consequences that would be detrimental for them or their families. Without that, we cannot have accountability, and that is here in the House, that is in our public service and that is in our private sector.

We need accountability across the country. What separates great societies from failing societies is when people know that they can be held accountable when they are doing wrong.

• (1340)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about security clearances today, and it is clear to me that the real issue is this: The Prime Minister has been getting briefings for the last two years, so he knows about the foreign interference and who the 11 compromised parliamentarians are.

Could my colleague comment on why he has not taken any action or disclosed those names?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a really good question.

The Liberals talk in the House about how the Leader of the Opposition needs to get a security clearance, yet we have a Prime Minister who has access to this classified information and has done absolutely nothing. In fact, in one case, a member of his caucus left caucus of his own volition, and the Liberals were looking forward to him returning to caucus, with the full knowledge that he was involved in foreign interference. It is shameful.

When they had classified information, they did not act. What do they expect from the rest of Canadians?

Privilege

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have had a few interventions this fall, but this is my first opportunity to rise and take part in a debate, so if you will indulge me, I want to extend my appreciation to the great people of Kenora and across northwestern Ontario for giving me their trust to represent them in this place. I just recently surpassed my five-year anniversary as a member of Parliament as well.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. It is always very humbling and an honour to rise in this place to speak on behalf of the people of northwestern Ontario.

Today, of course, we are speaking about a very important matter. I wish I could say that this motion is unprecedented, but it is not the first time the government has disobeyed, disregarded or otherwise simply not cared about an order the House has made.

When I was first elected over five years ago, I made a promise to the people of northwestern Ontario, the people who put their trust in me to represent them here and fight for their best interests. That promise was to ensure that government is acting in their best interests and spending their tax dollars responsibly. That is something we have not seen the government do.

Currently, the regular business of this House, as many know at this point, has been on hold because the government refuses to hand over documents the House has ordered of it. This is preventing us from doing anything. We are at an absolute standstill, and it is preventing us from addressing other issues that the NDP-Liberal government has caused, such as the doubling of housing costs; the creation of the housing crisis, with many young people giving up completely on their dream of home ownership; the affordability crisis; the infrastructure gap in first nations; and the crime the government has unleashed by breaking the bail system and implementing catch-and-release policies for violent criminals.

All of these issues are on the back burner now because the government is instead choosing to gridlock Parliament. It is the only one that has the power to end it. If the government were to comply with the House order and hand over all documents related to the green slush fund, we could get back to the regularly scheduled programming of the House. Instead, it is going to great lengths to protect itself and withhold them. I would imagine it is very damaging information given the extent it is willingness to go to do this.

I want to touch a bit on parliamentary privilege. Of course, it is a crucial function for ensuring that the legislative branch of government can meet one of its main objectives, that is, holding the government accountable. With this privilege comes extraordinary powers to ensure that the government cannot interfere with parliamentarians meeting that objective. In particular, this privilege includes the power to order the production of documents that the House deems necessary to carry out its duties. This is important. There is not a similar privilege afforded to the government to refuse an order for the production of said documents. I will get back to that more later, but I first want to talk about why we are here discussing the motion before us.

Last year, as folks at home know and members of the House know, we learned of allegations that Sustainable Development

Technology Canada, or SDTC, the organization the government entrusted to administer its billion-dollar green slush fund, was grossly mismanaging this fund. When a former employee blew the whistle, the government commissioned Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton to inquire about the allegations. Its report later confirmed a number of those allegations to be true.

If we fast-forward from that point to December 11, 2023, one of those employees testified at the industry committee. This former employee outlined that tens of millions of taxpayer dollars were misspent by SDTC. Alongside that, there were conflicts of interest, and senior-level managers were playing favourites. On top of all of that, when concerns were raised, complaints were never taken seriously and were always swept under the rug. This is the testimony that was heard at committee.

• (1345)

The whistle-blower made it clear that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and his office had known about the corruption within Sustainable Development Technology Canada and had helped to cover it up. The whistle-blower said, “The minister said, on the record and multiple times, that he was briefed on the outcome only on August 27, but that’s definitely not true.” He also went on to say:

The minister and PCO [which is the Privy Council Office] have been aware of this file longer than they are telling the public. There is documented evidence that they even engaged with everyone at ISED to make sure there were edits to the briefings before they were officially sent to them.

All of this is backed up by documents, transcripts and recordings, some of which we’ve already submitted to this committee.

That is disgraceful. These are shocking allegations about the improper use of taxpayer dollars. That it would not be taken seriously and that the minister would cover it up is even worse. At that point, the committee also learned that Liberal-appointed members had violated conflict of interest rules. Alongside the committee’s investigation, the Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner were doing their own investigations. Unfortunately, under the government, it has become even more unsurprising what it has allowed to happen under its watch.

As we look to the industry committee’s meeting from January 31 of this year, during that meeting, Leah Lawrence, the former president and CEO of SDTC, told the committee that she had warned the government about the board chair’s conflict of interest. That is very clear. The government was warned about this conflict of interest. She had also told the committee about the chair’s conflicts of interest. However, the chair disregarded that and sent money to her own company.

Ms. Lawrence's testimony also said that she shared those concerns with former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains' office, but the Liberals allowed the chair to stay in charge. Despite Liberal claims that they only learned about the abuse of the fund this year, Ms. Lawrence's testimony made very clear to all parliamentarians, and indeed, all Canadians, that they have known about it since 2019, which was five years ago.

I will also note that, at that time, the NDP-Liberal government and the Bloc Québécois were refusing to get documents from SDTC that would expose the level of corruption at this organization. Disclosure documents had also gone missing, or were filled out after the fact when the probe asked for them. A report into SDTC said the conflict of interest policy was "inconsistently applied".

If we are going through the timeline, as we have been doing, and we fast-forward a bit more to June 4 of this year, the Auditor General released a damning report about Sustainable Development Technology Canada. She, the Auditor General, found the government had turned SDTC into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. She also found that SDTC had awarded funding to projects that were ineligible and where conflicts of interest existed. In total, 123 million dollars' worth of contracts were found to have been given inappropriately, with \$59 million being given to projects that never should have been awarded any money at all.

On top of this, the Auditor General discovered that conflicts of interest were connected to approval decisions. As a consequence of this, nearly \$76 million in funding was awarded to projects where there was a connection to the Liberals' friends who had been appointed to roles within SDTC, while \$12 million in funding was given to projects that were both ineligible and had a conflict of interest. In fact, the Auditor General discovered that long-established conflict of interest policies were not followed in 90 instances. In one case, the Prime Minister's hand-picked chair siphoned off over \$200,000 to her own company.

• (1350)

The Auditor General made it very clear that the blame for this scandal lies directly at the feet of the Prime Minister's industry minister, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were being awarded to Liberal insiders. He utterly failed in his duty to protect the Canadian taxpayer.

Following the revelation from the Auditor General's report, common-sense Conservatives put forward a motion that required the government, SDTC and the Auditor General to hand over all relevant documents that are in their possession related to this scandal. They had to do so within 30 days of the motion being adopted. The motion passed on June 10; go figure, only Liberal MPs opposed it.

That brings us to today and why we are discussing this issue. Since the adoption of the order, the Liberals have refused to comply. That is really what it comes down to. As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, they could end all of this. The Liberals could get the House back working on their legislative priorities, if we can call them that. However, they are choosing to hold up their priorities because their only priority right now is to ensure that Canadians do not get answers and that there is no accountability for this scandal.

Privilege

The Conservative House leader raised a question of privilege. In the days leading up to the Speaker's ruling, the government tried to justify its defiance. It argued that Parliament may have exceeded its authority when it adopted the order. In the ruling, the Speaker noted:

The procedural precedents and authorities are abundantly clear. The House has the undoubted right to order the production of any and all documents from any entity or individual it deems necessary to carry out its duties. Moreover, these powers are a settled matter, at least as far as the House is concerned. They have been confirmed and reconfirmed by my immediate predecessors, as well as those more distantly removed.

He also quoted page 985 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which I will quote for the benefit of members of the House. It states:

No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers....

That brings me back to the privileges we, as members of the House, enjoy, whether individually or collectively as a chamber. In this case, it is clear that the government is violating one of our collective privileges as members of Parliament. Unfortunately, this is not the first time the government has refused to comply with an order of the House. Many previous speakers have also highlighted this.

Many of us will remember the Winnipeg lab scandal. How could we forget? At the time, the House again ordered, among other things, that the government hand over all relevant documents. Just as it is doing now, the government refused to comply with the order and instead tried to suggest that it complied with the order by sending the documents to the Prime Minister-controlled National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. The Speaker at the time ruled that this was not acceptable since said committee was not a parliamentary committee.

What the government did next, however, was really shocking. It took the Speaker to court to argue that the government had the legal authority to withhold documents requested by the House. The government taking the Speaker to court is absolutely unheard of. There was never a court ruling, because the government called an early and unnecessary pandemic election shortly after, which effectively cancelled the order to produce those documents. However, this shows just how far the government will go to disregard the will of Parliament and, by extension, the will of all Canadians, who brought us to this place and who elected us as members of Parliament to represent them.

Privilege

• (1355)

It is beyond unacceptable that the government has continued to defy the House order to hand over the documents. The government has caused this place to be in gridlock or, as we have heard, paralyzed for almost three weeks now, and it begs the question of whether the documents are damaging to the government.

An hon. member: They must be.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I heard one of my colleagues say they must be. The Liberals do not want to talk about moving any of their agenda items forward. They do not want to talk about the issues facing Canadians day to day. They would rather Parliament be completely focused on this issue than comply with the order and be accountable to Canadians.

Unfortunately, this issue of corruption and scandal within the Liberal government is not new. I mentioned the Winnipeg Lab scandal, but the list goes on. This has become a trend with the government, to the point that many Canadians have almost become numb to these scandals. If we ask Canadians on the street how they feel about the Liberal government scandal, they ask which one, because there are so many to choose from.

I would like to share some of them, and unfortunately, this is a very small subset of the scandals the government has found itself in. It certainly is not an exhaustive list.

We all remember the Aga Khan vacation, when the Prime Minister accepted a family vacation to a private island of the Aga Khan, a wealthy leader who happened to have lobbied the government on several occasions. The Prime Minister was found guilty of ethics violations there.

There was also the cash for access fundraisers, where the Prime Minister held private fundraisers for wealthy donors who could pay for access to him as the Prime Minister and to his senior ministers. These events led to allegations that the donors were effectively buying access to decision-makers.

There is more. The Prime Minister also found himself in hot water when he charged taxpayers \$6,000 per night for his hotel room while in England attending the funeral of Queen Elizabeth.

One of the more well-known scandals, the WE Charity scandal, draws a lot of similarities to the SDTC green slush fund scandal, in particular with money being given where a conflict of interest exists. In the WE Charity case, the Ethics Commissioner found that then finance minister Bill Morneau broke the law by violating the Conflict of Interest Act.

Finally, we have the SNC-Lavalin scandal, where the Prime Minister and other senior officials tried to pressure then attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould to intervene in a criminal case against SNC-Lavalin. When she refused, she was kicked out of cabinet and out of caucus. The Prime Minister was found guilty once again by the Ethics Commissioner.

This has become a pattern with the Liberal government, and it has caused a lot of Canadians to become incredibly frustrated or perhaps even jaded with politicians in general, because all they see is scandal after scandal coming from the government.

I want to end my speech with a message to Canadians. This is not how their government should be ran. Their government should not be caught up in scandal after scandal, improperly spending taxpayer dollars and trying to cover it up or trying to give money to well-connected Liberal insiders. That is why the Conservatives are going to keep fighting for Canadians by getting to the bottom of this scandal. Canadians deserve to know what is in the documents the government is hiding, and anyone who broke the law should be prosecuted.

It is clear the government is not worth the cost or the corruption and that only common-sense Conservatives will take action to clean up this mess. Above all, it is time for a carbon tax election so that Canadians can elect a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, stop the crime and stop the corruption.

• (1400)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to Canadians following that to indicate that, from the government's perspective, the Conservative Party is the one that is actually playing games, at a great expense. The Conservatives have chosen not to allow a vote on the motion that everyone else wants to vote on. Rather, they want to filibuster their own motion because they do not want it to go to committee, even though that was the ruling of the Chair.

Having said that, the member talked about nothing new. I could talk about Harper's corruption and how the current Conservative leader was directly involved with abuses of powers and so forth, including contempt of Parliament.

My question to the member is related to a very important issue of foreign interference. All of the leaders in the House of Commons today have the necessary security clearance, except for the leader of the Conservative Party, who refuses. Is it because there are serious allegations of foreign interference in the leadership race that he won? This is a very serious issue. Is it because there are other names among the Conservative parliamentarians that are there that he does not want to know about? Instead, he chirps from his seat, "Give us the names", knowing full well that we cannot provide those names.

What is the Conservative Party leader hiding from Canadians that he is so scared of getting the security clearance? Why not?

Privilege

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, it is always amusing to listen to the member for Winnipeg North. He spoke about many things, and, of course, the security clearance was the crux of his question. Our leader has been clear that he will gladly be getting the same kind of briefing that The Washington Post received, which is the same kind of briefing that the Prime Minister is willing to give when it suits his political benefit.

When it comes to the issue, the government has to stop playing games. The member for Winnipeg North knows full well that the Prime Minister has the authority, the knowledge and the power, if he chooses, to release the names. The Prime Minister has to release the names so that Canadians and all parliamentarians know them and that the appropriate action can be taken.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us be honest. Technically speaking, we are doing the work that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs should be doing, that is, receiving questions of privilege. I have been here quite a number of years now. I think that all of my colleagues who want what is best for their voters are unanimous in feeling it is time to move on.

I have a hard time understanding how the opposition can be so dead set on obtaining information it can use to take down the current government that it is filibustering its own motion. We could already have referred the whole matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs by now.

Is there something fishy going on? I do not get it.

● (1405)

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I would have to disagree with my colleague's presentation of her question. As I mentioned off the top, this is my first opportunity to rise in this place since I have been back, so there certainly is no filibuster. I am honoured and pleased to be speaking to an important issue.

What it really comes down to is that it is up to the government. If the Liberals hand over the documents, we are back to regularly scheduled programming in this place, where we can hold the government to account and they can move forward with their own legislative agenda. They are choosing to keep Parliament paralyzed because they do not want to be accountable to Canadians. I think that raises questions of how damaging this evidence truly is.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in this corner of the House, the NDP is supporting the motion. We want to get to the bottom of the SDTC scandal, as when NDP MPs played a key role in making sure we got to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal and the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

It is a bit rich for Conservatives to be pointing the finger at the Liberals when their own past is so tarnished by corruption and scandals. During the Harper majority regime, we had much bigger scandals that were covered up by Conservatives. I just have to mention them, because I think it is important to come back to them. The ETS scandal was \$400 million; we never got to the bottom of it. The G8 scandal was \$1 billion; we were never able to get answers because the Harper regime shut down any inquiries. The Phoenix

pay scandal was \$2.2 billion. The anti-terrorism funding, in the complete absence of a paper trail, was over \$3 billion.

I could mention many other scandals, but I am limited by time. The point is this: scandals are not only at the federal level but at the provincial level, with the Doug Ford Conservative government in Ontario. Now we about hear about Gary Grewal, a Saskatchewan conservative MLA, who basically stole from taxpayers three-quarters of a million dollars.

Will Conservatives apologize for all of the scandals they have been involved in, and will they commit to acting differently than they have acted in the past?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, with great respect to the member opposite, I was elected to this place in 2019. My first opportunity to vote was actually in 2019 as well.

The member likes to talk about all these issues in the past, whether it is the Harper government or the Martin government or the Chrétien government. We can go back, talking about the past, forever.

I was elected to this place to represent my constituents now, and to hold the current government to account. I would encourage my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby to join with our Conservative team in holding the government to account instead of continually propping up the Liberal government. Their formal coalition may not quite be intact, but we know the NDP is going to continue to bail out the Liberals every opportunity it gets.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to build on the question from our Bloc colleague to my Conservative colleague about the accusations of holding things up.

My colleague got a question from the member for Winnipeg North, and I think if we check the records, the person who spoke more to this privilege motion in the House is the Liberal member from Winnipeg North. The Liberal Party was putting up speakers to this motion just a couple of days ago. When we have had the member for Winnipeg North speaking to this to the tune of likely over two hours, two and a half hours, I question who is actually filibustering what. Would my colleague like to comment on that?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to comment on that. I want to thank my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for his great work in this place and for that important question, because that is just it.

As I mentioned in my speech, these documents must be very troublesome for the government if it is willing to go to these lengths. The Liberals are willing to hold up their own legislative agenda. They are willing to put up speakers and keep this debate going for even longer than it needs to, because they do not want this issue to be resolved. They do not want transparency for Canadians and I think all Canadians should be very worried about that.

Privilege

• (1410)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the arguments from the other side during the debate. It is a packed house for a late Friday afternoon. I want to thank everyone who is in the gallery. Those in TV land cannot see but the gallery is packed today. I want to thank those who are tuning in from TV land for watching this.

I want to remind everybody who is watching and those who are in the gallery listening that the House is their House. The 338 members of Parliament are elected to be their voice, elected to hold the government accountable. We are here because of the theft of about \$400 million of taxpayer funds given to the government. The Auditor General found 186 conflicts of interest with respect to that theft of over \$400 million for this slush fund.

The other reason we are here is that the Speaker ordered that papers be printed and given to the House so that an investigation can take place. What was seen? What was seen were thousands upon thousands of papers of redacted information. As a matter of fact, the Liberals at the time asked why we did not just let the committee study this. I said, if somebody steals from us, do we go to a committee or do we go to the RCMP? Essentially, that is what we are talking about: theft.

It is interesting. The government is more interested in funnelling money to its Liberal insiders and friends. It is great to be a Liberal insider, a friend, a family member or related to somebody on the front bench or within the House on the Liberal side. They get the contract, the job or the appointment. It is the same thing that we have seen over the last nine years of the government.

Our colleagues from the NDP will stand up and carry the water for the Liberals, of course, because guess what? It is the NDP's scandal, too. It has been propping the government up for the last four years.

NDP members stand up and wax on, that it is the Conservatives this and Stephen Harper that. They are just as guilty as our Liberal colleagues across the floor. They are complicit in the scandals and the corruption.

As was noted earlier on by my hon. colleague, and it was a backhanded slap for all of us here, the 2019 election was his first election to vote in, and, as a matter of fact, he got elected himself. I think he was the youngest member of Parliament ever voted in, or close.

Canadians are struggling to get by, while these Liberals are only focused on enriching the lives of their friends and their families. They would say that Canadians have never had it so good. I will ask all of those in the gallery or those in TV land to take a look at our communities. Take a look just outside this building. Just down the street, does it look the same as it did nine years ago? Does our community look the same as it did just nine years ago? No.

It is the government's failed policies that have turned our streets into war zones, that have allowed billions of dollars to be spent on failed policies. Over 47,000 Canadians have lost their lives to overdose yet the government continues to hand out taxpayer-funded drugs.

In British Columbia, my home province, the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 18 years of age is overdose. It surpasses suicides, natural causes and death by accidents. That is staggering.

• (1415)

We heard earlier today from reports out of Quebec that it is the same thing there. Children as young as 11 are becoming addicted to government-funded drugs given out at safe supply clinics. It is shocking, but that is the legacy of the Prime Minister, his government and our NDP colleagues. That is what they have supported.

This did not start today with the green slush fund fiasco. This has been a nine-year pattern of incompetence and avoiding accountability and transparency. Unfortunately, the NDP and the Bloc are still supporting the Prime Minister, even after all his blunders and after he has failed Canadians for nine years. As a matter of fact, the government has the most ethics violations in all of our country's history. They include the Aga Khan scandal and the WE Charity scandal, where the Conservatives caught the government funnelling over a billion dollars to a charity. How many recovery beds for Canadians struggling with addiction would that billion dollars have funded?

There was also SNC-Lavalin, where my friend Jody Wilson-Raybould, our first indigenous female attorney general, spoke truth to power. She did not allow undue pressure from the Prime Minister and his officers to interfere in a court case to protect the Prime Minister's friends.

There was blackface. The Prime Minister has worn blackface so many times that he has lost count.

There was the clam scam, where the former minister of fisheries took a fishing quota away from a community, Grand Bank, Newfoundland. I just received a message from its great mayor, Rex, asking how I am. Grand Bank developed a surf clam fishery, but the former minister of fisheries decided he would take the quota away from that community, which almost lost 500 jobs, and award it to an organization that did not have first nations business partners and interests despite saying it did. It also said it had a boat, but it did not. What did it have? It had a member of the minister's family. A sitting Liberal member of Parliament's brother was part of it too, and a former Liberal minister was one of the partners in the business. That is what we have to deal with every day. That is our government. That is the current Liberal government.

We have arrive scam, the cash for access affair and the Emergencies Act too. For the first time in the history of our country, a government instituted the Emergencies Act and turned on Canadians, our own people. We have a Prime Minister who chose during the terrible time of the pandemic not to unite Canadians but divide them based on whether they were vaccinated or unvaccinated. He actually used these words: Why should we tolerate these people? That is unbelieve.

Do not even get me started on reconciliation. In 2015, when the Prime Minister, then the member for Papineau, was campaigning, he promised that we would have the most open and forthwith government in the history of our country under his governance. He said the relationship with first nations would be the most important of his government. He stood there and with his hand dabbed away a fake tear. However, all we have seen is that he has pitted first nation against non-first nation and first nation against first nation. That is what these guys do. The Liberals choose to divide.

● (1420)

If someone does not get along with the Liberals' ideology and does not believe the same thing they do, the Liberals will not respect them for it. They will call them a racist, a homophobe, far right or alt right. Is it alt right to want to make life more affordable for Canadians? Is it alt right to want to bring our loved ones, who are struggling with addictions, home?

We talk about crime being up and time being up. I want to bring this back to my riding of Cariboo—Prince George. My own community is suffering under this radical, incompetent NDP-Liberal government. Instead of dealing with the crime and corruption it unleashed on our streets, the Liberals would rather line their friends' pockets.

Just last week one of my constituents, a gentleman by the name of Bob Hubbard, returned home in the middle of the day to find a bunch of drug-addicted criminals basically looting his house. In his efforts to stop them, Mr. Hubbard was dragged down the road by these criminals, who then ran him over and left him for dead. Mr. Hubbard is lying in the hospital right now in Vancouver. The extent of Mr. Hubbard's injuries are such that he has had to have facial reconstruction surgery. They are considering having to amputate his arm. He has broken ribs and a flail chest. He is going to have to have numerous surgeries. The RCMP managed to catch one of these criminals, but less than 24 hours later, that criminal was back on the streets.

That is this government's record. Criminals who should be locked up are out on bail due to the Prime Minister's hug-a-thug revolving door justice system. We need jail, not bail, when it comes to violent offenders.

After nine years, violent crime is up 50% and gun violence is up 116%. That is this government's record. In 2022, 29% of all murders were committed by offenders who were released from jail early. This week, the police associations in Toronto, Vancouver and Surrey all came out to call out this government's B.S. on its gun policies.

The Toronto Police Association said:

Privilege

Criminals did not get your message. Our communities are experiencing a 45% increase in shootings and a 62% increase in gun-related homicides compared to this time last year. What difference does your handgun ban make when 85% of guns seized by our members can be sourced to the United States?

The Vancouver Police Union said, “Guessing [the Prime Minister is] not aware of the ongoing gang war here in B.C. which is putting both our members and public at risk on a daily basis.”

The Surrey Police union said, “The federal handgun freeze fails to address the real issue: the surge of illegal firearms coming across our borders and ending up in the hands of violent criminals.” This NDP-Liberal government is turning our communities into war zones, and it is making them unsafe for Canadians.

In other news from my riding, in the fall of 2021, I spoke of a gentleman in the community of Vanderhoof in my riding. He had decided that he was going to go out and hunt RCMP. He terrorized a small community. He shot up the detachment, firing large-calibre rounds into it, narrowly missing both enlisted and civilian members of the RCMP. To this day, despite promises from the front bench, Vanderhoof is still waiting for a new RCMP detachment. The detachment that it has still has bullet holes. That is shameful.

News broke last night of that gentleman who had shot up the RCMP detachment and hunted RCMP members. He not only did that, but also terrorized the streets of Vanderhoof. Last night, we found out that his sentence has been cut in half to only five years, and this is for shooting at a building full of police officers and vulnerable staff. That is staggering.

● (1425)

According to one article,

The union which represents 20,000 RCMP officers across Canada said the appeal decision sends a horrible message to the public.

“This is a slap in the face to all of us,” Jeff Swann with the National Police Federation told Global News.

“This is high-powered rounds that take people’s lives and the verdict is insulting. It’s unfathomable given the current environment that our police officers face.”

Canada's justice system is broken under the NDP-Liberals. Only Conservatives will bring home jail, not bail, and stop the crime.

Privilege

Two million Canadians are lining up at food banks each month because of the NDP-Liberal government's inflationary policies and carbon tax. I would again ask the people who are listening in how many tent encampments they have in their communities and if they had them nine years ago. Over 1,400 tent encampments have crept up in Ontario. In my home province of British Columbia, we are seeing tent encampments at rest areas along the highways. Life has become unaffordable for most Canadians after nine years. Instead of fixing the problem and what they broke, the Liberals get caught wasting more taxpayer dollars to funnel to their green slush fund. That \$400 million could have gone a long way to fixing some of these policies and challenges we face in our communities.

I mentioned earlier that over 47,000 Canadians lost their lives to overdose since 2016. Overdose is the leading cause of death for youths aged 10 to 18 in my home province of British Columbia. This crisis has been exacerbated by failed Liberal-NDP policies, including experiments such as so-called safe supply and the decriminalization of deadly drugs in B.C.

Two weeks ago, we saw the parents of Brianna MacDonald. She had just turned 13 years of age, and she died from an overdose in a homeless encampment in Abbotsford, B.C. Masha Krupp testified yesterday; she is an Ottawa mother whose daughter died from an overdose and whose son is addicted to government-funded hydro-morphone. How can the government members live with themselves when they spend a billion dollars on failed drug policies to perpetuate addictions and make overdose worse, rather than investing in treatment and recovery for our loved ones?

The bottom line is that the NDP-Liberal government has now frozen the business of the House with the green slush fund scandal. It could end this right now by handing over the documents that Parliament requested, so we can allow the RCMP to do its job and arrest the Liberal cronies at SDTC. Instead, it is trying to cover its tracks and defend the corrupt behaviour of its friends. Meanwhile, our country is broken and hurting.

Only common-sense Conservatives will fix what the Prime Minister has broken. Time is up. It is time for the government and the Prime Minister to face and call for a carbon tax election. Let us bring it home.

The Deputy Speaker: Having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume the consideration of the privilege motion at 11 a.m. on Monday, October 28.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 94, I wish to inform hon. members that Private Members' Business will be suspended on that day.

• (1430)

[*English*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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