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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SCOTT HOGARTH

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, it is my honour to pay tribute to *Hanshi* Scott Hogarth, an 11-time world champion and black belt in seven martial arts disciplines, a champion of Milton's martial arts community, an inaugural inductee of our local Milton sports hall of fame, a dedicated sensei, a beloved father and husband, and a true master of his craft. Scott passed away peacefully on October 28, surrounded by his family, including his wife, Tammy.

In 1993, Scott opened his dojo in Milton, not only teaching martial arts but also instilling values of respect, discipline and perseverance in countless students for decades since. Scott's larger-than-life presence inspired many, and he was known for his infectious enthusiasm and commitment to the well-being of others. His legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of those he worked with, both in the dojo and in the community.

As we remember Scott today, let us celebrate his love of Milton, his extraordinary dedication to our community and the profound impact he had on so many people's lives. He will be dearly missed, but his influence will endure. For my friend Scott, we will always give it 110%.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, when I raised concerns about the government's failed drug strategy, I was slammed for giving a voice to Canadians

living with the consequences of its failure. This is what happens when we speak truth to the regressive left, so intent is it on protecting policies that sound good but are harmful in practice. It vilifies anyone who challenges its radical ideology.

This included parents concerned about their children's safety, seniors tired of thefts and break-ins, and business owners fed up with staff being assaulted. We were called NIMBYs, or “not in my backyards”, when the truth is our yards are full of crime, needles and drugs. However, we have persevered in our fight for safer communities, and the Ontario government acted to protect children by closing drug sites within 200 metres of schools and day cares.

Ontario has taken the first step; it is time for the government to finish the job and to do so now. We can all read the polls. We know the Liberals are going to lose the next election, so they should leave with some dignity, do the right thing, listen to experts and reform safe supply before even more Canadians are hurt.

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• (1405)

LUNG CANCER

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one in 15 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer. Lung cancer affects thousands of Canadian families, including my own. It is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada, and one of the least survivable, with only a 22% five-year survival rate. Many Canadians would be surprised to know that lung cancer kills more Canadians than prostate cancer, breast cancer and colon cancer combined. It is usually undetectable until its final stages.

Stigma remains because of the association between lung cancer and smoking, which may explain discrepancies in research and treatment funding compared with other cancers. While smoking is a factor in 70% of lung cancer cases, nearly 30% of patients have never smoked. If one has lungs, one can get lung cancer. I ask Canadians to treat all cancer patients with compassion and with the best hopes for new, life-prolonging therapies to add years of survival for our loved ones.

*Statements by Members***PERSONS DAY**

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recently celebrated national Persons Day, when we remember the Famous Five, prominent Canadian suffragists who advocated for the rights of women and children during the 1880s and 1890s. Their efforts culminated in the landmark case of *Edwards v. Canada* on October 18, 1929, when the eligibility of women to sit in the Senate chambers here in Canada was recognized.

Emily Murphy, Henrietta Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney and Irene Parlby have been immortalized in marble outside the current Senate chambers for us to see daily. I am honoured to rise in this chamber today, alongside many women I am proud to call colleagues, as we recognize this special day and the women who came before us on this journey.

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[Translation]

FRANÇOIS GERVAIS

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to talk about François Gervais, a staff member at Oka Secondary School, who recently opted for phased retirement after an accomplished career.

For nearly 40 years, Mr. Gervais touched the lives of hundreds of young people. Some of them still talk to me today about his initiatives, such as setting up a fair trade store, creating a student environment committee, establishing a humanitarian action committee in the wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and building bridges with the Kanesatake school to forge ties with the entire community.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gervais in May 2023, when he accompanied a group of students here to Parliament Hill to draw our attention to the issue of femicide. I remember him as a fine man with a profound desire to raise young people's awareness of the challenges of tomorrow.

On behalf of all my constituents, I want to thank Mr. Gervais for his unshakable faith in our wonderful young people and in our future. Above all, I wish him a happy retirement.

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FÉDÉRATION DE L'UPA OUTAOUAIS-LAURENTIDES

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Outaouais-Laurentians branch of the Fédération de l'UPA is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. I would like to highlight the important work it has accomplished for farmers in the Laurentians and Outaouais, which includes my riding. This branch represents some 2,259 farms and their 3,410 farmers and therefore accounts for nearly 10% of all farm businesses in Quebec.

I would like to thank the team, led by president Stéphane Alary, a Luskville dairy and field crop farmer, for choosing to celebrate the federation's 60th anniversary in my riding. A banquet is being held this evening at the Château Montebello, and I will be pleased and proud to welcome them to Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

I wish the Outaouais-Laurentians branch of the Fédération de l'UPA a happy 60th anniversary and many more to come.

POLICING

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the police officers who serve our communities, uphold the law and protect our families. For all this, they deserve our gratitude.

[English]

Policing is an honourable profession. Every day, officers put their own safety at risk to keep our country safe. My community of Durham is home to police who work in the Durham region, Toronto, York region, Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes police services, as well as the RCMP.

We thank them. I encourage all young Canadians with a heart for public service to consider a career in policing, where some of the best and brightest in our country protect and serve.

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● (1410)

GLOBAL ROBOTICS COMPETITION WINNERS

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to share that an all-girls team from Darcel Avenue Sr. Public School, located in Malton, has won first place at the World Robot Olympiad in Italy.

Known as the “Forest Guardians”, Chathak, Melanie, Chitra and Rubanya created the Blaze-Bot, designed to sense wildfires in their early stages and alert local fire stations before it is too late. Under the coaching of their French immersion teacher, Priya Parekh, and the support of their librarian, Lidia Marcelli, the fantastic Forest Guardians made history as the first-ever Canadian team to take the top spot at this competition. When I look at their faces, I know, with deep conviction, that their futures will help determine no less than the destiny that the nation will fulfill.

It is clear to me that the future of Mississauga—Malton is bright and promising. I invite all parliamentarians to join me in congratulating them and celebrating their significant achievement.

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OPIOIDS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in even our smallest communities in the Northwest Territories, the drug trade and accompanying addiction issues have reached a boiling point. Our community members, many dealing with trauma, are facing predatory dealers, who will sell to anyone to ensure they become repeat customers. It does not matter if we live in a city, town, village, hamlet or charter community. People are struggling to ensure that communities of all sizes are safe and healthy places to live.

Statements by Members

The Government of Canada must continue to work with the Government of Northwest Territories, community and indigenous governments to create and strengthen tools to disrupt and combat the drug trade and provide support and aftercare options that work for northerners. To protect our residents at risk, we need all levels of government at the table to end the drug crisis that is harming our families and our communities. *Mahsi cho.*

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JASON KUREK

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on September 27, my father, Jason Felix Kurek, unexpectedly and suddenly passed away at age 54.

My dad was a good man. He chose life. He always worked hard and gave generously even when he did not have much to give. He loved farming, a type of work that creates a bond that few will understand. He built deep friendships from the field to Parliament Hill. He lived with humility and grace, showing us that faith in Jesus is shown by love and care. Although kind, he never backed down. On the hockey ice or elsewhere, he stood for what was right and the values that built this country. He was a devoted husband to Mom for 35 years. He was a loving father, and he adopted his kids-in-law like his own. He was a seriously proud papa.

Our family and community lost a truly good man. I thank everyone for their support during these difficult weeks, both in Consort and here. In the midst of our grief, my hope is that everyone can remember my dad, Jay, by living with the strength, generosity and faith he showed us.

I love you, Dad. Until we meet again.

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LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across this country are deeply concerned by the Conservative Party's lack of attention to India's criminal activities and interference in Canada.

Yesterday at the public safety and national security committee, Conservative members had the opportunity to engage with senior officials but chose to focus on everything other than the actions of the Government of India and the security of Canadians.

At this critical time, not a single question has been raised in the House by the opposition leader regarding the safety of Canadians. He has failed to hold a press conference, delegating a statement through his MPs, which reflects a disturbing level of disengagement. He remains without security clearance, hindering his ability to gain a complete understanding of national security issues.

Canadians deserve better.

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● (1415)

HOUSING

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Liberal-NDP government is not worth

the cost of housing. The housing minister has allocated \$8 billion of taxpayer money to housing programs that have built zero homes, like the failed housing accelerator fund. The only things it has accelerated are tent encampments, rent and headlines like this one: "Priced out of rental market, Midland senior lives in her shed".

Common-sense Conservatives have a plan. We would cut the GST on all new builds under \$1 million. This would save Canadians \$40,000 on homes with an \$800,000 value. In Ontario, government taxes account for 30% of housing prices. Enough with taxing people into poverty and hopelessness. Our compassionate, common-sense plan would stop the Liberals from forcing people to put up tents as housing. We would axe the tax and start building the homes.

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HOUSING

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, they are not worth the cost of their failed housing programs that have only doubled the cost of rent, mortgages and down payments. Housing starts have dropped across the country and the Liberals' own forecast says they are only going to get worse in the years to come. That is why our bold, common-sense Conservative plan to axe the GST on new homes sold was so well received this week.

LiUNA says it is good policy. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness says it is "smart". The Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association and BILD in the GTA both say our tax cut would instantly make a significant improvement in housing affordability. It is because on an \$800,000 new house, it would save homebuyers \$40,000 plus \$2,200 a year in mortgage payments, and it would spark 30,000 extra new homes in this country each year.

Instead of funding photo ops, more bureaucracy and less home-building, it is time to bring home more homes for Canadians.

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LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard from top national security and law enforcement officials on the extent of the Indian government's interference in Canada, including serious criminal activities, extortion and the murders of Canadian citizens.

Statements by Members

Canadians from across the country are shaken and scared of this blatant attack on our democracy and on their safety. Despite the concerning evidence, Canadians still have not heard directly from the leader of the Conservative Party on this issue. His silence has been noted in the House and now it is being noticed in committees.

Canadian citizens have died at the hands of a foreign government. What will it take for the leader of the Conservative Party to give this issue the seriousness that it deserves?

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. An early screening can catch harder-to-find cancers like triple-negative breast cancer, or TNBC, which is more frequently diagnosed in patients under 50.

Those diagnosed with TNBC represent anywhere from 10% to 20% of the overall breast cancer population, and TNBC is more likely to affect Black and Hispanic women. Most people have never heard of TNBC and some Canadians are not even aware there are different types of breast cancer. We need to greatly improve awareness of triple-negative breast cancer and all breast cancers, and ensure more equitable access to screening and treatments. More education, earlier screening and earlier detection mean greater chance of survival.

In closing, I want to recognize friends and breast cancer survivors from Port Moody—Coquitlam: the unstoppable Captain Jenn Dawkins, my wonderful neighbour Hilla Shavit and retired Captain Paula Faedo.

* * *

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

MEMBER FOR MONTARVILLE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a distinguished member of the House who was first elected in Verchères in 1993 at the age of 28, in his very first election under the Bloc Québécois banner.

He was re-elected without interruption until he made the leap to the National Assembly in 2005, where he notably served as public safety minister from 2012 to 2014. After taking a short break from politics in 2018, he returned to his first love and ran under the Bloc Québécois banner in the 2019 election. No doubt members have gathered that I am talking about the current member for Montarville. Known for his relentless drive, strong work ethic and complete devotion to his constituents, he has always been held in high esteem by his colleagues.

He took everyone by surprise when he announced that he would not seek another term in the next election. We will no doubt miss having him on the Hill, but we are delighted to know that he will remain a proud supporter of Quebec independence.

I congratulate the member for Montarville on his 30 years of service. I thank him for all he has done.

[*English*]

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is only one guy left keeping the Prime Minister in power. That is the leader of the NDP, the stuntman who scammed voters right before a by-election. Do members remember his big stunt when he told Canadians he ripped up his coalition deal with the Liberals? In fact, he said, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”.

The leader of the NDP is all talk and is selling out to keep the Prime Minister in power. He voted for the carbon tax 24 times, the same one that sends Canadians to food banks in record numbers, with over two million visits in a single month. He supports the inflationary deficits, voting to fund corruption like the Prime Minister's \$60-million arrive scam. Every day the Prime Minister remains in power is because of the leader of the NDP.

It is time for a carbon tax election so Canadians can fire the costly and corrupt NDP-Liberal government.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently I spoke in the House about the growth of radical far-right movements. They have organized disinformation campaigns, impacted how some people and politicians treat others and led to some politicians not acting in the best interests of Canadians.

As the Prime Minister recently said, “we have seen that anti-vax messages during the convoy and during the pandemic were amplified by Russian propaganda, especially in the media of the right”; that this media began spreading “pro-Putin propaganda”; and that Russia Today “is currently funding bloggers and other [You]tube personalities at the right,” such as Tucker Carlson, “in order to amplify messages that are destabilizing democracies.” What this tells us is that some of these far-right movements and opinion leaders are not only harming Canada but doing so at the bidding of Vladimir Putin.

Some of these far-right movements are agents of foreign influence, so I wonder why the Leader of the Opposition will not get his security clearance and take this seriously. I urge us all to take the actions we need to, to stop the influence of these radical far-right movements, because our security, our economy and our freedom depend on it.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

● (1425)

*[Translation]***HOUSING**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada made everyone a promise. It is very simple. If people work hard, they can earn a big paycheque so they can afford food and a home in a safe community, no matter where they come from. This Canadian promise, like so many other things, is broken after nine years of this Prime Minister, who has doubled the cost of housing. This week, I proposed eliminating the GST on new home purchases. Everyone agrees that this will reduce the cost.

Will the Prime Minister accept my common-sense idea?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has a fundamental problem, which is that he can think of only one solution to deal with the challenges he mentioned. His only solution is to cut services, programs and investments for Canadians. His idea of a housing solution is to cut billions of dollars from the investments we are making to build more housing faster. He wants to cut the \$900 million that we are sending to the Quebec government to speed up housing construction in municipalities across Quebec.

It takes investments to build housing, not the cuts and austerity that the Conservative Party is offering.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Prime Minister is against eliminating the GST on housing, because he is the one who doubled the cost. He did that by breaking the immigration system, by printing 700 billion inflationary dollars, by funding the gatekeepers who block construction and by charging new taxes on home building. He did that to create more bureaucracy in Ottawa, a bureaucracy that does not result in any new housing.

Again, will he reimburse the costs related to these failures and accept my common-sense plan to eliminate the GST on housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party's plan is to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from Quebec and cut investments in housing across the country. That is not what Canadians need.

We are investing in housing. We are investing in offering more opportunities for people across the country. He is offering nothing but billions of dollars in cuts to the services and programs that Canadians rely on.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada makes everyone a promise. It is a very simple deal. If they work hard, they get decent food and a good home in a safe neighbourhood. It does not matter where someone comes from; if they work hard, that is what they get. However, that promise, like everything else, is broken after nine years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister. He has doubled housing costs. That is why I came forward with a now widely celebrated idea to axe the GST sales tax on new homes, saving up to \$50,000 on the cost of a new home.

Will the Prime Minister accept my common-sense plan to axe the tax and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Conservative leader is offering at a time when Canadians need support is cuts. He is proposing to cut billions of dollars of investments in housing across the country that would increase densification, cut red tape and accelerate the construction of homes and apartments that Canadians need.

He is offering cuts. He is offering austerity. He is saying that everything is broken, and then he is thinking that cuts to services, programs and investments are what is going to help Canadians. That is not responsible leadership.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I propose to cut bureaucracy and taxes. Let us axe the sales tax on new homes, saving up to \$50,000 on a new home. That is a savings of almost \$2,700 per year in lower mortgage payments. By contrast, the Prime Minister offers a multi-billion dollar housing bureaucracy in Ottawa that his own housing minister admits does not build homes.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to his own housing minister and accept my common-sense plan to axe the tax and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the most fundamental responsibilities of any Canadian prime minister is the safety of Canadians. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition has failed at his responsibility to keep his own MPs safe from foreign interference.

I have asked the security services to figure out a way to give some information to the Leader of the Opposition so he can actually fulfill his responsibility of protecting Canadians, including those within his own caucus. It would be easier if he got his security clearance, but I have asked them to give him some information nonetheless.

● (1430)

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman to please not take the floor.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Prime Minister has told his caucus that he is not sleeping. He is pulling his hair out with stress because of his caucus' revolting against him. Now he is spreading tin-hat conspiracy theories rather than answering the question.

Oral Questions

Eighty per cent of Canadians now believe that home ownership is only for the very rich after the Prime Minister has doubled the cost of housing in nine years. I came forward with a common-sense plan to axe the GST on new homes, saving up to \$50,000 on a new home.

Why will the Prime Minister not accept my plan to axe the tax and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party just put forward a plan to cut billions of dollars of investment in housing across the country.

However, in regard to issues of national security, it is extraordinarily difficult to have a leader of the Conservative Party refuse to get the necessary security briefings that will allow him to protect his own MPs and indeed protect our Canadian democracy. Therefore I have asked security services to figure out a way to share some information, perhaps even some names, with the leader of the Conservative Party so he can take action and protect his members.

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[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here is how to lose at politics.

Fully 80% of the population is asking the Prime Minister to increase old age security for seniors aged 65 to 74. Every party voted in favour of it, even his own. Thanks to the Bloc Québécois, the Prime Minister had a unique opportunity to make things fair for seniors, make 80% of people happy and stay in power. He could have killed three birds with one stone. Instead, he chose to abandon seniors, say no to 80% of the population and risk an election. That is zero out of three.

Now does he understand why nobody wants him around anymore?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government invested in seniors by enhancing the guaranteed income supplement by 10%, by increasing old age security for seniors aged 75 and up and by putting in place a dental care program for nearly one million seniors across the country, which is making a huge difference. The Bloc Québécois chose to vote against that dental care program.

If the Bloc Québécois is taking suggestions on how to be popular in politics, I would suggest that it provide dental care to seniors who need it. That might be a good thing to do, rather than following the Conservatives' lead and voting against our seniors.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister could have helped one million Quebec retirees by working with the Bloc Québécois. Instead, he abandoned them to get back together with the NDP, the party that had kicked him out and changed the locks. He went crawling back to a party so out of touch with Quebec that its lone Quebec MP is desperately looking for an out with the City of Montreal. I feel sorry for Montrealers. The Prime Minister could have chosen one million Quebecers. Instead, he chose 25 MPs, 96% of whom are from outside Quebec.

Does he understand that we do not need a secret ballot to know that no one in Quebec trusts him anymore?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is understandable for Quebecers to be worried when they see that the Bloc Québécois has the support of the Conservative Party.

The reality is that we are here to invest in seniors. We were there with dental care, though the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party voted against it. We were there to increase the GIS by 10% for the most vulnerable seniors. It was one of the first things we did as a government. The Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party voted against it. We were there to increase OAS for seniors aged 75 and over, because they have more costs to bear. The Bloc Québécois voted against it.

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● (1435)

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about women. In Alberta, Danielle Smith, the premier, is privatizing health care and giving it to Covenant.

Covenant refuses to give abortions. That is clearly a violation of the Canada Health Act. Does the Prime Minister agree, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are the government that has stood up for women's rights unequivocally across this country, including pulling back transfers to provinces where abortion services and reproductive health were not being delivered. At the same time, we are moving forward with more ways to protect women's rights.

Just yesterday, we presented a ways and means motion that would mean that pregnancy crisis centres would have to disclose whether or not they are actually offering the full suite of reproductive services and rights to women, or whether they would to leave women without support and without choices at an extremely delicate time.

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HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is "her body, her choice", not "her body, the Conservative Party's choice".

[Translation]

The Conservatives have revealed more cuts. This time, they want to cut the affordable housing accelerator fund, and now the Bloc Québécois is prepared to support them. The Bloc Québécois had power, but has still done nothing to resolve Quebec's housing crisis.

People need affordable housing, not infighting. Will the Liberals finally wake up?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the first part of my hon. colleague's question about the fact that the Conservative Party continues to attack women's rights.

I have questions concerning Conservative members from Quebec who stand silently by while anti-choice members of the Conservative Party attack women's rights. We are witnessing the regression of women's rights all over the world, and the Conservative Party is encouraging that through the members it elects.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois leader has literally made no gains for Quebeckers, no gains for seniors, and no gains for farmers. However, he voted nearly 200 times to keep this Prime Minister in power. He voted in favour of \$500 billion in inflationary, bureaucratic, and deficit spending. All the while, Quebeckers are impacted by a doubling of housing costs.

Will the Prime Minister agree to call an election so that Quebeckers can vote for my plan to eliminate the GST on housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I pointed it out in English, but I will repeat it in French. We know that one of the fundamental responsibilities of every elected member of the House is to protect the safety and well-being of all Canadians. However, having inexplicably decided not to get his security clearance, the Conservative leader is putting Canadians at risk, including some of his own MPs.

That is why I have asked intelligence services to share as much information as they can with the Conservative leader so that he can better protect his MPs, despite the fact that, for some unknown reason, he is still refusing to get his security clearance so he can learn what exactly they need.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we would have thought that after the Prime Minister doubled housing costs, doubled the debt, doubled gun crime and now doubled food bank use, the NDP would be pulling its support. After all, its leader said that the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people, yet there he is, still in power. He does not even have the confidence of his own Liberal MPs, but he seems to still have the confidence of the sellout NDP leader.

Will the costly carbon tax coalition stand up in front of Canadians and let people vote in a carbon tax election for change in the future?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, watchers of Canadian politics will remember that last year, Conservative Party members got up pretty much every time they could to talk about national security, to talk about it in a partisan way but to talk about it every chance they could get. Now that we have offered the Leader of the Opposition a security clearance so he can be

fully informed on national security, all they have been able to do is to make political attacks and ask questions of other parties.

Why has the Leader of the Opposition chosen to not get a security clearance when the safety of his own MPs is in the balance?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it looks as if the Prime Minister is worried about his personal political security as his MPs are revolting and trying to push him out of the job, so he is desperately trying to change the channel on the questions I have asked. I think that is unfair though. Those MPs helped the Prime Minister double housing costs, double the debt, double gun crime and double food bank use.

Why will the Prime Minister not turn around, look his MPs in the eye and say that they should stand up for their own record and his and face the music in a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no responsibility by the government is more important than keeping Canadians safe. That is why our security services every single day take actions and work hard to keep Canadians safe.

It is inexplicable to our security services that they cannot let the leader of the Conservative Party know about the threats facing him, his party and our democracy because he refuses to get a security clearance. I have asked the security agencies to look at ways to share at least some information with him, and perhaps some names, so he can protect his colleagues.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if he wants to release the names, he legally can do it now on the floor of the House of Commons. Will he do it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now we are getting somewhere. The Leader of the Opposition is actually engaging on the issue of national security. Unfortunately, he is willing to put at risk the agents, the officers and the sources who are putting their lives at risk to keep Canadians safe.

There is a reason we do not disclose classified information in places where our adversaries are watching and paying attention, but we can release many names and much information to him if he would only get his security clearance so he will be able to keep his own team members safe from foreign interference.

*Oral Questions***LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he will not release the names, because he knows that he and his party are compromised, and he will not answer my question, because right now 24 of his MPs are rebelling against him. They are asking for a secret ballot to fire him. However, as I say, that is not fair. Every one of those MPs helped the Prime Minister create 1,400 homeless encampments in Ontario. Every one of them voted to quadruple the carbon tax. They cannot just throw him out. He cannot just run away. They need to face the music.

Why will we not have a carbon tax election now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for well over a year in the House, just about every question from the Leader of the Opposition was about national security, about foreign interference. We called a commission of inquiry. We have offered security clearances to all leaders. Indeed, the leaders of the Green Party, the NDP and the Bloc have all done the responsible thing; they got their security clearances and top-secret briefings from our security services.

The leader of the Conservative Party chooses to play the pettiest form of politics instead of stepping up on his responsibilities as leader: protecting Canadians, protecting his MPs and protecting our institutions.

* * *

• (1445)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with housing comes security. In Quebec, the cost of housing has doubled. In Montreal, the cost of rent has tripled after nine years of this Prime Minister, who builds bureaucracy, who prints money, who broke the immigration system and who collected taxes from corrupt companies. That is why I proposed a common-sense solution: eliminate the GST on housing. The Prime Minister says he prefers to invest money in bureaucracy. I want to lower taxes for homebuyers.

Can we have an election on the issue of eliminating the GST on housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are extremely perplexed right now.

We know full well, based on stereotypes in any case, that the Conservatives are concerned about law, order, crime, national security and defence. They bring it up all the time during elections, but when there is a real threat to Canadians' security and even the security of his own members, the Conservative leader refuses to get his security clearance and refuses to take his responsibilities for public safety seriously.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every party voted to protect supply management with Bill C-282. Every party has demonstrated with the farmers to call on the Senate

to stop blocking the bill. Everyone is urging senators Boehm and Harder to do their job. Now it is time for the Prime Minister to shoulder his responsibility towards our farmers. He is the one who appointed the senators who are blocking the bill and it is his fault that we are stuck with them.

Will he finally ask these two lords to pass Bill C-282 without delay?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always been very clear on the fact that we would protect supply management.

That is what we did against the Trump administration and that is what we have continued to do. We made a promise to always protect supply management in any free trade negotiation we undertake in the years to come. We are defending supply management and we expect the Senate to pass this bill to ensure that supply management will always be protected in Canada in the future.

We perfectly agree with the Bloc Québécois on this.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Those are fine words, Mr. Speaker. Now, not only has he appointed the senators blocking Bill C-282, but one of them is actually his buddy. Peter Harder brags about it on his Senate page. He says that when the Prime Minister was in opposition, he called the senator several times asking for advice and favours, six months before rewarding him with a seat in the Senate. It was the Prime Minister himself who called him.

If the Prime Minister is able to call him for advice, surely he can call him and tell him to do his job.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the Senate's independence and the important work it does in considering bills and making recommendations. Over the years, we have appointed outstanding senators who are responsible and diligent in their work.

That said, we still expect the Senate to take into consideration the wishes of the House and the decisions made by the House, which voted unanimously to protect supply management in any free trade agreement negotiations. That is what we remain committed to doing.

* * *

• (1450)

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nine years after this Prime Minister promised to end chronic homelessness, it has increased by 38%. Fortunately, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness says that my Conservative plan to scrap the GST on the purchase of housing is, and I quote, smart.

If the Prime Minister really wants to fix the housing crisis that he created, will he listen to the people who work to end homelessness, accept my common-sense plan and scrap the GST on new housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to fight against homelessness, I recommend that the Conservative leader call his friends, the Conservative premiers of Saskatchewan and Ontario, to tell them to accept the money we are putting on the table to fight against homelessness and be done with the encampments that are making people so vulnerable.

That being said, it is interesting to see the Conservative leader absolutely refuse to answer such a simple question. Why is he refusing to get his security clearance to protect our institutions, our democracy and his own colleagues in the Conservative Party of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the West End Home Builders' Association stated that my common-sense Conservative plan to axe the sales tax on new homes under a million dollars is "the most significant housing policy commitment made in the past two decades. Removing the GST shows leadership to cut crippling levels of taxation on new housing, puts money directly back into the pockets of Canadians while combatting the housing crisis."

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to the people who build homes so that we can reverse the crisis he caused? Why do we not axe the sales tax on new homes today?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what shows leadership is taking seriously the safety of Canadians. The RCMP has concluded that the Government of India was involved in the killing of a Canadian on Canadian soil, as well as being involved in extortion, in violence, in drive-by shootings and in home invasions, and the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada refuses to get his security clearance so that he can keep Canadians safe, or even keep his fellow MPs safe. That is why I have asked our security services to find a way to share some information with him so maybe he can do at least a part of his job.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the Prime Minister do any of his job after nine years, such as reversing the housing price increase he caused. Let me quote British Columbia's Victoria Residential Builders Association, which said:

Reducing government costs, including GST, would have a significant impact on housing affordability.

[The Conservative leader]'s suggestion is welcome news, and long overdue if the federal government wants to get serious about housing affordability for Canadians.

This common-sense plan would stimulate 30,000 new extra homes built every year, so will he accept my common-sense plan to axe the tax and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the Conservatives, we always need to look at the fine print underneath the easy slogans, and the fine print on this one is that it would be cutting billions of dollars of investments in housing right across the country at a time where we need to be building more housing more quickly. Cuts are not the solution.

Oral Questions

If he wants to take something seriously, perhaps he should take seriously the issue of national security because, for inexplicable political, childish and who knows what reasons, he refuses to get his security clearance, which would allow him to keep his own MPs safe, to keep Canadians safe, and to keep our democracy and its institutions safe.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nine years after promising he would get rid of chronic homelessness, it has actually risen by 38%. Now there are 1,400 homeless encampments in Ontario. It is almost as bad as it is in NDP-governed British Columbia.

However, there is good news. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness heard about my common-sense plan to axe the GST on housing, and its founder said, "This is smart." Those who are fighting to end homelessness like my solution of axing the sales tax on new homes.

Will he accept my plan to axe the tax and build the homes?

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like I said, if he wants to be helpful on the issue against homelessness, maybe he could give a call to his fellow Conservatives, the premiers of Saskatchewan and Ontario, to agree to accept the money we are putting on the table that they could match to support people living in encampments and fight homelessness effectively on the ground. He will not do that.

What else he will not do is get his security clearance so that he can actually protect his fellow MPs and protect Canadians in this democracy. He refuses to get the security clearance necessary to keep Canadians safe. That is not the kind of leadership Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, systemic anti-Black discrimination is widespread in the public service. In fact, the Treasury Board Secretariat found that the Canadian Human Rights Commission discriminated against Black employees. Instead of supporting these workers, right now the Liberal government is fighting these workers in court.

Will the Prime Minister stop fighting Black employees in court and settle the Thompson class action lawsuit?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in extending the UN International Decade for People of African Descent, this government has done more to recognize systemic bias, systemic discrimination, unconscious bias and anti-Black racism than any other. There is always more to do, which is why we have stepped up with the Black entrepreneurship program. It is responding to the needs of Black communities to access more capital to create the prosperity they so need to be able to create for their communities. We are continuing to invest in anti-Black racism initiatives and continuing to stand with the Black community. There is always more to do, and we will do it.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, abortion is health care. One in three people who can get pregnant will need abortion care in their lifetime. For close to a decade, the Liberal government failed to remove barriers, letting Conservative premiers cut access to abortion, and the Conservative leader secretly voted five times to take away the right to choose. Canadians want to see access to reproductive health care protected.

Why have the Liberals not enforced the Canada Health Act to protect equal access to health care, including abortion?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my daughter is in the gallery today, so I wanted her to hear me as long as everyone else does.

This government is unequivocally pro-choice. We will always defend a woman's right to choose, full stop. That is why we have pulled back funding from provinces that have not been delivering access to abortion in their jurisdictions and why we will continue to enforce the Canada Health Act.

It is the Conservative Party, with its dangerous attack on women's rights, that should have people worried right across the country. At a time when we have seen *Roe v. Wade* overturned and attacks on women's rights, the Conservative leader cannot stand up to defend women's rights.

The Speaker: I would like to remind the right hon. Prime Minister, and all members, to please not mention people in the gallery. It is against the rules of this place.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Laurent.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while our government has always protected women's right to choose, the anti-choice lobby controls the Conservative caucus and leader, according to a former Conservative MP. Anti-choice organizations that support Conservative MPs use misleading tactics to deter women from obtaining the full range of reproductive care through so-called pregnancy crisis centres.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians what our government is doing to protect women at these centres?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Laurent for her hard work and her defence of women's rights.

We have heard too many women say that they were shamed at these centres, and that is unacceptable. That is why we introduced a bill yesterday to force these centres to be more transparent. Otherwise, they could lose their charitable status.

Unlike the Conservative leader, the Liberals will always defend a woman's right to choose and obtain the health care she needs, including the full range of reproductive health care and services.

* * *

● (1500)

[*English*]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that he opposes taking the GST off of new homes. He wants to keep the taxes high and housing prices rising. His solution is to fund more bureaucracy. What has that done? Well, that has doubled housing costs and it has caused a 39% increase in homelessness rates.

I have an idea. Why do we not let Canadians decide? If he will not have a carbon tax election, why not have a housing tax election, and allow Canadians to decide on more bureaucracy through him or axing the sales tax through me?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians watching today will see that the Leader of the Opposition is refusing to stand up to take a strong position in protecting women's rights unequivocally in the House. He cannot because his MPs will not let him. At the same time, he is refusing to protect his MPs by not getting the security clearance necessary to get fully informed on threats to our democracy from foreign powers.

Why will he not get the security clearance necessary to take international interference seriously?

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's tinfoil-hat conspiracy theories and misinformation will not distract. We stand up for women's rights every day on this side. It has been our 20-year-long policy in the Conservative Party that there will be no restrictions on women's reproductive choices or on abortion. He knows that, but he does not want to discuss the issue that we disagree on. Housing costs have doubled under him. His solution is to spend billions more on bureaucracy that drives them up further. We want to help women and men own a home, so will he vote for a housing tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be interested to see the leader of the Conservative Party do a very simple thing in his next answer: Switch the order of the statements he just made.

Any time he talks about unequivocally standing up for women's rights in this House, crickets from the Conservative backbench. That is because, consistently, members of the Conservative Party of Canada move forward measures that restrict and restrain women's rights, and that limit women's rights to a full suite of reproductive services. Conservative Party members do not stand up for women's rights, so nor does the Conservative leader.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of women's rights, just yesterday, the Prime Minister's former parliamentary secretary, Celina Caesar-Chavannes, came out publicly and said that she was abused, intimidated and mistreated by this Prime Minister, and that he used her for his fake feminist agenda, and that he treated her like garbage.

It is terrible the way he exercises hypocrisy: housing hypocrisy by doubling costs and tax hypocrisy by raising people's prices while flying around the world. How about putting an end to the hypocrisy and calling a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is fascinating is the spectacle of watching—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member not to speak without first being recognized by the Speaker. I want to insist on that.

The right hon. Prime Minister can start over from the top.

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating to see the lengths to which the Conservative leader will go to avoid the issue of national security, to avoid the issue of safety of Canadians, to avoid talking about issues of foreign interference, because he cannot say why he refuses to take the security clearance that would allow him to access top-secret information focused on keeping his members safe and keeping our democracy safe. We know that foreign governments interfered in the last leadership campaigns in the Conservative Party. He wants nothing to do with it.

• (1505)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is coming unglued. He is flailing

Oral Questions

around, spreading conspiracy theories and demonstrable disinformation in order to distract from the fact that not only did he double housing costs, double gun crime and double food bank use, but now 24 of his own MPs want to fire him. We cannot go on like this with a Prime Minister who admits he cannot even sleep at night because he is so in knots. Will he let his 24 dissident MPs vote freely on a non-confidence motion so we can have a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am confused about what happened. The Conservative Party used to be about the defence of Canada, but Conservatives dropped defence spending to below 1% last time they were in office. They are supposed to be about law and order, but they stand against stronger measures on gun control. They are supposed to be about national security, but the leader of the Conservative Party refuses to get the necessary security briefings to keep our democracy safe and to distinguish in the conspiracy theories that float around what is fact and what is fiction. Why will he not trust our national security agencies?

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as of today, Quebec will allow advance requests for MAID. Finally, patients diagnosed with a serious and incurable illness that will lead to incapacity can submit a request to their doctor.

However, doctors are still worried about the lack of legal protection because this government is cowardly and refuses to amend the Criminal Code. The Liberals are playing a dangerous game, one that is hurting both patients and doctors worried about potential lawsuits.

Will the Prime Minister show some humanity and amend the Criminal Code without further delay to allow advance requests, as proposed in Bill C-390?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, MAID is a deeply personal and sensitive choice that involves individuals and their families at an extremely difficult time in their lives.

Potentially expanding eligibility to include advance requests is a very important decision. We are therefore launching a national conversation and will not initiate legal proceedings against Quebec's Bill 11.

We remain committed to working with Quebec and all provinces and territories to carefully assess what responsible next steps can be taken.

Oral Questions

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is not a time for talk, but for action. Need I remind the House that this government is a minority government that could fall at any moment.

It makes no difference whether or not the Liberals hold consultations—which have already been held, by the way—or whether they agree not to take legal action against the Government of Quebec. The next government will be a Conservative government. Members know it, and it is pointless to pretend otherwise. Members also know that the Conservative religious right represented in the House opposes medical assistance in dying.

Why is the Prime Minister putting the fate of the sick in the hands of Conservatives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with my Bloc Québécois colleague when he points out the serious risk that the Conservatives pose to the freedoms of Canadians across this country. However, we must not hurry through an issue as fundamental as medical assistance in dying.

We have to protect the rights of the most vulnerable and their capacity to make free and informed choices. That is why we will take as much time as necessary to work with the different provinces, assess the issue, and ensure that we make the right choice for Canadians.

* * *

• (1510)
[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of releasing violent gun criminals and leaving our borders open to smugglers, the Prime Minister has presided over a 116% increase in gun violence, yet he was out boasting about it on Twitter. The Toronto Police Union, the largest police union in Canada, said his words were “out of touch”. They were offensive to victims and brave officers.

Given that his approach has doubled gun crime, why will he not accept our common-sense plan to lock up the gun criminals, scan the cans and stop the crime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservative Party's plan on guns is to unfreeze the market on handguns and re-legalize assault-style weapons across this country, nobody can take them seriously on the issue of guns.

However, they are talking about national security now, and safety, which begs the question: why will the leader of the Conservative Party not get the necessary security clearance to get the necessary security briefings to show Canadians he is capable of taking national security seriously?

The Speaker: I ask the members to not carry on loud conversations, in particular the hon. member for Waterloo, across the way, while she has not been recognized.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has never been easier for a criminal to get a handgun, in addition to which he has allowed it to be legal today to own a hand-

gun. He has brought in an amnesty on his own gun ban, re-legalizing all the guns he said he was going to ban. Four years after he held that big press conference with a scary-looking black gun on the front of his podium, a made-in-Hollywood-style cartoon, gun crime is actually up dramatically.

Why does he not actually ban the criminals, secure the borders and stop the crime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, slogans furnished to him by the gun lobby do not keep Canadians safe. Canadians know that significant, common-sense gun control measures, which we have put forward, are what is making a difference in keeping Canadians safe, and we will continue to do that.

However, we are now at least talking about security issues, so Canadians may be wondering why it is that the leader of the Conservative Party continues to refuse to get the appropriate clearances from our national security agencies so he can take the issue of foreign interference, including against his own party, seriously.

The Speaker: As I mentioned before, I am going to ask all members please not to have conversations across the way, including the member for Dufferin—Caledon.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

[Translation]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been an 800% increase in crime near Maison Benoît Labre since the Prime Minister allowed that centre to host a hard drug consumption site. The families who live in the community are frightened by the chaos this Prime Minister has caused.

Section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act gives him the power to shut down this consumption site. Will he do it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opioid and addictions crisis is having a profound impact on Canadians across the country. Our approach is rooted in science, facts and research, as well as compassion and the work we can do on the ground, hand in hand with the organizations, provinces, municipalities and experts. We will continue to take an approach based on public health, not on criminalizing people who are suffering from addiction. That is what will save lives.

[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always been clear that ensuring a woman's freedom of choice should be protected. However, many Canadians are rightfully worried that a Conservative government would not protect this fundamental right. It is alarming that women's rights and freedoms are under attack by the Conservative Party.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how our Liberal government will continue to protect a woman's right to make decisions about her own body?

• (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Humber River—Black Creek is right. Yesterday, we announced that we are holding pregnancy crisis centres accountable for preventing women from making informed choices. While we are protecting women's freedom of choice, the Conservative Party is trying to roll it back.

Any party leader who allows their MPs to introduce anti-choice legislation, and actively recruits anti-choice candidates and takes their money, cannot say that they are pro-choice. It is time the Conservative Party ends its filibuster and allows this House to vote on reproductive rights.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, nine million Canadians live in food insecurity according to Food Banks Canada. That is 23% of our population. That is twice as high as the rate in the United States. Food prices have risen 36% faster in Canada than in the United States, and that gap has happened at the same time as the implementation of the carbon tax and all the government greed. Now the Prime Minister wants to quadruple the carbon tax and starve even more people.

Why not have a carbon tax election so Canadians can vote to axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada carbon rebate puts more money back in the pockets of the middle class and people working hard to join it. The Parliamentary Budget Officer recognized that eight out of 10 Canadians are better off with the Canada carbon rebate than the price on pollution costs them in their jurisdictions.

The Leader of the Opposition is proposing to take away money from vulnerable families across this country at a time they need it. The Leader of the Opposition is also refusing to get the security clearance necessary to keep Canadians safe by getting the briefings from our security agencies that talk about foreign interference.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the carbon tax made people better off, we would not see a doubling of food bank use under the Prime Minister. He cannot blame the rest of the world. Food prices have risen 36% faster in Canada than in the United States of America in the same time period, and that gap grew as the carbon tax came in year after year over

Oral Questions

the last half-decade. If we tax the farmers who make the food, the truckers who ship the food and the grocers who sell the food, we tax all who buy the food.

If he really wants to quadruple that tax, why not have a carbon tax election so that Canadians can decide?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada carbon rebate puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians right across the country, and it is top economists, scientists and the Parliamentary Budget Officer who have declared that.

At the same time, we know the Leader of the Opposition will not listen to experts. He will not even listen to our national security experts, who are trying to let him know about threats to his own MPs. I have asked them to figure out a way to share at least some information with him, despite the fact that he has refused to get a security clearance, because the responsibility of the Prime Minister is to protect all Canadians, including, apparently, Conservative MPs.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was more division to distract.

Here we have two million people lining up at food banks. One-quarter of Canadians live in food insecurity, a level twice as high as in the United States. Food prices are rising 36% faster in Canada than in the U.S., coinciding with the carbon tax coming into force. Now the Prime Minister wants to quadruple it. Fifty-six per cent of food banks say they are literally rationing food. We have food rationing in a first world country.

Before he starves more people, why can we not have a carbon tax election and axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative leader actually cared about food insecurity, instead of just wanting to politicize and instrumentalize it, he would have supported our national school food program. However, he did not. What he also will not do is take seriously his responsibility as a party leader in the House, as someone who desperately wants to become prime minister, to get the security clearance and therefore the briefings necessary to protect our democracy, our institutions and his team members from the threats of foreign interference. That is absolutely irresponsible.

Routine Proceedings

• (1520)

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the public safety committee heard from top national security and law enforcement officials on Indian interference in Canada. Despite the concerning evidence, the Conservative leader refuses to speak directly on this issue, choosing instead to hide behind his MPs.

The government has been clear that all responsible leaders need security clearances so they can make responsible decisions to protect Canadians. Can the Prime Minister explain why the Conservative leader should get his security clearance, get briefed and protect our democracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kitchener—Conestoga for his hard work.

Canadians should not be surprised that the Conservative leader refuses to call out Indian foreign interference. He has refused to get briefed up, to get the security clearance necessary and to get the understanding that our national security agencies want him to have to be better able to protect his own MPs, protect our institutions and protect Canadians.

Let me put it in phrasing that perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will eventually understand: Get the clearance, get the briefings and protect Canadians.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who serve in the military deserve our gratitude and support, but we have learned that for at least 19 years, the Liberal government and the former Conservative government overcharged veterans and their families for long-term care beds. Again, veterans and their families have to fight the government tooth and nail to get what they are due.

Canadians need to know who did what and when. Will the Prime Minister immediately end this long-term care gouging?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Veterans Affairs has asked her officials to investigate this matter further.

We are committed to supporting our veterans and have been since day one. That is why we have invested over \$11 billion in new services and supports for veterans since 2016, which included reopening the nine veteran service centres that the Harper government shuttered and rehiring the 1,000 staff the Harper government fired. We are continuing to work to improve services, benefits and supports for veterans and their families.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to talk about national security, so let us do it. On New Year's Eve, Canadians will be ushering in the Hogue

commission's final report on foreign interference, but meanwhile, the media continues to provide insight as to who the infamous 11 parliamentarians in the pocket of China are.

Does the Prime Minister have trouble sitting at the cabinet table when he must wittingly know that at least one of his ministers is not working in the service of Canada, or is he entirely witless?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was an absolutely disgraceful display of irreverence and unseriousness in a place that deserves a serious contemplation of issues of national security, but it does not surprise me that he is choosing to sit with the Conservative Party of Canada, because its leader will not even get the necessary clearance to get the necessary briefing to keep Canadians safe. It is irresponsible.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1525)

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports: the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the second part of the 2024 ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, from April 15 to 19; the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the third part of the 2024 ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, from June 24 to 28; and a revised copy of the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Atlantik-Brücke German-Canadian Conference in Berlin, Germany, from May 12 to 14.

I have two signed copies in French and two signed copies in English of each report for delivery to the table.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want leave, if required, to go back to tabling of documents. We skipped through it relatively quickly.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, for clarity, it was skipped over really quickly because of the voices inside the chamber at the end of question period. I want to table some responses to petitions. That is all.

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: I will ask again.

Is it agreed?

An hon. member: No.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, which refers to Canadian supply chains and the issue of forced labour.

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “The Erie Lake Connector: A Project in the Best Interest of the Public?”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

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

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, presented on Thursday, October 26, 2023, be concurred in.

First, I would like to say that I have made the excellent choice to share my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to a subject that is affecting millions of Quebecers and Canadians, and that is the housing crisis. This crisis is raging across the country and having a truly serious impact on a fundamental right, namely the right to decent housing, the right to have a roof over one's head.

Several years ago, my team in Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and I started an annual tradition of renting a theatre at Cinéma Beaubien, paying for the screening rights to a documentary, and inviting the public to come watch it for free, followed by an opportunity to interact with the artists who produced the film.

This year, about three weeks ago, we screened a very interesting documentary by Diane Bérard and Mathieu Vachon called *Le dernier flip: Démarchandiser l'immobilier*. It is about the importance of decommodifying real estate, or what is sometimes called the financialization of the housing stock. It was a really important moment. Ms. Bérard and Mr. Vachon were in the room, so we could ask them questions and have a conversation with them. Representatives from the housing committees of Rosemont and La Petite Patrie were also present.

There was a lot of interest, because this issue affects everyone. We sold out two screenings. Nearly 500 people in total came out

and took the opportunity offered by my office to talk about the housing crisis and, more importantly, about solutions.

Over the past 20 or 30 years, there has been a significant shift towards speculation. Investment funds and trusts are increasingly involved in the purchase and construction of rental housing, and this speculation drives up prices. This is hurting a lot of people. A number of models and solutions are available. One of them is what Bernie Sanders did in Burlington in the early 1980s. People were happy to learn about this solution.

Bernie Sanders is well known as a socialist United States senator, but before that, he was also the mayor of Burlington. It was during his tenure that the city created what is known as a community land trust. A community land trust is an investment tool. The community land trust and the individual or family wanting to buy a home become co-owners of the investment, so it is a joint investment. The community land trust still owns the land itself, but the person buying the house becomes co-owner of the house. Later on, when the property is sold, the income generated by the sale is shared between the community land trust and the family that was able to benefit from a lower down payment thanks to the trust's support. In the end, the community land trust gets back part of the proceeds of the sale, which it can then use to make another purchase to help another individual, family or student.

This led to some very interesting discussions, because it is a different model that makes it easier to access home ownership. Today, the Champlain Housing Trust owns dozens of houses and apartments in Burlington. This has made it possible to keep the real estate market much more under control and to have prices that truly are much more affordable and accessible for the people living in that community.

There are also other models we have often talked about. For example, housing co-operatives provide access to affordable apartments and rent controls, because they belong to everyone and decisions are made collectively. It makes them affordable for people who are not fabulously rich, who cannot afford a condominium or a house on the “open” market. They have access to co-operative housing, which is pleasant to live in because it comes with a sense of community. Residents have to work together to find solutions and decide how they are going to repair or renovate their homes. These types of living arrangements are often very enjoyable. This is one of what we call the “off-market” solutions, because it is a different approach.

Routine Proceedings

• (1530)

The documentary put forward another idea that we in the NDP champion, and that is to use public lands to create truly affordable housing. When I say “truly affordable”, I want to be very clear. For housing to be affordable, its cost must match what a person is able to pay. That does not mean 80% of the average local market price, which leads to ridiculous situations. Three years ago, a two-bedroom apartment in Montreal renting for \$2,235 a month was considered affordable by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Housing that costs over \$2,000 a month is not affordable. It is not true that hard-working people earning modest incomes can afford housing at that price.

Using public lands to build truly affordable housing should be a priority. This is a tool that works very well. It is starkly different from the Conservatives' idea, which is to sell public lands to private developers and investment firms that will build housing with the sole intention of turning a profit as fast as possible, regardless of people's ability to pay. That is the worst solution anyone could propose, but that is exactly what the Conservatives are doing, because they have tunnel vision that causes them to see just one model, the capitalist model, the model of maximizing investor profit. That is all they see.

There are so many alternatives, so many community-based solutions. There is the community land trust that I was just talking about that worked in Burlington. We could also create an acquisition fund. We could use public lands to build affordable housing. We could also have a public fund for buying homes, apartments, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. Then we could have democratic public control over rents and prices.

Do my colleagues know where that has been done? It was done in Vienna, Austria. For years, Vienna has been buying up virtually every house, apartment or building that comes on the market. Today, 60% of Vienna's real estate stock is owned by the city, so rent prices are kept under control. There is none of the speculation that we have been seeing here in Canada over the past 20 or 30 years as a result of the Liberals' and Conservatives' poor decisions.

The documentary *Le dernier flip : Démarchandiser l'immobilier* talks about a 20% target for off-market apartments and houses. We are not talking about 100%. There will still be a private sector, a private real estate market, as is the case right now, and that is fine. However, the percentage of off-market housing is too low right now. It is around 3%, whereas the target is 20%. If we reach the 20% target, we will be able to stabilize the market. That will have a positive impact on the private market, because it will cool the market down and curb speculation.

There is a research group in Montreal called the Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques, or IRIS, which published a study in June. The current housing crisis is creating many losers. Unfortunately, the study is called “The Big Winners of the Housing Crisis”, because some people have been lining their pockets for years. I am talking about trusts, funds and investment firms, which are benefiting from significant tax incentives and, unfortunately, are only out to make a profit.

Thirty years ago, almost none of our housing stock was owned by large trusts and investment funds. Today, 20% of Canada's entire

housing stock is in the hands of people who are only interested in making money as quickly as possible. That is a big part of the financialization of the real estate market and the housing stock.

The IRIS study, much like the efforts in Quebec of FRAPRU, the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain, illustrates just how harmful this is. It hurts renters, because there is not enough rental stock that is truly affordable. We do not have enough off-market housing. I think that is what we need to focus on for the next few years. We need to use public money wisely to rethink our investment model and remind everyone that housing is a right.

• (1535)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have been talking about affordable housing, we have heard the Conservatives be extremely critical of the housing accelerator fund. However, it was revealed today in a CBC story, or by one of the outlets, that five Conservative members had written to the housing minister, encouraging him to award housing accelerator money to their ridings so their communities could benefit from it.

I am wondering whether the member would like to provide his thoughts on the hypocrisy between what Conservatives are saying and what they are doing behind the back of their leader.

• (1540)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, yes, I did hear about that. I was really stunned. What a blatant contradiction. I think my colleague used the word “hypocrisy”, and that is exactly what it is.

What the Conservatives want to do is cut programs that sometimes work. That program is working so well that some Conservative members want their municipalities' projects to be approved. However, the Conservative leader wants to axe the program. Maybe they need to have a conversation.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech. He provided a very good overview of the situation. My question will focus on the problem of the financialization of housing, which he spoke about so brilliantly.

I want to hear his thoughts on how this government could put measures in place to limit the financialization of housing when we know, for example, that one of the big players in Montreal is a personal friend of the Prime Minister's through the Claridge private investment fund.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, there are tax exemptions and loopholes, particularly with the capital gains tax, that allow these large trusts to get out of paying their share of taxes. This encourages them to buy more units, hundreds of units. That hurts tenants.

The NDP believes that if these big funds cannot guarantee that they are going to keep certain units affordable, they should be taxed more or prevented from acquiring more units. The Canadian Tax Foundation has done a very good study on why we need to review tax rules, because they are too favourable for these funds. The Liberals have not had the courage to touch them yet, but I hope this will be done in the next few years.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his speech and for pointing out every day that Montreal, Quebec and Canada as a whole are experiencing a shortage of affordable housing.

I know that the Liberals have given a lot of CMHC's funds to big real estate companies. The Conservatives are proposing to do the same, to hand over money to boost the profits of these big real estate companies instead of helping people by providing social housing and co-operative housing.

Can my colleague, who is truly an outstanding critic for affordable housing, tell me what needs to change in order for us to stop giving money to the rich and start helping average families get affordable housing?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I did not have enough time during my speech to adequately describe how expensive housing is for households. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are poor and vulnerable. Do members know how many households are currently in this predicament? The answer is 1.6 million Canadian households, including 373,000 Quebec households.

Yesterday, the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain, or FRAPRU, sent a letter to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. One of the things FRAPRU called for in its letter was to restrict affordable housing funding to the non-profit sector. We should use our non-profits to build truly affordable housing. This would require a review of the rules and the Liberal housing strategy that has failed to produce results in recent years.

[English]

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for bringing up the really important report on the financialization of housing.

I am sure he is as disappointed as I was that the government chose not to end the tax exemption for real estate investment trusts in the spring. Even in the current report, the recommendation is just to keep studying it.

I wonder whether the member can comment on how enough is enough; we do not need to study the tax exemptions we are giving to large corporate investors that are raising rents for folks in my community as well as in his. We can actually give the funds to groups like Habitat for Humanity that want to build more affordable housing.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is not as though the solutions were not known. The problem is that this issue

Routine Proceedings

has gone unaddressed for years. There have been federal cuts since 1994 that have never been restored.

The affordable rental housing deficit is even more striking when we consider the development of social housing. In six towns in Quebec, the share of social housing built between 2000 and 2023 ranged from 2% in Trois-Rivières to 5% in Saguenay. In Montreal, it represented just 2.8% of total housing built.

This absolutely needs to change. What we need is social housing.

● (1545)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among the parties, and I think that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow me to present a petition that I was planning to table today in the presence of certain elected officials from my riding who are here on Parliament Hill.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PETITIONS

VERCHÈRES HARBOUR

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to officially table petition e-4845, which was certified pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The petition has been signed by 1,315 people and was initiated by Alexandre Bélisle, the mayor of Verchères, as well as all the municipal councillors, who are here today on Parliament Hill.

The petition calls on the House of Commons to bring this matter to the attention of the Government of Canada and the ministers concerned so that the necessary funds to rehabilitate the Verchères harbour are provided. The Municipality of Verchères has been expressing its interest in acquiring this harbour from Fisheries and Oceans Canada for 25 years. However, nothing has changed, and residents are getting impatient.

As a result of Ottawa's negligence, the Verchères harbour fell into such disrepair that it actually had to be closed for safety reasons. I therefore expect a swift response from the government on this issue, which is of the utmost importance to the people of Verchères.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other unanimous consent motions to come forward?

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I suspect that if you were to ask, you would find consent for me to table our responses to petitions and questions on the Order Paper.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2905, 2907, 2909, 2910, 2914, 2916, 2918, 2919, 2925, 2929, 2931, 2932, 2934 and 2941.

[Text]

Question No. 2905—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to budget 2024 and the government's subsequent amendments to the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act and the Canada Student Loans Act: (a) what criteria did the government use to develop the list of health care professionals and social services professionals included in the amendments; (b) which health care professionals and social services professionals were included in the assessments in (a); (c) for each health care professional and social services professional included in the assessments but not included in the amendments, what is the rationale to exclude the professionals from the final list; (d) what is the total expected cost of the loan forgiveness measures announced in budget 2024, broken down by profession; and (e) what was the estimated cost of including occupational therapists in the loan forgiveness program?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, in recognition of increasing workforce shortages in the health care and social services sectors in rural and remote communities, Budget 2024 committed to expanding the list of eligible occupations for Canada Student Loan, or CSL, forgiveness to 10 new occupations: early childhood educators, dentists, dental hygienists, pharmacists, midwives, personal support workers, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers, and teachers. This expansion will ensure all Canadians can benefit from greater access to the health and social services they need, no matter where they live.

Several factors were considered in determining the list of newly eligible professions. Labour market information (e.g., the Canadian Occupational Projection System) was used to identify sectors that are projected to be in shortage in the coming years. In addition, extensive consultations were undertaken with provinces and territories, stakeholders from numerous different professions, and student organizations to ensure their voices were heard while the Government examined various options. The need for enhanced mental health supports, the growing importance of interdisciplinary care, and care services for an aging population were all highlighted as

priorities for stakeholders. Additionally, certain occupations were identified as playing key roles in supporting the implementation of Government of Canada priorities, namely the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system, the Canadian Dental Care Plan, and the proposed National Pharmacare Plan. While there are numerous other occupations in shortage in rural and remote communities, fiscal consideration was also taken into account. The expansion of the list to add the additional ten new occupations balances both fiscal prudence and health and social service shortages.

With regard to part (b), a variety of occupations were examined as part of the process of assessing an expansion to the list of professionals eligible for CSL Forgiveness. This included various health and social service occupations that deliver primary care, interdisciplinary health care, and technical/supporting services.

With regard to part (c), numerous occupations are in-demand in rural and remote communities. As noted in the response to (a), several factors were considered to determine the proposed ten new occupations, including labour market information, stakeholder feedback, complementarity with other efforts to address workforce shortages in healthcare and in social services, and financial considerations.

With regard to part (d), the total cost of the loan forgiveness measure over four years, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, is \$301.7 million dollars. While Budget 2024 did not provide the cost breakdown by profession, Employment and Social Development Canada officials are currently working on a Regulatory submission, which will disaggregate some of the costs.

With regard to part (e), as the profession of occupational therapists was not retained for the Budget 2024 proposal on Canada Student Loan forgiveness, no cost was estimated for the budget.

Question No. 2907—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to budget 2024 which stated that the changes to capital gains taxes would increase federal revenues by \$19.4 billion over five years starting in 2024-25: (a) how did the government arrive at this figure; and (b) what data sources were used?

Hon. Chystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, this figure was estimated using historical information on individual, including trust, and corporate tax filings to project capital gains realizations in future tax years, i.e. ending in 2024 through 2029, using the Department of Finance's forecasting and simulation models.

Adjustments were made to the baseline projections of capital gains realizations to account for some filers choosing to realize capital gains prior to the effective date of June 25, 2024, leaving less capital gains in future years that would have otherwise been subject to the higher inclusion rate had they not been pulled forward.

Routine Proceedings

The simulation models account for, among other things: changes in the inclusion rate on net capital gains and stock options subject to the \$250,000 threshold, the inclusion rate for allowable business investment losses, adjustment factors applied to net capital losses of prior years, Alternative Minimum Tax calculations, and the value of the lifetime capital gains exemption.

In addition, it was assumed that the higher inclusion rate for corporations would result in a reduction in the capital dividend account, and a greater value of taxable dividends paid out by corporations to be taxed in the hands of individuals.

Furthermore, an adjustment factor was applied to the model output to account for additional behavioural responses to the reform, i.e. retiming of capital gains realizations across years after 2024, changes in the allocation of assets to fixed income investments.

As for part (b), the Department of Finance's modelling tools leverage historical personal, trust and corporate income tax filing data from the Canada Revenue Agency.

The growth rates for key income variables, including capital gains and stock options, are based on the same departmental projection model that is used to forecast key fiscal and economic variables for the federal budget.

Question No. 2909—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the Assessment Framework and Guidelines that deliver on Canada's G7 and G20 commitments to phase out or rationalize inefficient fossil fuel subsidies: (a) how many tax and non-tax measures have been assessed and met the criteria to be considered an efficient fossil fuel subsidy; and (b) for each tax and non-tax measure identified in (a), which of the six criteria identified in the framework were met?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of its effort to fulfill Canada's G20 commitment to phase out or rationalize inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, on July 24, 2023, the Government of Canada released the Inefficient Fossil Fuel Subsidies (IFFS) Government of Canada Self-Review Assessment Framework and the Inefficient Fossil Fuel Subsidies Government of Canada Guidelines. The Framework provides a definition of a fossil fuel subsidy and the methodology for assessing efficiency, while the Guidelines prevent the creation of any new inefficient subsidies. The Framework and Guidelines were jointly developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Department of Finance Canada and apply to all federal departments and agencies.

Consistent with the Inefficient Fossil Fuel Subsidies Government of Canada Self-Review Assessment Framework, the Government of Canada has phased out or rationalized the following nine tax measures supporting the fossil fuel sector: phase-out of the accelerated capital cost allowance for oil sands (announced in Budget 2007); reduction in the deduction rates for intangible capital expenses in oil sands projects to align with rates in conventional oil and gas sector (announced in Budget 2011); phase-out of the Atlantic Investment Tax Credit for investments in the oil and gas and mining sectors (announced in Budget 2012); reduction in the deduction rate for pre-production intangible mine development expenses to align with rate for the oil and gas sector (announced in Budget 2013); phase-out of the accelerated capital cost allowance for mining (announced in Budget 2013); allowing the accelerated capital cost allowance for liquefied natural gas facilities to expire as scheduled in 2025

(announced in Budget 2016); rationalize the tax treatment of expenses for successful oil and gas exploratory drilling (announced in Budget 2017); phase out tax preference that allows small oil and gas companies to reclassify certain development expenses as more favorably treated exploration expenses (announced in Budget 2017); and, phase-out of flow-through shares for oil, gas, and coal activities (announced in Budget 2022).

Canada is currently developing a self-review report which will include information on all identified federal fossil fuel subsidies and its self-assessment against the IFFS Framework. These reports will be made public before the end of 2024.

Question No. 2910—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the pilot system for rapid heat wave attribution: (a) which heat waves have been assessed to calculate how much human-caused global warming changed the risks of such an event occurring, including during the development of the system; (b) what steps are being taken and what is the expected timeline to expand the pilot to include extreme cold weather events and extreme precipitation; and (c) are there plans to expand the pilot to include wildfires, drought, and floods?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the pilot heatwave attribution system is based directly on a published event attribution analysis of a heatwave which occurred in May 2023 in Alberta. Since the pilot system began running in March 2024, it has been applied to a range of moderate heatwaves in regions across Canada over the period March – June 2024. These have been used to evaluate the system, but the results have not been published.

With regard to part (b), research is going on this year to expand the system to allow attribution of cold extremes, and precipitation extremes. Applying rapid event attribution to cold extremes is a technically straightforward update to the existing system but requires research to ensure that the climate models used are able to simulate these events realistically. Attribution of precipitation extremes requires evaluation of observational datasets, and more in-depth model evaluation. We plan to include these variables in the rapid event attribution system by the end of March 2025.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (c), Environment and Climate Change Canada has collaborated with Natural Resources Canada to carry out an event attribution study of the 2023 Canadian wildfire season which has been submitted to a scientific journal but has not yet been peer reviewed. It is anticipated that this study could be used as a basis for attribution of future extreme wildfire seasons on an expedited timeline, compared to many months for a typical analysis. Such analyses are typically applied to a whole fire season, rather than individual wildfires. Research on rapid event attribution of flooding across Canada is a part of the rapid event attribution project and it will be developed in the next two to five years. Droughts tend to be longer-term phenomena that are not as well suited to rapid attribution. We do not currently have plans to include drought in the rapid event attribution system, but attribution of drought is a subject for future research.

Much of this research is taking place at Environment and Climate Change Canada offices at the University of Victoria, in Victoria.

Question No. 2914—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to the increase to capital gains taxes announced in budget 2024: prior to the release of budget 2024, did the government consult anyone on these tax increases, and, if so, what are the details, including (i) who was consulted, (ii) how they were consulted, (iii) when they were consulted?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada regularly consults Canadians and stakeholders in the context of pre-budget consultations, with over 16,000 submissions and suggestions received in advance of Budget 2024.

A search of the records of the Department of Finance did not produce any results.

Question No. 2916—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) decision to approve the COVID-19 modRNA vaccines and the Prime Minister's subsequent support for the vaccine mandates in the federal public sector and vaccine passports for travel purposes during the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what is the immunological mechanism of action of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines that enables them to stop the spread of SARS-CoV2; (b) what data supports this mechanism of action; (c) who or what agency provided the data and verified the data; (d) when was this data provided to (i) HC, (ii) the Office of the Prime Minister; (e) what data did Pfizer and Moderna produce to HC that demonstrated (i) the period of time the spike protein is produced in the body, (ii) where in the body the spike protein is produced; and (f) in relation to (e), what was the period of time Pfizer and Moderna tracked the spike protein in their clinical studies?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of Canadians is Health Canada's top priority, and the department exercises stringent regulatory oversight over vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccines. Before a vaccine is approved in Canada, the department conducts a rigorous scientific review of its safety, efficacy and quality. Submissions filed by vaccine manufacturers typically contain extensive data regarding the vaccine's safety, efficacy and quality, including results of pre-clinical and clinical studies, details on manufacturing processes, and information on adverse events following immunization. For your information, the clinical data that was submitted in support of the approval of COVID-19 vaccine by manufacturers, can be found on the Clinical Information Portal. An authorization was only issued when anticipated benefits of the vaccine outweighed the potential risks of its use.

The mRNA in the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines provides instructions for how to make the viral spike protein of SARS-CoV-2. The spike protein triggers an immune response. The body then prepares antibodies and cells that help fight the virus if it enters the body in the future. Additional details on how the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work can be found at COVID 19 mRNA vaccines – Canada.ca. The vaccines have demonstrated to be highly effective in prevention of COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2.

Studies on the biodistribution and pharmacokinetics of the drug product were conducted and were submitted as part of the pre-clinical and early clinical trial phase data packages that companies are required to submit to regulatory agencies, including Health Canada. The pre-clinical data provided by the companies demonstrated that vaccine-produced spike protein is rapidly broken down and does not persist in the body. These data were analyzed by Health Canada prior to authorizations being granted for the COVID 19 vaccines. The outcomes of some of these studies can be found in the Summary Basis of Decision for each product, available on the COVID 19 vaccines and treatments portal.

Question No. 2918—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) review of the COVID-19 modRNA vaccine products: (a) did HC consider the specific nature of the nanotechnology of the lipid particles used for the modRNA vaccine delivery; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what was their assessment; (c) why was the fact that modRNA vaccines contain nanotechnology omitted from the product monograph-label; (d) did HC assess the toxicity of pegylated nanoparticles, specifically the risk for complement activated related pseudo allergy (CARPA) with the lipid nanoparticles used in the mRNA vaccines; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, why was this not included in the product labelling; (f) if the answer to (d) is negative, why wasn't this assessed; (g) did HC assess the risk of toxicity due to the nanoformat of these vaccines; (h) if the answer to (g) is affirmative, what was the assessment result; (i) if the answer to (g) is negative, why not; (j) did HC assess the lipid nanoparticles as a novel excipient; (k) if the answer to (j) is affirmative, what was the assessment; (l) if the answer to (j) is negative, why not; (m) with respect to nanotechnology products and their unique properties and behaviors particularly in their application to the modRNA vaccines, did HC examine (i) the safety, (ii) the effectiveness, (iii) the risk to the environment, (iv) its specific regulatory status; (n) if the answers to (m)(i) to (m)(iv) is affirmative, what were the assessment results; (o) if the answers to (m)(i) through (m)(iv) is negative, why not; (p) how do established safe levels of DNA apply, (i) when using pegylated LNPs as a delivery system, (ii) when a product that contains pegylated LNPs requires repeated dosing; and (q) what assessment was performed to assess the risk of residual DNA when using pegylated LNPs as a delivery system in a vaccine which requires repeated dosing?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) to (q) of the question, the health and safety of Canadians are the utmost priority for Health Canada. Health Canada has a rigorous scientific review system in place to ensure vaccines are safe and effective in preventing the diseases they target. More information on these standards and how Health Canada regulates vaccines for human use in Canada can be found at <https://bit.ly/36xea3C>. Once vaccines are authorized, Health Canada releases information about the vaccine, including summaries of the data considered by Health Canada. This includes non-clinical, clinical and other studies, as well as how the decision was made. This information can be found on Health Canada's website at <http://bit.ly/30LJM2z>.

Studies to support the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines were conducted and were submitted as part of the pre-clinical and clinical data packages that companies are required to submit to regulatory agencies, including Health Canada. These data were analyzed by Health Canada prior to authorizations being granted for the COVID-19 vaccines.

The evaluation of toxicity of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines was focused on the vaccines themselves, the components and the delivery system. In non-clinical studies, the toxicity of vaccines was tested either as the whole product containing the delivery system as marketed in Canada, medicinal ingredients, i.e. COVID-19 antigens, or non-medicinal ingredients, including the components in the formulation.

Polyethylene glycol, or PEG, is an ingredient that is widely used in cosmetics, food products, and pharmaceuticals. Monoclonal antibodies, for example, are frequently conjugated with PEG to increase stability. Products containing PEGylated lipid nanoparticles, or LNPs, such as Onpattro, have been on the Canadian market for several years and are not unique to the COVID-19 vaccines.

In the product monograph, the composition/components contained in the vaccine, including the LNPs, are listed in the Table of "Dosage Form, Strength, Composition and Packaging". The important data from the required toxicity tests for the vaccine product are also presented.

The manufacturing data provided to Health Canada demonstrated the ability to produce a vaccine with consistent quality. Impurities, including residual DNA, are controlled through maximum permissible limits during the manufacturing process and before the product is released on the market to ensure safety. These impurities are evaluated using validated assays, and limits are set to ensure product quality and safety. These requirements are informed by science and are aligned with international standards, including the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use.

More information is publicly available in the Summary Basis of Decision available on the COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments Portal on canada.ca.

Following authorization, Canada has a robust and well-established vaccine safety surveillance system involving Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, provinces and territories, and vaccine manufacturers. Health Canada continues to moni-

tor the safety profile of health products once they are on the Canadian market, to help ensure that the benefits of the product continue to outweigh the risks. The safety profile of these products is monitored by reviewing safety information submitted by manufacturers as well as considering safety information from international regulators. When new safety issues are confirmed by the department, Health Canada takes action, which may include communicating new risks to Canadians and healthcare professionals or changing the recommended use of the product. In addition, Health Canada and the PHAC have been actively monitoring and reviewing reports of adverse events following immunization, or AEFI, reported to the Canada Vigilance Program of Health Canada and the Canadian Adverse Events Following Immunization Surveillance System of the PHAC. This information is published on the Government of Canada's website. It is important to note that these reports do not necessarily imply that a relationship between the adverse event and the vaccine has been established. However, they are an important information source supporting ongoing safety monitoring.

Question No. 2919—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to the project "Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke)" under Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program, broken down by participating elementary, middle and secondary schools: (a) what are the names of the schools; (b) what is the cost of the curriculum, broken down by subject, which is being taught to the students; (c) what are the total number of materials that are being disseminated to the students, in total, and broken down by the names and titles of those materials; (d) broken down by schedule I, II, and III drugs and substances as defined by the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, how much of the total funding is being allocated to each specific "primary focus" as defined by the program, broken down by each specific drug and substance; (e) how many staff or volunteers are being funded; and (f) is it a mandatory requirement for all staff or volunteers to undergo a criminal background check, and (i) have staff or volunteers been subjected to criminal background checks, (ii) have any criminal background checks for staff or volunteers turned up criminal convictions that are indictable or summary convictions, (iii) was any hired as staff or a volunteer with an indictable or summary conviction?

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, with regard to part (a), Health Canada, through the substance use and addictions program, or SUAP, has a contribution agreement with the board of education of schools district number 62 in Sooke. The funding is allocated to this organization and is not broken down by individual schools. According to the parameters of the agreement, funding recipients have the option to distribute a portion of their funding to other eligible third parties. Third parties are defined as individuals or entities that receive funding from the Health Canada funding recipient to carry out specific components of a project. This can include schools, with their participation at the discretion of the funding recipient.

The Health Canada funding recipient is responsible for distributing the funds and overseeing the progress of projects undertaken by any third parties. All third party funding is subject to the terms outlined in the Health Canada contribution agreement, or CA.

Routine Proceedings

All funded recipients are required to account for the funds they receive from SUAP, including any amounts disbursed to third parties. They must submit a detailed budget, annual cash flow forecasts and records of expenditures on a regular basis.

With regard to parts (b), (c) and (d), the board of education of school district number 62 in Sooke is implementing a project titled “Strengthening Substance Use Prevention, Harm Reduction, and Pathways to Care in Sooke School District”. This initiative supports middle and secondary school-based events aimed at improving awareness of substance use issues among teachers in order to help them better support youth with concerning substance use behaviors and implement evidence-based drug education approaches. With SUAP funding, the organization has initiated its “Youth in Action” campaign, which includes planning and hosting health-related activities.

Curriculum development and the dissemination of materials developed for students are not central to this SUAP-funded project. Therefore, information regarding related costs and titles of materials developed for distribution to students is not available.

The recipient is not required to track or report budget expenditures categorized by substance.

The recipient holds sole responsibility for determining the focus of learning events and resources within the parameters of their school district policies and professional practice needs. School-based curriculum is supported by the B.C. Ministry of Education and managed by individual school districts. Health Canada does not direct these activities or participate in direct decision-making related to them.

To date, the project has produced and delivered 16 learning opportunities and six knowledge products in response to requests from teachers, counsellors, principals and vice-principals for easy access to evidence-aligned resources.

Two examples of initiatives implemented are as follows. One was a series of full-day, secondary school-based training events on naloxone education to 270 participating youth and staff. In addition, the project supported a forum for youth to learn more about and provide input into a regional youth strategy based on the results of the adolescent health survey available on the Sooke school website, which included a dialogue on how to reduce exposure to harms from substance use.

With regard to part (e), the project provides funding for release time of approximately 40 teachers. This allows for teachers on call to be compensated for replacing approximately 40 regular full-time teachers for a period of two days of participation in training and workshops related to the project.

With regard to part (f), the board of education of school district number 62 mandates that all employed personnel undergo and pass a criminal records check as a condition of employment. Further details about this policy can be accessed on its website.

With regard to parts (f)(i), (ii) and (iii), under their agreement with Health Canada, funded organizations are not required to report on or disclose the results of any criminal records check on their

staff. However, Health Canada retains the right to request project-related information with reasonable notice at its discretion.

Question No. 2925—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to all infrastructure projects that have received government funding since November 4, 2015, that require the use of steel: (a) what percentage of projects used only steel produced in Canada; (b) what percentage of projects partially used steel produced in Canada; and (c) what percentage of projects used steel produced outside of Canada?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to all infrastructure projects that have received government funding since November 4, 2015, that require the use of steel, Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, or HICC, undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. HICC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

For more information on projects funded under HICC’s contribution programs please visit <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/gmap-gcarte/index-eng.html> and <https://open.canada.ca/data/organization/infcc>.

Question No. 2929—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to federally funded research for children’s illnesses: (a) how much federal funding was given out since 2015, broken down (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) illness, (iv) organization type; (b) which organizations received funding; (c) of (b), how much did each organization received, broken down by total amount (i) under \$1000, (ii) \$1,000 to \$4,999, (iii) \$5,000 to \$9,999, (iv) \$10,000 to \$24,999, (v) \$25,000 to \$49,999, (vi) \$50,000 to \$99,999, (vii) \$100,000 to \$249,999, (viii) \$250,000 to \$499,999, (ix) \$500,000 to \$999,999, (x) more than \$1,000,000; (d) how many funding opportunities were available; (e) how many applications were received; (f) how many applications were accepted; (g) how much did Health Canada spend in-house; and (h) what reports were provided to the Government of Canada?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, without a comprehensive list of children’s illnesses, it is not possible to determine how much Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or CIHR, funding has been allocated in this area since 2015. Additionally, CIHR has concluded that identifying projects and then producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection and validation of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Routine Proceedings

All CIHR funding decisions are publicly available in the CIHR funding decisions database, available at <https://webapps.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/decisions/p/main.html?lang=en#sort=name-sort%20asc&start=0&rows=20>

Question No. 2931—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to the safety of novel therapeutic products approved by Health Canada (HC) through Agile Licensing: (a) does HC determine the specifications required to be completed by the manufacturer to determine a therapeutic product's safety for use by Canadians based primarily on its (i) therapeutic indication, (ii) pharmacological mechanism of action; (b) how does HC determine that a therapeutic product is safe; (c) what clinical and pre-clinical criteria are used by HC to make a safety assessment in regards to (i) vaccines, (ii) modified mRNA products, (iii) lipid nanotechnology, (iv) medications, (v) other biologics; (d) based on the pharmacological phase of the COVID-19 vaccines (i.e. from administration to spike protein expression), (i) are adverse events following immunizations adequately detected based on the Brighton Collaboration Criteria, (ii) what are the anticipated adverse events; (e) if the answer to (d)(i) is affirmative, how has this been confirmed; (f) what specific criteria were used to confirm the COVID-19 vaccines' safety profile at their time of (i) approval, (ii) authorization; (g) based on the requirements in (b), (c) and (f), was that information adequate to categorically declare the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines for all cohorts at the time of their (i) approval, (ii) authorization; (h) does approval of a novel therapeutic product based on the Agile Licensing pathway require criteria that are equivalent to that required under C.08.001(2) of the Food and Drug Regulations; (i) if the answer to (g) or (h) is negative, who approved the messaging from government, public health officials, and other authorities that "COVID-19 vaccines do not get approval from HC unless they are safe" or that "all vaccines authorized in Canada are safe"; (j) how has safety of the COVID-19 vaccines been re-evaluated based on detected impurities, including (i) residual DNA, (ii) residual dsRNA, (iii) SV-40 enhancer sequence, (iv) endotoxins, (v) unknown peptides resulting from frameshifting; and (k) how has safety of the COVID-19 vaccine been evaluated based on remaining excessive intracellular N1-methylpseudouridine following degradation of the synthetic modified mRNA?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) to (k), the health and safety of Canadians are Health Canada's top priority and the department exercises stringent regulatory oversight over biologics, including vaccines. Before any of the COVID-19 vaccines were approved in Canada, the department conducted rigorous scientific review of the extensive data regarding the vaccines' safety, efficacy and quality, including results of preclinical and clinical studies, details on manufacturing processes and information on adverse events following immunization. An authorization was only issued when the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine outweighed the risks of its use.

For all products authorized by Health Canada, the summary basis of decision is published on the website <https://dhpp.hpfb-dgpsa.ca/review-documents>. This document details the clinical and preclinical data analyzed and provides a rationale for the review decision. Furthermore, as part of the regulatory requirements, a product monograph is publicly released at the time of a vaccine's authorization. A product monograph is a factual, scientific document on the drug product that, devoid of promotional material, describes the properties, claims, indications and conditions of use for the drug, and contains any other information that may be required for optimal, safe and effective use of the drug. It is used to inform physicians, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, other health care professionals and patients about the appropriate use of the product.

The product monograph is developed and managed by the manufacturer. The content, wordings and format are carefully reviewed by Health Canada to ensure that it is prepared in accordance with the guidance. Each publicly available Canadian product monograph can be consulted by accessing the drug product database at <https://>

www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/drug-products/drug-product-database.html. It describes the specific evaluation methods and data used to assess safety and effectiveness for each product. As part of this assessment, Health Canada relies on clinical trials that are assessed against established international and national standards.

At the time of authorization, the safety information included in the product monograph and in package inserts is based on the available safety data from clinical trials. Furthermore, Health Canada is responsible for ensuring that the product monograph and package inserts are updated over time to adequately reflect the risks associated with the vaccines that are authorized in Canada. Health Canada-approved information is used by appropriate bodies, such as provincial and local public health authorities, to guide recommendations, vaccine use, as well as information provided to vaccine recipients. The product monograph also contains a list of adverse reactions observed during clinical trials for the product. Each drug product authorized for sale in Canada has labelling that reflects Health Canada's assessment of the product at the time of approval.

For new drug submissions, the product sponsor proposes a therapeutic indication supported by clinical trials and other data. During review of the submission, Health Canada conducts its assessment. A drug's pharmacological mechanism of action is considered within this context. It is noted that no health product is without risks. Adverse events from the clinical trials submitted by the sponsor are carefully assessed, considered within the context of the condition treated or prevented by the product, and labelled in the product monograph, linked above.

Following authorization, Canada has a robust and well-established vaccine safety surveillance system involving Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, the provinces and territories, and vaccine manufacturers. Health Canada continues to monitor the safety profile of health products once they are in the Canadian market, to help ensure that the benefits of the products continue to outweigh the risks. The safety profile of these products is monitored by reviewing safety information submitted by manufacturers and by considering safety information from international regulators.

Routine Proceedings

In addition, Health Canada and PHAC have been actively monitoring and reviewing reports of adverse events following immunization, or AEFIs, reported to the Canada vigilance program, or CVP, of Health Canada and the Canadian adverse events following immunization surveillance system of PHAC. Adverse events of special interest, or AESIs, which are potentially associated with vaccine products, must also be carefully monitored and confirmed by further evaluation. Information on AEFIs and AESIs is published on the Government of Canada's website at <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccine-safety/>.

It is important to note that these reports do not necessarily imply that a relationship between the adverse event and the vaccine has been established. However, they are an important information source supporting ongoing safety monitoring. When new safety issues are confirmed by the department, Health Canada takes action, which may include communicating new risks to Canadians and health care professionals or changing the recommended use of the product.

The Brighton Collaboration, or BC, was established in 2001 to provide standardized, validated and objective methods for monitoring the safety profile and benefit-to-risk ratios of vaccines. This includes the development of globally implemented case definitions, guidance and protocols for data collection and comparability within and across clinical trials, surveillance systems, and post-licensure clinical studies. Health Canada has been implementing the BC criteria on case definition when assessing AEFI reports retrieved from the CVP.

Information about AEFIs reported in Canada, including the BC criteria, is published on the Government of Canada's website at <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccine-safety/>.

With respect to product quality, Health Canada performs a thorough review of manufacturing processes and controls. Impurity levels in all product types are controlled by predetermined limits in place during product manufacturing and before the product is released onto the market. Health Canada ensures that scientifically justified methods are in place to monitor impurities and that the limits set are appropriate to ensure the safety of patients. The impurities are adequately controlled by the existing control system.

Agile licensing for drugs and medical devices are regulatory amendments being proposed to the food and drug regulations and the medical devices regulations. The agile regulatory proposal was pre-published in the Canada Gazette, part I, for a 130-day consultation, which closed on April 26, 2023. The proposed regulations are intended to reduce irritants and regulatory roadblocks to innovation by introducing regulations that are more agile and internationally aligned increasing postmarket oversight without compromising pre-market rigour. The measures that will be introduced as part of these modernization efforts will not lessen Health Canada's commitment to the health and safety of Canadians. The department will continue to require the same high standards of evidence about the safety, efficacy and quality of drugs and medical devices prior to authorization for sale and once on market.

Health Canada is targeting a fall 2024 Treasury Board date, with publication of the finalized regulations in the Canada Gazette, part

II. As these amendments have not yet received Governor in Council approval, they are not currently considered under the regulations.

Question No. 2932—**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Business Account, broken down by province or territory and city: how many small and medium businesses which were classified as grocery or convenience stores filed for bankruptcy after January 1, 2024?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada emergency business account applicants are not required to provide industry information at the time of application. Therefore, bankruptcy data by industry sector is not available.

Question No. 2934—**Mr. Larry Maguire:**

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and their involvement in the inaugural Five Eyes alliance Unidentified Aerial Phenomena caucus working group on May 24, 2023: (a) what was the agenda of the May 24, 2023 meeting; (b) what are the names and titles of all CAF personnel who attended the meeting; and (c) has the CAF participated in any other meetings of the working group and, if so, what are the dates, agenda items, and details of CAF participants at each such meeting?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in "Our North, Strong and Free", Canada has always believed that a multilateral approach is critical to the effective delivery of the defence mandate. That is why National Defence has many partnerships on the continent and around the globe, including through the Five Eyes alliance with the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

In relation to the question above, a meeting of the Five Eyes unidentified aerial phenomena caucus working group was organized and hosted by the United States on May 24, 2023. Meeting details, including the agenda, remain under the purview of the United States.

Two officials from the Royal Canadian Airforce and the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command attended the working group meeting. National Defence applies the principles of the Access to Information Act and protects information on the grounds that disclosing certain information could be injurious to national security and defence. Therefore, further details cannot be disclosed.

Finally, in terms of any other meetings of the working group, National Defence carried out a manual search of its records within the allotted time and found no instances of further participation by members of the defence team.

Question No. 2941—**Mr. Michael Barrett:**

With regard to amounts collected from the federal fuel charge: (a) to date, how much has been paid by municipalities, including any municipal department or agency, broken down by province or territory, municipality and by year; and (b) how much is estimated to be paid by municipalities in the future, broken down by province or territory, municipality and year?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is an existential challenge, and climate action is critical to Canada's long term health and economic prosperity. Carbon pricing is widely recognized as the most efficient means of reducing our greenhouse gas, or GHG, emissions, which is why the Government of Canada continues to make sure that it is not free to pollute in Canada.

The federal price on pollution is revenue-neutral for the federal government; all of the direct proceeds from the federal carbon pricing system remain in the province or territory where they are collected. Put simply, every dollar collected from the carbon price is returned.

The fuel charge is generally paid at the producer or distributor level and passed on to purchasers as part of the price paid for fuel. Monthly fuel charge returns only account for aggregate amounts by fuel type and by province or territory. Typically, once the fuel charge has been paid by a fuel producer or distributor, there is no further reporting of who ultimately bears the cost of the federal fuel charge.

In the provinces where the fuel charge applies, the majority of households receive more with the Canada carbon rebate than they incur in carbon pricing-related costs. The government reports the direct fuel charge proceeds collected and returned annually through the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act annual report. For more information on the proceeds collected and returned, please see the annual report for 2022 at the following website: <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.893583/publication.html>.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2906, 2908, 2911 to 2913, 2915, 2917, 2920 to 2924, 2926 to 2928, 2933, 2935 to 2940, and 2942 to 2946 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2906—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the National Trade Corridors Fund (NTCF): (a) under the "National Call to Address Capacity Constraints" first call for proposals in July 2017, how many projects were approved for British Columbia; (b) under the "Continuous call for Trade Diversification" launched on January 15, 2019, how many projects were approved for British Columbia; (c) under the "Increasing the Fluidity of Canada's Supply Chains" launched on December 9, 2021, how many projects were approved for British Columbia; (d) under the "Relieving Supply Chain Congestion at Canadian Ports" launched on January 31, 2022, how many projects were approved for British Columbia; (e) under the "Advancing Supply Chain Digitalization" launched on February 13, 2023, how many projects were approved for British Columbia; (f) what is the current status of every NTCF funded project in British Columbia; and (g) how much program spending has been done each year since 2017-18?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2908—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to changes in capital gains taxes as announced in budget 2024: after removing capital gains income from the calculation of total personal income, what is the share of capital gains tax revenue collected from those earning (i) equal or less than \$50,000, (ii) between \$50,001 and \$100,000, (iii) between \$100,001 and \$150,000, (iv) over \$150,000?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2911—**Ms. Laurel Collins:**

With regard to the 2 Billion Trees Commitment, broken down by province or territory since its inception: (a) what is the total amount of funding allocated under each of the (i) cost-sharing agreements with provinces and territories, (ii) Privates Lands stream, (iii) Urban Lands stream, (iv) Federal Lands stream, (v) distinctions based Indigenous stream; (b) what is the total amount of funding delivered under each of the (i) cost-sharing agreements with provinces and territories, (ii) Privates Lands stream, (iii) Urban Lands stream, (iv) Federal Lands stream, (v) distinctions based Indigenous stream; and (c) what is the total amount of funding on hold or undelivered under each of the (i) cost-sharing agreements with provinces and territories, (ii) Privates Lands stream, (iii) Urban Lands stream, (iv) Federal Lands stream, (v) distinctions based Indigenous stream?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2912—**Ms. Laurel Collins:**

With regard to species listed under the Species at Risk Act since October 2015, broken down by status (i.e. extirpated, endangered, threatened and special concern): (a) how many recovery strategies or management plans were (i) produced within the timelines set out in the act, (ii) overdue; (b) how many action plans required to support the implementation of recovery strategies were (i) produced within the timelines set out in the act, (ii) overdue; (c) how many species do not yet have recovery strategies or management plans; and (d) how many recovery strategies do not yet have action plans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2913—**Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to contracts between any government department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity and Speakers Spotlight, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of each contract, including the (i) date of event associated with the contract, (ii) amount, (iii) name of the speaker, (iv) event description and purpose of the speech?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2915—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the terms of the Pacific Salmon Commercial Licence Retirement Program (LRP) under the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI), broken down by each harvest area: (a) how many individual commercial salmon licenses have been retired each year broken down by gear type; (b) what were the average prices paid; and (c) what were the highest and lowest prices?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 2917—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) establishing the safety of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in 12-15 year olds: (a) what serious adverse events (SAEs) did the pharmaceutical company disclose to Canada's health agencies for this age group pre-authorization; (b) since approving the product in this age group, has the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) or HC become aware of additional adverse events (AEs) or SAEs that the pharmaceutical company had not disclosed during the initial authorization process; (c) if the answer to (b) is affirmative, (i) what AEs and SAEs has the PHAC, the NACI and HC become aware of, (ii) when were they discovered, (iii) what are the means by which Canada's health agencies were provided this information; (d) prior to authorizing this product in this age group, was the PHAC, HC or the NACI given information about (i) the SAEs of a 12-year-old trial participant named Maddie de Geray who was diagnosed with chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy which rendered her reliant on a wheelchair and feeding tube, (ii) any other specific SAE cases in this cohort following the Pfizer inoculation; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what was the date and means by which the PHAC, the NACI or HC became aware of these cases; (f) if the answer to (d) is negative, has Ms. De Geray's diagnoses been added to HC's list of SAEs on the HC website in this age group; (g) has the PHAC, HC or the NACI been aware that the adverse events experienced by trial participant Maddie de Geray were not properly disclosed within their trial studies as described in the scientific publication of said trial (i.e. NEJM - Frenck et al. 2021); (h) did the PHAC, HC or the NACI take any action after discovering the lack of proper disclosure of Maddie de Geray's SAEs by Pfizer; (i) what was the age stratified risk-benefit analysis for 12-15 year olds in relation to the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at the time of authorization, on May 5, 2021; (j) what was the data and calculations for quantifying the risks and benefits that Canadian health agencies used to authorize or approve the product in this age group; (k) what data indicated that the benefits of the vaccine outweighed the risks at the time of authorization; (l) since the roll-out of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in this age group, (i) what are the top ten SAEs identified in this cohort, (ii) how have these SAEs been communicated to the medical community and the public at large; (m) what type and frequency of SAEs in 12-15-year-old would invoke an unfavourable benefits-risk ratio for healthy children and for children with underlying medical conditions; and (n) is HC, the PHAC or the NACI aware of any other jurisdictions worldwide that no longer recommends the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in children at (i) six months of age, (ii) between six months and two years (iii) between two to five years, (iv) between five to 12 years, (v) between 12-15 year, (vi) between 15-18 years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2920—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to a Statistics Canada report titled "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2022", The Daily — Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2022, and the report that there has been a 43% increase in the rates of level 1, 2, and 3 sexual assaults between 2015 and 2022: (a) does Public Safety Canada acknowledge that level 1, 2, and 3 sexual assaults have increased 43% in that time period, and, if not, why not; (b) when did Public Safety Canada learn of the 43% increase in the rates of level 1, 2, and 3 sexual assaults; (c) how long was the delay between Public Safety Canada learning of the 43% increase and the establishment of mitigation measures to reduce the number of level 1, 2, and 3 sexual assaults, broken down by the dates the measures were undertaken by Public Safety Canada and its public safety partner agencies; (d) has Public Safety Canada and its public safety partner agencies taken measures to mitigate this increase of level 1, 2, and 3 sexual assaults broken down by specific measures, including the funds allocated and spent by each specific mitigation measures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2921—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA) Request for Assistance Program (RFA), which has historically been an effective tool for Intellectual Property (IP) rights owners to prevent counterfeit goods from crossing the Canadian border and entering the commerce stream, and having cut the RFA program significantly: (a) does the government have plans to (i) reassess the cuts to training and processes that limit CBSA officers from efficiently searching, identifying and detaining the counterfeit products, (ii) reinvest in the RFA program in the next years, and, if so, when, (iii) work and discuss the impacts that these cuts have had on Canadians, businesses and trade noting that Canada is the only G7 country on the 2023 United States Trade Representative Watchlist, (iv) meet directly with the Customs Immigration Union to ensure that the frontline officers participate in the process to reestablish increased searches, identification and counterfeit products pro-

cesses; and (b) how much estimated value has been confiscated each year from this program and from how many seizures for the last ten years at all ports of entry to Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2922—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to the federal target of achieving 100% Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) market share in Canada by 2035: (a) what is the government doing now, and what was done to date to address the lack of available public charging stations throughout the country to meet the demand for ZEVs; (b) what is the number of current public charging stations available through Canada, including locations, number, and types of chargers; (c) what is the projected number of public charging stations needed to meet demand by 2035; (d) did the government consider or have plans to increase the amount of the federal Incentives for Zero-Emission Vehicles Program (iZEV) from \$5000; (e) did the government consider or have plans to match the United States' federal incentive program to provide an equal and fair incentive for purchasing domestic vehicles; (f) did the government consider a plan for federal incentives for consumer purchases of used electric vehicles to help drive the sales and meet the environmental targets; (g) is the government tracking the import and export of new and used electric vehicles, and, if so, is it starting from the year 2022; and (h) is the government tracking the movement of electric vehicles purchased in one province the later moved to another province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2923—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to the proposed deep geologic repository (DGR) plan by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) which could be located in South Bruce, Ontario: (a) should this site be selected, which falls within the Great Lakes basin, has the government (i) met with members of the United States Congress and United States Senate, or with our Canadian Ambassador to the United States, to hear the American concerns and opposition about storage of nuclear waste near, or within, the Great Lakes Basin, and, if so, who did they meet with, where were the meetings held and when, (ii) followed the progress of Amendment #947 to the to the FY 25 National Defense Authorization Act in U.S. Congress which calls for both Canada and the United States to not develop facilities to permanently store nuclear waste in the Great Lakes Basin and which has now moved to the United States Senate for further action and support, (iii) discussed with the NWMO alternatives to transporting and storing radioactive waste in the Great Lakes basin, (iv) considered alternatives to DGRs, such as recycling the radioactive waste, such as France, Japan, Germany and Belgium; (b) has the Prime Minister, the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development or the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry raised or responded to this issue to the President or other representative of the Biden Administration, and, if so, when and where did the meetings take place and with who?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2924—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to VIA HFR – Dedicated Project Office 2023-2024 Operating Budget: (a) for each individual paid under "Technical Office: specialized individuals hired under contractual agreements", (i) what was the average payment, (ii) what was the highest amount of payment, (iii) how many unique individuals received payment; and (b) what are the details of all entities paid under "Technical Office: Engineering, accounting, procurement, legal, technical and communication services", including the (i) date of the payment, (ii) date signed, (iii) value, (iv) detailed description of the service(s) provided, (v) start and end dates of work, (vi) details on how the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid), (vii) titles of the officials who approved or signed off on the contract?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2926—Mr. Dan Muys:**

With regard to the federal carbon tax collected from the transportation sector, since April 1, 2019, broken down by year: (a) what were the amounts collected from Canadian Airports; (b) what were the amounts collected from (i) Canadian Airlines, (ii) non-Canadian Airlines; (c) what were the amounts collected from Canadian ports; (d) what were the amounts collected from (i) Canadian Maritime Transportation Companies, (ii) non-Canadian Maritime Transportation Companies; (e) what were the amounts collected from (i) Canadian trucking companies, (ii) non-Canadian trucking companies?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2927—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to the 21 privately-operated airport authorities in Canada: (a) what were the amount of rents collected from each airport authority since January 1, 2016, broken down by year; (b) what were the amounts of other fees or penalties collected from each airport authority since January 1, 2016, broken down by year, in total, and broken down by type of fee or penalty; and (c) since January 1, 2016, broken down by year, (i) how many projects at the 21 airports received funding by the federal government, (ii) what was the amount of funding received, broken down by project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2928—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to carbon pricing on government administration, including the Carbon Tax and the Carbon Rebate, since January 1, 2019: (a) how much did the Government of Canada collect in each riding and province during each calendar year in carbon tax, broken down by (i) federal administration, (ii) provincial administration, (iii) municipal administration; (b) how much did the Government of Canada return in each riding and province during each calendar year through the Carbon Rebate, broken down by (i) federal administration, (ii) provincial administration, (iii) municipal administration; (c) of (a)(i) and (b)(i), what is the breakdown of the movement of funds from (i) central agencies, (ii) ministerial departments, (iii) separate agencies with direct ministerial oversight, (iv) independent agencies and offices, (v) independent review bodies, (vi) branches of the Canadian Armed Forces, (vii) the Senate of Canada, (viii) the House of Commons, (ix) federal courts, (x) special operating agencies, (xi) Crown corporations, (xii) Canadian Coast guard auxiliary, (xiii) federal infrastructure projects; (d) of (a)(ii) and (b)(ii), what is the breakdown of the movement of funds from (i) provincial agencies, (ii) ministerial departments, (iii) separate agencies with direct ministerial oversight, (iv) independent agencies and offices, (v) independent review bodies, (vi) provincial legislatures, (vii) provincial courts, (viii) special operating agencies, (ix) Crown corporations, (x) provincial courts, (xi) school boards and school divisions, (xii) health authorities, (xiii) public post-secondary institutions, (xiv) provincial infrastructure projects; and (e) of (a)(iii) and (b)(iii), what is the breakdown of the movement of funds from (i) municipal administration, (ii) museums and art galleries, (iii) curling rinks, (iv) hockey arenas, (v) pools, (vi) recreational centres, (vii) stadiums, (viii) community centres, (ix) municipal infrastructure projects, (x) visitor centres, (xi) homeless shelters, (xii) parks, (xiii) emergency response, (xiv) enforcement services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2933—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the inventory of immigration applications in the Humanitarian and Compassionate (H&C) and other categories: (a) in which month and year were applications received, broken down by country of origin; (b) what is the average processing time from application submission to final decision, broken down by country of origin; (c) what are the total resources or staffing levels dedicated to processing applications in the H&C and other categories over the past three years to date; (d) considering that the 2024-26 Immigration Levels Plan target presently provides for a target of 29,750 allocations for the H&C and other categories in total from 2024 to 2026, with a low range of 22,000 and a high range of 41,500, and the current inventory already exceeds 70,000 applications, how many years does the department estimate it will take to clear the present application inventory without projecting for forthcoming applications; (e) what are the details of all special measures and policies included in the H&C and other categories over the last five years, including the (i) eligibility requirements for those immigration streams, (ii) descriptions of all processing prioritization directives given for each stream, (iii) dates on which updates or changes were made to those directives, broken down by country and the year the measure or policy came into effect; and (f) what plans or strategies are being developed to address the backlog of applications in these categories and to improve processing times?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2935—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to destroyed goods for which a “drawback” (i.e., refund) was obtained for the duties and excise taxes paid, under the Obsolete or Surplus Goods Program of the Canada Border Services Agency, broken down by year since the program was created: (a) how many refunds have been granted for goods deemed obsolete or surplus by importers, producers, manufacturers and owners, respectively; and (b) what are the details of each case, including (i) the date of the refund, (ii) the description of the goods including their respective quantities, (iii) their declared values, (iv) the amount of drawback granted, (v) the name and municipality of the recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2936—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, for each fiscal year since 2020–21, inclusively: what are the details of grants and contributions and of all loans made to any organization, group, company or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose of the funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2937—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Papineau, for each fiscal year since 2020–21, inclusively: what are the details of grants and contributions and of all loans made to any organization, group, company or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose of the funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2938—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to the information revealed in the “Blood Gold Report,” which indicates that the Russian economy benefits from mining in Africa to the tune of \$3.4 billion dollars Canadian, thanks in particular to the involvement of the Wagner Group, a private military company financed by the Russian state, as well as the activities of Canadian mining companies in Africa: (a) what information has the government received on the activities of two Canadian mining companies, Barrick Gold and B2Gold, operating under the Malian military regime, in connection with these revelations; (b) has the government contacted Barrick Gold or B2Gold on this subject, or does it plan to do so; (c) has the Canadian government assessed the national security implications associated with the fact that these two Canadian mining companies have made tax payments of \$1.8 billion to the Russian-backed Malian regime since 2022, and are thus indirectly financing Russia’s war effort in Ukraine; (d) are there or will there be any measures, economic or otherwise, in place to prevent Canadian mining companies from indirectly financing Russia’s war effort in Ukraine; (e) are there or will there be any measures, economic or otherwise, in place with the Malian regime to make it impossible for Canadian companies to do business with the Russian state’s trading partners, including the Wagner Group; (f) how much has Canada provided to these two mining companies in grants, contributions and loans for each year since fiscal year 2019, inclusively; and (g) how much have these two mining companies paid in taxes to Canada for each year since fiscal year 2019, inclusively?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 2939—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, between January 1, 2016, and September 16, 2024, broken down by year: how many certificates of exemption from registration under the Controlled Goods Regulations were granted to or on behalf of (i) visitors from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea within academia, government, and industry, (ii) temporary workers from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea within academia, government, and industry, (iii) international students from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea within academia, government, and industry?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2940—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to ministers' and government entities' compliance with paragraphs 74(d) and 88(c) of the Access to Information Act: (a) has each minister or government entity, subject to those provisions of the Act, complied with the requirement to disclose proactively the briefing materials prepared for each parliamentary committee appearance; (b) what is the average period of time, broken down by minister or government institution, between a parliamentary committee appearance and the proactive disclosure of the briefing materials prepared for the appearance; (c) if (a) is negative, (i) why is the minister or government entity not in compliance with the law, (ii) what is being done to bring the minister or government entity into compliance with the law; (d) which parliamentary committee appearances, subject to those provisions of the Act, during the 43rd Parliament, have outstanding requirements to disclose proactively the briefing materials which were prepared and, broken down by outstanding requirement, (i) when is proactive disclosure expected to occur, (ii) what accounts for the delay; (e) which parliamentary committee appearances, subject to those provisions of the Act, during the 44th Parliament and up to May 10, 2024, have outstanding requirements to disclose proactively the briefing materials which were prepared and, broken down by outstanding requirement, (i) when is proactive disclosure expected to occur, (ii) what accounts for the delay; and (f) which officials are considered to be persons in "a position of equivalent rank" to deputy heads for the purposes of paragraph 88(c) of the Act?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2942—Mr. Larry Brock:

With regard to the government's claim that it will build 250,000 new homes by 2031 as part of the Public Lands for Homes Plan: (a) how many homes have been built on the land involved in this plan; (b) how many homes are currently under development on the land involved in this plan; and (c) when was the disposal process started for each property, broken down by location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2943—Mr. Larry Brock:

With regard to the government's Firearms Buyback Program: (a) how much has been spent to date on the program, broken down by fiscal year; (b) of the amount spent in (a), how much was for (i) program administration, (ii) payments to buy back firearms; (c) how much money went, or will go, towards the buyback program from the (i) allocated, (ii) unallocated, sums outlined in budget 2024; (d) when is the program expected to conclude; and (e) what is the expected total cost of the program through conclusion, broken down by expected administrative costs and expected firearm payment costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2944—Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:

With regard to federal infrastructure funding being provided to either cities or provinces, where the ultimate recipient is a municipality with a population of more than 50,000 people: (a) how much funding has been provided, broken down by municipality, year, and program, since January 1, 2016; and (b) how much funding is currently budgeted to be provided in the future, broken down by municipality, year, and program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2945—Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:

With regard to the government's public lands mapping tool, announced in August 2024: (a) what are the costs related to the tool, in total and broken down by type of expenditure; and (b) what are the details of all contracts over \$1,000 signed by the government related to the tool, including, for each, the (i) value, (ii) date and duration, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced or competitive bid)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2946—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency: (a) for the Income Tax Act, what was the total number of notices of objection filed from January 1 until August 31, 2024; (b) of the objections in (a), how many were determined in favour of the tax payer; (c) under the Income Tax Act, what seven sections received the most notices of objection from January 1 to August 31, 2024; (d) for the Excise Tax Act or the Goods and Services Tax, what was the total number of notices of objection filed from January 1 until August 31, 2024; (e) of the objections in (d), how many were determined in favour of the tax payer; (f) under the Excise Tax Act, what were the seven sections that received the most notices of objection from January 1 to August 31, 2024; (g) what is the breakdown of (a) through (f) for the (i) Atlantic, (ii) Quebec, (iii) Ontario, (iv) Western, tax centres; (h) what is the estimated number of hours and related salary costs associated with treating all of the above notices of objection that were ruled in favour of the taxpayers, in total and broken down by tax centre; and (i) for all of the tax centres across Canada, how many filings to the Tax Court of Canada were ruled in favour of the tax payer and what was the total number of filings to the Tax Court of Canada?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would ask for unanimous consent to present petitions.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PETITIONS

VENEZUELA

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): *Señor presidente*, today I rise to present petition e-5102, as 1,650 people signed this petition due to their concerns about the July 28 presidential election in Venezuela. They are calling on the government to recognize Edmundo González Urrutia as the rightful victor in the election, demand that the Maduro regime release the full vote count and access to voting records at polling stations, impose sanctions on all individuals associated with the Maduro regime complicit with violating international law and the Venezuelan constitution, and do everything in its power to support the people of Venezuela as they fight for freedom and real democracy in their country.

Viva Venezuela libre.

Routine Proceedings

• (1550)

FALUN GONG

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to stand in this place today and present a petition requesting that the Canadian Parliament and government pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs; amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting; and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in Canada, in particular referencing Mingyuan Liu and the many Falun Gong practitioners who have faced persecution, and the importance of ensuring their freedoms are respected. As Canadians, we have a responsibility to do something about it.

HOUSING

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present and table, in both official languages, a petition on behalf of Canadians who are calling on the government to address the housing crisis. It goes on to state that these citizens and residents of Canada call on the Government of Canada to impose a moratorium on evictions and other forms of displacing tenants in pursuit of higher profits; to invest in affordable housing operated by non-profit housing providers to ensure affordable housing units are available for our most vulnerable; and to stop providing billions of dollars in handouts to corporate landlords who are buying up the existing affordable housing, evicting people and raising rents.

FALUN GONG

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline whose moral teachings are truthfulness, compassion and forbearance. The Chinese government perceives religion as a threat to its state atheism, especially Falun Gong, whose popularity has grown since it was founded in 1992. Since 1999, the Chinese government has persecuted Falun Gong practitioners in the thousands, perhaps even millions.

Zhang Yunhe is the sister of Tianxiao Zhang, a Canadian citizen from Toronto. She was arrested in 2002 in Qingdao and was detained for over half a year because she was a practitioner of Falun Gong. Her family was not notified of her arrest, making this a case of forced disappearance. Her family has called on the Shandong provincial prison administration many times to inquire about Yunhe, and the prison administration remains silent on this matter, in a clear dereliction of duty. Zhang Yunhe has not been seen and there have been no reports on her since her arrest.

Therefore, the petitioners request that the Canadian Parliament and government pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically imprisoning Falun Gong practitioners, amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and, finally, publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians who are deeply concerned that the Chinese Communist Party has launched an intensive nationwide persecution campaign against practitioners

of Falun Gong, including Ms. Alice Zhang. They are concerned that many of these Falun Gong prisoners have died and their organs have been harvested. They are calling on the Canadian government to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners, to amend Canadian legislation to that effect and to publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong members.

HOUSING

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition, on behalf of 26 constituents in British Columbia, that was sponsored by the fantastic, hard-working member for Port Moody—Coquitlam. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to impose a moratorium on renovations and other forms of displacing tenants in pursuit of higher profits; to invest in affordable housing operated by non-profit housing providers to ensure affordable housing units are available for our most vulnerable; and to stop providing billions of dollars in handouts to corporate landlords who are buying up the existing affordable housing, evicting people and raising rents.

• (1555)

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Oxford County who state that after nine years of the Liberal government, homelessness is a growing crisis in communities right across our country. There are over 1,400 homeless encampments in Ontario alone.

The petitioners are speaking particularly about the encampments that have become a visible and urgent issue, highlighting the lack of affordable housing and inadequate support services for those experiencing homelessness, and the impact it has on small and rural counties and communities like mine. In particular, they want to make sure there is enough support to get people the help they need, but also to make sure the residents who live in these communities have safe, viable neighbourhoods where they can raise their families and walk around in the parks.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to work with all levels of government to find a solution to end homelessness and take care of the homeless encampment crisis we are seeing right across our country by providing support to those who need help the most.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to stand to present a petition sponsored by the fantastic MP for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

These citizens have asked for a moratorium on renovations, because they are seeing more and more of their communities' affordable housing units being taken away by corporate landlords solely for profit. They wish the House of Commons and the government would invest more in affordable housing, offer not-for-profit housing units and provide for our most vulnerable. I am excited to present this petition on their behalf.

Routine Proceedings

FALUN GONG

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to a petition from several Canadians in support of the Falun Gong and, in particular, Yao Fengyun.

Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline that consists of meditation, exercise and moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. An investigation done in 2006 concluded that the Chinese regime and its agencies throughout China have put to death tens of thousands of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience. Their vital organs were seized involuntarily for sale at a high price.

The petitioners request that the Canadian Parliament and government pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I, too, am rising to present a petition regarding Falun Gong and the organ harvesting issue. I was the chair of the parliamentary committee that heard compelling testimony about this heinous practice. The petitioners call for Canada to adopt legislation to stop forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong, a peaceful movement that embodies the best of Chinese cultural practices.

In conclusion, I want to point out that Cong Lanying, a Falun Gong practitioner with family ties to Canada, is one of those imprisoned. We also would call for their release.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first one is in regard to Falun Gong practitioners who have been persecuted in China since 1999 by the CCP, which launched a campaign to have the faith eradicated in China.

L.I. Yongmei is the mother of Suting Li, a resident of Calgary. L.I. Yongmei received her second prison sentence in 2023, for five years, because she is a practitioner of Falun Gong. Her phone was monitored for six months and her home was ransacked by police. She was strung up by her wrists with her feet in the air during the interrogation. She was first arrested in 2014 and was incarcerated from 2015 to 2017, when she was subjected to torture. She refused to renounce her faith or admit any guilt, and as such, she endured extended periods of squatting and standing, and had freezing cold water poured on her. She was deprived of food and sleep. She was forced to do unpaid labour and was made to sleep on a bare bed board with no blankets.

Therefore, the petitioners request that the Canadian Parliament and government pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically imprisoning Falun Gong practitioners, amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

• (1600)

BORDER SERVICES

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting is regarding our border. Many citizens from Cypress Hills—Grasslands have written to me to express concerns about potential border closures and reduction of services. They note the border crossing is important to the economic activity and also as a front line to the safety and security of Canadians. Therefore, petitioners want to make sure they are consulted by the government before any changes of any kind happen at our border crossings and with the CBSA.

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the residents of Port Moody—Coquitlam are very concerned about the price of housing. More and more people are getting displaced from their home, getting renoevicted. I am proud to say that the city of Port Moody recently passed a bylaw about standards of maintenance on rental housing just to keep people in safe housing, so I raise my hands to them.

The same folks, the residents of Port Moody—Coquitlam, want to present a petition to the House. These citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to first, impose a moratorium on renoevictions and other forms of displacing tenants in pursuit of higher profits; second, invest in affordable housing operated by non-profit housing providers to ensure that there are affordable housing units available for the most vulnerable; and third, stop providing billions of dollars in handouts to corporate landlords that are buying up the existing affordable housing, evicting people and raising rents.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, petitioners want to draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following. Since the CCP's rule of China, it has implemented state atheism and perceived religion and believers as a threat to its rule. This is why in 1999 the CCP initiated a campaign of persecution against perhaps millions of Falun Gong practitioners due to the practice's growing popularity in the country. Falun Gong is a Chinese spiritual discipline with moral teachings of tolerance, compassion and truthfulness, with millions of adherents all around the globe.

Liu Zhoubo is the father of Jack Liu, who is a resident of Ottawa. Liu Zhoubo was unlawfully imprisoned from 2001 to 2009 for clarifying the truth regarding Falun Gong. In 2021, he was kidnapped from his home in Langfang City. He was detained for two years in Beijing No. 3 Detention Centre. He was a person who faced religious persecution and was a prisoner of conscience.

Other members have given different comments about this, but I have talked to Falun Gong practitioners who have been imprisoned. It is a very serious situation, and this is an important petition.

VETERANS SERVICES

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I sat beside a new veteran on a flight to Ottawa. During the flight, she shared with me both the rewards and challenges of being a member of the Royal Canadian Navy. I had an opportunity to reconnect with this brave veteran a few weeks ago, and I was upset to hear that she is still working to obtain the services she is entitled to.

As we approach Remembrance Day, it is timely for me to rise today to bring the petition forward. Our veterans deserve better. They provided service to our country. They should at least receive the benefits they are entitled to.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence to dramatically cut red tape and simplify and expedite the delivery of services and benefits for our military veterans, especially during their initial transition to civilian life.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is on behalf of Falun Gong practitioners in Canada.

Petitioners are calling for the Government of Canada to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime from systematically imprisoning practitioners.

* * *

● (1605)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 66 to concur in the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

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

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for bringing forward the very important debate today and for showing

Routine Proceedings

how members from the NDP continue to work for Canadians while the Conservatives continue to debate themselves.

The promise of the free market was the promise of opportunities for people. People were told that the market would bring competition, but that is not what it brought. What it has brought is corporate collusion, which has made life more expensive for everyday people while corporate CEOs are taking home millions in bonuses. There has been collusion in the grocery industry and now in rental housing.

The Liberals and the Conservatives put all of the housing eggs in the market basket. Forty years ago they walked away from social housing, from purpose-built rental housing and from co-op housing. The market was supposed to build homes for people. It was supposed to create the stable rental housing that 30% of Canadians need. It has not.

Instead, the market has reached peak greed and collusion in rental housing, leading to evictions, displacements, encampments and a growing number of Canadians living rough. Even seniors and persons with disabilities cannot escape the free market and are not protected from corporate greed with the Liberals and Conservatives.

Thanks to the NDP member for Vancouver East, the financialization of housing in Canada was brought to the forefront, including through the study we are debating today from HUMA. The financialization of housing is the largest driver of housing unaffordability and homelessness in this country. Investors are turning homes for Canadians into financial assets that are pushing ordinary people out of the housing market and only profiting rich, real estate CEOs.

One-third of what should be stable and affordable rental housing for people has been purchased in recent years by private investors. In some cities this problem gets even larger, with nearly half of all purpose-built rentals being owned by wealthy investors. The committee heard from the federal housing advocate and leading researchers like Martine August how the financialization of housing is reshaping our communities and undermining the very fabric of our society as more and more people cannot afford a home. We are seeing this manifest in encampments across this country.

Housing is increasingly being treated as a commodity and a financial asset rather than as the fundamental human right that it is. When housing becomes a vehicle for profit maximization for the few, it harms the majority. The Liberal government, and the Conservatives before it, stopped focusing on providing safe, secure and affordable homes for Canadians. They have purposely laid the groundwork for the largest corporations and landlords to drive up their profit margins on the backs of Canadians.

Routine Proceedings

New Democrats have raised the alarm about this. There is endless proof that financialized landlords raise rents faster and higher than other landlords, and they file for more evictions than any other landlord type. This practice has become so prevalent that my NDP colleagues, the members for Windsor West and for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, have written to the Competition Bureau to investigate collusion on rent-fixing.

Landlords are now at the point where they are suing their tenants for libel when tenants speak out on unfair rental practices. Who is protecting those tenants from lawsuits? It is not the Liberals nor the Conservatives. It is only the New Democrats who are standing up for Canadians and not for the wealthy CEOs who are taking away their homes.

The problem is magnified when the Liberals and the Conservatives continue to team up in committee to protect corporate landlords by not agreeing to NDP motions to have landlords come to committee to talk about their unfair tactics. Shame on the Liberals and the Conservatives for putting wealthy CEOs ahead of people and their homes.

The government led the financialization of housing, and it led its pension fund investments' doing exactly the same thing. The Liberals are heavily involved in the financialization of housing, whether it is through the CPP or the public service pension fund. Canadian pension plans are increasingly investing in and buying up affordable housing and then partnering with corporate landlords like Starlight to extract maximum profits.

• (1610)

An access to information request found that PSP Investments owns rental housing and has hired a corporate landlord to raise rents above guidelines, evict tenants and kick them out on the street. The Liberal government is doing that. Tenants have been forced to organize rent strikes to fight back against these unfair practices. I wonder whether the government will sue them as well.

Now, to make it even more unfair, the Liberal government has okayed the use of AI rental collusion software by its asset managers. The same algorithmic pricing tools that are part of an antitrust lawsuit in the U.S. for allegedly being used to price-fix are now being used by the same asset managers the government has hired: firms that go after tenants. AI software like YieldStar and Yardi are working with the Canadian government through corporate landlords.

AI in the marketplace is like all technology: a promise. When used correctly, it can make our lives easier, healthier and better, but it can also be used by bad-faith actors to crush competition and hurt renters. AI poses new challenges that make the potential scale of price-fixing something we have never seen. As more and more industries use AI to optimize their prices, we are only going to see the problem more and more.

The technology has the power to undermine the very foundation of fair competition in the rental market by simply creating an AI-central planning that serves only the wealthy, and it is already happening. The federal housing advocate told our committee about how the financialization of housing is a serious human rights issue that must be addressed, and now with the introduction of tools like

AI, human rights are pushed even further behind. It has the greatest potential to cause harm to indigenous and disadvantaged groups, such as vulnerable seniors, low-income tenants, people with disabilities, recent immigrants, refugees and lone-parent families.

The financialization of housing does not have to be an inevitable fate; it is a choice of Liberals and Conservatives. The Liberals have the power to prioritize the well-being of people and ensure that every Canadian can find a place to call home.

The report we are discussing today sheds light on the consequences of financialization. It points to alarming rates of evictions, skyrocketing rental prices and the increasing prevalence of precarious housing for Canadians, but the recommendations in the report are minimal. That is why the NDP filed a dissenting report outlining the actions the government could take to make housing a human right. The government has to act now. That is why I am going to move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following: “the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, presented on Thursday, October 26, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, with a view to consider the role of financialized landlords on rising costs in Canada's rental market, including how the use of algorithmic pricing tools is contributing to rent increases and how pervasive this practice is across the Canadian rental market.”

• (1615)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants has the floor.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are few things I agree with and a few things I might probe and maybe have a different view on. First, I would certainly agree with the fact there were successive federal governments in the past that did not properly invest in public housing. Therefore, we have been playing catch-up as a government over the last number of years that we have been involved.

The member took a lot of time to focus on rental costs and rental increases. She talked about the Government of Canada, presumably around assets that may be held by government entities that serve as landlords. However, she talked about rent increases there.

Routine Proceedings

These are tools that are controlled in provincial legislatures. We are having conversations with premiers; however, constitutionally, we do not have the authority. There is work the government is doing, and we need to do more at the federal level. Nevertheless, when she talks specifically about rent, is that not something that is governed in legislatures, with conversations with premiers needed across this country?

Will the hon. member recognize that rent increases and rent control are inherently under provincial jurisdiction?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, no, I will not. People who are living in an encampment or in their car do not care whose jurisdiction it is, nor do those who are being renocted and who do not have housing. I am telling the government, right now, that what they are doing is making people homeless. There is no fix for it other than stopping this financialization of housing. People are losing their homes, and the government is behind it. It is involved, and it is encouraging it.

I would ask the member to go take a look at some of the annual reports of some of their investment boards, specifically, the PSP investment board. By the way, the new board chair will not see me and will not take an appointment. There is no transparency and no ability to push back on them. They are making above their guideline profits. The government needs to look inside.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has put a lot of money into affordable housing. However, there is still a lot of criticism because, quite often, developers prefer to pay a fine rather than build affordable housing. Once built, the units are often not affordable. The agreement is supposed to be in place for a decade, yet prices remain very high.

What some organizations are proposing, like the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain, which came to the Standing Committee on Finance, is to send all the money for affordable housing to non-market housing, social housing or co-operatives that remain affordable.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, this is another example of how the government has been told over and over what to do to fix this problem, and it is doing nothing. When I was preparing for this speech today, I was speaking to some of the people who testified at this HUMA committee study on the financialization of housing.

They are asking why the government has done nothing. I absolutely agree that those investments in social housing need to happen. The NDP is calling for it. Now we see the Bloc calling for it. The government is doing nothing, and we know that Conservatives will cut any investments in social housing.

• (1620)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member, who has done a phenomenal job on this file, as has the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. The Liberals like to pretend that if only there were someone in power who could do something about this. They want to pretend that laissez-

faire economics, leaving it to the market, is somehow going to solve this crisis.

However, there was a time in this country when the victory homes project built a million homes for people, for affordability, for soldiers who came back. After World War II, there was a bold initiative to build a million homes, and we are talking about the 1950s and 1960s,

They still have them in Hamilton. In fact, in the neighbourhood where I grew up, that is what we had there. There was a victory homes project that became the CMHC. Somewhere along the line, the CMHC just became this insurance backstop for REITs and big developers.

Could the hon. member speak a little about how, not only is it possible for the federal government to build a million non-market housing units, but it already happened some 50 to 60 years ago, and it needs to happen now?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member across the way there for such an important history of what CMHC was supposed to do. CMHC came to HUMA multiple times. It is a risk management company now. CMHC's very own CEO said that they are not in the business of social housing or supportive housing. She admitted that they do not even know how to do it. They are risk managers. It is terrible.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the government will be tabling a response to one more petition today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are interesting times. There is no doubt about that in terms of what takes place in Parliament nowadays. We have before us, once again, a concurrence motion. It is a really important issue. It is one of those issues that I would suggest Canadians are very concerned about. Ultimately, no government in the history of Canada has actually invested more real dollars in a sector than the current Prime Minister and government; it has never seen as much cash and other resources flow to it. That is the reality of the situation, whether opposition members want to recognize it or not. I will expand on that at great length shortly, but I also want to provide a comment in terms of where we are as a Parliament.

Routine Proceedings

Colleagues will know that we have not had any sort of discussion on legislative bills that are before the House, which are some very important pieces of legislation. Some of it would be direct, and maybe more so indirect, even dealing with the issue that we have before us today. Instead, we have seen different forms of things brought to the floor in order to prevent that discussion or debate from occurring. The best example we can give is the one where the Conservative Party moved a motion that “the government's failure of fully providing documents, as ordered by the House on June 10, 2024, be hereby referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.” The reason I mention it is that it is important to realize why, in good part, we are actually debating the report that we are debating today. It is because the Conservatives, in their wisdom or lack thereof, have decided to prevent any sort of debate on a wide spectrum of issues by filibustering their own motion. Since they have been doing that, we have seen members of the Bloc and the New Democratic Party actually bring in concurrence reports.

In the past, I was very critical of concurrence reports being brought in, but I can appreciate the frustration of other political entities inside the House. Like me, they have been seeing the Conservatives playing games and denying Canadians the opportunity to hear a lot of positive debate and votes take place on issues that are critically important to them. I find that unfortunate. I hope that, at some point in time, we will be able to acknowledge that there are important issues in concurrence motions. We know that there are actually well over 100 reports out there. We could spend every day from now until September 2025 talking about a concurrence report. Some might be a little more interesting than others.

I like this concurrence report in the sense that it is relevant to an issue that Canadians are concerned about. It provides us the opportunity to get some of the things that the federal government is actually doing on the record. The unfortunate reality of it, however, is that it continues to support and allow for the Conservative Party to ultimately filibuster the very simple motion that was put to the House. All members of the House actually want to see the motion voted on, except for the Conservatives, so that we are better able to deal with the important issues that Canadians have to face and deal with.

● (1625)

That is why, day in and day out, we are appealing to the Conservative Party to start putting the interests of Canadians ahead of the leadership ambitions of the current leader and the Conservative Party in general here in Ottawa. We hope that, over the next number of days, weeks and whatever it takes, the Conservatives become a bit more sensitized to the issues that Canadians are facing. We hope that they will ultimately work with other political entities in the chamber so that we can have the types of debates it is necessary to have here on the floor of the House of Commons.

Having said all that, housing is a very big issue. I recognize that. There is nothing new there. We know that housing has needed to be looked at, not only for this year but also in previous years. We made a bold start on the housing file a number of years ago. When I started off, I said that no other prime minister or government has done more in terms of contributing to the bigger picture of housing in Canada than the current Prime Minister and government. That is a fact. No government has worked as diligently as the current gov-

ernment has with provinces, territories, indigenous communities, every region of the country and the many different stakeholders out there. As a government, we have been very proactive on the housing file.

We could contrast what we have done with previous governments. Even better yet, let us contrast the leader of the Conservative Party with the Prime Minister, the leader of the Liberal Party, on the issue of the housing file. It does not take very much to expand on what the leader of the Conservative Party did. He was actually the housing minister when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. We have had many ministers talk about how enthusiastic the leader of the Conservative Party was with respect to housing when he was the minister of housing. He actually built six houses in Canada. Now, to the best of my knowledge, we have not found any of those six houses, but we are told that that he actually built six houses as minister of housing. That is a pretty impressive background. If we contrast that with what the leader of the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister of Canada, has done, people would get a better understanding and appreciation of who really understands the needs and the housing-related issues as a leader.

Yesterday, we were entertained with a Conservative idea. The Conservatives do not have very many of them, but we had one that floated to the top yesterday. It is a rare occurrence. What the Conservatives are saying now is that, if we bought a house for \$900,000, we would not have to pay the GST on that house. That is the Conservatives' gift to the housing situation that Canada is facing today. At the same time, the leader of the Conservative Party says that they would also cut back on other federal programs dealing with housing. I found it interesting that the leader of the Conservative Party today said that they are helping homelessness. It raises the following question: How many people in homeless shelters do they think are going to benefit by building a \$900,000 home in the next year or so? I suspect that it will not be any of them. I do not quite understand the Conservatives' policy.

● (1630)

Maybe the leader of the Conservative Party got the idea when we said we were going to get rid of the GST on purpose-built rentals. Not only was that well received in Canada, but provincial jurisdictions did likewise for the PST. That in itself is going to lead to thousands of units being built across the country. That was a very strong and positive announcement from the Government of Canada, and now the leader of the Conservative Party is saying the Conservatives have a better idea, that they are going to give a break on GST to those buying brand new houses, putting in a cap of a million dollars.

Routine Proceedings

How does that deal with affordable housing? I can say right off-hand that it deals with it in a very negative way, because while he is talking about this shiny new Conservative program, he will also be cutting programs that are going to build more affordable housing across Canada. Their policy statement does not make any sense, unless there is a theme that he wants to develop, the theme of axing the tax. I saw the motions he made today, moving his arm up and down. I see him do that inside and outside the House when he talks about axing the tax. He believes that he can fool Canadians. That is what this is about.

He is trying to give an impression that Canadians are going to benefit because he is going to axe the GST for those building brand new houses. How many Canadians are going to benefit by that major policy announcement, particularly those who need affordable housing, especially when we factor in that he is going to cancel other programs? Interestingly enough, the Conservatives are critical, publicly and here in the House, of the Minister of Housing with regard to the accelerator fund. They say it is one of the programs they are going to axe.

If we look at National Newswatch, we become very familiar with a number of the members of the Conservative caucus who disagree, at least those who wrote the Minister of Housing, with what the Conservative leader is saying. We got letters from Conservatives asking, in essence, for additional support on the housing file, appealing to the Minister of Housing for support on the initiative in their ridings. I applaud those members. They are doing what they should be doing in advocating for their constituents, even though their leader is advocating to get rid of the program. I find something odd about that.

I know of at least five Conservatives who did this, and I understand there are potentially even more, as a number of communities are affected. I sure hope the letter was good. What do the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, the member for Simcoe North, the member for Fundy Royal, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton and the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola have in common? I suspect there are more, but here are the five we know of. They all have two things in common. One is that they are all Conservatives, and two, they all want the government program that the leader of the Conservative Party wants to get rid of, as he said in his announcement yesterday.

• (1635)

Today, time after time, the leader of the Conservative Party stood in his place and said how good he is because of what so-and-so is saying about his announcement. At the end of the day, the Conservatives need to rethink their housing policy. While they are doing that, they might also want to rethink their price on pollution policy, because they have had a few flip-flops on it. I would suggest that if they want to do the environment a favour, they should have yet another flip-flop.

Shortly after coming into government, we established the national housing strategy. We can think of the affordable housing initiative and the rapid housing initiative too. Through supports of that nature, we were able to repair, renew and see the construction of literally tens of thousands of homes in different regions in Canada.

We are providing loans and more to ensure that capital gets off the ground.

We can talk about the support for non-profit, low-income housing that has been ongoing. The federal government provides hundreds of millions in subsidies to ensure that people can afford to live in non-profit housing.

We have other programs that might not be as direct as one would like to see but are very important. I am thinking of the greener homes program, which provides support to individuals who want to make their homes more energy efficient. That was taken up by thousands of Canadians throughout the country.

As a government, we believe in co-op housing and support it in a very tangible way. We want to see more co-op homes being built, because there is a difference between being a resident of a co-op and being a tenant in an apartment block. If I had more time, I would go into that in much greater detail. We also have the housing accelerator fund.

There is a fundamental difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals. We understand that the federal government has a strong leadership role to play on housing, and we are doing just that. However, we have to work with municipalities, provinces, territories, indigenous communities and the wide spectrum of stakeholders out there, like Habitat for Humanity, which does fantastic work. I suspect it has built more new homes in Winnipeg North, in particular in areas that are more challenged, than any other organization, including government.

Stakeholders play a very important role, and we have been there to support them. Whether it is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister, we are constantly looking for ways, working with the Minister of Housing and caucus colleagues, to bring up ideas on how we can improve Canada's housing stock and expand it.

I remember the housing accelerator fund opportunity. It was great when the Prime Minister came to Winnipeg. He, the premier and the mayor of Winnipeg talked about how, by working together, all three levels of government were going to be able to accomplish so much more. These are the types of things we need to see more of.

That is where the challenge is for the members opposite. We have invested. We understand the issue. We know that more work still needs to be done. However, they cannot tell me that any other national government in history, throughout the generations, has done more on the housing file than the Prime Minister and this government. That does not mean things are perfect; it means that we will continue to work for Canadians on this very serious issue.

I would appeal in particular to the Conservative Party to stop the games it is playing on the floor of the House of Commons. Let us get to work for Canadians and put our party interests behind the interests of Canadians.

Routine Proceedings

• (1640)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have one question for the member. Will the government support the NDP amendment and get rent price-fixing investigated in committee? The member's caucus colleagues at HUMA are currently shielding ultrawealthy corporate landlords from testifying.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that I would love to see the standing committee deal with. As for the issue of rent control, I was an MLA for a number of years, and rent control is in provincial jurisdiction. Having said that, I believe there is a role for our standing committees there, especially after yesterday's announcement, when the official opposition said the best way to deal with housing in the country is to give a tax break to people building houses under a million dollars. That is supposed to resolve the homelessness issue. It is supposed to resolve the affordable housing issue.

I think we need better educated Conservative members to ensure there is good, sound public policy when it comes to housing. I would recommend that all committee members take a look at what the Conservative Party is talking about. It might cause a few of them to change their mind and backtrack, possibly do a flip-flop, on their most recent announcement. That would definitely be in the best interests of Canadians.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague opposite name members, one of whom was me. I will never apologize for standing up for the constituents, mayors, wardens and municipalities that write in to me and ask me to advocate on their behalf.

I would like to ask the member if he has talked to members of the Liberal Party who represent ridings in London, which includes Middlesex County. Have they written a letter to their own minister to ask for funding? I ask because if we look, I think we will find that the two sitting members from London have never stood up for Middlesex County and have never written a letter on its behalf asking the Liberals to look at a funding application that makes sense for the city.

I ask if the member opposite will stand up for his constituents the way Conservative MPs are willing to stand up for their constituents, even in opposition.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are not standing up for constituents if their leader is running around saying to kill the program, knowing full well that if they were to form government, the program would be a puff of smoke and disappear. That is not advocating for constituents. The member should be taking up the issue she just finished raising. If she believes in the program, she should be expressing that within her caucus.

I am glad that she wrote a letter to the minister, but I suggest that she show that letter to the leader of the Conservative Party and tell him to flip-flop on the issue.

• (1645)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that we are in the midst of a housing crisis. There are not enough homes to meet all needs.

Affordable housing is often spoken of as a need. We in the Bloc Québécois prefer to talk about social housing. There is a big difference. I wonder if my colleague and the government are aware of that. Affordable housing is housing that costs 10% less than market price. In the case of social housing, rent is calculated based on the person's income and must not exceed 30% of their income.

Is the government aware of that? When will it finally apply these basic principles to make housing truly accessible?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely know the difference. I was the housing critic in the province of Manitoba, where we had roughly 15,000 to 20,000 fully subsidized units that were based strictly on income. That is why I said that hundreds of millions go toward ongoing support of individuals in non-profit housing and affordable housing in different forms.

Whether it is 100% subsidized or there is a 10% subsidy through other mechanisms, we understand that there need to be different forms of housing. I am a very strong advocate of, for example, housing co-ops. There should be all sorts of programs for non-profit organizations. I also think we need to see the different levels of government come to the table to look at how we can build more homes and have them be non-profit houses and units. There is a need there. Thank goodness we started when we did with the national housing strategy a number of years ago.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem with the intervention from the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex a few moments ago is that she is trying to paint the picture that she is just standing up for her constituents. The reality is that she does not do that in the House when it comes to these programs. Instead, during question period and at every other opportunity, she tells us repeatedly that the government is failing her constituents. Then, behind everybody's back, she writes a letter to the Minister of Housing saying, "Can we please get some of this money because we see value in this program." It is the exact same thing the members for Simcoe North, Fundy Royal, St. Albert—Edmonton and Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola are doing.

It is all about the hypocrisy of what is going on here. On the one hand, they are saying that the government is completely failing Canadians, but on the other hand, they go behind everybody's back to write letters to the minister directly.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Routine Proceedings

Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, despite the fact she is heckling me right now, I do not hear her standing up in the House saying, “That is such a great program. By the way, did the minister get my letter? We are waiting to get some money, too.”

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary can comment on that hypocrisy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe my friend and colleague did a wonderful job in pointing out the issue. He made reference to five members, and as he was speaking, I thought maybe we should have a production of papers from the Minister of Housing of all the letters he has received from Conservatives asking for support from the housing programs. We might all be surprised. There might be a majority of Conservatives, and if we can get a majority of the Conservatives agreeing with the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and her other colleagues, maybe the leader of the Conservative Party would flip-flop on the issue. It would definitely be in the interest of Canadians if the Conservatives did that flip-flop.

Should we be asking the Minister of Housing, if we can get unanimous support, to provide all the letters from Conservative members requesting finances? Would I be able to request that as a unanimous consent motion?

• (1650)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is asking for unanimous consent to table those documents.

Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the only thing more exaggerated than the hon. member for Winnipeg North is the Liberal national housing strategy itself. The Liberals made an announcement of \$75 billion that was supposed to go out, of which \$12 billion was already spent and \$37 billion went nowhere. We know, in this moment, that they like to pretend Canadians have never had it so good, but I know Winnipeg is a lot like Hamilton. Winter is coming. It is going to be very cold in Winnipeg, and there are going to be people on the streets dying.

Will this member finally stand up and just admit that laissez-faire economics, leaving it to the market and dishing money out to private developers, is a failed policy and that this government has a responsibility to do what it did some 50 years ago, which was to be bold and build purpose-built, non-market social housing? Yes or no?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that there has not, and that is why I challenged him. He cannot give me a prime minister or government that has done more on the national housing scene than the Prime Minister or the government has done. He might not like that, but the reality is, when we compare the Liberals' performance to that of Thomas Mulcair when he was the leader of the official opposition, the NDP, during the 2015 election, we will find that the Liberal platform outdid the NDP platform on housing. Not only did we outdo it, but we are also actually implementing it.

Having said that, we do appreciate the support that we get from the NDP.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove, Taxation; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, Government Accountability; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Government Accountability.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country.

I will be splitting my time today with the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Today, we are discussing a report from the human resources committee, or the housing committee. I want to point out quickly that the Conservatives put forth a dissenting report on this, and I will read a couple of points that we made in our dissenting report.

We wrote:

We will not get out of the housing crisis, without building more homes. To build more homes we need everyone pulling in the same direction, the federal government, provincial governments, municipalities, workers, and yes, the private sector. Demonizing, taxing, and blocking private sector involvement in Canada's housing market, not only keeps us from solving Canada's housing crisis, but could actually make it worse.

We also referenced some statistics:

To reach 22 million units by 2030, the CMHC says we must build 3.5 million more units beyond what we will build anyhow. The CMHC says that those 3.5 million units that are required by 2030 will require “An investment of at least \$1 trillion” to build. The CMHC says we need “increased participation from the private sector” to meet these goals.

Our dissenting report continues, “Conservative members support 60 day average approvals at the CMHC, linking bonuses for CMHC executives to performance metrics, and balancing the budget to lower interest rates so that we can unleash” non-governmental organizations and others.

Here are a few points that I want to make at the onset of this debate here today. I would like to set the template for where housing is in Canada right now. Under the Liberal government, housing has never been more expensive. The Liberals' failure to build homes has created a housing crisis for Canadians. In fact, the House of Commons has said that we are in a housing crisis.

The cost of mortgage payments and down payments have all doubled under the Liberal government, or we could say the NDP-Liberal government because the NDP has been supporting the Liberals. It previously took 25 years to pay off a mortgage, whereas now it actually takes 25 years to save for a down payment. This is one of the reasons young adults, so many of them in the country, are saying that they feel they will never be able to afford a mortgage. It is very demotivating and really frustrating for our young adults here in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

The Liberals' record on housing, mortgages and rents is really nothing for them to be proud of. Instead of building homes that Canadians need, they have been building more bureaucracy. We hear a lot about the bureaucracy of the federal housing agency, the CMHC, at the housing committee. We have done a number of studies recently, and we have had a lot of testimony from different witnesses talking about how the federal housing agency will add costs because of certain building rules that it has put in place, which are far and above actual requirements. It will also add in a number of other rules, which can actually add a lot of cost, time and delays onto building the housing. We have heard quite a bit about this at the housing committee.

We also know that, nine years after the Prime Minister promised to lower the price of housing, rents and mortgages have doubled, and middle-class Canadians are being forced to live in tent encampments. In nearly every city across the country, we are seeing a record number of tent encampments opening. However, the photos that we have seen from the Liberal government will not come anywhere near to building the 5.8 million homes that are needed to restore housing affordability in Canada. As a result, home prices have doubled, rent has doubled, down payments have doubled and mortgages have also doubled.

There was a report done by CMHC earlier in October that showed that housing starts continue to trend lower while Canada's population has rapidly increased. When we compare September 2024 to September 2023, the results are even worse. Across the country, housing starts were down 15% this September compared to September 2023. Similarly, in Canada's most expensive cities, the Liberal government's billion-dollar photo op fund has really done nothing to build more homes because housing starts are actually down 20% in Vancouver and Toronto.

• (1655)

Statistics Canada also recently reported that the total value of building permits increased by 7% in August of this year. As well, Rentals.ca recently published its national rent report, which shows the consequences of the Liberal failure. This means the cost of rent has massively outpaced Canadian paycheques. It is just one bad statistic after another.

We can look at homelessness, which is an issue in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country and across the country. The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a detailed report in May of this year outlining the state of homelessness in Canada. The Liberal government committed to eliminating chronic homelessness by 2030. However, according to this report, since 2018, chronic homelessness has actually increased by 38%. The report also stated that the number of individuals living in unsheltered locations has increased by a staggering 38%. These are not just statistics. These are people. These are family members. These are neighbours.

What I would like to discuss now is a recent announcement made by the leader of the official opposition about a plan that Conservatives have to lower the cost for Canadians looking to buy a home. Our common-sense Conservative leader announced that we would axe the federal sales tax, or the GST, as it is called, on new homes sold for under \$1 million. This cut would save \$40,000, or \$2,200 per year, in mortgage payments on an \$800,000 house, as an exam-

ple. This tax cut would spark 30,000 extra homes being built every year.

Common-sense Conservatives would also push provinces to remove their sales tax from new home sales, which would save tens of thousands of dollars more for homebuyers. The move really comes after this housing crisis, as I have mentioned, has doubled housing costs over the nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, which is faster than in any other G7 country.

Back in October of 2015, the month before the Liberals were elected, it took only 39% of the median pre-tax household income to cover home ownership costs. Now it takes nearly 60%. That is a staggering difference and a staggering amount for Canadian families. While it used to be normal for working-class youth to buy homes, now 80% of Canadians tell pollsters that home ownership is only for the very, very rich.

The GST alone adds about \$50,000 in cost to a \$1-million home. This common-sense Conservative tax reduction would really eliminate billions of dollars in bureaucratic programs that the Liberals admit have not built a single home. That is what will be offset by the difference.

As I mentioned, this tax cut would spark extra homes being built. What is really missing here is the promise of Canada, where many of us are of the generation that, when we were in our 20s, if we had a decent job, we could have a decent car, save up and buy our first place. That dream of home ownership is really gone now for our young Canadians, and it is incredibly sad.

We also know that, in addition to that, we have record-breaking numbers of people going to food banks. It was just reported that now two million people are going to food banks a month. It is just incredibly hard for young adults and families.

On our Conservative proposal, I would like to mention a couple of quotes here. Canadian housing expert Mike Moffat, senior director of policy and innovation of the Smart Prosperity Institute, said, “[This] proposal to eliminate the GST for newly constructed homes selling for under \$1 million is the boldest middle-class housing proposal released to date from any federal political party. It will put \$4 billion back into the pockets of homebuyers each year.”

The Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association said, “Increasing the GST Rebate threshold will support affordability, increase housing supply, and restore fairness to current and future generations of homebuyers”.

There are more quotes as well. I know that I am running out of time, but this is really important, and we hope that the government will follow the proposal made by Conservatives to axe the federal tax on new housing sold for under \$1 million.

Routine Proceedings

• (1700)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned and it comes from a lot of the questions and points that my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam raised earlier in the day. In the HUMA meeting, Conservatives and Liberals joined ranks to ensure that the committee would not bring forward CEOs' big corporate interests to committee, to hear about that financialization of housing that we know is driving up the cost of housing. I would really love to hear the hon. member's explanation of why she joined with the Liberals to block that from happening at committee.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, I know that I cannot use a prop in this place, but there is a 61-page report called “Financialization of Housing” that was completed by the committee and I referenced a dissenting report that we did. Of course, any members of the committee can bring forth witnesses to testify and all party members did. We had a very robust study on this in October 2023. Anyone can go online and have a look at that report and view all of the testimony and many recommendations that came out.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member can explain to the House, if this accelerator fund was such a failure, why it was that the members for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Simcoe North, Fundy Royal and others asked for funds for their communities from it. If they believed that it was a failure, does that mean that they knowingly asked for money from a program that they knew was a failure?

• (1705)

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, we know that we are in a housing crisis right now and this is under the nine years of the current Liberal government. It was actually the Housing Minister himself who said that the particular fund does not actually build any homes. This is why Conservatives keep bringing forth suggestions for ways to build homes and ways for Canadians to get into housing, in particular for new homeowners. That was one of the recommendations.

The announcement was made yesterday by the official opposition leader to axe the federal tax on new homes built that are under \$1 million. This would prompt new homebuilding and would prompt people to get into homes and really help with the affordability and the housing crisis that we are having here in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are going to need to tell us their plan.

The former Conservative leader said that he had a plan, a contract for Quebeckers. I would like my colleague to explain the plan to us. We are studying a committee report on the financialization of housing. In October 2023, the Conservatives did not exactly agree with some of the measures. A year later, while this long-standing crisis still rages on, they come up with a new measure: a GST exemption for new housing.

I would like my colleague to explain why the Conservatives did not think of that a year ago and why they are thinking of it now. It feels improvised. I would like her to explain, in depth if possible,

what came out of the work and thought processes of the Conservative Party.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, we are continually putting out recommendations, suggestions and announcements with respect to a whole number of ways that we can fix so much that the government has broken. Whether we are looking now at a housing crisis, at crime or at record numbers of people going to the food banks, we are continually making suggestions and recommendations on an ongoing basis. The announcement that came yesterday is another example of that.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to stand up on behalf of British Columbians and, in fact, all Canadians, when tackling the important issue of housing. Right before I came into this chamber, as I prepared my notes for this speech, one of the interns in my office said the Liberal government's approach to housing sort of reminded them of a famous quote by former United States President Ronald Reagan: “I'm from the government, and I'm here to help.”

There is no other scenario in Canada where this quote makes total sense. We have a government that put forward nearly \$100 billion and its record is that housing costs have doubled, rent has doubled and the ability for a young person to save up for a home, let alone afford rent, has gone beyond their reach. If we have ever seen a government mismanage a portfolio so badly, it is indeed the Liberal government's approach to housing.

Where I live in British Columbia, many Canadians mourn the fact that they will never have the opportunity to own a home. In fact, they feel helpless. The Canada they once knew is not the Canada of today, primarily because of how the government has attempted to tackle housing.

For example, in the Fraser Valley right now, the average cost of a townhouse is \$750,000. A down payment for a townhouse, modestly, would be about \$55,000 to cover the down payment, maybe some of the legal costs and real estate fees. If we took a very fortunate young Canadian who was making a salary of about \$85,000, in British Columbia, that would give them take-home pay of about \$5,300 a month and change.

However, let us look at what the cost of living is today. If someone is commuting to work and their gas bill is \$100 a week, they are spending \$400 on gas every single month. They have to pay ICBC insurance. That is about \$125 if they are a good driver. For a phone bill and Internet bill, they are looking at about \$160. For gas and hydro for a home, they are looking at about \$120. For a single person, they are looking at around \$750 a month for food; \$150 a month for clothing, toiletries and maybe some basic household items; \$500 for a car payment and maybe some miscellaneous costs; and \$2,500 for the average rent.

Routine Proceedings

Now, this is a modest understanding of what the average, young single person in Canada is facing. I did not even talk about the cost of student loans or other debt that they might be paying off on a monthly basis. If we tabulate all those numbers, on that salary of \$5,300 and change, they are going to be left with about \$650 at the end of the month to save up for a home. At that rate, it is going to take them about seven years and a month to save up for a down payment. That is actually a pretty accurate scenario. It is similar to what my wife and I had to do to get into our first home in that price range.

If we look at what youth are facing today, the unemployment rate for young Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 is 13.5%. The Canadian Income Survey outlines that in 2022, the average income for a Canadian worker was only \$55,000. The average young Canadian today is facing a whole host of impediments to get to where they thought they would be in life today. That is one of the biggest issues facing our country.

The NDP and the Liberals often say the Conservatives are going to cause extremism. No, it is the NDP-Liberal government that has taken away hope from an entire generation, who are going to push to the far left and the far right because of its disastrous policies and what it has done. I have lived under an NDP government in British Columbia for seven years and nine years under the Prime Minister.

Every night in Canada, there are about 25,000 to 35,000 Canadians who cannot afford a home or cannot access social housing. Unfortunately, that number is even higher for indigenous Canadians. About 30% of the Canadians who are homeless come from one of our first nations. That is not acceptable. About 22% of shelters are aimed at young homeless people in Canada, while 20% of the people experiencing homelessness are between the ages of 13 and 24.

• (1710)

Let us tie that to our unemployment rate. We have a hard scenario for young people in our country right now. I would be remiss if I did not outline that since the NDP-Liberal government came into power nine years ago, the budget at Indigenous Services Canada has increased 181%. I shared that with one of the chiefs in my riding recently and he said that if we took even a portion of that money and gave it directly to first nations to address childhood poverty and housing on reserve, we would be in a much better position than the increase of bureaucrats in Ottawa who are not accountable to the taxpayers of Canada and are not accountable to the indigenous people who rely on their services.

We could have done so much better to help indigenous people who face some of the biggest challenges for housing in this country, along with young Canadians. That brings me to the announcement that the hon. leader of the Conservative Party has made and that is a simple tax cut that will save the average purchaser of a new home between \$40,000 and \$50,000. That is not an insignificant amount of money. It will make a big difference in the time it takes to save up for a mortgage and to, indeed, afford a mortgage if one is successful in purchasing a home.

Of all the countries in the developed world, Canada has some of the highest occupancy rates. It is because we have not done enough to spur new homebuilding construction in Canada.

In fact, TD Economics just came out with a report on productivity in September of this year. They said that the biggest impediment to Canada's economy is our ability to build homes and fill the jobs in building construction for new homes in Canada. That report also stated that we have to create incentives and maintain incentives that will push people back into the industry to meet the very real challenges we face, no matter what area of the country we are in today.

Throughout this debate so far, Liberal and NDP members have been challenging Canadians on the money that was given to municipalities to speed up building permits. In fact, my community received \$26.5 million under the accelerator fund, I believe it is called. Unfortunately, in that very time since they received \$26 million, they put out a proposal to double the DCC and to levy a new tax on home builders of \$7,500 per unit to fund our infrastructure deficit as it relates to parks and recreation. Young Canadians cannot afford those costs. The City of Abbotsford should not be putting its inability to approve new home builds onto the backs of young Canadians who are just trying to get by and have some hope of home ownership once again.

There are so many big challenges facing our country but the number one thing that I hear at the doorsteps, which people in my riding want me working on, is to restore the dream of home ownership. The Conservative Party is on the right path. Our proposals relate to densification, to incentivizing construction, to building more homes that Canadians need and that they can afford.

• (1715)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, will the Conservatives support the NDP amendment that was tabled today and get this rent price-fixing investigated in committee? His colleagues at HUMA are currently shielding the ultra-wealthy corporate landlords from testifying.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, no.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think people are concerned about the mistakes that the leader of the Conservative Party is making. We could talk about his announcement on housing from yesterday or the security clearance. One that really affects me and I think would upset a lot of Canadians is a more recent decision. When I think of Canada's diversity, I always think of how we have been enriched as a society, through, for example, Diwali, which we are going to be celebrating over the coming days. It is a part of our Canadian heritage in terms of who we are as a nation and as a people. Whether truth over misinformation or light over darkness, the member knows it well, as he is very familiar with Diwali.

Routine Proceedings

The leader of the Conservative Party has made the determination that he does not want Conservatives to participate in Diwali. Can he explain why?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear that many of my Conservative colleagues and I are blessed to go to Diwali celebrations all across Canada. The statement made by the member opposite is misdirected. Conservatives celebrate Diwali, and I celebrate that part of Canadian heritage with thousands of my constituents, who use the opportunity to ensure that light conquers darkness.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with two articles that were published two weeks ago in *The Economist*, which severely criticized the government and the Prime Minister on the housing file.

As we often say here, housing prices have skyrocketed over the past nine years. They have increased by 66%. Aside from Australia, Canada is one of the only countries in the OECD with this problem. Obviously, there are several factors that explain this, but according to the two articles in *The Economist*, the number one factor was ambitious targets for increasing the population through immigration without a plan to also develop housing and social services. That may explain the government's recent about-face.

I would like to ask my colleague what immigration levels the Conservative Party thinks are acceptable.

[English]

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I do not have an exact number on immigration at hand, but as the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, I believe that immigration should be tied to Canada's ability to integrate newcomers. It should be tied to our ability to have hospitals that can serve our population and schools that can serve our population. Immigration needs to be done in a responsible way. What is so scary is that the NDP-Liberal government has destroyed the Canadian consensus on immigration due to its mismanagement.

• (1720)

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that he has young people in his community, as I do in my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, who think the dream of home ownership is out of their reach. We heard our leader this week make an announcement about taking the GST off new home builds. In my constituency, there are a lot of new home developments, but some of them are on hold because people cannot afford to buy those homes right now.

What we have seen from the NDP-Liberal government is programs, such as the one members were talking about earlier, the housing accelerator fund, through which not a single house has been built. There are numerous developers in my riding that are trying to build houses, but unfortunately young people cannot afford them.

I am wondering if my colleague would like to make some comments on the common-sense Conservative plan to get homes built.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, there are some key things the Conservative Party must do to see more homes built in Canada. First and foremost, we must do what economist Mike Moffatt said is the

single-biggest thing we can do for middle-class homes, which is to incentivize more construction through the elimination of the GST on homes under a million dollars. Second, we must ensure there is densification around transit stations across Canada. Third, we need to incentivize municipalities in this country to build more in order to receive more infrastructure dollars from the federal government.

[Translation]

Mme Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like you to know that I will be sharing my time.

First of all, I would like to thank my NDP colleague for initiating a debate on this report. Had he not, I would have done so myself, because this report on the financialization of housing is one of the most important and widely supported reports produced by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, even though it has drafted a number of very important reports.

We produced this 67-page document after hearing from many witnesses. Although its recommendations were quite strong, the government's response was quite weak. The report concerns the financialization of housing. However, considering the crucial importance of this issue, I have been somewhat saddened to see that, from the start of the debate, all sides have focused on asking what the Conservatives are going to do or what the Liberal government is going to do.

To place the report in context, I am going to read a few passages from it. First of all, what led us to study this question? The report was tabled in October 2023. Here is what it says:

On 8 September 2022, the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate released a series of reports on the financialization of housing in Canada. Each of these reports focused on an issue or group of people impacted by the financialization of housing, including: seniors, racialized people, those living in multi-family rental housing and tenants more broadly, as well as an examination of the international landscape. They also included a variety of recommendations for Canadian governments at all levels.

This was no small feat. The report defines financialization of housing. That is what our committee's report is about, and that is what we should be focusing on today. Here is what the report says:

Martine August, author of one of the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate's reports on financialization of housing and Associate Professor, University of Waterloo, described "financialization of housing" as "the growing dominance of financial actors in the housing sector, which is transforming the primary function of housing from a place to live into a financial asset and tool for investor profits." The Federal Housing Advocate clarified that

[i]t's not new that these buildings are privately owned. What is new is that they are now increasingly owned by large institutional investors and financial firms whose focus is making maximum returns for shareholders.

Privilege

That is truly what this is about and it is having an impact on people and renters, even though the right to housing is a fundamental right.

The committee heard from the Federal Housing Advocate about her perspective on how financialization of housing has expanded and shaped the country's housing system in the last decades. She noted that

regulatory changes enabled the creation of real estate investment trusts and allowed pension funds to invest in financial markets and instruments.

The report also addresses the impacts of financialization:

Houle told the committee that 20% to 30% of Canada's purpose-built rental housing is owned by institutional investors. She discussed the harm she sees being caused by financialized housing, that it is "contributing to housing unaffordability and it's worsening housing conditions. It is leading to evictions and displacement." She explained that the trend toward financialization "is violating people's right to adequate housing in Canada," as defined under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, signed by Canada in 1976, and enshrined in the *National Housing Strategy Act*.

● (1725)

These troubling reports led to witnesses being called to committee. They came to tell us that, basically, the Liberal government's national housing strategy is not working. Over \$80 billion has been invested in affordable housing, but we will not get anywhere as long as everything is determined solely on the principle of supply and demand. This is evident when we look at how the market works: When we act on the supply side, that reduces demand. This is partly true, but we must act on the real demand.

In the current housing crisis, the real demand is for social housing, non-market housing. We must ensure that these housing units meet the affordability criteria, which means that people must not spend more than 30% of their income on housing. We are not talking about the average income per capita per city. We also need to ensure that we are building sustainable housing.

My esteemed colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, who is the housing critic, has toured Quebec extensively. He has travelled across 15 regions. Many recommendations were made, including increasing the supply of non-market social housing to 20% and taking meaningful action to counter financialization so that housing is no longer subject to speculation. That is what we are talking about.

In its concluding statement in response to the committee's eight recommendations, the federal government said, "The Government of Canada acknowledges the potential impact of the financialization of housing on access to affordable housing and recognizes that there is more work to be done". That is weak and rather sad.

There is a fundamental issue that we need to address. The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities has done just that. I think that we need to take all of this into account when we talk about the housing crisis and the effects of the financialization of housing. Safe, affordable, decent quality housing is a fundamental right.

● (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time. Accordingly, the debate on the motion will be rescheduled for another sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 29 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I stand in the House today to discuss the corrupt Liberal \$400-million green slush fund, the former Liberal minister Mr. Navdeep Bains is literally across the street before the public accounts committee. He is continuing what has been a long-standing pattern of ducking, dodging and diving to avoid any accountability and avoid answering any questions about the Sustainable Development Technology Canada scandal, the \$400-million Liberal green slush fund. He is avoiding questions from my Conservative colleagues. It is not hard to see why when we dig into the rot that has occurred at SDTC.

As I begin my comments today, I would like to recap some of the background, because a lot of Canadians may not be aware of just how horrible the SDTC scandal really is. SDTC started in 2001, and for years operated without any cloud of concern, but with the Liberal government in charge, it became a \$400-million slush fund for Liberal elite insiders.

The Auditor General conducted an investigation and found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that could not demonstrate environmental benefit or the development of green technology. There was another \$58 million to projects without ensuring that carbon contribution agreement terms were met. A whopping, staggering \$334 million went to over 186 projects in which board members held a conflict of interest. Now, as I stand here, the former Liberal minister who was supposed to be overseeing this and making sure the SDTC ran properly is across the street denying any knowledge or awareness of the 186 projects with conflicts of interest.

The reason the public is able to know what went on is that a whistle-blower came forward from SDTC and testified that "the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like [this]".

Privilege

Certainly, everything from the Liberal government since the whistle-blower's testimony seems to be backing up the assertion that there is a cover-up in place, that the Liberal government will go to any extent possible to avoid having a real, transparent conversation about the corruption that occurred at SDTC. Conservatives are asking for basic accountability and for documents to be released and turned over so the relevant law enforcement authorities can make their own decisions about what to do with all of the evidence. However, currently all of the evidence is being withheld because the Liberals refuse to comply.

A question that I think is natural to ask is this: What do my constituents think about this? Liberals have gone to great lengths to downplay the issue as if it were not a matter of broad public interest in our country. I have, thankfully, had the chance to speak with residents of Durham about the scandal. It is pretty clear why my constituents are upset, because \$400 million is a lot of taxpayer money to waste, to dish out to Liberal elite insiders in a corruption scandal when there are very serious problems in this country that would benefit from taxpayers' keeping more of their money and not giving it to the Liberal Party so it can then send it out the window.

Let us put into perspective what \$400 million means in real economic terms for the average Canadian. First, if we do the math, 400 million bucks works out to about \$9,700 per person in this country. That is an enormous amount of money for the average Canadian. It would make getting through life the rest of this year a lot easier. However, Canadians were not able to keep that tax money for themselves. No, they were overtaxed so Liberals could take their money and then give it out to their friends. It is no surprise that Canadians are frustrated and upset.

What else could be done with \$400 million? We are in the middle of a housing crisis in this country. I am a renter who dreams of owning a home one day. As a millennial, I am part of an entire generation of Canadians that is now looking at a housing market that looks increasingly unlikely for us to ever participate in.

• (1735)

There was a time in this country when that could be taken for granted. People would do everything they are asked to do: finish school, work hard, get a job, pay their taxes. Then home ownership would be a realistic, attainable goal. That is not now the case. What would \$400 million mean in those terms? In my community of Durham, \$400 million could buy over 440 homes.

That is again putting into perspective the value of the taxpayer dollars that the Liberals took from the public and dished out to their elite insider friends. In a housing crisis, that is completely inexcusable, yet a generation of Canadians continues to have a government turn its back on them at a time when home ownership is a distant dream for many.

What else could \$400,000 do for the Canadian people? If Canadians were able to keep that money, based on the average amount of groceries that a family of four buys, according to "Canada's Food Price Report 2023", \$400 million is the equivalent of over 24,000 families buying groceries for a year. Again I will put this into perspective. Two million Canadians are lining up at food banks right now. People going to grocery stores are increasingly feeling

the strain of not being able to purchase the things they used to be able to afford just a couple of years ago.

Every time I go to the grocery store, I notice people who put produce or meat into their cart and then second-guess whether they should put it back on the shelf, because they are not sure they can afford what they are used to feeding their family. At a time like this, \$400 million of taxpayer money being wasted is infuriating because people are making real compromises on what they purchase from the grocery store every day. The money amounts to over 24,000 families' grocery bills for an entire year.

What else could be done with \$400 million? Many people in this country are struggling right now with car ownership because the Liberal government is increasing a carbon tax that makes it harder to pay for fuel and to make use of a vehicle to go to work, go to school, get around and take kids to soccer practice, hockey practice, piano lessons or whatever. The cost of car ownership has gone up under the government.

What could taxpayers do with a car if they could keep the \$400 million? That is the equivalent of 24,000 Canadians being able to pay for gas, parking, insurance and car maintenance for an entire year. That is what \$400 million would mean to taxpayers if they were allowed to keep that money; instead, it was taken from them to be dished out to Liberal elite insiders as part of a \$400-million green slush fund.

What else could be done with \$400 million? One of the things I hear a lot from moms and dads in my community is that there is an increasing number of kids who need more services and support. We have, Lord knows, in my province of Ontario, an epically failing Ministry of Education that puts an increasing number of children in a position where the day-to-day supports offered by schools just are not enough to help kids get over the adversity and challenges they are facing. I recently heard from a mom and dad who were concerned about not being able to afford speech therapy for their kids. The \$400 million would provide one hour a week of speech therapy in an entire year in the greater Toronto area for over 48,000 children.

When we put this in terms of what the money means for the average taxpayer, taking the money away from people has real consequences. When they hear what was being done with the money, it is no wonder they are frustrated by the current government and the status quo in this country.

Privilege

The last one is an important one, and I say this as a cancer survivor and someone who has great admiration and appreciation for health care workers in this country. I say this because the government constantly points fingers, as if Liberals were the only people who care about health care in Canada. If they care so much about health care, where is their apology to the Canadian public for spending \$400 million of taxpayer money on Liberal elite insiders, which would have been the equivalent of over 60,000 people being able to stay at a hospital?

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, \$400 million would cover over 60,000 hospital stays in the health care system we have right now. The \$400 million of taxpayer money being wasted is incredibly concerning for someone who looks at the numbers, knows all of these problems are stacking up across Canada and then hears what is being done with their tax money. Of course taxpayers are frustrated; that is just an inevitability. I am just putting what is a real Liberal scandal in clear economic terms.

● (1740)

I would like to touch on why some of the residents of my community of Durham are also frustrated with what is happening with respect to the SDTC scandal, which is that they are big believers in making real, genuine investments in technology. Many of my constituents in Durham either work at or have family members who work at the Darlington nuclear facility. It is an incredible facility in Durham region that powers our local economy and generates a tremendous amount of energy for our community.

There have been tremendous technology investments at the Darlington nuclear facility, including medical isotopes, which are now used to help with cancer treatments. There is also the development of small modular nuclear reactors, which will make low-carbon-emitting energy more accessible to rural and remote communities. This technology is being exported across the world. These are incredible innovations and they are happening in my backyard in Durham.

My constituents know that technology investments are actually very important. The Liberal government claimed that was what was happening with the SDTC, that the \$400 million was going to go to technology investments like the kinds of investments that we know could happen with that money in Durham. However, that is not what happened.

In fact, we have an industry that employs 89,000 Canadians and adds \$17 billion to our GDP each year, but none of the \$400 million was used to support our technology developments. None of it was used to support the nuclear industry. In fact, the money was dished out to Liberal elite insiders who, I recap, were engaged in over 186 conflicts of interest, with \$58 million going to 10 ineligible projects that could not demonstrate environmental benefit or the development of green technology.

I can assure members that the Darlington nuclear facility could have used some of that money to continue the great work that is being done there. It is developing green technology and does have very clear, measurable environmental benefits. Again, people in Durham understand that technology investments matter, but that is not what we are getting from the Liberal government. Instead we are getting a cover-up of a scheme that took the money away from

projects that could have benefited from it and gave it to Liberal insiders.

I would like to continue by also addressing some concerns related to the police. We have heard from Liberals ad nauseam over the last few weeks that they are somehow doing the will of the police by opposing a basic request for accountability. On that, I would like to say that I believe that this is part of a broader trend with the Liberal government of, frankly, not respecting or trusting police officers.

Just recently, police associations across Canada, including the Toronto Police Association and the Vancouver Police Association, have come out and criticized the Prime Minister and his Liberal policies for increasing crime in our country. There has been a 116% increase in handgun crime under the current government. Police associations have rung the alarm and are openly asking the Liberal government to listen to what their members have to say. They are on the ground and are seeing the consequences of Liberal policies every day.

What are they being told? The Prime Minister and the Liberal member for Pickering—Uxbridge have stood here in the House of Commons and accuse the police associations of somehow mimicking talking points from gun lobbyists. It is absurd. It is disrespectful to law enforcement in this country; however, it is more than just that.

The Minister of Justice has before him, right now on his desk, a report that makes a series of recommendations about the criminal justice system. One of those recommendations is cutting police budgets. Yes, it is a recommendation that would take away 25% of the grant dollars from public safety, the Attorney General and the Solicitor General that police organizations are currently able to apply for. They would no longer be eligible for that money.

● (1745)

If the Liberals were as supportive of the police as they claim to be, they would have just come out and said this recommendation is absurd, that they trust the police and that they think the police do a good job and are an important institution in our communities. The Liberals should have said they do not want to even entertain that recommendation, but that is not what we heard from the Liberal Minister of Justice. In fact, what we got from him is a celebration of that report. He called it “history-making” and “an important milestone”.

This recommendation is absurd at face value. The more we look at it, the more we cannot even believe the Liberals would celebrate these kinds of policies. However, what we are asking them to do is turn over documents to the police and trust them to make their own decision about what to do with them. That is what basic accountability means. That is all we are asking for. We are not directing the police on what to do. We trust their judgment to make a decision. The Liberals do not share that trust in law enforcement, and this goes to a long track record of anti-police bias.

When we have a government that has this view of law enforcement, has an antagonistic relationship with police unions and has a Minister of Justice who is celebrating policy recommendations that will lead to the cutting of police budgets, it is no wonder the Liberals do not have the confidence to let the police decide. They should turn over the documents and let the police decide what they want to do with them. This is basic common sense.

I will return to what is happening across the street right now. Former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains, one of the people who were supposed to oversee SDTC and prevent a stacking up of conflicts of interest and the misallocation of funds, is continuing what we have been seeing for months and months, which is that the government does not want to answer questions, does not want to submit to any form of accountability and barely even wants to acknowledge there was wrongdoing. This has been a pattern that we continue to see, literally happening right now across the street, of thinking the Liberals can misuse \$400 million of Canadian taxpayer funds and not even have to answer questions on a potential investigation. They vilify a whistle-blower who dares to speak up about what is going on, a whistle-blower who pointed out and called it right that the government would not want to hold itself accountable and would do everything it possibly could to downplay this and avoid answering any questions. For the Liberals, the PR side of this is a bigger problem than the taxpayer accountability side.

This entire debate we are having right now about the \$400-million Liberal green slush fund really comes back to taxpayer accountability. The government is not entitled to everyone's money, no matter how much it likes to raise taxes and oppose our attempts to lower taxes. The Liberals can play those games all they want, but the reality is they are not entitled to people's money.

They introduce policies, and policies should be based on some mechanism of trust with the taxpayer so that every time we pay taxes, that money is used for a good purpose that benefits our communities, our families and our country. However, what we are seeing is a betrayal of that trust at a time when we have very serious problems that deserve attention and that could be benefited by taxpayers' having more of their own money in their pockets. Instead, we are seeing people get overtaxed, and the spending that comes from that overtaxation is being done in a way that is entirely reckless. Now there is a chance to have some accountability in that process for the Liberals, but on this side of the street, they are trying to downplay the problem, holding Parliament up and refusing to release the documents, and on the other side of the street, they continue to not answer any questions we have at committee.

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a bit much to hear the member be disrespectful to the RCMP. I will quote a letter from the RCMP about the games or tactics the Conservative Party is using: "There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections." That is from the commissioner of the RCMP, and the Conservatives say, "Who cares?" They have their political agenda at hand and completely disregard what the RCMP is saying.

Privilege

The member says this is all about political Liberals lining the pockets of Liberals. However, the chairperson was an adviser to Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative; Stephen Harper, a far-right Conservative; and Jim Flaherty, another Conservative. She donates thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party, yet the member calls her a Liberal. The Conservative Party makes absolutely no sense on this issue. It feeds into the incompetence of the leader when he puts the interests of the Conservative Party ahead of the interests of Canadians.

Will the member opposite encourage his leader to do the right thing, be respectful, listen to Canadians, put Canadians' interests ahead of the Conservative Party and the leader's interests, and get a security clearance so he is better able to deal with the issue of foreign interference? Will the member give his leader the advice to get a security clearance?

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, I have not been here for very long; I think it is fair to say I am a rookie, but I have been here long enough to know how the Liberals play the game. I knew these questions were coming. It is a no-brainer.

This is from an October 12 National Post interview with Commissioner Mike Duheme of the RCMP:

When asked what the RCMP was investigating specifically, Duheme said police were exploring a range of theories.

"Could there be a possibility of corruption?...Breach of Trust? Is there anything fraud, any favouritism?"

"It was brought to our attention and we felt, as an organization, OK, let's look into it, and if charges are warranted, charges are warranted. If they're not warranted, we'll explain why we're not charging," he said.

Those are the words of the RCMP commissioner. All I am saying is let us make sure he has all the documents he could possibly need so he can use his judgment and discretion as the chief of police to make the most informed decision possible. What is wrong with that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a simple question. We have been dealing with this question of privilege for over two weeks, and we all hope that, as a result, the government will hand over the documents. However, if the government does not do so, what is the Conservatives' plan? Do they intend to raise another question of privilege?

[*English*]

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, my plan is to hold the Liberal government accountable. That is exactly why I am standing here in the House of Commons right now. My constituents know, like Canadians all across our country, that the government is mismanaging its money and misleading our country. Every Canadian, from all walks of life, can see that the quality of life in Canada is in decline, and we are holding the government accountable for how it is using \$400 million of taxpayer money.

Privilege

The Liberals should produce the documents and should answer questions. Their former Liberal minister should not be across the street right now ducking, dodging and diving. He should be answering questions that were prepared to provide the public with answers.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke quite rightly about the waste of \$400 million and said this money would have been much better put into our health care system. I agree with him. He also called on the Liberals to apologize for that waste of money.

I was in this House when the Conservatives were last in power. They wasted \$2 billion on the Phoenix pay scandal, something we are still paying for today. In the spirit of calling for an apology from the Liberals for wasting money that could have gone to health care, would the member apologize for the Conservatives wasting \$2 billion? That also could have and should have gone to health care.

• (1755)

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that members of the NDP and the Liberals see Stephen Harper in their dreams and nightmares, but I am focused on what is happening today. We are pressuring the Liberal government to be accountable to the public for the corrupt \$400-million green slush fund. Despite all the efforts to draw us away from that topic, distract us and have us debate things that happened probably before I was old enough to vote, sorry, I am not getting into all that right now.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, I liked my friend and colleague from Durham's reference to what is going on across the street in contrast to the many ways that this \$400 million could have been better spent for Canadians. He broke that down in many important ways and drew many examples.

What is the member hearing from his constituents, who we know work so hard for the tax dollars they send here, about the money being wasted in this way? It could have been spent on so many better things. He touched on taxpayer accountability, so maybe he can elaborate a bit more on that.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, the reality is that the public, the Canadian people, is aware that they are being overtaxed. There are expenses they would like to pay but cannot afford because the Liberal government is taking too much money out of their pockets and away from their families. It is a natural question to ask, "What are all the things I could do if I just had more of the money I work for?" That is the question Canadians are asking themselves when they look at this \$400-million green slush fund.

When we look at hospital stays, car payments, groceries and homes, there are a whole host of things that have become very expensive for a lot of people and burdens on our public systems. People are frustrated by what that has done to our quality of life. Taxpayers have an expectation that when they see a deduction from their paycheques or an extra 13% added onto everything they buy, they are going to see some benefit from the money being taken away from them. When that money is being taken and misused, with Liberals dishing it out to elite Liberal insiders, like George Costanza and Jerry Seinfeld trading a rye bread out the window, of course people are going to be frustrated.

That is what the Canadian taxpayer feels right now. That is why we are focusing on this issue. We are speaking for the people of our country and speaking for our constituents.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, ironically, the member said "ducking" and "diving" and that members should answer questions. I asked him a question and he did not even answer it.

Let me be more crystal clear for the member. Foreign interference is a very serious issue in Canada. All political leaders except his leader, the leader of the Conservative Party, have gotten their security clearance. There have been recommendations from legal experts, who have said he should be getting a security clearance. Others are saying the rationale the Conservatives are using is absolute nonsense.

Will the member stop ducking and diving and actually answer the question that has been posed to him? Why is the leader of the Conservative Party not getting a security clearance? Do not give us a bogus answer that does not fly and has already been discredited.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will remind the hon. member that I will not give any answers.

The hon. member for Durham has the floor.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, the Liberal member is comparing his former colleague, who was called before committee to answer questions about the green slush fund and has refused to do so, to me commenting on the green slush fund. The Liberals are doing everything possible to drag me into another conversation, but sorry, I am not a sucker. I am not going to stand here and be dragged into any topic under the sun.

I stand here to talk about why I am here, which is to call out the Liberals for mismanaging \$400 million of Canadian taxpayer money. That is why we are here. That is what we are debating. He knows better, and I know his tricks. I appreciate the try; maybe he will get me next time.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, I wish I could think of a *Seinfeld* reference that is equally adequate to that of the esteemed member for Durham there. I hope that, as the night goes on, something will come to mind. Before I get into my speech, I just wanted to highlight something very briefly, if the House will quickly allow. I had the immense privilege to go and visit, last weekend, an organization called Jack.org. It is Canada's only charity training that empowers young leaders to revolutionize mental health.

The work they are doing is incredibly moving, and I wish I had more time in the House to share some of the stories. Suicide among youth is still the leading health-related cause of death for young people in Canada. One in seven young people in Canada reports having suicidal thoughts, to say nothing of those who do not report. This year, 150,000 will act on their thoughts by attempting suicide. For hundreds of them, the attempt will be fatal. Things need to change, and Jack.org is doing a lot of that work for us.

Privilege

Now to turn to the matter at hand, which is the privilege motion here before the House. I rise with great disappointment to speak to this question of privilege. This particular question of privilege is related to the failure to produce documents required by an order of the House. On June 10, a majority of members in the House passed a motion that ordered the production of important documents related to Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

The key word there is “order”. It was not “ask” or “request”; it was not that, in the opinion of the House, the board “should”. The House of Commons has the authority to order the production of documents. That authority comes right from the Constitution; in fact, it is in section 18 of the British North America Act, also known as the Constitution Act, 1867.

It clearly states, “The privileges, immunities, and powers to be held, enjoyed, and exercised by the Senate and by the House of Commons, and by the members thereof respectively, shall be such as are from time to time defined by Act of the Parliament of Canada”. That power includes the time-honoured ability to send for persons, papers and records.

As is explained in Bosc and Gagnon at pages 984 to 986:

The Standing Orders do not delimit the power to order the production of papers and records. The result is a broad, absolute power that on the surface appears to be without restriction. There is no limit on the types of papers likely to be requested; the only prerequisite is that the papers exist in hard copy or electronic format, and that they are located in Canada.

It continues:

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 and records.

That is our collective right, as the House of Commons, as the grand inquest of the nation. Documents have been ordered by the House; those documents have not been provided. That, unfortunately, is why we are debating the question of privilege today.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC for short, is the organization we are focusing this privilege motion on once again today. It has become known here in the House as the green slush fund. Just to back up a bit, and for some historical context, the Office of the Auditor General made several key observations for the audit period of March 2017 to December 2023.

I will read a few quotes from the report that was tabled in the House on June 4. First, “10 projects were awarded \$59 million” in funding when they should have been deemed “ineligible”. I would suggest that is concerning. Second, SDTC’s “conflict-of-interest policies were not followed” in “90 cases”. Again, this is very concerning.

• (1800)

Third, “the board approved \$58 million for projects without ensuring that they met the terms of the contribution agreements.” I would think that this is something the government would also be very concerned about.

Meanwhile, the responses to these issues appear to show the exact opposite. Of the responses I have seen to many Auditor General

reports, I cannot recall such out-of-touch responses. In its written responses, SDTC made false and outright preposterous claims.

First, SDTC claimed, “Each project proposal goes through rigorous due diligence and evaluation” that is “robust” and “highly credible”. That is simply not true, but if it were true, SDTC would not be facing this \$58-million scandal, unless the due diligence it was referring to is actually just its insiders looking at who on the board would be getting money out of each proposal.

Second, SDTC claimed that it was subject to an Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada evaluation in 2018. That was six years ago and outside the period of the Auditor General’s audit. Essentially, SDTC was clearly ignoring the audit period and ignoring these findings.

Third, SDTC claimed it “uses external experts”, but then failed to identify them. For an organization whose problem is conflicts of interest to claim things are going to be better based on the advice provided by some unnamed external experts shows just how out of touch SDTC had really become.

Fourth, SDTC claimed that it did not fully agree to the Auditor General’s recommendations because SDTC “has delivered strong outcomes against these objectives.” Unless those objectives were to push money into companies that board members had a financial interest in, that is simply not true. The Auditor General found that 82% of the funding transactions approved by the board of directors during the audit period were conflicted. That is unreal.

Fifth, SDTC wrote, “written records did not fully capture the robust deliberations that were made” and “SDTC is of the view that these projects met the eligibility criteria set out...but acknowledges that the [Auditor General] reached a different conclusion”, suggesting that the independent Auditor General was basically out to get them. The arrogance is appalling. The operators of the green slush fund were simply saying that the Auditor General got it wrong, there was nothing to see here, we should ignore it and let them get back to business. Then, at the same time, they admitted that their own written records do not support their claim, so they stuck by their story.

Sixth, SDTC claimed it “had clear processes for staff and directors to declare real, potential and perceived conflicts”. Again, this claim completely ignores the findings of the Auditor General and, subsequently, the public accounts committee. We know conflicts were not declared, and even when they were declared, they either voted for their own projects or took turns voting for each other’s projects. The idea that there were clear processes for conflicts of interest would be laughable if it were not so sad.

Privilege

Seventh, SDTC claimed it “further strengthened its conflict-of-interest policies” in November 2023. This shows exactly that the SDTC only cared about preventing corruption after they got caught with corruption. By November 2023, they knew the Auditor General's report was coming because the audit period was from March 2017 to December 2023. Claiming that policies have been strengthened and implying nothing further needs to be done after corruption has already been uncovered is disingenuous.

There is a word that comes to mind: entitlement. This kind of entitlement comes from an organization that is so used to getting vast amounts of money for its own purposes, it disconnects from the realities of honest and hard-working Canadians.

There is still a lot that we do not know about the green slush fund, but what we have learned through the industry committee and the public accounts committee is alarming. What we have learned so far has made those of us on the opposition benches determined to get the full story, and for that, we need these documents the House requested back on June 10th.

● (1805)

We know that SDTC was created in 2001, and as of an audit in 2017, no problems had arisen. The conflict of interest culture only emerged after board members were appointed under the current Prime Minister by former minister Bains. The most concerning of these appointments was in 2019, when the chair, Annette Verschuren, was appointed despite multiple warnings of conflicts of interest. Those warnings turned out to be warranted as, this past July, the former chair was determined by the Ethics Commissioner to have violated the Conflict of Interest Act by participating in decisions to benefit organizations she had an interest in. One would suggest that they were warned but went ahead anyway.

We now know that former assistant deputy minister Noseworthy was responsible for keeping watch over SDTC, but we can only call his job simply a failure. On December 11 of last year, he appeared at the industry committee and said, “To my knowledge, I am not aware of any decisions to allocate funds to projects related to board members where they did not recuse themselves.” However, the Auditor General's report released just two months later informed us that the system was filled with conflicts of interest. Again, the Auditor General is independent. Therefore, the assistant deputy minister either lied at committee or was willfully blind to the corruption that was going on around him. We also know that, if there were any semblance of good governance, the minister of innovation, science and industry would have been notified. However, because accountability is absent, we do not know what the minister knew or when he knew it.

Nevertheless, we do know that at least one Liberal MP was informed almost two years ago. When the whistle-blower known to the public accounts committee as Witness 1 appeared at public accounts last month, they informed the committee that they had informed the Liberal member for Calgary Skyview all the way back in May 2022. The whistle-blower further stated that this member “assured me that he took this situation seriously and guaranteed that he would facilitate contact with the appropriate people in the federal government and the Auditor General's office.” However, we now

know that the member was not true to his word and subsequently refused to engage.

We know that the directors were appointed to the board. A key example of this was long-time Liberal operative Stephen Kukucha. He was appointed to the board in February 2021. This is after he had been a long-time donor, a ministerial staffer in the Chrétien government, original organizer for the Liberal Party and former general secretary for the Liberal Party 2016 Convention. Shortly after the Prime Minister came into office, this insider became a lobbyist; he advocated for energy and transportation businesses. It does not get more inside than this, yet he was appointed to the board of the green slush fund, exactly where companies that had a financial interest could receive contributions directly from the government.

Furthermore, in another twist, as my hon. colleague for South Shore—St. Margarets has explained, we now know that the Minister of Environment has had an interest in a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital. Cycle Capital also received funding from the same green slush fund. It just keeps unravelling more and more.

Finally, we now know from a member of the new board that, since this scandal broke, none of the money that was wrongfully sent out has been recovered. On behalf of the Canadian taxpayer, I will say that this is unfair, unacceptable and, quite frankly, incredibly frustrating. Simply put, after all this, it seems rather clear and painfully obvious that we need the documents that were called for in the motion passed by a clear majority of members on June 10.

This is not only a matter of parliamentary privilege; it is also a matter of the moral obligation we have to Canadians. In order to meet that obligation, we need to access documents when we have ordered them from the executive branch. The public accounts committee is still waiting on documents it has requested to receive. We do not have the contribution and funding agreement showing the requirements and obligations of the recipients. We do not have the conflict of interest declarations of the board members, and we owe it to Canadians to produce this information. When we put all of this together, we do not have transparency, oversight or accountability.

● (1810)

I started my speech indicating that I am disappointed to be rising in this debate in Parliament because it is not the first time we have seen this type of parliamentary privilege violated. Earlier this year, there was yet another privilege debate on yet another scandal, the one related to ArriveCAN. The slow erosion of rights and privileges is not a small matter. It is an absolute threat to our democracy. We saw this in the previous Parliament with the Winnipeg lab scandal, and it caused tremendous hardship for the scandal-plagued government.

On that occasion, in the 43rd Parliament, the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada was even called to the bar of this House of Commons to be admonished for failing, or, perhaps more accurately, refusing, to provide documents that he had been ordered to provide to the House. One would have hoped the government had learned from that experience, but clearly, it did not, and here we are again.

In June 2021, 147 members on that side of the House, shamefully, voted against the motion on the question of privilege, which has proven to be a huge mistake. I should hope, this time around, history does not repeat itself and they do not repeat that mistake. However, now we have this green slush fund scandal. The government continues to refuse to release documents that it has been ordered to produce because, one can only presume, it does not want to help uncover corruption that has occurred under its watch for the past several years, corruption that has benefited its own insiders. It is an issue of vital importance. No matter how hard the government tries to push it away, Parliament must continue to pursue it.

When the opposition House leader raised the initial question of privilege, he referenced a memorandum he had obtained from the Privy Council Office at the beginning of this Parliament. That memorandum read, “Public servants do not share in ministers' constitutional accountability to the Houses of Parliament but support ministers in this accountability”; it also stated that “the ultimate accountability for deciding what information to withhold from or release to parliamentarians resides with the responsible minister.” The government may believe the rights and privileges of Parliament no longer matter, but we will soon see if it believes the ministerial responsibility still matters. It is the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry who is ultimately responsible for SDTC and for this violation of an order of the House. It is the minister who must be held accountable.

In conclusion, I support the motion as moved by the opposition House leader, and I will reference it here. The motion by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle on the alleged failure to produce documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada reads as follows: “That the government's failure of fully providing documents, as ordered by the House on June 10, 2024, be hereby referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.”

The amendment reads:

provided that it be an instruction to the committee:

(a) that the following witnesses be ordered to appear before the committee, separately, for two hours each:

- (i) the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry,
- (ii) the Clerk of the Privy Council,
- (iii) the Auditor General of Canada,
- (iv) the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police,
- (v) the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada,
- (vi) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons,
- (vii) the Acting President of Sustainable Development Technology Canada,
- (viii) a panel consisting of the Board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada; and

(b) that it report back to the House no later than Friday, November 22, 2024.

Privilege

The green slush fund has been exposed as a tremendous waste, a scandal where taxpayers' hard-earned money was used to benefit government insiders at SDTC. We need more details. Canadians deserve to know more details and to know who is at fault. There are individuals who need to be held accountable, and the people within the government who should have known and should have prevented this from happening need to be held accountable.

I will be voting for this motion, and this time, I hope every member, regardless of party affiliation, does the right thing and votes yes, yes for accountability and yes for respecting orders of the House of Commons.

• (1815)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is just it. Let us have the vote. What the member just read is the motion. It is a Conservative motion, but it is the Conservative Party that is preventing the vote from occurring. The motion is going to pass. The Conservatives should allow the vote and allow us to give them what they want, which is for it to go to committee. That is the issue.

That aside, there is another issue I have raised on numerous occasions, yet no one in the Conservative Party has been able to provide an explanation. Canadians have a right to know why the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada will not get the security clearance. Is there something in the background of the leader, something he is scared to tell Canadians about his past? Is it because the leadership convention that he won was influenced by foreign interference? Is it because members of his caucus are affiliated with it? What is it?

Why is the Conservative leader so scared to tell Canadians about his past? I believe he has told his caucus members, who are also scared. What are they hiding? Why will they not even answer the question? I believe Canadians are owed the truth.

• (1820)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Can I ask for a quorum call?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We do not have a quorum. We are suspended to the call of the Chair.

And the bells having rung:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We now have a quorum.

The hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, I would ask the member to repeat the question, but honestly, it is the same question he has asked every single member who is here.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there was a bit of a time lapse there. I would be more than happy to repeat the question if the member is serious.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, I like the member for Winnipeg North. We tease, but we like each other. It is getting late. The Halloween spirit is in the mood.

Privilege

The question he likes to throw back at us is about the security clearance, and one could argue relevance in this particular debate. In question period earlier today, we saw our leader stand up over and over again offering policy ideas and solutions for Canadians, and everything we heard back from members on the other side, including the member for Winnipeg North and the Prime Minister, was them rambling on about the security clearance.

The Leader of the Opposition has been clear about the type of government these guys seem to be running over there. We cannot wait until we form government. Then the names would be released. What we are trying to get to here is these documents. The member says he simply wants to have a debate about foreign interference, which, again, I would say is not something of relevance to this particular debate. I guess we will allow leniency seeing as he is the only member who is asking questions over there.

At the end of the day, we are simply asking for these documents. I would encourage the member to encourage his team and his cabinet to produce these documents.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is too bad, because I do not think that everyone is going to put on their earpiece and understand what I have to say today. I really want to congratulate my colleague because it has been almost—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member. It seems that the interpretation is not working.

Is it working now?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, this gives me the opportunity to again say that I listened to my colleague's speech. We have been here almost a month and, frankly, I think that was the best speech we have heard on this question of privilege. I was listening to him and thinking that his speech tops them all. I want to congratulate him because it was so unique. I have never heard anything like it. He presented some innovative ideas. Frankly, it is incredible. It gives me an opportunity to say that there is still a lot to be said on this issue.

Now, my question is going to be simple. We have been told that, if the Liberals hand over the documents and put an end to this question of privilege, the Conservatives have already prepared another question of privilege. The Conservative leader is shouting from the rooftops that he wants an election. However, his next step, if this question of privilege ever comes to an end, is simply another question of privilege.

I hope my colleague will answer my question. Is it true? Are they going to submit another question of privilege?

• (1825)

[*English*]

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, I think I should take the member on the road with me. His saying that my speech was the best one that he has heard is great. I think that might go over really well in Alberta to have a member of the Bloc Québécois come and share that. I invite the member to come on out to Alberta.

If the impression in the House is that we are the ones coming up with questions of privilege, then I think that is perhaps maybe the mistake here. These are questions of privilege that were granted by the Speaker. We raise these questions of privilege, and whether they are granted or not is determined solely by the Speaker. If there are more questions of privilege coming, that is for the Speaker to decide, and it is also on the government. I guess I can stay tuned, and I will start preparing my speech now, if there is another one. I hope the member will be in the chamber to be part of it.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague gave a serious speech, so I think it deserves a serious question. I agree fully that this entire spectacle is a disgrace. We had contracts being given and money being misspent. Taxpayers do deserve answers, and I agree that documents do need to be disclosed.

From what I understand, the Speaker's ruling says that the documents must be disclosed to PROC. It appears to me that is exactly what my hon. colleague's party wants. Can he explain to the House why that is not enough? Why can we not proceed to a vote and have those documents sent to PROC to get the answers that his party seeks? What is wrong with that?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, it is great to see my honourable colleague in the House. He and I had a lot of Zoom calls together during COVID.

That reminds me of the Winnipeg lab scandal, which we went through and saw together. At the end of the day, a lot of that was about transparency and accountability. It was about making sure that we had somebody who was held accountable for that. Ultimately we did, and we brought someone to the House. In that instance, I think that particular committee did a lot of good work.

It seems like almost every day there is something new unfolding in this scandal. The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets is constantly finding new information, and there are new board members saying that things have not been repaid. It feels like accountability and transparency are moving targets for this. Until we get to the bottom of it, this is going to be something that hopefully the government takes seriously, as we have been debating this for a while in the House, and finally produces those documents.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, by now most members are well familiar with the fact that a Canadian was assassinated on Canadian soil in my constituency. My constituents are asking me to ask every Conservative why their party leader is not taking a security clearance to protect Canadians. There are some of his own members that might be under the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like a very brief answer from the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend.

There is no answer.

CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORTS

● (1830)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

The House resumed from October 9 consideration of the motion.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise to speak in the House. I should note that I will be splitting my time with the great member for Bay of Quinte.

A couple of years ago, when I was on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, we tabled this great report on facial recognition technology and the growing power of artificial intelligence. The concurrence motion on this was brought forward a couple of weeks ago by my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, and she articulated very well why we needed to do the study in the first place because of the problems that we have in Canada with the unregulated use of facial recognition technology.

We have a situation where policy has lagged behind and technology is moving at lightning speed. The government's answer to this is Bill C-27, which is a broken piece of legislation, which has already been admitted by the Ministry of Industry. The minister has said that we need to improve upon it through amendments at committee, but when it is this broken, in three parts, it really makes it more difficult to modify and manage. We need to go back to the drawing board. I just want to point out some of the problems that we studied at committee. We heard about how Tim Hortons' app, for example, was actually tracking the movement of customers who were using the Tim Hortons app to buy their food and then tracking their movements for the first 10 minutes after they left a Tim Hortons store. Tim Hortons then sold that information to other stores so that they could harvest that data and then determine how best to access those customers.

It was a complete violation of privacy but an ingenious way of making use of an app and GPS, and using that technology to be able to track people. If Tim Hortons could do that, imagine what nefarious actors could do here in Canada or around the world.

We also heard, from a security perspective, how the RCMP and other police agencies across this country made use of facial recognition technology that came out of the Clearview AI database. The disturbing part of Clearview AI is that it scraped all of its images from social media to train its artificial intelligence. It accessed Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. When the company then programmed it, whether knowingly or unknowingly, it created a racial algorithm that was biased, especially with regard to men of

Concurrence in Committee Reports

darker complexions. Whether they were Middle Eastern, whether they were African, Black or brown, they were definitely discriminated against in the technology. They were wrongfully accused through facial recognition that was being used en masse by the RCMP and other police agencies here in Canada as well as in the United States, causing discrimination in arrests that were ultimately wrong at the end of the day.

The same was happening with our indigenous Canadians, who were also being wrongfully accused through the use of Clearview AI technology by the RCMP. We also had TELUS providing data and giving locations of people, for tracking, for things like COVID, to the Public Health Agency of Canada, again, a complete violation of the privacy rights of Canadians.

We cannot forget how we had, of course, the trucker convoy up here and we had the public doxxing of those that were part of the trucker convoy. They were located using GPS and then someone was able to go into the system and map them out on Google Maps and publicly disclose their banking information as well as their home addresses, a complete violation of Canadian privacy. We dug in on this when we were part of the committee on ethics and privacy and protection of information.

We want to make sure that individuals are aware of it. Public education needs to keep up. At the end of the day, we need to make sure that there is the right to know that our data has been collected through facial recognition, with all of the cameras that we have around here on the Hill, never mind what is happening in other public spaces, like airports, train stations and stores. There needs to be a public disclosure of that, so that people know, when they are entering, that there is proper signage. We get into all of this in the recommendations.

People have the right to have that information disposed of, including images that may be left up on social media platforms and images that have been collected by government agencies and corporations. Employees are exposed to this at work, because there are cameras all over the place monitoring. When they leave that platform or they leave that employment, or they are no longer, supposedly, on a watch-list, their data should be disposed of. That right to disposal is paramount.

● (1835)

Of course the government's answer to this was Bill C-27. It did answer the report, too. If I have time, I will get into their response to the report.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

I should just point out that as Conservatives, we believe that digital data privacy is a fundamental right of all Canadians. It urgently requires us to have the legislation, protections and enforcement to guarantee the privacy of all Canadians. We also believe that Canada's digital policy framework is in dire need of modernization. It is outdated, it is stale and the technology is moving much too fast. We are lagging behind our international counterparts. When we were at the committee, we heard about best practices, particularly from the European Union, and how we need to institute some of their ideas and their policies so that we can have the flexibility to adjust to data as it is being modernized and the technology is advancing, but also to ensure that Canada's privacy protections are in place.

Now, as I mentioned, we have serious concerns about Bill C-27 and so we are going to be looking at ways to redraft that bill, making sure that we bring forward the proper legislation, not burdensome red tape on small businesses, Canadians and sole proprietors. We are going to put forward a lot of common-sense amendments, as Bill C-27 is currently being studied by the industry committee, I believe. There needs to be lots of consultation and input from stakeholders, Canadians, security agencies and the government on what is needed and what plans there are.

Bill C-27 is an omnibus bill. It has three chunks of legislation in it.

Some of the key problems in Bill C-27 have to do with part 1, which deals with the consumer privacy protection act. We believe that it is the right of businesses to collect and use some personal information, but we also want to bring home greater privacy protections for individuals and charities, and bring clarity for organizations, which is right now missing in that part of the bill.

Then the government also set up, in part 2, the personal information and data protection tribunal act. Putting in place a privacy tribunal appointed by the government to put Liberals in place to oversee the privacy protection of Canadians is a concern. As we have been debating here, the Liberals who were appointed to the green slush fund, SDTC, ultimately ended in corruption. We want to make sure that we do not have another layer of bureaucracy. We do not need to overburden this and slow down the prosecutions for those who misuse and violate the privacy laws of Canada. We need to work more closely with the Privacy Commissioner and advocate for the removal of this tribunal. As the Privacy Commissioner has also said, it is completely unnecessary. We want to have quicker prosecutions and quicker turnarounds, and remove the gatekeepers that the government is proposing.

Then the final part of this bill is part 3, dealing with the artificial intelligence and data act, which I can tell colleagues right now is outdated and broken even though it is not even legislation yet. It was introduced in June 2022 and things have moved so quickly with things like ChatGPT, new generative AI systems and new facial recognition systems that the act that is prescribed in there does not work. We are concerned about giving too much regulatory power to the government on a legislative and policy framework that is already outdated when Canadians need protection today on the technology of tomorrow.

• (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member may not want to admit this, but he must be aware that the government has actually been moving significantly on the whole issue of the Internet, including how AI has really exploded over the last number of years. Having regulations in place and having legislation in place is important. In fact, the first time I witnessed the Conservatives actually using AI was when they wanted to amend a piece of legislation. I think, by using AI, they came up with 20,000 amendments in committee, which was a record in itself. So, we do know that the research bureau of the Conservative Party does use AI.

There is a lot of benefit to using AI, but there are also drawbacks. Does he have any specific concerns in regard to its drawbacks?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, a lot of censorship has been coming from the government in all its various forms of legislation, and the Liberals have failed to regulate and protect Canadians' privacy. For example, the Liberals have failed to properly prosecute generators of intimate images. Instead of protecting our youth, the Liberals want to make everybody a criminal, or they want to censor the entire Internet. That is why Canadians do not trust the Liberals. Therefore I will continue to advocate for stronger legislation and policy that actually protect Canadians' privacy.

I know that, as Conservatives, we will bring forward the legislation that would protect our youth and allow the freedom for people to move without being tracked. It would allow people to be anonymous on the Internet when they want to be, rather than having over-arching red tape, censorship and unnecessary tracking as we witnessed during the COVID pandemic under the arrive scam app and as we saw with the Public Health Agency of Canada. All of that continues to undermine Canadians' confidence in the current Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the report we are discussing right now includes 19 recommendations for the government to address its inaction. Does my hon. colleague think that the government should use these recommendations to create legislation to better protect the public?

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that there are a lot of great recommendations in the report that the government should be using as the guide rails on developing any legislation. Recommendation 2 states that we have to “ensure that airports and industries publicly disclose the use of facial recognition technology including with, but not limited to, signage prominently displayed”.

We also have to “refer the use of facial recognition technology in military or intelligence operations”, when there are implications for national security concerns, to NSICOP, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, so they can study and review it.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy the member's speeches. Both of us have been here a while, and I appreciated what he was saying about addressing some of the concerns that come from AI and facial recognition technology. As he knows, the report indicates that currently the facial recognition technology misidentifies as many as one in three racialized women, even though it is 99% accurate for white men.

This is a fundamental problem that is addressed in the committee report by recommendation 13: “That the Government of Canada update the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that it applies to discrimination caused by the use of facial recognition technology and other artificial intelligence technologies.”

I remember that during the Harper government, the Canadian Human Rights Act was actually stripped of some of the protections. If the Conservatives undertake to update the Canadian Human Rights Act and actually add additional protections, can they ensure that—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman a chance to answer the question.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, the first thing we would do, and it is in recommendation 18, is “impose a federal moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology by [all] policing services” to ensure that they are not engaging in racial discrimination. As can be seen in recommendation 6, we want to make sure the algorithm tools also address facial identification technology. We know that is also true in recommendation 9, that there has to be “transparent disclosure of racial, age or other unconscious biases that may exist in facial recognition technology”.

We have to fix it. That is why we need the moratorium right now, and Conservatives would make sure we get it right.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for giving a great speech. It seems like nine years ago that we sat on the ethics committee, but I think it was only three years ago. We use the number nine a lot in the House.

Today, I want to speak about why nations fail. To quote Acemoglu and Robinson, “Nations fail today because their extractive economic institutions do not create the incentives needed for people

Concurrence in Committee Reports

to save, invest, and innovate.” As a whole, that also includes privacy: the right of businesses to operate and the freedom of citizens to operate.

We can go all the way back to something I am very fascinated with. North America and South America were founded around the same time, but how did North America end up becoming so rich and wealthy and South America did not? It comes down to those same pillars. We allowed freedom to operate. We allowed freedom for patents to be developed, especially in the Industrial Revolution. We allowed people the freedom to have their own land, to have privacy on their own land and to own businesses with patents, allowing privacy for those businesses to operate, to get investments and capital and to grow.

What we saw from that was a tremendous amount of wealth, more wealth than the world had ever seen. It formed a capitalist society that allowed wealth to be owned by individuals. People who used to be poor became wealthy, and that allowed a nation like Canada to have socialist capitalism. With this tremendous amount of wealth, there was the ability to have socialist programs like a universal health care system.

When we do not follow the narrow corridor, and it is a very narrow corridor, not only with liberty but also with capitalism and socialism, and we stick with the fundamentals of privacy, investment, free capital and patents, we lose the wealth of the nation. With that, the citizens suffer.

After nine years, we are seeing that reality here in Canada. We have the worst housing crisis this country has ever faced. Rents have doubled. Mortgage payments have doubled. The amount needed for a down payment has doubled. Nine million Canadians are now food insecure. That is one-third of Canadians, and that number in the U.S. is barely 13%.

We see the problem with businesses fleeing this country. We talk a lot about what that means for AI and having great ideas. We also talk about IP, the currency of innovation. When we look at what happens in Canada, the numbers are startling. Canada files 40,000 patents annually compared to the 374,000 the U.S. files, and only 13 out of 100 patents are owned by Canadians. That means we give away over 87% of our patents to foreign nations; we give that data away.

When we look at what that means for the Americans, we see they generate 12 million jobs and \$2 trillion from patents and IP. Of course, AI is among that. In Canada, that number is less. The best way to look at it is by using GDP per capita or income per capita. The GDP per capita for Canada is \$53,000, compared to \$80,000 for the U.S., more than a 36% difference. We have seen less capital and less ability to invest, save and innovate.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

We can couple that with the problems with the business investment and productivity we have seen in Canada and the lack of privacy. Of course, the government has tried, but as with a lot of things, it has tried and failed. It presented Bill C-11 before the last Parliament and could not get it through. In this Parliament, it submitted Bill C-27, and at the last minute, it threw AI legislation in it called the AIDA. What happened at committee? I know the Conservatives get blamed for this, but at committee, the Conservatives, the Bloc and the NDP all came together to say this bill was terrible in the way it was presented. Even the Liberals were filibustering it in committee at one point.

We need these bills to work. The Conservatives have been steadfast that privacy is a fundamental human right, and not only privacy for individuals in Canada but privacy for our children. We know the results of not having the right legislation come forward and not having privacy protection in Canada. We saw it at the ethics committee two years ago when we faced the daunting speculation of privacy in facial recognition technology.

• (1850)

This technology was misused. A company called Clearview AI scraped images off the Internet, and we know how many images are on the Internet. It scraped everyone's face off the Internet and sold those images, which should not be owned by anyone.

Privacy is a fundamental right. However, the thing we have come to also understand about AI, which was discussed at committee but was not in the legislation, is that it should never be able to use someone's face or likeness without their permission. Those are the biggest problems we are having. The biggest thumbprint we have, the most unique thing about us, is our face. Our colleague from the NDP brought this up, but the main point that came up at committee about facial recognition technology was this: When this technology was used by the RCMP and our police forces in Canada in terms of marginalized and minority groups in Canada, Black women and Black men, the technology misread their face and misidentified them 30% of the time. That is terrible.

Technology is supposed to make things better, and we could not believe what we were hearing. Police representatives were at this committee multiple times and testified that it misidentified these groups 30% of the time. That is a failure; it is ridiculous. This is something that should not be used. We went through all the reports on ethics and brought the final report to Parliament two years ago, in October 2022, with the recommendation to outlaw this technology until it gets better.

Here we are today, two years later, and this technology has not been outlawed. It has been in place for two years since the ethics committee found that there were these breaches. It is terrible that these breaches have been happening for so long. Today, as we stand in Parliament, facial recognition technology, which we call digital racism, is still allowed to be used in this country.

Again, it follows the bigger problems we have with the government, and not only with the recommendations that come from committee. The government always talks about filibustering. These are recommendations in a report that could have been done without Parliament's consent, because it was enacted by Parliament and

came to the House to begin with. Here we are two years later, and that has not happened.

Let us talk about all the other things that have not happened either. With respect to privacy, Bill C-27 is still in committee based on, again, the fact that the Liberals are filibustering their own bill. It is just terrible and needs to be redone. I think we all agree on the first part of PIPEDA and how that is going to be done. The Liberals do not, but we agree that the tribunal should be eliminated and that more power should go to the Privacy Commissioner. Again, those privacy breaches and the rights should be governed by the Privacy Commissioner as a whole.

We looked at the proposed AIDA as a whole. AIDA was riddled with delays and inefficient guidance. It failed to provide the necessary oversight, allowing technologies such as facial recognition to remain largely unregulated. It was supposed to be prioritized legislation, yet it was wrong. The industry minister brought the legislation to the committee, and three months later, he brought 60 different amendments to his own bill. We had never even heard of that before, and it certainly was not a good bill.

I want to talk briefly about what is happening because we do not get privacy investment right in Canada. This is going to have long-term impacts. The capital gains tax hike is expected to reduce Canada's capital stock by \$127 billion, resulting in 414,000 fewer jobs and a \$90-billion drop in GDP. We cannot afford to lose control of our most valuable ideas or allow unchecked technologies to undermine our freedoms. Nations fail today because their extractive economic institutions do not create the incentives needed for people to save, to invest and to innovate.

The consequences are already visible. Nine million Canadians are food insecure. Two million Canadians are visiting food banks, and this rate is 36% higher than that in the United States. It is time to reverse course. Let us regain control over our privacy. Let us make sure we give those fundamentals back to save, innovate and invest back into Canadian businesses. Let us bring home capitalism once again, where people can make a good wage, have a good job and bring home savings for them and their families.

• (1855)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a bit ironic that the Conservatives are expressing concern about legislation, yet they continue to play a game. It has lasted for well over three weeks; they are wasting time on the floor of the House of Commons because they made the decision to put their party and their leader ahead of the interest of Canadians.

The example I would use is Bill C-63, which is a bill that deals with intimate images communicated without consent. It also deals with content that sexually victimizes children. The Conservatives are holding up that legislation. They are preventing it from ultimately even going to committee. They are more interested in the leadership of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party's interest than that of Canadians. Can he explain why they do not support that particular bill?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, Conservatives are standing up for their people and their country in this place. It is not just Conservatives but NDP and Bloc members who are demanding that the government hand over unredacted documents. Parliament made a motion and you, Madam Speaker, supported that; they had to do it because that is the power of this place. The precedent that would be set if the government did not hand over the documents would mean this place would have no power and, more importantly, the people would not have any power.

The ethics committee has been the busiest committee in Parliament because the current government, time and time again, runs roughshod over the Canadian people, their values and democracy, and it thinks it can play its own game, but people have had enough. We stand up for people in the House and in this country, and we will continue to do it. Let us go for another election and see how far it goes.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his dynamic speech.

He quoted the book by Acemoglu and Robinson, which was quite popular in 2012. At the time, Quebec's finance minister said it was his bedtime reading and he predicted its authors would earn a Nobel prize.

The authors' analysis led them to predict an economic downturn in China. Political power is too concentrated and the leaders, who fear the presence of other economic powers, are going to do whatever it takes to block the emergence of those powers. Those are the reasons why the authors predicted China's economic downturn.

What does my hon. colleague think of that?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, China is a huge concern in terms of what it wants to do. President Xi has said on the record he wants the decline of the west and the growth of the east, and wants to see a disruption in NATO.

When we look at the mercantilism, the unfair trading practices that China displays, China has uncompetitive behaviour. It oversubsidizes its industries, and we have seen that with the EV sector; it is using forced labour and pretty much subsidizing 100% of the vehicle to try to disrupt our auto industry, which is 500,000 jobs and of incredible worth to North America's economy.

We believe in free nations that allow us to compete against the world with great competition, good innovation, lower tax policies and the ability for businesses to grow and scale.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the member's speech. He spoke about

Concurrence in Committee Reports

the issue of facial recognition technology misidentifying racialized people, particularly racialized women, with the error rate, and the member cited this, at almost one-third when there is 99% accuracy for white males. The reality is that this causes a whole range of problems.

I asked this question of the member's colleague, but I did not get an answer. I want to come back to the issue of recommendation 13: "That the Government of Canada update the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that it applies to discrimination caused by the use of facial recognition technology and other artificial intelligence technologies." Now, the Harper government weakened the Canadian Human Rights Act substantially. My question to my colleague is quite simple. Is he in favour of strengthening the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that it applies to this type of discrimination?

• (1900)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, with privacy as a fundamental human right baked into Bill C-27 and our privacy laws, this is where it is supposed to reside, and I know my colleague and the NDP have supported that at committee.

More importantly, what I am really concerned about is that in this report on facial recognition technology, which his party supported, a moratorium was supposed to be levied on the use of this technology until we get the Privacy Act finalized. The government has not done that. Maybe of all the other reasons to bring down the government, this is the reason we bring down this government.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, in a rapidly evolving technological environment, it is important, more than ever, that we ensure children are protected. The report tabled by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled "Facial Recognition Technology and the Growing Power of Artificial Intelligence", looks at the benefits and risks of facial recognition and use in specific contexts, such as law enforcement, as well as exploring AI governance issues.

It is important we study this technology cautiously, as there are many benefits that will come from this type of innovation, but we must make sure this technology is used in a responsible way that protects the rights of all Canadians and, I would add, especially children. Throughout my time as a member of the industry committee, I have championed the inclusion of the best interests of the child in amendments to legislation of the Digital Charter Implementation Act, Bill C-27, which includes the government's proposed legislation on artificial intelligence, as well.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

Nowhere in this bill was the term “minor” defined. The Liberals rushed to get this bill to committee and failed to include separate protections for children's privacy that would have demonstrated their commitment to putting children first. We all know stories about the damages social media platforms and AI have already done to our children and youth. Conservatives will fight for stronger privacy protection for children and find a balance to still be innovative with this technology, so it is used appropriately.

In addition to inserting the best interests of the child, Conservatives have also pushed to insert a children's code into Bill C-27, modelled after the U.K. Children's code. This amendment would empower the Governor in Council to introduce a code of practice for organizations, including businesses, to follow through regulation for online services related to children's online activity.

The U.K. Children's code has become an international standard for jurisdictions around the world in creating legislation, yet the Liberals failed to include it when drafting legislation that pertains to children's privacy. Many stakeholders and witnesses emphasized the need for a children's code to be included in the bill, but the government did not meet with any of these stakeholders before tabling it. Children must be put first when it comes to creating legislation around facial recognition technology and artificial intelligence.

This was outlined by the report tabled by the ethics committee, with the Human Rights Commission, indicating that the legal framework for police use of facial recognition technology should take a human rights-based approach that integrates protection for children and youth. This has indeed come up in respect to the recommendation in the report, and I would note it is actually the Conservatives fighting against the New Democrats and the Liberals to enshrine these very important rights for the protection of children to uphold their right to privacy.

These types of amendments to bills demand a holistic approach to a child's development, ensuring their rights cannot be overridden by the commercial interests of a company, especially. However, the potential benefits of facial recognition technology and AI are substantial. The report outlined that these technologies can assist law enforcement in locating missing children and combatting serious crimes. As Daniel Therrien, former privacy commissioner of Canada, pointed out, facial recognition technology can serve “compelling state purposes”, including safeguarding our communities and ensuring public safety. It can also be a powerful tool in urgent situations, identifying individuals who pose threats or finding those who are lost or in danger.

However, these advantages must be weighed against the significant risks that cannot be overlooked. The same technologies that can find missing children also risk infringing upon their privacy and civil liberties.

Kristen Thomasen, law professor at the University of British Columbia, noted, while facial recognition technology can be touted as a protective measure for marginalized groups, “the erosion of privacy as a social good” ultimately harms everyone, especially “women and children”.

As we enhance surveillance capabilities, we risk consolidating an environment of constant observation that stifles individual free-

doms. Moreover, as we consider the integration of AI into the lives of children, we must recognize the profound potential for manipulation and deception.

● (1905)

By their very nature, children are often at a distinct disadvantage when navigating AI systems. Their cognitive and emotional development leaves them particularly vulnerable to influences that they might not fully understand. AI tools, including AI companions, smart toys and even educational applications, can unwittingly lead children to disclose sensitive or personal information. Such disclosures can expose them to risks of exploitation, harm and even predatory behaviours by adults. Children may not grasp the implication of sharing personal information, and AI systems designed to learn from interactions can inadvertently manipulate their responses or choices, leading to harmful outcomes.

For example, a recent tragedy just came out of the U.S. in which a 14-year-old boy, Sewell Setzer, committed suicide after speaking with a chatbot on Character.AI. His mother is now suing the company. She wrote that AI can “trick customers into handing over their most private thoughts and feelings.”

The implications of deepfake technology further amplify these concerns. Deepfakes are highly convincing but entirely fabricated images or videos, placing children in situations they never experienced. Such manipulations can depict minors in inappropriate contexts or lead to false narratives that can damage their reputation and emotional well-being.

As technology becomes more accessible, children may find themselves targeted by malicious actors who use these tools to exploit their innocence. To combat these dangers, it is crucial that we act swiftly and decisively to develop comprehensive policies and laws that prioritize the protection of children over commercial interests while still fostering an environment where innovation can take place.

A legislative framework should clearly delineate the appropriate contexts in which facial recognition technology and AI can be employed for legitimate purposes while firmly prohibiting any uses that could infringe upon the rights of children and other vulnerable populations. This is why I want to re-emphasize the importance of including a children's code when regulating facial recognition technology and artificial intelligence.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

In industry meeting 99 on November 28, 2023, Elizabeth Denham, chief strategy officer of the Information Accountability Foundation, came to input her opinions on Bill C-27. While working for five years as the U.K. Information Commissioner, she oversaw the creation of the U.K. Children's Code, and the design of that code has influenced laws and guidance all around the world.

The code assists organizations in creating digital services that cater, first and foremost, to children's needs. It is also important to note that, when we discuss a children's code, we should take into account the fact that children are biologically and psychologically different and distinct from adults.

Protecting children in the digital world means allowing them to be children in that world, with appropriate protections for their safety and their reputations, both today and tomorrow, when they enter adulthood. Numerous stakeholder groups, such as the Centre for Digital Rights, and witnesses, such as the former U.K. privacy commissioner, have advocated for a comprehensive code of practice to be created when it comes to regulations and laws related to children's privacy.

More specifically, a children's code would be developed through a consultation process that, at minimum, included the Privacy Commissioner, parental rights groups and children. It would be developed with the best interests of the children over commercial interests in the same space. A children's code would ensure that the following standards must be included when it is developed: data protection impact assessments, transparency, the detrimental use of data, default settings, data minimization, data sharing, geolocation, parental controls, profiling, nudge techniques, connected toys and other devices, and online tools, to name a few.

In conclusion, as we embrace the transformative potential of facial recognition technology and artificial intelligence, we must remain vigilant in prioritizing our children's best interests. The balance between harnessing innovation and safeguarding rights is delicate, but it is a responsibility we cannot afford to neglect. Here on the Conservative side, as these bills come before parliamentary committees, first and foremost, we want to see children go above commercial interests in all cases.

● (1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member just said that we cannot afford to neglect legislation about children and protecting children. That is what the member just said, yet for the last many weeks, we have seen the Conservative Party of Canada put the interests of their leader and the Conservative Party ahead of the nation's interests, to the degree to which they will not even allow legislation to be debated, let alone get passed to committee.

We have before the House Bill C-63, the online harms act. Why are the Conservatives filibustering to the degree that we cannot debate this bill regarding content and sexually victimized children on the Internet? Are they allowing it to continue to this degree because they want to filibuster?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, we all are aware that, when a privilege motion comes before the House of Commons and the Speaker of the House of Commons rules that there has been a

breach of Parliament's powers, no other business can come before the House of Commons. If, indeed, the member was so concerned about the passage of Bill C-63 through the House of Commons, the government would do what Canadians want and hand over the documents pertaining to the green slush fund from the former Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

Let me remind the House that it was, in fact, our current industry minister who suspended SDTC, and it was our Auditor General who clearly found close to \$400 million in misspent funds and 180 cases of conflict of interest.

Furthermore, pertaining to Bill C-27, the government decided not to continue the legislative review of that legislation when the House returned in September. Instead, it decided to start a study on Interac fees. That is on the parliamentary secretary to the minister of industry for not managing the legislative calendar appropriately and putting Bill C-27 on the side. This was done because they were worried about the amendments that all the other parties of the House of Commons deemed appropriate, but that were not deemed appropriate by the minister and the backroom lobbyists who are informing his position.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I see that, even when the debate has nothing to do with the question of privilege, members are still talking about the question of privilege. I want to thank my colleague for his very interesting speech. Obviously, protecting children must be our main concern.

My question for him has to do with one of the recommendations set out in the report. The committee recommends that the government amend the Privacy Act to require that, prior to the adoption, creation or use of facial recognition technology, government agencies seek the advice and recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner.

What does the member think about that?

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, that is exactly it. We have to look very closely at Bill C-27 to update Canada's privacy laws to account for the revolutionary technological advancements that are taking place before our eyes today. Make no mistake, the period that we are living in right now and the technological advancements that were clearly articulated to the industry committee here in Parliament are equivalent to one of the greatest leaps in technology ever witnessed by mankind.

We do need to ensure, in Bill C-27, that these rights are protected. It was Conservatives who were pushing to ensure that privacy is seen as a fundamental human right.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

• (1915)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I like the member, and I always enjoy his speeches. I am going to try a third time to get an answer from Conservatives, though, about the important issue around facial recognition technology and the fact that we are now aware of the discrimination that can take place through the use of this technology. The report of the committee itself states very clearly that in the case, particularly, of racialized women, we are talking about an error rate of up to a third, which has profound implications for individuals who are caught by this weakness in the technology.

Under the Harper government, we saw a weakening of the Canadian Human Rights Act. Recommendation 13 in the report is “That the Government of Canada update the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that it applies to discrimination caused by the use of facial recognition technology and other artificial intelligence technologies.”

I have asked this question twice to other esteemed colleagues, but I have not received a response. Could the member advise me? Is he in favour of strengthening the Canadian Human Rights Act in this way?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, let me begin by acknowledging that I agree that racialized people, especially vulnerable children and women, are impacted by artificial intelligence the most. That is a fact; I believe that. The best way to protect these people is not to amend the human rights report, as per the committee's recommendation, but to enshrine the protections in Bill C-27, which is at committee right now, to ensure that they are in place to help people as quickly as possible.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the federal Liberal Party was actually called in front of the Privacy Commissioner for facial recognition technology that was being used in nomination contests. The need to put boundaries on its use has only become more and more acute, particularly in government, over the last several years. The government has failed to act. It did not really address the issue at all in any of its legislation.

I am wondering whether my colleague could expand upon the fact that after nine years of a government that has failed to act on a crucial issue, perhaps it is time for an election.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I would agree with my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill that indeed we need an election right now.

With regard to the attempt by the government to update our laws with respect to personal privacy and its application with all forms of technology, the government has been very irresponsible with respect to the legislation in its attempt to update our laws. In fact, this is about the third iteration of the bill. Even since it was tabled by the government, the government brought forward special amendments during the committee process that completely changed the nature of the legislation because it just happened to miss things.

It is not every day that there are, as with Bill C-27, independent academics who come out against the government on its failure to consult appropriately with a broad set of stakeholders across Canada, including in the human rights space, as the member for

New Westminster—Burnaby was outlining, where the technologies are going to seriously impact the lives and well-being of children especially.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that my colleague has young children. I have young grandchildren, and I am deeply concerned about their safety in this age of technological accessibility to the Internet and all the poison there. On the other hand, I am also very concerned about protecting privacy.

I have a wide-open question: How do we find a balance between those two competing interests?

• (1920)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I think it begins with putting in law the best interests of children. That is a significant part because it assumes that the interests of children will always supersede commercial interests. I think that needs to be at the forefront of legislation regulating the use of technology and our datasets in Canada. Children always have to come first and technology second.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, based on what the member just said about putting the child first, Bill C-63, the bill I was referring to, talks about “content that sexually victimizes a child” and ensures that we can take it off the Internet. Does the member support the bill?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, in fact, the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who just spoke, has a private member's bill that is before the House as well, Bill C-412 which would do a better job of amending the Criminal Code to go after child predators.

What the Liberals are trying to do in Bill C-63 is create a new bureaucracy that would not be accountable to Canadians. From what we have seen with Bill C-27, I do not necessarily believe that the expertise in the Department of Industry is sufficient to manage the issues. The protection of children needs to be under the Criminal Code first and foremost, not under new regulatory bodies.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

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

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 6, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

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

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government's reckless spending and mismanagement of the national economy are causing inflation. Now, on top of that, it wants to tax this inflation.

This is how it works. Somebody buys a capital property, say, a commercial warehouse for their business, and over time, the value goes up. When they sell that property, that capital asset, there is a tax to pay on that capital gain, and so it is really a tax on inflation. It has always been deemed to be unfair, but Canada made the compromise by saying, "Well, we will put only half that capital gain into a person's income and then tax it at their marginal tax rate." Is it fair? No, but it has been accepted.

The current government, on account of its incompetence, does not even know how to balance the budget in good times, in times of full employment, as in the first four years of the Liberals' administration, from 2015 to 2019. The economy was good, there were good government revenues and low interest rates, but even then, it could not balance the budget. The Liberals were lulled into a sense of complacency because of low interest rates, and it was spending till the cows came home. Well, eventually the cows did come home, in March 2020 with the pandemic, and all hell broke loose. There was deficit spending, borrowing, quantitative easing like we have never seen before in Canadian history and, very predictably, inflation followed. There were too many dollars chasing too few goods and services. The law of supply and demand, like the law of gravity, never changes.

The middle class, whom this government had promised to help, has suffered on account of this inflation. We can look at the cost of housing, groceries and transportation. What does the socialist government do? It attacks the wealthy, of course, which is what the Liberals always like to do. The Minister of Finance introduced a capital gains tax increase, said the Liberals were asking the wealthiest 0.13% to pay just a bit more. Now many Canadians are finding out, to their surprise, that they are part of this elite group of Canada's wealthiest.

Hard-working Karen in my riding runs her retail store very successfully. She bought her own commercial strata unit to save for her retirement. If she sells it for half a million dollars more than she bought it for, and in these inflationary times that is completely realistic, with the new rules, the capital gains inclusion rules, her tax bill will be \$40,000 higher than it would have been under the old rules in Canada for many years.

Will the Liberals keep their promise, keep the Minister of Finance's promise, that only the top 0.13% of income earners will be taxed, and will they leave ordinary, hard-working entrepreneurs like Karen alone?

• (1925)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to start, before I expand on it, I will make very clear that as of June 25, 2024, the capital gains inclusion rate increased from one-half to two-thirds on capital gains realized annually above \$250,000 by individuals and on capital gains realized by corporations and most types of trusts. We are talking about a quarter of a million dollars annually. It does not surprise me that the Conservative Party does not recognize the value of that and does not expect a bit more from those who have that sort of profit, but it is not appropriate to say it is not fair.

When the Liberals came back in 2015, we put a special tax on the wealthiest 1% in Canada, and the Conservatives opposed that. At the end of the day, we have supported Canada's middle class in a very tangible and real way. I would go back to the time we decreased taxes for Canada's middle class. Again, the Conservatives voted against that. We brought in programs to support Canada's middle class and those aspiring to become a part of it, and we have looked at ways we can support others.

The member makes reference to inflation, but Canada, in comparison to virtually every other industrialized country, has done exceptionally well there. It does not mean that we sit back. We have not done that. We have recognized that we need to support Canadians, even though our economy, in many ways, is doing better than those of other countries around the world. We have done that through things such as the grocery rebate.

Members of the Conservative caucus often reference seniors. We have supported seniors in very tangible ways, whether with the substantial increase to the GIS a number of years ago or with an increase for those 75 and over. In many ways, the government has been there to support Canadians, and we will continue to look for ways to do that.

With a bigger, holistic approach when dealing with the economy, we have now seen interest rates drop in Canada, the first of the G7 countries. Inflation rates are now under control. I suggest the member take a look at the world environment, whether during the economic slowdown or the pandemic. No country was exempt from them. We all had to play a role. The Government of Canada, working with Canadians and other jurisdictions, like the provinces, the territories and indigenous leaders, has been able to minimize the negative impacts of what has been happening around the world. Yes, there are some areas where we need to increase revenue, but this is a fair way of doing it.

The Liberals obviously disagree with the Conservatives, but when we first came out with the announcement, the Conservatives sat on their hands and said nothing. It took them a while to decide on the position they were going to take. As it took them a while to adopt their position, I suggest they go back to the drawing board on it.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1930)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I have three comments in response.

First, the parliamentary secretary said that a capital gain is a profit. It is not really a profit; it is inflation. Profit is when someone works hard and earns an income based on what they are selling. This is just inflation. If a person had to buy another asset, it would cost that much more, so it is not profit at all.

Second, he said that compared to other countries, Canada is doing pretty good. Our real estate inflation is way worse than it is in the United States.

Third, our GDP per capita, which is the most reliable measure of national wealth, lags substantially behind that of the United States. One of the reasons is that we are sending investment dollars to the U.S. instead of keeping them here in Canada. Increasing the capital gains tax does not help that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have a couple of very quick facts. Only 0.13% of Canadians with an average income of \$1.42 million are expected to pay more tax on their capital gains in any given year. Also, the current 50% inclusion rate can lead to unfair circumstances, where a millionaire can pay a lower marginal rate on capital gains than a nurse pays on salary.

People need to reflect on that. If my memory serves me correctly, Brian Mulroney had a higher percentage than what we are proposing. The member might want to fact-check that. I am relying purely on my memory.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to address a question. On September 9 of this year, before Parliament came back in session, the Liberal Party of Canada, not the Government of Canada, asked Mark “carbon tax” Carney to join the Liberals as a special economic adviser to advise on the economics of the country. Again, this is not the Government of Canada, but the Liberal Party of Canada, and that is to avoid the conflict of interest rules that are incumbent upon officers that serve the government. He is a special adviser for a special new task force on economic growth, a task force of one person. He is doing this himself. He is not talking to anybody else. My colleagues have called for an examination of this and for the lobbying commissioner to look into whether this is a conflict of interest and how it should be properly dealt with in the House of Commons.

Who is Mark “carbon tax” Carney? Well, amongst other roles in which he serves a lot of rich people around the world, he is the chairman of Brookfield Asset Management here in Canada. Brookfield is a very large corporation. It invests in all kinds of credit and equity around the world, and it has assets under management of \$1 trillion U.S., so it is a significant fund. That is a little less than half of Canada's GDP in one fund, which Mark Carney helps oversee. I do not begrudge the fact that he has done well heading up a corporation like that. He has never actually worked there, but being a chairman, he is rewarded. How does Mark Carney get rewarded? He gets rewarded with deferred stock units and other options to participate in the financial success of Brookfield Asset Management.

Now, let us say there are \$1 trillion of assets under management. Usually, these types of funds get paid as a percentage of the assets they hold under management. It can be as high as 2%, but let us say it is 1%. That is \$10 billion a year in compensation that goes towards the managers of Brookfield Asset Management. I can be corrected on that number at some point in time, if someone would like.

On September 17, Brookfield proposed to lead a new \$50-billion fund focused on Canadian assets, leading with \$10 billion, not from a pension fund, but from the Government of Canada. This is not the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, but the Government of Canada. This is \$10 billion from a broke government that actually does not have any money, but is \$50 billion more in deficit this year, plus another \$40 billion that it is proposing from pension funds.

Where is it getting that notion? It is getting that notion because back in the spring, in April, the finance minister had a different former Bank of Canada governor look into how we need to address the productivity crisis that is happening in Canada and find out why pensions are not investing in Canadian business. That is because, quite frankly, it is a broken financial system under the government. It has broken the regulatory environment. CPPIB, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, in fact only has 12% of its assets invested in Canada. The rest is offshore. It does not invest in Canada. Investment funds are now flowing outside this country.

Let us look at that conflict of interest. After we have been debating in the House of Commons for how many weeks the conflicts of interest involved in SDTC, how can the Liberals continue on this path to have another Liberal insider try to take some more funds from Canadians and not face the conflict of interest regulations?

You are protecting your friends. Have you learned nothing? Will you actually accept that this should be a conflict of interest?

• (1935)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I hope I am not being called into question by the hon. member.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am going to get to the question right away, but first I want to wish people a happy Diwali. Diwali is celebrated in every region of the country. It is a part of our Canadian heritage. It is about good over evil, light over darkness, knowledge versus ignorance. I think Canadians, whatever their background, should get out there and celebrate Diwali.

Having said that, I appreciate the member's comments. Obviously, I do not agree with the member's comments, because what he has been tasked with doing is what I classify as a character assassination, where a Conservative member goes out of their way to take down an individual. Often we see it of ministers. Now we even see it of potential future politicians. Mark Carney has, in fact, contributed as a public servant in many ways, not only here in Canada but also in the U.K. As governor of the Bank of Canada, he was at the forefront of public policy.

I find it very disturbing when Conservatives are so focused on tearing people down without legitimate justification. The equivalent would be my taking four minutes to be critical of Jenni Byrne, for example. Jenni Byrne is very cozy with the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative caucus. She is a lobbyist. One of the firms her company lobbies for is Loblaw. Canadians are concerned about food inflation and that Loblaw might have been gouging consumers, yet that individual is in the inner circle of the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. I would suggest she is probably closer to the leader, in different ways, than most Conservative members of Parliament. She carries a great deal of influence. As I said, I do not want to spend my full four minutes talking about that.

Rather, I want to talk about some things we have witnessed over the last number of years, as there have been challenges in the economy. We look to individuals like Tiff Macklem, the current Governor of the Bank of Canada, the same governor the leader of the Conservative Party says we should be firing and the same governor who dismisses him completely. Because of that leadership and the administration of public policy, from Ottawa and other jurisdictions, today we have an inflation rate of less than 2%. We are on target. Interest rates are going down. I realize that goes against what the Conservatives want to do, which is to assassinate characters. Mr. Macklem is probably one of those individuals. At one point, the Conservative leader was critical of him. He has backed off a bit, to his credit.

We have a lot of people who have done so much for our country. We should—

• (1940)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, no character assassination was intended here.

What we are trying to do is get accountability for government, which does not exist with the government right now. We have made that quite clear over the last handful of weeks as the green slush fund needs to present its documents in regard to conflicts of interest and investments in insiders' companies. That needs to be disclosed to Canadians. We want to make sure there is accountability.

Likewise, Mark "carbon tax" Carney needs to be accountable to the government. He has to make sure his interests are disclosed very clearly and that he does not get paid for presenting something to the government that will put a lot of dollars into his own pockets and the pockets of his companies. All we are asking for is accountability and for the lobbying commissioner to take a good look at this. We are also asking the government when it is going to learn its

Adjournment Proceedings

lessons as far as corruption goes, and stop dealing on an insider basis and funnelling Canadian taxpayer dollars to its friends.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am sure members noticed that the member indicated it is not about character assassination and then right away went into "carbon tax Carney". That is the slogan, because the Conservatives are very good at creating slogans. I do not know whether they use AI or what they do to come up with their slogans, but at the end of the day, all one needs to do is read the member's comments that he has put on the record or the many comments that his colleagues have put on the record.

The character assassination is not only of this particular individual, who does not sit in the chamber. There is also a great deal of focus even on the Prime Minister. I knew that the Conservatives started character assassination with the leader of the Liberal Party even before he was Prime Minister. Even before he was actually the leader of the Liberal Party, they were going after his character in a very negative way. They have spent millions—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill has the floor.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):
Madam Speaker, earlier this year, the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Carney to be his senior economic adviser, and in that role, Mr. Carney would have unfettered access, in theory, to confidential and sensitive economic information, and he would also have unfettered access to people who make policy decisions on economic policy.

The finance minister has on multiple occasions said that Mr. Carney is a very close friend of hers. In fact he is one of her children's godparents. I do not believe she has disclosed him as a close friend, which is all fine in theory, except for the fact that Mr. Carney has, as my colleague has said, multiple business interests that relate to the types of policies that the finance minister or the Prime Minister would be implementing. Now, in his new role, he is ostensibly going to be implementing or suggesting policy himself.

Therefore, clearly this is a matter for the lobbyist commissioner to look at, and I want to say why. First of all, example one is a fact: Right after Mr. Carney was appointed in the role, The Logic reported that Brookfield, the company that he chairs, had started talks with the federal government and the Canada Pension Plan fund to back a new multi-billion dollar fund that Brookfield is raising, and that Brookfield was seeking 10 billion tax dollars from the federal government for the fund. Mr. Carney is the chair of the board. Now he is sitting with power and access to be able to determine the federal budget and economic policy, and his company is asking for \$10 billion. That is problem one.

Adjournment Proceedings

Problem two is that Mr. Carney also sits on the board of Stripe, a payment service. The federal government just struck a deal with Visa and Mastercard to lower payment processing fees, but Mr. Carney's company, Stripe, has elected not to pass that savings along to small businesses, but hoard it for itself. This begs the question of why the federal government did not require Stripe to do this, as would be done in other jurisdictions. Mr. Carney is on the board. He has access to this exact policy. His purview and his access to the finance minister would give him purview to the policy.

Example number three is a very close relationship with the Telesat CEO, Dan Goldberg. Telesat was just given \$6 billion by the federal government, shortly after Mr. Carney's appointment.

As another example, overseas there is actually a company admitting that Mr. Carney lobbies the government for the company's joint business ventures on behalf of Brookfield. The company is Home-Serve. The CEO, Richard Harpin, in the Telegraph is reported as saying, "Mark is working on our behalf in Government and he did have a meeting on this with Rachel Reeves", a U.K. senior economic policy person. "It was covering some other issues and the role of Brookfield as a trillion-dollar investor in the U.K. And so it wasn't just this issue," the subsidies it was looking for, "but he did mention it." Mr. Harpin also said, "We want to make sure that there's some money allocated to this [from the federal government], that we've got a clear direction of travel when the Budget comes out on Oct 30."

Here is the point: There is a man who is beholden to multiple corporations who is now directly advising the finance minister, the Prime Minister and the entire governing party on economic policy, and that is wrong. It is not character assassination to say it is wrong. It is fundamentally wrong. I would say it is a character flaw of the man to not see that. I am sure he believes that is altruistic, but it is not—

• (1945)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Yes, Madam Speaker, it is a continuation. I will give an example to the member opposite. Let us imagine what we should actually do. The Conservative leader came out yesterday and said he has a brand new, shiny policy. He is going to get rid of the GST on any homes that are being built, as long as they are under \$1 million.

Now, I wonder where he got that idea from. Did he get it from some individuals who might be in a conflict? He possibly did. Maybe we should get the Ethics Commissioner or the Commissioner of Lobbying to take a look at where that idea originated from. I do not know where it came from. Maybe Canadians should know. Can the member clearly indicate and provide assurances that there is no one who would have provided him that advice who would have been in any form of a conflict whatsoever?

I remember when today's Deputy Prime Minister actually came and met with the Liberal caucus, while we were a third party inside the chamber. She talked about Canada's middle class and provided us information and thinking in terms of how we could ultimately enhance and support it. That was of great value. I would like to

think that caucuses invite people with different levels of expertise to their meetings. Some might use the expert as an adviser, whether the Prime Minister, another minister or even me, to try to enhance the knowledge on an important issue.

There is no need to assassinate the character just because they do not like that particular individual or they believe that individual might be in a conflict position if this star is here and that star is there. We can put on our tin hat, and this is what we think. After all, even though that person is not in the cabinet or a member of caucus, it could be inappropriate. Therefore, they want to try to get some news attention on it and, by the way, come up with a slogan. They have one.

There are people in Canada who have a lot to offer. People do not have to be an elected official in order to be able to come to the table and offer good advice. Whether they are a member of Parliament who just has an interest in a topic area, a cabinet minister specializing in one policy area or the Prime Minister of Canada, I would like to think that we have an open mind to those individuals who have a certain level of expertise. I would argue that the Deputy Prime Minister today has more knowledge and ability to understand the issues of Canada's middle class than any other individual that I am aware of. Moreover, I have been aware of quite a few people over the years. She knows her stuff; that is why, at the end of the day, we see a healthier middle class in comparison with other countries. That is one of the reasons I was pleased to see the Deputy Prime Minister make a presentation to the national Liberal caucus at a time when we were in third party status; she could help us look at ways in which we could build sound public policy.

• (1950)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition put a great piece of policy forward this week. I am so glad my colleague mentioned it, and I hope he will support it. The policy is to axe the GST on homebuilding, and it was developed by anti-poverty advocates. These are people who are trying to fight for Canadians to have a break; in contrast, Mr. Carney is advising the Liberal Party in order to get rich himself. That is the difference. He is advocating for corporate interests whereas the Leader of the Opposition's policy was developed without any sort of ethical issue. Of course, I can absolutely say that. Mr. Carney, on the other hand, has a whole host of ethical issues.

The question is simple. This needs to be investigated by the lobbying commissioner. My colleague should have some shame in holding the bag on such a clear violation of, probably, the lobbying rules and other things. Mr. Carney should have some shame too. If he is such an esteemed individual, he should not be putting himself in this situation. Frankly, he should not be putting his boards up to this type of reputational risk. Seriously, it is really bad governance.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am going to have to call the member. She just finished saying that, of course, the leader of the Conservative Party was advised on the policy he announced yesterday by anti-poverty advocates. We can think about that for a moment. How many homeless Canadians are going to benefit by purchasing a brand new house next year? How many anti-poverty advocates are really endorsing this particular announcement that people should not have to pay GST if they are going to spend \$900,000 on a brand new house? By the way, the Conserva-

tives would also be deleting all the other housing programs that are, in fact, supporting non-profit housing. It does not make any sense.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:52 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Scott Hogarth

Mr. van Koeverden 27141

Public Safety

Mr. Vuong 27141

Lung Cancer

Mr. Kelly 27141

Persons Day

Ms. Bradford 27142

François Gervais

Mr. Garon 27142

Fédération de l'UPA Outaouais-Laurentides

Mr. Lauzon 27142

Policing

Mr. Jivani 27142

Global Robotics Competition Winners

Mr. Gaheer 27142

Opioids

Mr. McLeod 27142

Jason Kurek

Mr. Kurek 27143

Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada

Mr. Dhaliwal 27143

Housing

Ms. Ferreri 27143

Housing

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) 27143

Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada

Mr. Sarai 27143

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Ms. Zarrillo 27144

Member for Montarville

Mr. Barsalou-Duval 27144

Leader of the New Democratic Party

Mr. Barrett 27144

Democratic Institutions

Mr. Baker 27144

ORAL QUESTIONS

Housing

Mr. Poilievre 27145

Mr. Trudeau 27145

Mr. Poilievre 27145

Mr. Trudeau 27146

Seniors

Mr. Therrien 27146

Mr. Trudeau 27146

Mr. Therrien 27146

Mr. Trudeau 27146

Health

Mr. Singh 27146

Mr. Trudeau 27146

Housing

Mr. Singh 27146

Mr. Trudeau 27147

Mr. Poilievre 27147

Mr. Trudeau 27147

Government Priorities

Mr. Poilievre 27147

Mr. Trudeau 27147

Mr. Poilievre 27147

Mr. Trudeau 27147

Democratic Institutions

Mr. Poilievre 27147

Mr. Trudeau 27147

Liberal Party of Canada

Mr. Poilievre 27148

Mr. Trudeau 27148

Housing

Mr. Poilievre 27148

Mr. Trudeau 27148

International Trade

Mr. Perron 27148

Mr. Trudeau 27148

Mr. Perron 27148

Mr. Trudeau 27148

Housing

Mr. Poilievre 27148

Mr. Trudeau 27149

Mr. Poilievre 27149

Mr. Trudeau 27149

Mr. Poilievre 27149

Mr. Trudeau 27149

Mr. Poilievre 27149

Mr. Trudeau 27149

Public Service of Canada

Mr. Singh	27149
Mr. Trudeau	27150

Health

Ms. Zarrillo	27150
Mr. Trudeau	27150

Women and Gender Equality

Ms. Lambropoulos	27150
Mr. Trudeau	27150

Housing

Mr. Poilievre	27150
Mr. Trudeau	27150

Government Priorities

Mr. Poilievre	27151
Mr. Trudeau	27151
Mr. Poilievre	27151
Mr. Trudeau	27151
Mr. Poilievre	27151
Mr. Trudeau	27151

Justice

Mr. Thériault	27151
Mr. Trudeau	27151
Mr. Thériault	27152
Mr. Trudeau	27152

Public Safety

Mr. Poilievre	27152
Mr. Trudeau	27152
Mr. Poilievre	27152
Mr. Trudeau	27152

Mental Health and Addictions

Mr. Poilievre	27152
Mr. Trudeau	27152

Women and Gender Equality

Ms. Sgro	27153
Mr. Trudeau	27153

The Economy

Mr. Poilievre	27153
Mr. Trudeau	27153
Mr. Poilievre	27153
Mr. Trudeau	27153
Mr. Poilievre	27153
Mr. Trudeau	27153

Democratic Institutions

Mr. Louis	27154
Mr. Trudeau	27154

Veterans Affairs

Ms. Blaney	27154
Mr. Trudeau	27154

Democratic Institutions

Mr. Vuong	27154
Mr. Trudeau	27154

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**Interparliamentary Delegations**

Mr. Sorbara	27154
-------------------	-------

Committees of the House**International Trade**

Ms. Sgro	27155
----------------	-------

Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Mr. Schiefke	27155
--------------------	-------

Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Boulerice	27155
Motion for concurrence	27155
Mr. Gerretsen	27156
Mr. Ste-Marie	27156
Mr. Julian	27157
Mr. Morrice	27157

Petitions**Verchères Harbour**

Mr. Barsalou-Duval	27157
--------------------------	-------

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lamoureux	27158
---------------------	-------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux	27158
---------------------	-------

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lamoureux	27165
---------------------	-------

Petitions**Venezuela**

Mrs. Kusie	27168
------------------	-------

Falun Gong

Mr. Kurek	27169
-----------------	-------

Housing

Mr. Desjarlais	27169
----------------------	-------

Falun Gong

Mrs. Wagantall	27169
Mr. Van Popta	27169

Housing

Mr. Julian	27169
Mr. Khanna	27169
Ms. Mathysen	27169

Falun Gong

Mr. Brock	27170
Mr. Reid	27170
Mr. Patzer	27170

Border Services

Mr. Patzer	27170
------------------	-------

Housing

Ms. Zarrillo	27170
--------------------	-------

Falun Gong

Mr. Dalton	27170
------------------	-------

Veterans Services	
Mr. Vis	27171
Falun Gong	
Mr. Vis	27171
Business of the House	
Mr. Lamoureux	27171
Motion	27171
(Motion agreed to)	27171

Committees of the House

Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Motion for concurrence	27171
Ms. Zarrillo	27171
Amendment	27172
Mr. Blois	27172
Mr. Ste-Marie	27173
Mr. Green	27173
Mr. Lamoureux	27173
Ms. Zarrillo	27176
Ms. Rood	27176
Mrs. Vignola	27176
Mr. Gerretsen	27176
Mr. Green	27177
Mrs. Gray	27177
Ms. Mathyssen	27179
Mr. Gerretsen	27179
Mr. Blanchette-Joncas	27179
Mr. Vis	27179
Ms. Zarrillo	27180
Mr. Lamoureux	27180
Mr. Ste-Marie	27181
Ms. Rood	27181
Mme Chabot	27181

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Privilege

Reference to Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Motion	27182
Mr. Jivani	27182
Mr. Lamoureux	27185

Ms. Chabot	27185
Mr. Davies	27186
Mr. Muys	27186
Mr. Jeneroux	27186
Mr. Lamoureux	27189
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	27190
Mr. Davies	27190
Mr. Dhaliwal	27190

CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committees of the House

Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Motion for concurrence	27191
Mr. Bezan	27191
Mr. Lamoureux	27192
Mr. Ste-Marie	27192
Mr. Julian	27193
Mr. Williams	27193
Mr. Lamoureux	27194
Mr. Ste-Marie	27195
Mr. Julian	27195
Mr. Vis	27195
Mr. Lamoureux	27197
Mr. Ste-Marie	27197
Mr. Julian	27198
Ms. Rempel Garner	27198
Mr. Van Popta	27198
Division on motion deferred	27198

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Taxation

Mr. Van Popta	27199
Mr. Lamoureux	27199

Government Accountability

Mr. McLean	27200
Mr. Lamoureux	27200

Government Accountability

Ms. Rempel Garner	27201
Mr. Lamoureux	27202

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