



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 365
Monday, November 4, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 4, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Speaker: Honourable colleagues, pursuant to section 536 of the Canada Elections Act, it is my duty to lay upon the table a report from the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada on proposed amendments to the Canada Elections Act.

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 1 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right before we concluded on Friday, the member for Louis-Hébert asked me a question about the Conservatives' dollar-for-dollar rule. It is a question I am very pleased to address because the Conservatives believe we need to fix the budget. That means when a new spending commitment is made, we need to be able to identify where the money will come from. This is unlike the Liberals, who continually make new spending commitments and have no plan for where to get the money for them, other than through higher taxes and higher inflation.

The Conservatives, when we have made announcements, have been clear about where the money would come from. The member for Louis-Hébert was asking in general, for some of these proposals, where the money would come from. I will shed some more light on some of the key areas. We have seen a dramatic increase in spending on outside consultants providing advice to the government that could be provided by the public service. We have seen incredible abuses in the procurement system. One of many areas

where we can very easily save money is in outside consulting and procurement, by ending all of the abuse we have seen there.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am really glad my colleague talked about outsourcing and highly paid consultants, something the NDP has been deeply concerned about dating back to the Harper government. Outsourcing doubled under the Harper government. It has actually quadrupled under the Liberal government.

One thing we have been trying to do as New Democrats is take a real look at companies like Deloitte, for example. It is the highest paid beneficiary in all of external consulting. The Conservatives, who run the government operations committee through the chair and their members, have not allowed OGGO to study and take a close examination of Deloitte despite many requests by the New Democrats.

It is no surprise that the Liberals do not want to look at it, but I will note that former cabinet minister Pierre Pettigrew and former Conservative cabinet minister Peter MacKay sit as managing directors of Deloitte. It is no surprise why the Conservatives do not want to take up a closer examination of Deloitte. They want to talk about McKinsey in their rabbit hole chase, but they do not want to look at Deloitte.

Will my colleague tell us when the Conservatives are going to open up the books on Deloitte and take a hard look at it? Why is Deloitte getting such an obscene number of outsourced contracts from Canadian taxpayers?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, in broad strokes, the member's description of the OGGO committee's agenda is simply incorrect. I know he has not been a member of OGGO for a very long time, but I understand he may be back. I look forward to giving him the opportunity to get reacquainted with the committee's agenda and working with him again at that point.

Here is what happened with respect to the studies on outsourcing for McKinsey, Deloitte and other companies. The committee ordered various documents related to the outsourcing to McKinsey. We wanted to pursue the government on those documents because the documents we ordered were not provided. However, the NDP folded like a cheap suit and would not work with us to demand that we get those documents. On the one hand, the NDP refused to follow up to get the documents, but on the other hand, it tried to shift us over to another company.

Privilege

The Conservatives would say, no, let us do the work; let us look at every instance of outsourcing, but let us get the documents we asked for. We cannot say we do not need these documents and then jump to something else right when we are in the middle of pursuing one particular issue. The NDP should stand with us in ordering the production of these documents. Then we can get the work done.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here we are, I believe in week four, still debating a privilege motion because the Liberals are refusing to comply with the order of the House made back in June about the green slush fund. They are refusing to produce the documents.

What are the opportunity costs here? What is being lost in this chamber when we could be debating important issues that are relevant to Canadians in this day and age? For example, what about housing and our leader's recent announcement about cutting the GST on housing so we can build more homes for Canadians?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the future of this Parliament, I believe it is time now for a carbon tax election. It is time to put to Canadians what we have put forward, our proposal to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, as well as the Liberal government's record of failure over the last nine years.

Right now, the Liberals have refused to hand over documents that Parliament has ordered. This is why there is a focus on this question of privilege. We are stuck on this question of privilege because the Liberals refuse to hand over documents that the House has ordered. This could end right away if the government would hand over the documents.

Moreover, as we have seen, the green slush fund demonstrates the cost, the corruption and the crime that have been growing in this country over the last nine years. With costs up, crime up and time up, we should go to a carbon tax election now and have a Conservative government that will really get things done in this place.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative member who asked the previous question asked what it was costing us to debate this privilege motion for the fourth week in a row and what we could be doing instead.

I would like to remind my colleagues of something rather important. The opposition parties agree with this motion and the Bloc Québécois is prepared to vote in favour of it. If we adopt it again, the government will have no choice but to hand over the documents. Right now we are caught in a sort of vicious circle, like the chicken-and-egg dilemma. Members want the government to hand over the documents to put an end to the debate, but at the same time, we know we are winning the debate.

When will we vote on this motion? If my colleague cannot answer that question, can he tell me how many more Conservative members will rise to speak on this issue so that we can mentally prepare? Is this debate going to go on until Christmas?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, let me seize on the idiom the member used. What is going to come first, the chicken or the egg: the study proposed at committee or getting the documents? The chicken needs to lay the egg, that is, the documents are needed first, and then the study can be done. If we send this to a committee without having the documents, the committee will be severely limited in the work it can do.

It is an established principle that Parliament has a right to order the production of documents. We are prepared for this privilege question to end right away, today, in five minutes, if the government hands over the documents. For the public accounts committee and other committees that have been studying this issue to properly do the work, the government needs to be responsive and forthcoming in adhering to what Parliament has asked for. In this case, that means documents that the law clerk can provide to the RCMP and allowing committees to proceed with the work they need to do.

It is very clear where we are right now. As soon as the government hands over these documents, we can proceed to other business. The government has refused to recognize the long, well-established privileges of Parliament and the principle of parliamentary sovereignty in our system of government. By the way, the government has failed to recognize that principle on a broad host of other cases as well. Starting with the Winnipeg labs documents and in many cases since, the Liberals have failed to show respect for this institution.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Steven Chaplin is a former senior legal counsel in the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel.

There is nothing more than a Conservative game here. We have the leader of the Conservative Party virtually holding the House of Commons at ransom. That is no surprise. This is the same leader who refuses to get a security clearance.

When is the Conservative Party going to do the right thing, direct its leader to behave in a more responsible fashion and, to start off, get a security clearance and stop the games?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the member opposite has a security clearance, but let us talk about how we got here. All of the opposition parties voted to order the production of these documents. Parliament is sovereign. A majority of members of Parliament voted to order these documents. The member, representing a minority of the House, does not like the decision the House has made, and that is fair enough; I do not always like decisions the House makes either. However, the House has ordered the production of these documents, and the government should recognize the supremacy of Parliament in our system of government.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe North. It is nice to see you in the chair. Usually, that is not the case when I am speaking.

Privilege

Before I get into the heart of the matter, I would like to acknowledge a local benefactor in Simcoe North, who, over the summer, announced that he was donating \$22.5 million to local charities in the region, in Simcoe County but primarily in Simcoe North. This is on top of \$28 million that this individual has donated over the previous 27 years. This is likely the largest single benefactor in our area, a wonderful immigrant entrepreneur who came to the country with very little, built a business and has given back to the community. He could have stopped at any of the small towns along the 401 before he turned north to the Midland and Penetanguishene area, and we are very glad and lucky that he chose our place as home. On behalf of all the charities and recipients, I would like to thank Mr. Reinhart Weber for his generosity and amazing business success, which he has allowed to benefit the community.

We are back at it. I am wearing a green tie today not because I used to work for the former finance minister Jim Flaherty, but because it is the colour of money and the colour of the green slush fund. Somehow, we are still in this twilight zone. It feels a bit like the movie *Groundhog Day*.

In a letter the law clerk wrote with respect to Parliament's ability to receive the documents in question, he noted that the order is an exercise of the House of Commons' power to send for documents and that this parliamentary privilege is rooted in the preamble of the Constitution and section 4 of the Parliament of Canada Act. Nowhere in the motion does the House pretend to direct the RCMP. It merely says that these documents need to be made available to the RCMP. If the RCMP decides not to look at them, that is fine. If the RCMP, on recommendations from the justice department, says that some of these documents are inadmissible, that would be up to the RCMP to decide.

Let us remember that this is not the first time the RCMP has not been able to get documents. Need I remind my hon. colleagues of SNC-Lavalin, the WE scandal and foreign interference? By the way, with respect to foreign interference, for the entire time this debate has occurred in the House, individuals within the government, who have had all the information all the way along, have said, "There is nothing to see here so please move along." That is biggest understatement we have seen coming out of the government with respect to foreign interference. Lo and behold, there was explosive testimony at the public inquiry that the government did not want to have. Need I remind the House about the Winnipeg lab documents?

This is a very serious matter. There are Criminal Code provisions related to breach of trust that ought to be explored by the RCMP. It is up to the RCMP to do so, but we want to make sure that it has the information to conduct an investigation if it chooses to do so. However, this raises a bigger question about the role of the House and the fact that the government, members of the government in particular, seems to consider this chamber, Parliament and committees mere inconveniences.

Let us go back to 2020, in the early days of the pandemic. What did the government try to do? The government tried to introduce legislation to give itself unlimited taxing and spending powers without having Parliament sit for oversight. We have ministers who routinely ignore invitations to come to committee. The Liberals frustrated the WE scandal. In fact, they prorogued Parliament to avoid that scandal. They took the Speaker's office to court. This

was all in the name of protecting charter rights, and it is apparently why the Liberals are not giving the documents here. Well, what about the charter rights of the people who had their bank accounts frozen for what appeared to be charges of public mischief? However, here, the government wants to protect the privacy rights of people who may have defrauded the Canadian taxpayer and the Canadian public of significant money.

• (1115)

Now let us go back to why. The Auditor General has said there is \$400 million from this fund that has gone to ineligible recipients, including well over 100 specific instances of conflicts of interest. That alone should cause this entire place to stop until we figure out more and until we ensure that Canadian taxpayers will be taken care of.

I just saw last week one of the individuals who is at the heart of this scandal appear at industry committee. This individual said that she was under scrutiny because she was a woman and from Quebec. At no point during the testimony did I hear the words, "I am sorry; I made a mistake; I should have been more clear or more precise about recusing myself on the grounds of conflict of interest." That is the definition of gaslighting, to try to shield oneself from scrutiny when they have been caught dead to rights by the Auditor General for misappropriating funds to companies in which that individual and other individuals on the board have a direct pecuniary financial interest.

Now, I am here as an individual, and I would like to think we can be collaborative, so I have an idea. I will work hard to convince my colleagues that maybe there is another way. Maybe there is another path to get back to the people's work. Of course, the government could produce the documents, but maybe there is another way. If the government recovers the \$400 million, I will work hard to convince my colleagues that maybe we should move past this and get back to the people's work, but I do not think the government has shown any interest in recovering these funds.

The government was dragged kicking and screaming to do an internal investigation. When it had documents that specifically showed direct conflicts of interest, it waited until the Auditor General's report was done to ask some of these individuals to leave their posts. In fact, when it was known that there were problems with conflicts of interest with this particular fund, one of these board members was given a promotion. This person was promoted to the Canada Infrastructure Bank board.

I wonder if that individual had any personal connection to companies involved in the infrastructure space while they were there. It is a very relevant question to ask, but the fact is that this person sat on that board for multiple months. My understanding is that even a year after allegations surfaced of wrongful conduct, the government left this individual in that position.

Privilege

The government and other members in this House like to bring up scandals of the past. The one they like to bring up involved Mike Duffy, and for the life of me, I do not understand why. It was the only scandal in Canadian history where the taxpayer was repaid. Really, \$90,000 was repaid to the taxpayer for wrongful conduct of a senator. He was in the wrong, but the taxpayer was made whole.

As such, how come this government is not out trying to recover \$400 million from people who should not have gotten it? If these documents were provided to this chamber, to the law clerk and to members of Parliament, there would be nothing to stop any member of Parliament from publishing these documents on their website or making them available to journalists. Of course, the RCMP would be able to look at those anyway. The fact that the documents would be sent to the RCMP is completely redundant. They will become public documents in most circumstances. It seems rather bizarre that this government is very happy not having much happen in this place, because it could easily just turn over the documents or maybe it should show some effort to recover the \$400 million. As I said before, there is nothing in this motion that directs the RCMP.

● (1120)

I find it fascinating that members of the government, including the parliamentary secretary who is probably still smarting from the last time we had an exchange in this place, are worried about directing the RCMP. They improperly directed their attorney general on SNC-Lavalin and they improperly directed the RCMP with respect to releasing documents during an open and active investigation in the absolutely tragic Nova Scotia shooting, which was still very raw for the country, but more importantly for the victims of those crimes, all to politically benefit the government's new firearms regulations and agenda. They improperly pressured the commissioner of the RCMP to release details against protocols, because it would help the government's agenda.

I think that if this government was really worried about directing the RCMP, it would read the motion, for one, and recognize that the words "direct" or "encourage" or anything close to that are not there. As I said before, if these documents are produced, the RCMP will be able to get them on multiple avenues. The fact that they might be inadmissible to court has nothing to do with the motion.

The Liberals think that they are protecting the charter rights of people who may have committed crimes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I love the comments from my hon. colleagues. *Law & Order* is a fantastic show; even the new one that is filmed in Toronto. Maybe they should actually watch some of it to figure out how these investigations happen.

However, if the RCMP had access to documents that might be inadmissible, it could at least put together a timeline of events and it could put together what has occurred. The fact that the Liberals are not interested in learning about the wrongdoings of board members that they appointed tells us all we need to know, which is that when this government started appointing board members to this organization, its lobbyists and friends, its eyes turned as green as the colour of my tie.

The SDTC organization had been going on for years without any problems. If we go back to the previous government, Jim Balsillie was the chair of that board and never put in an expense report. There was never an Auditor General concern about that organization or the way it disbursed funds. It was only when this government decided to appoint its friends, knowing they would be in conflict of interest. Thank God for the whistle-blower who let everybody know, before these appointments were made, that certain individuals would find it very hard to do their duty because they would be in so many conflicts of interest.

What was the response back to that initial concern? It was, "Do not worry about it, we have it taken care of." Well, "have it taken care" of is right, with \$400 million all the way to the bank.

If Canadians are upset that Parliament is not working, they only need to look at one party. This motion, this request, is within the full rights of Parliament to make.

● (1125)

This makes it right because Parliament has asked for it. In the past there have been multiple times when Parliament has asked for documents in previous administrations. Do colleagues know what other governments have done? They have found another way to get past the impasse. During a very difficult and controversial issue with respect to treatment of detainees in a previous government, a secret committee was struck in order to allow members of Parliament to see sensitive documents related to national security. I do not see any creativity on that side of the House trying to find a path forward.

If the government was interested in getting back to work, it would try to find a way to get back to work. As I mentioned before, I would be willing to work with that side of the House, to find a path to get this place back to work. That could include turning over the documents, but of course we see that the government is not that interested in doing that. Maybe if the government recovered the \$400 million, we could move along and let this go to a committee where there would be full scrutiny, but only if taxpayers are repaid. To me, that would sound like a very reasonable compromise. I would commit to working with my colleagues in order to make that happen. If the government is unwilling or unable to even get a significant portion of those \$400 million in funds returned, I think we might as well stay here for a very long time.

I noted the question from my friend from the Bloc to the previous speaker about how long might this go on. I think we should try to find a compromise, but it has to include either the release of the documents or a full accounting and repayment of the \$400 million back to the taxpayer. The \$400 million is not a number that opposition party members have said was misappropriated or went to ineligible recipients. That number came from the Auditor General. We could have no more credible source when looking at government spending than the Auditor General.

Privilege

By the way, this would not be the first time that the government has not accepted the findings of the Auditor General. In a very rare case, the Auditor General produced a report on the CERB and wage subsidy audits that the government did not even accept. It was one of the first times in at least a decade where the findings of the Auditor General were not accepted. However, here I have not heard that the government has not accepted these findings. It seems bizarre that it is not also trying to recover the \$400 million for taxpayers.

I think we have established that Parliament has a right to these documents; taxpayers have a right to be repaid; there needs to be transparency; and the RCMP, to the extent that it wishes to look at the documents, should be able to look at them. As for the fact that the clerk might make them available to the RCMP or send them along, I do not think that should be of concern to anybody here, because once the documents are tabled, they are basically public anyway.

Unless the government wants to come up with another way, I think we are going to be here for a little while. I am fully confident that when we talk about the severity and the size of the grift in this circumstance of \$400 million, it should bring this place to a halt. It should make a government think twice about how it is going to proceed. The fact that multiple opposition parties support this motion should let everybody know that \$400 million, this entire circumstance, is that important that this place is coming to a halt until we get the documents. Release the papers.

• (1130)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting that the member encouraged this side of the House to watch *Law & Order* to understand the law. I found it very alarming to hear this from somebody who has a degree in law. I would warn the member that perhaps relying on fictitious characters on a TV show might not be the best way to come by understanding how the law works, but I digress.

I will preface my question for the member by saying that the RCMP does not want to obtain the information this way. The commissioner of the RCMP specifically said that, "There is a significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as circumvention of normal investigative process and Charter protections." With all of the member's experience and time when he studied law, how many times did he come across evidence that had been obtained by a motion of Parliament?

• (1135)

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question. Maybe there are a few lawyers on that side who need to educate Liberal members on what a conflict of interest is, because it seems there is only one party in the House that, time and time again, does not understand what a conflict of interest is.

Frankly, with respect to the RCMP, it does not have to look at the documents or use them in court if it does not want to. What Conservatives are saying is we want to make them available to the RCMP. If the RCMP does not want to produce them as evidence in a trial, that is up to the RCMP. That is what this is about. We are asking for documents, which we have a constitutional and legal obligation to do on behalf of taxpayers.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to give my colleague credit. His speech actually stayed on the motion today, unlike many of his colleagues who use this as a platform to clip and raise money.

The Conservatives under the Harper government were embroiled in scandal after scandal: the ETS scandal of \$400 million; \$1 billion in the G8 scandal, including the gazebos we all know about; \$2.2 billion for the Phoenix pay system, which the Liberal government inherited and still has not fixed. There has been scandal after scandal.

Does my colleague not have any shame for the Harper government and the scandals under the Conservatives' watch? I would like to hear why they did not address those in any of their speeches.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, what we should be concerned about is if a law has been broken. I do not care which party a person is from or when it happens, so long as it is within the statutory limitation period. That person should face the consequences of the law that was broken.

In this circumstance, when board members are purposely and knowingly benefiting companies they have a pecuniary and financial interest in, that should be investigated to the fullest extent of the law, and if any of them had a breach of trust, they should be prosecuted. Everyone should just accept the fact that it does not matter which party anyone is from or where they live in the country; if they break the law, they should face the consequences.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member might comment on some of the arguments that have been brought forward from the other bench.

Already this morning, the Liberals are talking about whether the House of Commons should order the production of documents. That ship sailed. The House of Commons did vote for the production of documents and the government has failed to comply with an order of Parliament, a possible contempt of Parliament.

If Liberals wanted to make the argument, which they have made over and over again, the time to do so was last spring. Today we are talking about fulfilling the order for the production of documents.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, that is the best question I have received thus far on my speech. The government tried to make that argument at the time but my friend from Calgary Rocky Ridge is correct that Parliament has requested these documents, which is the full right of the House. The fact that the government is not providing them speaks volumes.

One wonders what the Liberals are hiding. That is a common refrain we are hearing from them these days. What is it they are hiding in these documents? Is it explosive evidence that directly links their friends to the grift? We need to know and Canadians deserve to know.

Privilege

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague continues to mention \$400 million that is missing. Is it not correct that the Auditor General chose a selection of 58 files that the SDTC had granted money to and, potentially, the number is much bigger?

• (1140)

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is always very astute. She reads the fine details, and yes, she is correct that the \$400 million was on a sampling of transactions. Once we find \$400 million has gone to ineligible recipients from the sampling, should we not look at the full amount? Maybe the government would be interested in looking at the full amount, but it has not suggested it is interested in finding any truth for Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I did not get an answer to my question, so I am going to ask it very clearly without any preamble. Can the member please inform the House as to how many times, during the time he spent at Western University studying law, he came across evidence in a case that was furnished to the authorities or to an attorney through a motion of Parliament?

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I have never seen a case where \$400 million of taxpayer money went to ineligible recipients with direct conflicts of interest to members who sit on the board, who, by the way, are friends of the government and former employers of the Minister of Environment. I have never seen so much graft in my entire experience as a member of Parliament, which is only a few years. This \$400 million is not \$20 or nine dollars' worth of orange juice or \$90,000 of expenses that was paid and was actually reimbursed to the taxpayer. It is \$400 million and these individuals are not interested in finding out the answers.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for a very inspirational speech. In his comments—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to stop the clock here for a second and note for members on both sides that there was a time for questions and comments. If we are fortunate, we might be able to get another question in. Please rise if you would like to ask a question. The Chair will recognize you as long as there is time to do so.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove has the floor.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, for four weeks now, while we have been debating this privilege motion, we have been hearing specious arguments from the Liberal side of the House saying, "Oh, maybe this order made back in June is contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms." It is a little late to be advancing those arguments, after the Speaker has made his ruling supporting the motion. I wonder if my hon. colleague could comment on that, and on what other options might be open to the Liberals today if they really believe in those charter arguments, such as perhaps suing the Speaker and taking it to court.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, the government is trying to hide something. I would love this to be the seminal case that goes to the Supreme Court about testing the privacy rights of individuals who have had their documents confidentially exposed by an order of the House when it is within its due right to get the documents. If

that goes to the Supreme Court to test the government's position and the fact that someone might be held accountable for this \$400 million, I would very much welcome it. How is that for an answer?

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise again in the House. It has been over a month that the House of Commons has been paralyzed. The Liberals are not able to advance a single piece of legislation in the House; quite frankly, I am not complaining about that part, after the last nine years and a lot of things they have done. The number one question that remains in my mind as I begin my comments today is this: What are they hiding? What damning information about their unethical conduct, when it comes to the \$400-million green slush fund, is so bad they are willing to shut down the regular business of Parliament to avoid the RCMP having all of the documents, unredacted, so it can complete a criminal investigation into the Liberal government's green slush fund?

I am speaking again and we are refusing to back down to the Liberals' demand that we push this over to a parliamentary committee to study and think about it, not to hand the documents over but to debate whether they have to or not. It makes one wonder why they are willing to give up a month of time for their own agenda to hide and cover up from the RCMP getting full access to vet all the documents. It is important to remind Canadians, as Conservatives have been doing, of the magnitude and severity of the unethical and inappropriate behaviour and use of taxpayers' money that the Liberal-appointed insiders gave themselves with this fund.

The Auditor General, whose office is independent of the work we do in the House of Commons, came out with a stunning report. This was the first report, because there was a second, more in-depth report, that was required for Canadians to understand just how corrupt this program was. The report found that \$59 million of this program was awarded to projects and companies that were ineligible to receive it. The worst part of all of this was the 186 cases where conflicts of interest existed. What do we mean by that? That comes to \$330 million in funds awarded in cases where directors, appointed by the Liberals to this green slush fund board, who were approving their own projects, were not recusing themselves and were giving to themselves or to other directors' projects, 186 times.

Here is the thing: This is a problem of the current Liberal government, which has been propped up by the NDP for several years since we have known about this behaviour and corruption. This is a Liberal-induced problem.

Privilege

SDTC was a federal program created back in 2001, when Jean Chrétien was prime minister. The program operated under a Liberal government and under nine years of a Conservative government, during which time the Auditor General found no such shoddy business and corruption. It was only in 2017, when the current Liberal government started changing the chair and appointing its own members to the board, that these serious problems and the misuse of taxpayer money started.

There are so many parts I find asinine and insane when it comes to this issue and scandal. To be clear, the Liberals brush this off and say we should take it to a committee and think about it there. They are not at all serious about tackling this problem.

I want to go back to my time in municipal politics. I had the honour of serving in the local level of government for 12 years in the Township of North Dundas: four years as a councillor and eight years as mayor for the township and a member of SDG Counties council, where I had the honour of serving for two years, two terms, as the warden of SDG.

• (1145)

In the oath we take at the municipal level, we commit to declaring any pecuniary interests, which basically means conflicts of interest. For municipal politicians, staff and everyone, this was the number one thing in any orientation. At the beginning of every term when we were elected to office, at conferences, at best practices seminars and at meetings with our legal counsel and others, we were constantly reminded of the need to declare a conflict of interest.

We have an Ethics Commissioner here in Ottawa who goes through members and individuals appointed to boards; this is basic Board Governance 101. We cannot, or should not, sit on a board that advances our financial interests directly, our pecuniary interest. All these terms are explained right at the outset. For the individuals and the Liberal insiders, this is not their first day on the job. It may have been on the board, but they knew what they were doing the day they got in here.

With this board, they go back and forth on approving, 186 times, projects that were a conflict of interest. Again, these are where the voting members of the green slush fund are directors of the businesses and companies applying for money. This was not just one or two times where, oops, sorry, they forgot, they had a busy meeting that day and forgot to recuse themselves. It happened 186 times.

I went through the Auditor General's report. There is just the insanity of all of this; they knew better. This was not a case of, whoops, they did not take the training. Anybody who is on a board in governance, any of the names that are mentioned, where they are directors of these private companies, know the rules. It is ingrained in somebody. They knew the rules; they did not care. They got themselves in an incestuous circle of Liberal insiders, and they did it 186 times, for 330 million dollars' worth of projects approved where this was there.

We can go through the Auditor General's report; it lists the cases in exhibit 6.4. Exhibit 6.4 goes through the 90 cases of conflict of interest. In this case, and as part of it here, it is worth \$76 million.

March 29, 2021, was a pretty busy day at that board. It was not just one conflict of interest here or there. The chair, Annette Verschuren, voted to approve \$100,000 with a conflict of interest on that meeting date. There is another one on the same day, where she was on another company and gave it \$100,000. In the same meeting, NPower, another company, got seed money of \$100,000.

On March 10, 2022, a board member on the green slush fund, who also had a company in a conflict of interest, voted to give his company \$5 million of taxpayers' money. There are 90 examples that go through the magnitude of the conflicts of interest and the corruption. I make the argument here that Canadians are rightly frustrated. This is not accidental. This is not some sort of circumstance where, whoops, they did not know the rules. They knew exactly what they were doing.

I am drawing my opinion here in the chamber. What has the House said? A majority of members said, earlier this year, through a motion, that the RCMP must have all the documents, unredacted. At the end of the day, they do not get into a case where, based on the information we have and were given, we determined X. The majority of the House said to make sure, to not give an implication or an opinion and to give it the documents for it to do its full criminal investigation, something it confirmed is under way.

Why is this important? For many reasons, it is just a simple matter of fact: All the information must be given for a full investigation; no stone must be left unturned.

Let us go back and remember the Liberal government and its record from just a couple of years ago. On the SNC-Lavalin scandal the Prime Minister found himself in, it was the RCMP saying that, based on the information it had, it would not proceed to lay charges. It is interesting.

• (1150)

They were not given all the information. Cabinet confidants and the Prime Minister blocked certain information from going to the RCMP for a full investigation. We can talk about a conflict of interest there. Parliament has the right to pass the motion, to have it enforced and to have the government comply with it. Parliament reigns supreme and is paramount, and the Speaker's ruling made exactly that clear.

Liberals have tried to change their excuse over the course of the last month about five times, throwing whatever they can at the wall and hoping an argument sticks. Nothing has yet. Canadians want the RCMP to have the full information and to do a full criminal investigation. We do not want another conclusion such as that we had only a couple of years ago under the Prime Minister, when the RCMP did not have the information it needed.

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Another part that is important here is actually talking about that past pattern of behaviour. We talk about ethics violations, bad behaviour, not following the rules and only admitting fault after they are caught and found guilty of those ethics violations. There have been several in the past nine years under the government. The Minister of Public Safety was found in violation of ethics laws. A couple of years ago, the Minister of International Trade was as well. Just last week, the Liberal-appointed CBC president was found guilty of breaking ethics laws and fined.

We can believe it or not and say it is not so, but who is the one leading the pack? The Prime Minister himself was found guilty of breaking ethics laws twice. There is a pattern of behaviour that Canadians are getting tired of. When the government came in, back in 2015, it was “open by default” and would have “sunny ways”. It was going to change the way things were done in Ottawa. It changed them, all right, and not for the better.

Liberals are so desperate to avoid accountability and transparency, to avoid complying with what the majority of the House of Commons has said, which to give up all the documents for a full criminal investigation, where no stone is left unturned. They are now so closed by default that they are closing their own business for the last month to avoid all of this. Again, we talk about a pattern of behaviour. A key thing for a government is maintaining trust with Canadians.

I have spoken about the SNC-Lavalin scandal. The WE Charity scandal was another massive ethical challenge and corruption issue, with Liberals working with Liberal insiders to benefit them. At the time, they said it was all about youth during the pandemic. However, it was all about benefiting their friends, and they were caught for that. They talked about “open by default” but then did not follow through.

For the Winnipeg lab documents, there was a Speaker's ruling as well: Over years and years, the government refused to provide full access to all documents so that Canadians can see exactly what the government knew when it knew it and, in the case of what we know, what it did not do to protect our national security and the Canadian people. Again, this broke trust in a major way.

Now, Liberals are advancing and trying to keep the NDP-Liberal coalition alive. We found this out last week, when it was revealed that the NDP was given special access to the Prime Minister's Office and Privy Council Office, in proposing a bill to change Canada's elections laws. The bill is not about adding advance poll dates. It is not about closing loopholes and foreign interference; gaps still exist. It is about moving back the election date by just a week. It so just happens that many NDP and Liberal MPs, who will lose their pension by a day, will have their pension guaranteed. They know they are going to be defeated in the next election.

It is on record. The NDP said that the legislation was part of its deal to keep the coalition intact. It was not to keep it intact because Canadians want it to do that. It was the opposite. It is desperate to avoid Canadians having their say in a carbon tax election.

• (1155)

Now we know why the deal was made. It was not for advance polls, not for any of the other technical measures, but to protect the pensions of the soon-to-be defeated.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the interesting part is that the member for Kingston and the Islands is saying that I am protecting my pension. I am not here for my pension; I am here for Canadians. I do not want to back the election up by a week. I want to call the election now—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1200)

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I am going to ask the member for Kingston and the Islands to please wait until we get to questions and comments, when he will be able to ask a question of the hon. member.

The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your intervention to bring some order during my speech here. However, the interventions and the heckling do not bother me; they reinforce just how tired and out of gas the Liberals are.

The Liberals changed the date for the election, which is absolutely ridiculous. They changed it to secure power in the votes of the NDP to keep them in office and avoid having to go to an election. That is the fact. They are sputtering, trying to explain and failing miserably at it. Therefore, those heckles do not discourage me; they reinforce the fact that the Liberals are desperately trying to change the channel from the numerous scandals that consume them.

I would be rattled too if I had to go to people in Kingston, having been a Liberal MP for the last nine years, and answer for the number of ethical violations that the Liberals have. He should answer for why they will not show the \$400-million corruption scandal and provide all the documents to the RCMP, as well as why they are so desperate that they will work with the NDP to protect the pensions of soon-to-be defeated NDP and Liberal MPs. I am very confident in going to the people of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry right now.

Again, the eroding trust is disgusting. There is very little left after nine years. Every week, Canadians are growing sick and tired of the endless desperation of Liberal and NDP MPs. Therefore, I do not worry about anything else but having an election right now for Canadians to have their say, which they desperately want.

On the other side, those members should be ashamed and embarrassed of what was exposed last week. They gave the NDP special, secret access to meetings in advance of proposing a bill to change the election laws in order to keep themselves in power. They got caught, and they should rightly be embarrassed and rattled about that.

When we go back, at the end of the day, this issue happened because Liberals are terrible managers when it comes to the federal government. Again, this is the latest scandal of waste, mismanagement and corruption. I could go on for hours on end, outlining the numerous examples. There are the Auditor General reports that have come in the last couple of years alone, as well as the ones at public accounts and other committees that are under way and getting more information on the magnitude and depth of their incompetence.

The \$400 million was meant for green technology, which are good buzz words from Liberals. We talk about virtue signalling. Why is that? It is because they say all the right things; they get A for announcements, but there is zero depth to the reality and their ability to deliver. The only thing they have delivered is 186 cases of conflict of interest totalling \$330 million to Liberal insiders and giving \$59 million to ineligible projects. It is not about green technology, the environment or Canadians. It is about lining the pockets of their friends. Twenty years ago, this defeated the last Liberal government, and it is going to be one of the many factors that defeat this one.

In nine years, the NDP-Liberal government doubled the amount spent on consultants and outside contractors. It is going to \$21 billion a year. We are seeing numerous cases, such as \$60 million for ArriveCAN and \$400 million here, of a completely inappropriate use of taxpayers' money.

As I wrap up my comments, I want Canadians to reflect on this: The Liberals have been made aware now, since whistle-blowers came forward a couple of years ago, of the case of the green slush fund. If they took this issue seriously, they would not have shut Parliament down for the last month to avoid accountability. They would not be dithering and delaying instead of just co-operating. If they are so serious about respecting taxpayers' money, they should tell us this: How much money has been returned of the \$400 million to date? It is zero dollars, and that is why they have zero credibility left in the House.

• (1205)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I continue to be more and more frustrated. I come here week in and week out to do work on behalf of my beautiful riding of Saint John—Rothesay. None of us is getting work done.

However, I do want to home in on the Leader of the Opposition. Every member of the House, and every Canadian in fact, knows that there is a need for leaders of the parties to get a security clearance. We all recognize that. In my riding and right across Canada, voices are getting louder and louder asking why the leader of the Conservative Party refuses to get his clearance. Does he have something to hide? Should the leader not come forth and be honest with Canadians as to why he is not getting a security clearance?

Privilege

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals need to come clear. If the member is so interested in getting back to work and getting back to government business, the Liberals should provide all the documents as the House of Commons explicitly stated and as the Speaker said was appropriate and must be done. If the member is so anxious to get back to work, maybe he could raise that at the next Liberal caucus meeting. I hear that the meetings have been pretty interesting the last couple of weeks.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do not want the member to misrepresent what the Speaker has actually indicated. The Speaker did not indicate, under the current motion that we are debating, that the production of papers be provided but rather that the issue go to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker: We are descending into debate.

The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry may complete his answer.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons has the right to request the documents, as it did, and it has the right to have them. That is what the Speaker said. We are not interested in pushing this over for a committee to go somewhere to study it. The Liberals are trying to divert and distract from the issue. They should just provide the documents.

To the matter at hand regarding security clearance, the Leader of the Opposition has been very clear: Release the names for all Canadians to see so they can have the information. That is the way and that is what we deserve. The Prime Minister and the Liberal government have found many ways, as with the inquiry that is going on, to evade transparency. Release the names for all Canadians to see; that is the simple answer.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know that as we are here doing the work of this place, we know that outside this place important things are happening in Canada. I just want to say that it grieves my heart deeply to hear that Senator Murray Sinclair passed away today after 73 years of life, which he committed to making sure that the voices of residential school survivors were heard. As the granddaughter of a residential school survivor and as the spouse of a residential school survivor, I am incredibly grateful to Senator Sinclair for his tremendous leadership and work. I am wondering whether the member has any thoughts that he would like to share with the family of Senator Sinclair on this very hard day.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague for raising today's news, which I heard probably about an hour ago, of Murray Sinclair's passing. He was a wonderful Canadian and gentleman who served in the Senate for a couple of years and played instrumental roles in the efforts of our country when it comes to reconciliation and advancing the awareness of the challenges facing indigenous Canadians in this country. He was a calm, cool and collected voice for millions of people. He was widely respected, and rightfully so.

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I would echo what the member has said in offering my condolences to Murray Sinclair's family during this difficult time. May they take some comfort during in knowing that he was an exceptional Canadian, one who made us proud and made a difference in this country.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for getting my riding name right time after time. It is an impressive feat and I appreciate it.

There was a sort of drive-by smear comment from the member for Kingston and the Islands a bit earlier, in his questions and comments. He essentially asserted that the government is passing the legislation in order to protect people like my hon. colleague here. I just happen to note that in the last election in the riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, the Conservative candidate, our colleague, won with 54% of the vote and the Liberals were in second place with only 24%.

Therefore the obvious question is this: Does my colleague think there is any possibility under any circumstances that he would be facing a loss in the next election? As well, given that the bill is all about protecting the MPs who are in danger of losing their seat, in which caucuses do the MPs sit who are in danger of losing their seats and who have almost six years?

• (1210)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we learned last week at the House and procedural affairs committee that the NDP was given special secret briefings by the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office, which have said, in fact for months now, that Bill C-65 was an important part of the changes to the Election Act. The reason it was important was that, to the member's point, there are dozens of NDP and Liberal MPs who stand to lose the election next year, whenever it may be called, or if it is called right now, and they are refusing to do that.

Bill C-65 is a pension protection bill to secure the votes of the NDP for longer. I am very confident, as I was in 2019 and 2021, that I have the pulse of what the good people of Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry think. I am looking forward to being on the ballot and asking for their support again. I am ready to do so right now in a carbon tax election. What I am not looking for, and what Canadians are sick of, are the insider deals between Liberal and NDP MPs, protecting their pensions. It is exactly why after nine years they are not worth the cost or the corruption.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important we recognize that the Conservative Party of Canada is doing nothing more than playing a millions-of-dollars game at great expense. The leader of the Conservative Party is literally abusing power in a position in opposition. That should not surprise Canadians, because he was the parliamentary secretary to Stephen Harper when Stephen Harper was found in contempt of Parliament. Nothing has changed. The Conservative record still is there and it is going to haunt Canadians.

The question I have for the member opposite is related to something a bit different. The leader of the official opposition is the only leader of the House of Commons who says he does not want the security clearance. Canadians have a right to know why. What is the

leader of the Conservative Party of Canada hiding from Canadians? What in his past is not allowing him to get the security clearance? Can the member indicate why the leader of the Conservative Party is scared to get a security clearance?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, with bluster and confidence the member asks his ironic questions on this side of the House's abusing power. It is the government that is shuttering the RCMP from having full and unredacted access to documents on a \$400-million green slush fund corruption scandal, and the government has been stonewalling for over a month on being able just to produce the documents. If that is not abusing power, I do not know what is.

We have been very clear. The Leader of the Opposition, every member of the House and every Canadian deserves to know the information. Release the names publicly now; that is what Canadians want and deserve.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to take the member back to the intervention of the member for Saint John—Rothesay, who was frustrated that, roughly in his words, there is no business being done. However, if there is an impasse over the government's failure to table the documents, there is a clear constitutional remedy, and that is an election. Does the member believe that if the government is unprepared to comply with a motion of the House, a production order democratically given to the government, it will call an election?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, a great way to resolve the impasse would be for Canadians weigh in on an election right now, but that is why there is an absolute, steadfast, stubborn refusal of the Liberals and the NDP to do that.

There is an eerie resemblance to the last nine years in what we have seen right here: a lack of transparency, a lack of respect for Canadians and an unwillingness for the democratic process, both in the motion that has been debated here and in the contempt that the government has been found in on the Speaker's ruling. Parliament has the right to all the documents and to be able to give them to the RCMP.

To my colleague's great point, the Liberals should call an election. If the member for Saint John—Rothesay is so adamant that this place is not working, he should call an election for Canadians to decide. He will not do that, because he wants his own leader to resign first, and the Liberal caucus cannot even get itself organized. However, we are ready on this side, and no matter what, the runway is getting shorter and shorter for them. Canadians will have their say, and it will not be good for the Liberals nor the NDP.

• (1215)

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to bring to the House the voices of Chatham-Kent—Leamington, in particular those of of your sister-in-law and your brother, whom I thank for his service to our country and to our community.

Recently I spoke to the amended privilege motion regarding the SDTC scandal, or as it is better known as now, the green slush fund. Today we are speaking to the subamendment to the amendment, from the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, which was seconded by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I will read it into the record:

That the amendment be amended by adding, after subparagraph (a)(ii), the following:

“(iii) the Privacy Commissioner of Canada,…”

The name is being added to the list of witnesses to be called. The subamendment goes on to state, ““who respected the order of the House and deposited unredacted documents,””.

Then there is another new part: ““(iv) Paul MacKinnon, the former Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Governance),””.

We want to add the mentioned individuals to the list provided in the original amendment, and we want them called to testify before the PROC committee. First, however, we are here, and we need the government to respect the first ruling of the Speaker of the House to provide all of the documents unredacted, period. We will be here in the chamber until that is accomplished.

In my first intervention in speaking to the amendment, I described the government's plethora of scandals. It is a list, a plethora or an amount; pick any word to describe the scandals.

An hon. member: Cornucopia.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, “cornucopia” is another good one.

I asked where the accountability is. Indeed, the witnesses should be compelled to come before the committee to provide Canadians with the documents and the answers they seek. Since my first intervention, I have not gotten a satisfactory response to the question I asked: Where is the accountability? I will therefore continue along in the similar line of questioning.

In the case of the green slush fund, \$400 million was paid out to Liberal insiders. The bigger mind-boggling number to me is that it was through 186 cases of conflicts of interest, a number that came from a sampling by the Auditor General. I wonder how many Canadian families could be fed with \$400 million. It is hard to wrap one's head around a number so big, and around so much corruption.

According to another member's intervention in this place, \$400 million is equivalent to the annual tax filings of 22,000 Canadian families, all to go to fund Liberal insider corruption. According to a recent RBC study, the average Canadian family of four now spends \$1,227 a month on food, just under \$15,000 a year. The math would suggest that \$400 million would feed over 27,000 families per year, which is about 108,843 Canadians. Please do not misunderstand me. The role of government is to create the fiscal and societal climate where powerful paycheques allow Canadians to feed themselves; it should not have to be the role of government to directly feed Canadians.

Members get my point. I am trying to make the big numbers, which are so hard for many of us to wrap our heads around, relatable in order to indicate exactly the size of the issue we are dealing with and the amount of the gross misuse of taxpayer money. It is simply not acceptable. Where is the accountability?

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In speaking for 20 minutes two weeks ago, I did not have enough time to go through the full list of scandals, corruptions and conflicts of interest. I will continue in that vein today.

I did comment last time on the Prime Minister's removal of the only indigenous woman ever to serve as a justice minister and Attorney General for Canada, Jody Wilson-Raybould. She was removed because she would not be pressured by him to thwart the rule of law in Canada to help the PM's friends at SNC-Lavalin. The former minister lost her job because she stood up for what her oath of office required her to do. She was accountable, which is the principle that everyone is subject to the law, regardless of their relationship with the Prime Minister of Canada.

I also spoke about one of several Bill Morneau scandals, including Bill C-27. When the bill was tabled in the House of Commons, the value of Morneau Shepell shares increased dramatically. Coincidentally, Minister Morneau held 21 million dollars' worth of shares.

● (1220)

I also mentioned the David Lametti scandal, yet another case of Liberal disregard for the rule of law in Canada. The former attorney general cancelled the verdict of first-degree murder against Jacques Delisle, a former judge, even though all the legal experts were against this decision.

Who can forget the then minister of public works, whose husband sat on LifeLabs board as a director while the company was awarded COVID testing contracts totalling \$68.2 million? What is the value of that in today's groceries? It could feed 18,470 plus people. Again I ask, where is the accountability?

I mentioned Scott Brison's attempt to benefit from his and his husband's ties to Irving Shipbuilding by trying to block a shipyard contract in favour of Irving away from Davie. In the process, the Liberals and Mr. Brison tried to frame multi-decorated Vice-Admiral Mark Norman and charge him with breach of trust. He was exonerated of all those charges, but not before his military career was destroyed. The whole sordid affair was unconscionable. Where is the accountability?

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Former minister Navdeep Bains was also mentioned in my previous speech with his telecom windfall. As the former minister of innovation, science and industry, he pledged to deliver government support and that they would demand the big three telecoms, which are Bell, Rogers and Telus, to lower their prices by 25%. Now, Mr. Bains sits as the chief corporate affairs officer at Rogers and is receiving a six-figure salary. Again, there is no accountability, and for Canadians, there are higher cell phone bills. In many cases, Canadians' mobile data plans cost 200 times more than the cheapest ones in other countries, according to a recent Toronto Star report. I do not know about other members' cell phone bills, but mine has not gone down.

Of course, no scandal chronicle would be complete without mention of the WE Charity scandal and the Trudeau family bonanza paydays totalling \$482,000. Doing the math, that amount would buy 128 Canadians groceries for a year. I guess that is okay because I am sure Margaret, Sacha and Sophie needed the money for groceries.

I would have been negligent in my previous intervention if I had not touched upon the notorious arrive scam and GC Strategies incident. That was the Liberal-friendly company that charged \$60 million for an app that could have cost \$80,000. Again, there is not much accountability. If my calculator is correct, that would be the equivalent of groceries for 16,300 Canadians for an entire year.

What about the Prime Minister's Christmas vacation on the Aga Khan's island and the subsequent \$50 million of federal funding that flowed to that foundation, which is what it has received since 2016?

The Prime Minister also invited a convicted terrorist, Jaspal Atwal to dinner when he was in India with his family, and he ensured the feast was prepared by his own celebrity chef, who was flown in from Vancouver. He embarrassingly played Mr. Dressup with an insensitive overuse of Indian clothing. That scandal cost Canadians another \$1.66 million, or the equivalent of the annual food bill for 451 Canadians. There was no accountability for that fiasco. Once again, Canadians were left embarrassed and angry, or perhaps hangry.

The Ethics Commissioner found that the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development also broke ethics rules when she doled out just under \$17,000 in a contract to a friend. That is about one family's worth of annual groceries. I am sure we all know of families that could use that money.

Now on to the scandals that I did not get to last time. I did not have time to describe the Julie Payette fiasco. The Prime Minister ignored the independent process put in place by the previous government to vet potential Governors General, as he thought he was smarter and could do it better himself. He picked his own. We know how that turned out, which was a disgrace to both the Governor General's staff and to the institution.

What about the Minister of National Defence's interference in the Nova Scotia shooting tragedy? He pressured RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki to publicly release information about the specific firearms used in the shooting in order to advance the federal government's misguided gun control legislation.

• (1225)

These are ones I did not get to last time. I am just getting to them now. That is not to mention, following the resignation of the then ethics commissioner Mario Dion, due to overwork, I believe, the Liberal government decided to appoint Martine Richard, the sister-in-law of the current public safety minister, to replace him. Does this sound like nepotism to anyone? Again, where is the accountability?

Under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the sponsorship scandal may have been the spark that ignited the grand-scale Liberal penchant for lining their own pockets and those of their friends. Unfortunately, it was not the last. The Liberals and their buddies have discovered that their corruption is inflation-proof when it comes to padding their own personal fortunes. Therefore, here we are today.

After the documents for the SDTC scandal, the green slush fund, are finally handed over, Conservatives will raise concerns over the member from Edmonton Centre's company receiving over \$120 million in government grants and contracts, including when he was minister. Although the minister has denied any wrongdoing, he went so far as to say text messages referring to a "Randy" uncovered during the committee hearing last summer, was not him, but, indeed, "another Randy". The evidence tells a different story.

New text messages indicate that the member in question was in cabinet at the time and, at one point, the texts between the business partner and his client referred to a "Randy" being in Vancouver on September 6, 2022. We know that the member for Edmonton Centre was attending the Liberal government's cabinet retreat in the same city. Furthermore, Global News reported that the minister's former business partner was texting a "Randy" about deals involving a half-million dollar payment. Subsequently, that same business partner admitted that he had lied to Global News about the identity of the "other Randy", confirming that it was, indeed, the member for Edmonton Centre who he was referring to in those now infamous text messages. However, the minister had the audacity to testify that the "Randy" referenced in those texts is not him, but another Randy, who just happened to work at the company he had a 50% ownership stake in.

At the committee hearing, his business partner did come clean and testified that, indeed, there is only one Randy who ever worked at the company, and it was the minister himself. I guess he thought better than to stand by his original statement when he learned that section 132 of the Criminal Code of Canada states, “Every one who commits perjury is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.” Where is the accountability for the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages? Where is the ministerial accountability? Where is ministerial integrity?

Who can forget the Frank Baylis scandal? Frank Baylis left politics after only one term as an MP and was part of a consortium of companies that received \$237 million to provide 10,000 ventilators in the spring of 2020. It sounds eerily similar to the situation of Navdeep Bains. When will Canadians find accountability restored again in their government? I can tell members: It will be when they elect a common-sense Conservative government. That is when.

Now questions are arising about whether taxpayers are going to be funding one of the companies that Mark Carney works for days after he was announced as an adviser to the Prime Minister. As a former governor of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, on paper, he seems to be the perfect fit as a financial adviser to the PM. Unfortunately, it appears that he is cut from the same cloth when it comes to financial ethics, or lack thereof. What should come as no surprise, a potential conflict of interest has come in for Mr. Carney and his company, Brookfield, which could involve billions of taxpayer dollars.

• (1230)

I am moving on from millions of dollars now to talk about billions of taxpayer dollars. The Globe and Mail reported that the proposal floating around Bay Street and the halls of Parliament would see Brookfield Asset Management create a \$50-billion investment vehicle, with \$10 billion of that to be paid for by Canadian taxpayers, and members guessed it, Mark Carney is the chair of the board for Brookfield. He holds the title head of transition investing at Brookfield.

How much is \$10 billion? How do we wrap our heads around understanding how much \$10 billion is? It is the equivalent of 689,163 Canadian families' groceries for a year. Even that is a number too big, and I cannot fully fathom how it would impact Canadians if this were to come about. It is simply unacceptable that carbon tax Carney has been given the power by the Prime Minister to offer him advice on a company in which he holds \$1 million in stock options. Why is there no conflict of interest screen being applied?

If the Prime Minister were to grant Brookfield's request, does that not beg the question of how much money Mark Carney would stand to personally profit. The Financial Post reported that Brookfield immediately began lobbying the government for this money after the Deputy Prime Minister created a task force in last spring's budget to redirect Canadian pension fund investments. This was of course led by the former governor of the Bank of Canada, Stephen Poloz.

What we do not know is if Mark Carney personally put efforts into pushing this through, as he refused to register as a lobbyist. The Prime Minister protected carbon tax Carney by appointing him

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to a position in which he does not have to declare his conflicts of interest. Every day, more and new questions emerge.

As mentioned last September, Carney's close friend, who serves as the CEO of Telesat, Daniel Goldberg, received \$2.1 billion in taxpayer loans to build a broadband network that other firms could have delivered at a fraction of the cost to taxpayers. Despite Carney's glaring conflict of interest, both the NDP and the Liberals decided to protect him from answering questions at the House of Commons committee.

I ask my colleagues down the way why it is that NDP members have sold their souls to their Liberal partners and then ripped up the deal, and now they are saying they will sell them on a case-by-case basis. Have they been caught protecting their own again? I do not know. Why can we not have transparency? The injustice never ends. The only way it would end would be after the next election, when Canadians would be able to take back their paycheques from the corrupt government.

To summarize, I have spoken to about 17 scandals that show the Prime Minister of Canada views the government and the government's treasury as his own personal slush fund, and that of his cabinet and their close friends, all to be used to improve their personal fortunes.

The lack of accountability starts with the Prime Minister, and this disease and corruption seems to pervade this cabinet. The member for Edmonton Centre followed the lead of the Prime Minister and his colleagues by stepping up to gorge himself at the illicit Liberal banquet table. Will the real Randy please step up and take responsibility?

We need change and accountability, and we need the kind of leadership that shows Canadian people that the government serves them and not the other way around. We need the kind of leadership offered by the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition and a country where its citizens can both heat and eat. That government will only be found in one place, and that is with common-sense Conservatives, who presently sit on this side of the House. We will turn the Liberal hurt into the hope that Canadians need by bringing home a country where hard work pays off members's homes, my home and our homes. Let us bring it home.

• (1235)

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am wondering if you could check to see if we have quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us start counting.

And the count having been taken:

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, to accommodate a quorum, do we have to have more than one Conservative member in the chamber?

The Deputy Speaker: That was not a point of order.

We are good.

Privilege

On a point of order, we have the hon. House leader for the NDP.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, why are the Conservatives hanging out and hiding behind the curtains?

The Deputy Speaker: We will go to the hon. member for Saint John—Rothesay for his question to the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, honestly, I think I am watching *Groundhog Day* or *Inception*. This goes round and round again.

My question straight up to the member opposite is this: Will you have the courage to encourage your leader to do the right thing and get his clearance? I know the leader has painted himself into a corner and has to get his feet wet getting out, but he needs to listen to Canadians. He needs to put Canadians' interests ahead of his own.

Will the member opposite encourage his leader, the leader of the Conservative Party, to do the right thing, get his clearance and put this issue to bed once and for all?

The Deputy Speaker: I will just remind my friend from Saint John—Rothesay, which is right next door to West Nova, to run questions through the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, I just checked through my notes and do not recall speaking about foreign interference. I thought I was talking about generalized corruption. However, I do not mind addressing the question.

Will I take on some responsibility here? Absolutely. I am going to work very hard so the Leader of Opposition becomes the Prime Minister of Canada. Then he will receive these briefings without any clearance at all.

Anyone who thinks the Leader of Opposition has anything to hide should listen to his words: Release the names. That is what we are asking for. There is nothing to hide here.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have a proud record of hiding facts. The NDP, of course, supports the motion. We wanted to get to the bottom of the SNC-Lavalin scandal and the WE Charity scandal, just as we want to get to the bottom of this scandal, but the Conservatives did not share that. In fact, during the Harper regime, the Harper government and Harper Conservatives systematically blocked every single parliamentary inquiry into misspending. There were massive amounts, with \$400 million in the ETS scandal and over \$1 billion for the G8 scandal. My colleague from Courtenay—Alberni mentioned the \$2.2 billion in the Phoenix pay scandal. There was also the anti-terrorism funding, which had no paper trail, at over \$3 billion. The Conservatives succeeded, with a majority government, in shutting down any parliamentary inquiry into any of these massive misspending and corruption scandals.

Will the Conservatives now admit that they were wrong to do that? Will they apologize to Canadians for their massive misspending under the Harper regime?

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, I was not here then. I am part of the proud 2019 cohort.

I will head off a question from across the way. I do not need any help in the other legislation being debated that has come up in earlier interventions. I look forward to having an election now.

To the question that was asked, let us put accountability back to the Canadian people. Anyone who has breached ethics, shown corruption or had a conflict of interest should be held accountable, period, end of story. I do not care where they come from in the House.

• (1240)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated what my colleague had to say today. He expressed concerns about a number of different scenarios where the government has behaved as it is now with the green slush fund. I wonder if he has anything to say to young Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet while going to school or trying to buy a home. With all of the challenges they are facing, they are very concerned about our environment. The Minister of Environment is implicated in all of this, the king of the whole environmental scenario, yet he has seen Canadian tax dollars, which could be used to help young Canadians, being abused when they should have gone to the green opportunities that young people want to see them spent on.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, that is why I tried to relate some of the terms in my intervention to what so many Canadians are struggling with, be they young or otherwise. What is the equivalent value in the form of groceries of the money being corrupted away? Absolutely, responsibility, especially responsibility to fiscal management of taxpayer resources, needs to come back to the House.

Often in round tables at home, I say to folks I meet with who tell me of their struggles and ask for government help, governments of any stripe, be they municipal, provincial or federal, that no government has money. Governments only have the power to get money, municipally or provincially, by taxation or borrowing. The federal government can also do so by printing, which the government did, and now we are living with the consequences of that.

What young Canadians and what my own children and their families are looking for is responsibility in stewarding their tax resources. I believe it was the member for Kelowna—Lake Country who said the \$400 million from this corruption, to take it back to the subject before us, is equivalent to 22,000 Canadian families' tax filings. Canadians, young ones especially, are looking for accountability, responsibility and proper stewardship regarding those funds.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the NDP brought up Stephen Harper corruption. I have a booklet called “Stephen Harper, Serial Abuser of Power” on scandals and corruption. The current Conservative leader is actually mentioned in it and was, in fact, a point man on many of those issues.

Let us get back to today. What we are witnessing today is a multi-million dollar game being played by the leader of the Conservative Party. Much like when his prime minister was held in contempt of court, the leader of the official opposition is on a power trip, abusing legislative and common powers, even when he is in the opposition benches. All one needs to do is understand the game the Conservatives are playing, at great expense. Nothing has changed with the leader.

A question has been posed to the Conservatives that they do not answer directly. The Conservative leader is playing a game by putting the Conservative Party and his personal interests ahead of Canadians and not getting a security clearance. What is he hiding? What in his background is preventing him from doing the honourable thing, putting Canadians ahead of the Conservatives and getting a security clearance? Why not?

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, the member referenced that a game is being played. Let us end the game. There are two ways to do so. Power resides on that side of the House. If the Liberals hand over the documents, the game will be ended. If they do not want to do that and are afraid of foreign interference, let us go back to Canadians. Let us have an election.

We are prepared to end the game and continue the work of Canadians in this place. We are prepared to go to the people and ask for their confidence to run the affairs of this country, spend money responsibly and protect our country from foreign interference.

Let us end the game. I am all for it.

• (1245)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, I talked to an individual who told me that all his life he has voted for the NDP but that has changed. He is so frustrated with the NDP's support of the Liberals in government, all the scandals and mismanagement, and the impact that is having on his life.

I am wondering if the member could address the NDP supporting the Liberals, even with the green slush fund, and not bringing down the government.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the party in fourth place in this Parliament. It wants to represent Canadians and says it is working for Canadians, yet it has missed so much time in this chamber. It has missed 24 shifts while we are doing this.

I cannot understand why the New Democrats are propping up the government. They say they are not going to prop it up, but they prop it up and do not come to this chamber to bring the government down. I do not have an answer. I really do not.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this debate has been going on for some time. We have gone through the original motion and an amendment and now we are dealing with a subamendment to the motion. It all refers back to a previous motion, which was adopted on June 10 in the House of Commons, so I thought it might be helpful to go back and review the wording of those motions to make sure that we all know what is being discussed.

Back in June, here was the question before the House:

Privilege

That the House order the government, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) and the Auditor General of Canada each to deposit with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, within 14 days of the adoption of this order, the following documents, created or dated since January 1, 2017, which are in its or her possession, custody or control:

- (a) all files, documents, briefing notes, memoranda, e-mails or any other correspondence exchanged among government officials regarding SDTC;
- (b) contribution and funding agreements to which SDTC is a party;
- (c) records detailing financial information of companies in which past or present directors or officers of SDTC had ownership, management or other financial interests;
- (d) SDTC conflict of interest declarations;
- (e) minutes of SDTC's Board of Directors and Project Review Committee; and
- (f) all briefing notes, memoranda, e-mails or any other correspondence exchanged between SDTC directors and SDTC management;

provided that,

(g) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly thereafter notify the Speaker whether each entity produced documents as ordered, and the Speaker, in turn, shall forthwith inform the House of the notice of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel but, if the House stands adjourned, the Speaker shall lay the notice upon the table pursuant to Standing Order 32(1); and

(h) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall provide forthwith any documents received by him, pursuant to this order, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for its independent determination of whether to investigate potential offences under the Criminal Code or any other act of Parliament.

This was voted on in a somewhat amended format. I will read the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. The motion was amended slightly by changing “14 days” to “30 days”, to give the government more time to comply, and through the following:

(b) by adding the word “and” at the end of paragraph (f), and by adding, after paragraph (f), the following new paragraph: “(g) in the case of the Auditor General of Canada, any other document, not described in paragraphs (a) to (f), upon which she relied in preparing her Report 6—Sustainable Development Technology Canada, which was laid upon the table on Tuesday, June 4, 2024;”....

Then there was a further adjustment to paragraph (h), which was to delete all the words after the word “Police”.

That was voted on, and in the division on June 10, 171 of us voted yea and 150 voted nay. All of the nays, of course, were from members of the Liberal caucus. The other parties supported it.

This produced a series of reports from various government departments and agencies, which were tabled in the House of Commons as required. The Clerk then submitted the material to the Speaker, who reported back to the House, and it was at that point, over the course of the summer, that we learned numerous departments either had completely failed to comply by submitting literally nothing or, in other cases, had submitted heavily redacted documents.

Privilege

● (1250)

That failure of compliance was the basis for another motion, which was introduced in the House upon our return. This was in the name of the opposition House leader. The motion is, “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”.

Initially, there was a question of privilege about this. That led to the Speaker’s ruling that this was a prima facie case of privilege and also an injunction to us to refer it to the procedure and House affairs committee.

Based on that, this motion was put forward. It was subsequently amended to read as follows:

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.

I made remarks addressing this amendment about two weeks ago.

Subsequent to that time, a subamendment was moved in the name of the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook to change one of the subparagraphs regarding the list of witnesses who are to appear before the committee for two hours each. The amendment would add “the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who respected the order of the House and deposited unredacted documents,” and “Paul MacKinnon, former Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, [responsible for] (Governance),”.

What we are debating now is the subamendment dealing with these two gentlemen. The thing that is striking about this is that the Privacy Commissioner, unlike so many other individuals who were expected to produce these documents, respected the order of the House and deposited unredacted documents.

When I listen to what is being said on the far side of the House by the government members, they act as if it is a horrendous breach of privacy, of civil rights, of civil liberties, of charter rights, of the ways in which we conduct business respectfully and of individual rights here in Canada, to ask for such documents. They say darkly that we will be possibly damaging the ability to engage in criminal prosecution in the future, if these documents are presented in this manner, but the Privacy Commissioner did not think so.

I am going to guess that the Privacy Commissioner did not think so, in part because of the other individuals whose names are on that list. More to the point, the Privacy Commissioner probably antici-

pated that we would be hearing back from some of these other people. The Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel for the House of Commons is on that list of individuals who would testify before the procedure and House affairs committee. That individual would be able to shed light on the kinds of documents, without getting into the specifics, that have been presented and the kind of information that they reveal and could point out where it looks like the redactions have had the effect of removing evidence that really could not be characterized in any conceivable way as triggering the rights of which the Liberals have such a punctilious concern.

● (1255)

The commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police would, likewise, be able to shed some light on that. Both the testimony of the individual in receipt of the documents, who is not going to be called forward as a prosecution witness and therefore can look at them objectively, without any danger with regard to future court proceedings, and the testimony of the commissioner of the RCMP, who can indicate exactly what kinds of concerns they need to have, are very significant safeguards. In all fairness, their names were not added to the list back when the Privacy Commissioner submitted full, unredacted documents, but presumably the Privacy Commissioner was able to anticipate, as an intelligent individual in his position would do, that this would be the case. That should be no surprise. This comes from the biography of the Privacy Commissioner, Philippe Dufresne, on the Privacy Commissioner’s website:

He previously served as the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons. In this capacity, he was the chief legal officer of the House of Commons and led the office responsible for the provision of legal and legislative drafting services to the House of Commons, its Speaker, Members and committees, the Board of Internal Economy and the House Administration.

Additionally, before that, “he was the Canadian Human Rights Commission’s Senior General Counsel”. If there are concerns about abstract human rights or procedural rights, which are some of the most important human rights, here is a guy who knows this stuff cold.

He successfully represented the Commission before all levels of Canadian Courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada, in a number of key human rights and constitutional cases over the last two decades. He has appeared before the Supreme Court on 15 occasions, on issues ranging from accessibility and equal pay for work of equal value, to the balancing of human rights and national security.

The Privacy Commissioner has far more expertise in this subject than any of the Liberal MPs I have seen addressing this question, and he felt safe releasing unredacted documents, understanding that these safeguards would be in place. That is quite striking; it is quite different from most of the other government agents who responded.

In all fairness, he is independent of government, unlike those departments that failed to submit, all of which report to ministers from the same government whose MPs now say that we ought to accept that these redactions are in the public interest; although, it seems more likely that they are in the interests of those individuals who have something to hide in this matter, and who may well have broken the law.

I assume the Privacy Commissioner understands his mandate. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner has a mandate to provide “legal and policy analyses and expertise to help guide Parliament’s review of evolving legislation to ensure respect for individuals’ right to privacy”. Someone whose job is to do that said it is okay to release unredacted documents and demonstrated that through his own provision of such documents. Also, his mandate is “providing legal opinions and litigating court cases to advance the interpretation and application of federal privacy laws”.

I think these are pretty strong pieces of evidence. The evidence we have from the initial report back on June 4 from the Auditor General indicates very strongly that there is something profoundly wrong with this fund that dwarfs any previous scandal of a similar sort because the numbers involved are so enormous. The sponsorship scandal that took place when a similar kind of fund was set up to be disbursed with very little oversight involved conflicts of interest and misallocated funds on a scale that is perhaps, I think I may be overstating things, 10% of the amount involved here. It might have been less than 10%. Here, an extraordinary proportion of funds seem to have been misallocated. The Auditor General selected, randomly, a subset of all the contracts and found that there were problems in a majority of those contracts, suggesting that the majority of the funds allocated may simply have gone to the wrong purposes entirely. Does this qualify as illegal use or merely as grotesquely inappropriate use, which is not illegal, thanks to rules that are so slipshod and so loosely written that it is almost impossible to fall afoul of them? That is a good question. I do not know. It is probably a little of each.

● (1300)

There is clearly a very profound problem here. We have some guidance that it is reasonable to seek full disclosure of all documentation. I simply am unable to determine what, other than a deliberate attempt at misdirection, lies behind all of the high-sounding assertions regarding procedural justice that keep on being mentioned by Liberal members when they urge us to be afraid of the implications of this very reasonable set of motions, amendments and sub-amendments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an incredibly expensive, multi-million dollar game that the leader of the Conservative Party is playing. As of now, when the member sat down, 93 Conservatives have stood up to participate in this game and an additional 42 at the first amendment. They applaud the waste and the abuse that the leader of the Conservative Party is putting on Canadians, by putting the interests of his party and his leadership ahead of the interests of Canadians.

Let me quote Steven Chaplin, from a wonderful story in the Hill Times, and I encourage members opposite to read it: “It is time for the House of Commons to admit it was wrong, and to move on.” Further down, it says, “It is time for the House to admit its overreach before the matter inevitably finds its way to the courts which do have the ability to determine and limit the House’s powers, often beyond what the House may like.”

It is time that the Conservatives stop this multi-million dollar abuse of power, and let us start moving on so we can start dealing with the issues of Canadians.

Privilege

When will this member advise his leader to do the right thing, stop the abuse, and, while he is doing that, get the security clearance?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I think I have the numbers right, 93 Conservative members of Parliament. I am not sure how this is costing money. We are not paid by the word here. We are not the authors of potboilers. I can only observe that if this is how things work, if it is the case that time that is wasted in the House of Commons is the public’s money being squandered, then surely the member opposite, who has taken up more time and used up more of the House’s word count than anybody else in the Parliament, owes us all an apology and should let someone else speak for a change. He is up there talking all the time while that entire caucus is gagged. It is him and the member for Kingston and the Islands. Everybody else is told to shut up and sit down. It is no wonder their caucus is so upset with their leader. What abuse, what abuse of a caucus and what abuse of people who have the right under our parliamentary traditions to speak out freely this is. They cannot even open their mouths. I am told that they cannot even get up in their caucus to ask a question without submitting a request first. I can say that in our caucus, which I chair, that does not happen.

● (1305)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member. I have served with him for a number of years and always appreciate his speeches. Of course, as we know, the NDP supports the motion, and it was NDP MPs that got to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal and also got to the bottom of the SNC-Lavalin scandal. That is where New Democrats shine. We tried to do the same thing under the Harper regime and the member will remember how Conservatives shut down any parliamentary inquiry into the myriad scandals of the Harper years. The ETS scandal was \$400 million. The G8 scandal was a billion dollars and that included gazeboes, as we will remember. The Phoenix pay scandal was \$2.2 billion. The anti-terrorism funding, where they simply lost the paper trail, was \$3.1 billion. The member was here. He remembers how the Harper regime shut everything down.

Does he now appreciate that this was wrong, and does he apologize on behalf of Conservatives for their years of scandals and corruption?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I likewise very much enjoy my colleague’s interventions. I enjoy them much more than the ones from the member for Winnipeg North, if we are being honest about things, although I do not get to enjoy them as frequently.

Privilege

I want to say with regard to this that I was intimately involved in the procedure and House affairs hearings in 2011 into the purported contempt of Parliament of the then minority government headed by Stephen Harper. A series of charges were made against the government. One charge had to do with the procurement of jets. Another one had to do with an imaginary plan to set up for-profit prisons. This was the issue on which a vote of non-confidence was held. It endorsed the report of a committee that never actually finished reporting. I know this because I was sitting in that committee debating the content of an eventual report when the bells rang, ending our debate, so the vote could be held on concurrence in the report we had not actually finished writing. I think that is what the member is referring to. Ultimately, as the member for Winnipeg North likes to point out, the government was found in contempt. What he does not mention is that in the subsequent election, the Conservatives were elected with a majority and the member's party was reduced to its lowest numbers since Confederation.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend for Winnipeg North, even though he does not have the floor, finds the need to continue to speak, but I will get on to it.

One of the issues with the green slush fund, the SDTC, is that the government will not turn over the documents Parliament has demanded. In the contribution agreement between the current government and Industry Canada, with respect to funding SDTC, it states that any conflicts of interest, real or perceived, over the funding have to be reported to the minister.

There are well over 150 conflicts that we know of, as pointed out by the Auditor General. We have asked repeatedly, even of the head of SDTC, "Were any of these conflicts reported to the minister?" All we have received back have been shrugs. We actually brought the old minister, Navdeep Bains, to committee and we are looking at a privilege issue because he is refusing to answer the questions. If these documents that Parliament has demanded are turned over, will we actually get the answer as to whether Liberal ministers were informed of these conflicts of interest as they were required to be under the agreement?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, there are really two ways of slicing this. The implication is that these conflicts were reported to the ministers, and the ministers saw them and decided not to act, which is itself obviously outrageous. The other possibility, which is entirely possible, remembering always the dictum that one ought never to ascribe to malice that which can be explained by incompetence, and looking at the record of the current government, is that it may very well be that, like the Prime Minister, the relevant minister simply never looked at his briefing book.

● (1310)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member might spend a moment on talking about remedies, for those who think the House should merely move on to other business. I do not care for the government bills that are potentially going to be debated, but some would say we must get on to other business. However, the remedy for what one might think of as paralysis in the House would be to dissolve the House and go straight to an election and let Canadians pronounce on what agenda should be pursued in the House of Commons.

Does the member have any comments on that as a specific remedy to the impasse, if the government is unwilling to fulfill its obligation and table the documents?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is quite right. We could, and probably should, go to an election. The House of Commons has a kind of tenuous confidence in the government right now, so it would seem. It should be understood that "confidence", used in the parliamentary sense, does not mean robust confidence; it means unwillingness to trigger an election. Certainly, in this party, we are willing to go to an election and we would very much like to do so. My sense is that there is a willingness in the Bloc. The NDP is wavering, in the hopes the government will see the light.

However, in terms of where Canadians are, it is abundantly clear. There has never been a prime minister, since polling started, who has been as unpopular as the current Prime Minister, who has been opposed by more people. The people of Canada deserve to have a say, regardless of what our rules are here. We can all agree that, morally, that ought to happen. I am not suggesting that somehow we should override the rules with respect to the confidence convention, but clearly it is well past the time for the Prime Minister and his tired party of incompetent ministers to move aside.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you here today. I am happy to have a chance to contribute to this discussion. It is always an honour for me to stand and speak on behalf of the great people of Souris—Moose Mountain.

If I may, I would like to take a moment to give a shout-out to my five-year-old granddaughter Zella, who is beautiful and brilliant just like her mother Kathryn, my daughter, and her grandmother Donna, my wife. I would also like to shout out my two-year-old grandson Porter and my 16-month-old twin grandsons Kaysen and Atlas.

The reason I bring them up is that not only are these people very important to me, but these particular children, like all children in Canada, are the main reason I do what I do. I love them with all my heart. However, I worry about their financial futures after nine years of the government's reckless spending. The Liberal green slush fund we are talking about today is a prime example of just that. As I stated, I appreciate this opportunity to add my voice to the debate we are having here in the House, which we have been having for a number of weeks.

I have listened to many speeches delivered by my colleagues on this issue, and I admire the perseverance they have shown in making sure the government is held accountable for its failure to produce the documents that were ordered by the House. It is shameful we are not able to move on to other business simply because the Liberals refuse to follow the rules. This is also something we have, sadly, come to expect after the last nine years of the Prime Minister.

Privilege

One of my colleagues tallied up the number of scandals that have occurred under the Liberal government, and he came up with approximately 68 scandals, an alarming number to say the least. If we look at it another way, that means the Liberals are dealing with a new scandal about every two months. Some people, like myself, might wonder how this is even possible, especially since the Liberals got into power by claiming to be the most transparent and accountable party out there.

Spanish philosopher George Santayana is credited with saying, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” I find that very ironic given today’s discussion. In fact, in October 2013, six months after becoming the leader of the Liberals, the Prime Minister tweeted, “It’s hard not to feel disappointed in your government when every day there is a new scandal.” What does that say about the Prime Minister? There has been scandal after scandal.

We on this side of the House have been dealing with this exact problem for nearly a decade now. In this particular instance, it is costing the taxpayer an eye-watering \$400 million. This is not the kind of governance I wanted for my country. I know the majority of Canadians are also sick and tired of the Liberals’ repeated failures and complete inability to manage public funds.

I would like to remind all members that the seats we are sitting in do not belong to us. They belong to the people, the taxpayers, who put their faith in us to represent their best interests and to make their lives better in whatever way we can. The people voted for us because they trusted our ability to govern honestly and openly, and that is something I personally hold very sacred. Watching the Liberals flout the rules of this institution by refusing to comply with the House order to produce documents is offensive, not just to me but to all Canadians. It is a slap in the face of democracy and it insults the very people who put MPs in this position of privilege, here in the House of Commons chamber, in the first place.

The overarching theme that appears to encompass the Prime Minister’s time in office over the last nine years is “rules for thee, but not for me”. What the public sees with the current government is hypocrisy at every turn. How are Canadians meant to trust a government when its leader continually says one thing but does another? The Prime Minister tells Canadians they need to cut down their emissions, and what does he do? He flies in a private jet, taking dozens of trips a month, and likely has one of the largest carbon footprints of anyone in this country.

The Prime Minister said “the budget will balance itself”, yet he has now spent more in the past nine years than all other previous prime ministers combined. The Prime Minister said he would maintain an open and transparent government when he got elected, yet the second the WE Charity scandal hit the headlines, he prorogued Parliament to avoid accountability. Time and time again, the Liberals fail to practise what they have preached, and they refuse to be held accountable for their failings.

• (1315)

The fact of the matter is that the rules of this place and how it functions are written out in black and white. I believe all MPs have a copy of Bosc and Gagnon’s *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* in their office, and this information is also available on the

Internet. We can all access it on our computers or on our phones, so there is really no reason these procedures would not or could not be followed when they are so clear and readily available.

When it comes to the right to order the production of documents, Bosc and Gagnon’s *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017, states the following on 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 on to say:

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.

This is not the first time this section of the procedure and practice manual has been quoted during this particular debate. That is because it is so essential to how our country’s government functions, or does not function, in this case.

The House of Commons has, without question, the right to order papers to be produced by the government, and it has done so in the appropriate way, by following the appropriate rules. The Liberals have failed to do their jobs and have broken those rules, yet again showcasing their disregard for the institution of Parliament and eroding public trust at the same time.

One of the roles I am very fortunate to have had during my time as a member of Parliament was chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, otherwise known as OG-GO. I took that job very seriously, because I knew there was great trust being put in me to uphold the rules and follow the procedures that had been set out and established by my predecessors.

This was the job I was given, and I like to think I did it well and to the best of my ability. It was not difficult for me to follow the rules. I had some incredible support from the House of Commons committee staff, including the clerk and the analysts, so there was no reason I was unable to follow the letter of the law with their help and guidance. We have the same support here in the House of Commons, and I thank all the clerks and all the experts in this place who work so hard to make sure we can do our jobs properly for Canadians.

With all of these great minds coming together, as well as the ease of access we now have with technology, one would think it would be easy to know and comply with the rules of Parliament. However, the Liberals still cannot seem to figure it out. Canadians expect that at the very least, their elected officials are the type of people who follow the rules and respect the institution of Parliament. This is why they elected us, and upholding these rules and institutions is one of the most basic functions of this role.

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What Canadians do not want to see are members of Parliament who are stalling the business of this country because they are desperately trying to cover up their \$400-million scandal. That is exactly what is happening when they tune into CPAC these days. It is disappointing, yet not surprising, that the Liberals are doing anything they can to dodge accountability for their mistakes. What must be in these documents that the Liberals do not want Canadians to see? It makes us wonder.

As we know, Sustainable Development Technology Canada, also known as SDTC, is the organization that has been at the centre of our debate since September. The initial purpose of SDTC, as outlined on its website, was as follows:

SDTC finances and supports the development and demonstration of clean technologies which provide solutions to issues of climate change, clean air, water quality and soil, and which deliver economic, environmental and health benefits to Canadians.

● (1320)

As someone who represents a riding that has been a world leader in developing the utilization of carbon capture and sequestration technology, otherwise known as CCUS, I know first-hand how important it is to ensure that the funding meant for this purpose goes to the right people and places. Thanks to investments made by the previous Conservative government, the CCUS facility at Boundary Dam power plant in my hometown of Estevan, Saskatchewan, has now been in operation for 10 years. As of the end of 2023, this facility had captured a total of over 5.8 million tonnes of CO₂ since 2014, prevented it from entering our atmosphere and sequestered it two kilometres underground. This is exactly the kind of project that SDTC was meant to facilitate.

It is clear that, when taxpayers' funds are handled by a competent government, it creates an environment where innovation and development can flourish. We have seen it before, and, under the next Conservative government, I know we will see it again. Sadly, the reason we are having this debate today is that taxpayer funds at SDTC were abused to the tune of a whopping \$400 million, not a penny of which has been paid back. Money was given by directors to companies that they had huge conflicts of interest with, companies that they were affiliated with and stood to gain from.

I come from a rural riding that has historically relied on the development of this country's abundant natural resources. The biggest industries in my constituency are agriculture and energy, and I can say right now that farmers are some of the best, most-educated environmentalists and stewards of the land that we will ever encounter. The innovation and ideas that our agriculture producers have had, and continue to have, to reduce emissions, improve our agriculture and so much more are astounding. They have done this all while producing some of the best crops in the world. I can only imagine what these producers could have done with the \$400 million that the government misappropriated through SDTC. Liberals should be ashamed of themselves for trying to cover up such a gross and egregious misuse of taxpayers' dollars. One might ask this: Where did that money go and into whose pockets?

I would like to focus on that figure for a moment because the amount of \$400 million is difficult for the average person to really visualize. In times past, families and governments would count their nickels and dimes; over time, that was turned into dollars and

cents, then into hundreds and thousands and then into millions and billions. If we look at the national debt, with the current government, we are counting trillions, with families still trying to keep up with the nickels and dimes.

The Liberals have upped the ante in all the worst ways. Too much scandal has been coupled with too much spending, and Canadians have had enough. When the Liberal leader became Prime Minister, the national debt was just over \$612 billion. Today, nine years later, it has doubled to over \$1.2 trillion. As mentioned, he has spent more in this time frame than all other previous prime ministers combined. As I stated before, I can only imagine the difference that \$400 million would have made to the people in my riding if that money had been spent responsibly and constructively instead of being used for the Liberal green slush fund.

I know the town of Coronach, which has been absolutely devastated by the government's so-called just transition, would have benefited massively from just a small chunk of that money. It stands to lose up to 67% of the town's population by 2030 because of the government's policies and lack of support over the last nine years. Its local representatives have pleaded with the Liberals for more funding and more boots on the ground assistance, but they have been getting virtually nothing. They have even come all the way to Ottawa on multiple occasions to state their case before the government and the other House about the need for greater government support.

Instead of getting funding that might save their country, what do the people of Coronach see? They see rich Liberals getting even richer through corrupt and illegal means. They see a government that refuses to be accountable to the people who elected it. They see \$400 million going to people who did nothing to earn it but rub shoulders with the right people in the right places. The system was blatantly abused, and the attempt to cover up this abuse by refusing to produce the ordered documents is almost as bad.

● (1325)

According to the Auditor General's report, there were 186 conflicts of interest in the grants that were delivered by SDTC. The amount given to projects in which board members of SDTC had a conflict of interest was roughly \$334 million. For those following at home, such that the numbers add up, there was \$58 million given to projects where the terms were not even ensured.

These board members, I will remind the House, were appointed by the Prime Minister and by Mr. Bains, the then minister of innovation, science and industry. They hand-picked these individuals and approved them for this job. The board members then felt it was appropriate to make funding decisions that benefited themselves. This is extremely concerning, and I will expand a little on why that is.

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Since I became an MP in 2015, one of my biggest gripes with the government has been its unwavering devotion to creating unnecessary bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister seems to love nothing more than hiring a board of people to consult on every issue under the sun, and he has no problem whatsoever with billing the taxpayer for it.

The Liberals create these boards and pay the members to consult, hold meetings and write reports; in many cases, there is almost no concrete benefit to show for it and little to no accountability for the board members. These people are paid with taxpayers' dollars. By "taxpayers", I mean the hard-working Canadians who go out to do a job and get paid for their work. These people then pay taxes on that income. That is how governments make money. The current government likes to take the money from them to pay bureaucracies rather than using it to benefit the very people who work for it.

My worry is this: If the board of SDTC was able to waste and abuse 400 million taxpayer dollars so flippantly, how many other boards appointed by the government are doing the same? Are we just starting to scratch the surface or only beginning to really see the tip of the iceberg when it comes to how deep this scandal might truly run? As we know, an iceberg is always bigger under the water than what is seen on the surface. Oftentimes, the cover-up is worse than the crime.

In this case, the Liberals will not even give the authorities the chance to determine how bad the crime really is. We know it is bad. The famous Liberal sponsorship scandal that brought down the government of the time was about \$40 million, and this is 10 times that amount. As I mentioned before, it is a number so high that most struggle to really conceptualize it, including myself.

The \$400-million scandal we are debating here today is not the Prime Minister's first. It is far from it. In fact, I am sure we all remember the WE Charity scandal, which was a whopping \$600 million that the Prime Minister gave to his friends and Liberal insiders. He obviously did not learn his lesson then, and it is likely that he will not learn anything from this situation either.

We also had the ArriveCAN app, otherwise known as arrive scam; it cost the taxpayers \$56 million for something that could have been created for a few thousand dollars. I am sure my constituents who cannot afford groceries would have loved a piece of that wasted \$56 million, but I digress.

There was also the SNC-Lavalin scandal, in which the Prime Minister unethically and inappropriately interfered with our country's justice system by pressuring a cabinet minister to do something against her greater judgment. That is a prime example of how he has absolutely zero regard for the rule of law of this country; it shows that he truly believes he can do whatever he wants without consequences.

I would like to wrap up my remarks by reminding my colleagues that Remembrance Day is soon approaching. As the son of a veteran and as someone who was raised to have the utmost respect for the men and women who have fought for this country, we need a government that does better. Our veterans fought for us to be able to live peacefully and safely in this country, which upholds the rule

of law above all else. The least we can do as parliamentarians is to reflect that value here in the House.

I call on the Prime Minister and his Liberals to stop the cover-up and produce the documents so that we can get back to the work that truly matters. Better yet, he can just call a carbon tax election.

● (1330)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is very important we all recognize that we are witnessing nothing more than a Conservative Party tactic, directed by the leader of the Conservative Party.

We have now seen 95 members of the Conservative Party stand up to filibuster an amendment to a motion that they actually introduced to the House. All we want to see is for the Conservative Party to stop the multi-million dollar filibuster and start putting Canadians' interests ahead of their own leadership ambitions and above the Conservative Party of Canada.

It is disrespectful. It is a continuation of the contempt of Parliament Stephen Harper showed when the current leader was his parliamentary secretary. Now we get the leader of the Conservative Party abusing power here on the floor of the House of Commons, even when he is the Leader of the Opposition.

My question for the member is this: How can we expect the Leader of the Opposition not to control his abusive ways, which we have witnessed in the past and are seeing again today?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, it is good to see that there is at least one Liberal over there who knows how to add, because 94 plus 1 makes 95. It is good to see that happen. We see the member up all the time, yet we do not have questions from anybody else other than the said member. We are continually talking about 95 of us, but where are the 150 of them?

To answer his question, the reality is what my constituents continually tell me. They do not ask me about what the member keeps talking about. They ask me where that money has gone. Where did that \$400 million get spent? Why are Canadians not getting it back?

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• (1335)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the NDP supports the motion. We want to get to the bottom of this latest Liberal scandal, as we did with WE Charity and with the SNC-Lavalin scandal. However, the reality is that my colleague, whom I have a lot of respect for, talked about where the money has gone. This is a question that Canadians have been asking since the Harper regime was in place; the Harper Conservatives absolutely, steadfastly blocked any possibility of finding out what happened to the money in the various Conservative scandals. There was the ETS scandal, for \$400 million, and the G8 scandal. We remember the gazebos and a billion dollars, the Phoenix pay scandal of \$2.2 billion and the anti-terrorism funding, where they simply lost the paper trail, of \$3.1 billion.

With all of these Conservative scandals and all of this Conservative corruption, in every single case, the Harper regime shut down any transparency and any answers for Canadians. As such, my question for my colleague, whom I have a lot of respect for, is simply this: Where did all that money go under the Harper regime, and why have Conservatives never apologized for that misspending and corruption?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, over the years, in the nine years that I have been here, I have watched the member here in the House. He brings a lot of experience because he was here before my time. The Harper era was before my time, so he is asking me to respond on questions that I was not here for.

However, with that said, for almost 10 years, the NDP-Liberal government has been here. The only reason the Liberal government has been here for the last five years is that it has been propped up by the NDP. If it were not for the NDP standing up and supporting it, the House would have fallen a long time ago; we would have been in that carbon tax election. However, we are never given that opportunity, because the NDP continually wants to support the government. Its members love to say to the media that they have torn up the document, but when the votes come, they vote for the Liberals.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague talked about being the son of a veteran. I think, at this time of year, we should reflect upon a line in a poem written over 100 years ago by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae:

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

I often think about that line. I think the foe lives in people who seek to subjugate or to divide or to prevent us, as Canadians, from having the freedoms that are our birthright, that those men fought to protect. I am wondering if my colleague opposite could talk about why it is so important for each of us, regardless of political stripe, to take up that quarrel with the foe and what that means to him.

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, that is a great question, especially at this important point of time. It is very humbling for me to be here in the House because the privileges that I have today are thanks to so many Canadian veterans. Those privileges are what I believe in.

As I mentioned in my speech, this seat does not belong to me. It belongs to my constituents. The people we will be remembering in a couple of days will be those who gave us that right to sit here and to speak, to sit here and represent our constituents because this is their seat. I am here just to be the voice for those people. We are all just here to be the voice for those people. We need to continue to be the voice for those people and those people who come on after them and who will continue on for generations and generations to come.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am wondering if I can express what I believe a vast majority of Canadians are in fact concerned about. We have the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, who wants to be the prime minister but refuses to get the security clearance. It begs the question as to why. What is it that the leader of the Conservative Party is so scared of? Is there something personal in his background that he does not want Canadians to know?

That is a legitimate question. I believe that Canadians have a right to know. The Greens, the Blocs, the NDP and the Liberals all have it. The leader of the Conservative Party has chosen not to get it.

Does he believe Canadians have a right to know why?

• (1340)

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, there is a squirrel. Did someone see that squirrel that just ran through here? That is what these Liberals love to do. They love to scream “the squirrel”, so we look at something else as opposed to paying attention to what has been going on. That is what they want. They just want to distract Canadians so that we can talk about something else as opposed to talking about the \$400 million that they handed out to their friends.

People are driving on the highway and they will say that there is nothing to see here, to keep going. That is what they are all doing. There is nothing to see here. Just keep going. We are doing just fine. It is \$400 million. The government wants to tell Canadians to not look this way and to not worry about it, that it is only \$400 million because it is only “million”. It is not “billion”. It is not “trillion”.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, at the beginning of the hon. member's speech, he talked about his grandchildren and how important it was that he was here to secure their future.

Could he elaborate a little bit more on why it is important to illuminate the corruption of the Liberal government and what it will mean for future generations?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for allowing me to highlight my grandchildren, because they are the most important part of my life, other than my wife. I need to put that on record. I have witnesses.

That is what is so important here. We need to remember who is paying that debt. Who is going to end up paying this \$400 million, which is going to be added to the \$1.2 trillion that has already been accumulated by the government? When we talk about 1.2, Canadians try to turn around and say that it is only 0.2. I point out to them that this 0.2 is \$200 billion.

Who is going to pay that? It is going to be my grandchildren. It is going to be our grandchildren. It is going to be everyone's grandchildren, and then some, who are going to have to pay that.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, what a tough act to follow, my colleague with those brilliant words about accountability for the government. It has been a month that the House of Commons remains at a standstill. The Prime Minister and these NDP-Liberals will stop at nothing to throw sand in the gears of Parliament in a blatant attempt to cover up their costly corruption.

These documents are still missing. The taxpayer money is still gone. The dirty deeds still go unpunished. It has been more than a month. When we look at the numbers, it is astounding: \$400 million vanished, 186 conflicts of interest, one government in contempt of Parliament. It refuses to hand over the evidence to the RCMP and that is exactly why we are here. It does not want Canadians to know who got the money and how. It does not want Canadians to know how badly it mismanaged this boondoggle. It does not want the RCMP to start sniffing around on what is actually going on.

That just tells us whatever is in those documents must be really bad. It must be more than our usual garden-variety Liberal corruption. If they shut down Parliament for a month, there must be something brutal in those documents. I think Canadians have a right to know; that is why we are still here. Day in and day out, parties in the House are demanding the Liberals do their basic duty and provide transparency that Canadians deserve and, frankly, the Speaker demanded.

They stand up claiming the government is working in the best interest of Canadians, as that is what their objective is, but it is a bit rich from a party that has now stopped this place from operating for a month. The paper trail must be so long and lead all the way to the top. That is the only conclusion to draw from why they have stopped this place from working for a month.

Nearly 10 years ago, the Prime Minister pledged he would lead the most "transparent" and "open" government in the world. Those were his words. Ten years later, it is easy to see just how far they have fallen. His caucus is now forced to do the dirty work to cover up yet another scandal from the government. If stonewalling documents about corruption for months on end is the behaviour of the world's most transparent government, I would hate to see what happens in the world's least transparent government.

If the Prime Minister wanted to make the promise about transparency, maybe he should have said he would lead the most transparently corrupt and incompetent government. That would be a promise he could certainly brag about keeping. That would be one that would result in us not having to be here, certainly, for a month, arguing with them about their basic duty to turn over the documents to the cops.

Conservatives have a plan, and they have a plan on keeping a promise, too. Our promise is to hold the government accountable for every bad decision it makes, for every grifter who gets rich off Canadian tax dollars and for every ethical lapse in judgment from the Prime Minister and the cabal of Liberals who have been a problem in that respect, and every conflict of interest. That is the duty of

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the opposition, it is one that we take seriously, and it is one we will argue for here in this place for as long as it takes for these guys to actually be accountable to Canadians.

We will not let up until we make sure Canadians have the answer and this does not happen again. Now, it seems with the culture of corruption, with the Liberal and the NDP members, it has transferred over to another party. It seems like the Bloc wants in on the action too. It is offering the Prime Minister a secret deal to let him off the hook for this corruption and incompetence in order to serve the Bloc's narrow interest. It is a deal with the devil, so to speak, between them and the federal government, to see all the corruption swept under the rug until the next scandal. We know there will be another one, to get a firmer grip on power and play politics with the rights and the privileges and the obligations of this place.

When Canadians look at this Parliament, they see Liberals and Conservatives and NDP and Bloc and Green Party members, but now it is clear, while there are five parties that actually sit here, there are really only two parties: one mega-party that supports the Prime Minister and his agenda, blindly voting to declare continued unaccountability to the Canadian people, but more than that, unfettered confidence in his leadership; and only one party that is really standing up for Canadians.

• (1345)

However, after nine years of the Prime Minister, the most devoted Liberals are realizing that the Prime Minister's corruption and incompetence are just too much to handle. At least 24 of them, 24 that we know of, have finally seen the light. They are demanding a change because the writing is on the wall. They feel it in their own constituencies, with people who used to be excited to see them. They are fed up with everything that the Prime Minister has become and that he said he would not do. They see record-high inflation and home prices. They see out-of-control government spending. They just see how out of reach life has become in Canada. They, like all of us, like almost every Canadian, have lost confidence in the Prime Minister. Really, who can blame them?

It is now evident that the Liberals will do anything to stay in power; even a humiliating U-turn that we saw last week on immigration when they set these sky-high targets and then had to reverse themselves; even throwing around unfounded conspiratorial accusations, like we just heard from questioning right before me, about the Leader of the Opposition and foreign governments. The tinfoil hats over there must be real tight; even turning the trite and, frankly, ridiculous fearmongering about individual rights, things like abortion in this country, that every Canadian now sees through.

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This is the same old strategy: divide and conquer; divide this country into smaller and smaller pieces so it is easier to keep a grip on power and make sure that everybody forgets how miserable the Prime Minister has made their life. Canadians are tired of this. They are tired of the division and they are tired of being labelled as some kind of “other”. They are tired of being told that north is south, up is down and wrong is right. Certainly, they are tired of a government that cares more about itself than Canadians. That is what this whole saga is about.

It is not just the Prime Minister who is not in it for Canadians. He is in it for himself and for his friends. As long as he has to cling to the job for a bit longer, to ship some more money off to Liberal insiders, he will do whatever it takes to stay in power. The Liberals will do whatever it takes to argue in this place, rather than do their duty and hand over the documents to the RCMP, like the Speaker ordered them to.

Look at everything happening outside of this place: violent crime is up 30%; crimes with firearms have doubled in this country since the Prime Minister came to power; there are illegal drugs on our streets; loved ones cannot get the help that they need; and car theft in my home region of York is up 300% in just three years. There are members of the Liberal caucus who are celebrating an hourly drop in auto theft patterns and they are patting themselves on the back for it. They do not need to celebrate a 20% decrease in auto theft when it has increased 300% under their watch. That is not success; it is a victory lap on failure. Yet, that is exactly what they are doing. The average home price in that same region is \$1.3 million. There has been runaway deficit spending by a finance minister who still misses her targets. Canadians, who are already struggling to make ends meet and afford a place to live, are staring down the barrel of even more tax hikes and price increases. We have seen it day after day, month after month, year after year, for nine years of these guys.

We just found out that platforms like Spotify are raising subscription fees. The finance minister already told everybody in this House and every Canadian that she would cut Disney+, and I guess she is going to have to tell them to cut Spotify, too. That is the latest of the tone-deaf condescending suggestions from a finance minister who has somebody else pulling the strings in her own department. That is not to mention the serious allegation of election interference from foreign states and the Prime Minister's dangerous complicity in it, or the instability and the insanity happening on the other side of the world in the Middle East, or the out-of-control anti-Semitism on our streets.

We cannot talk about any of that in this place. We cannot fix any of those things because the government is focused on running out the clock while it tries to cover up for its own mismanagement, its own scandal-ridden government. That is what this debate is about. It is about making sure that we no longer let the Prime Minister use his office as a platform to enrich his friends and his own self-interest at the taxpayer's expense.

• (1350)

There is an easy fix to all of this, and it can happen in mere minutes: The government just needs to release the documents, give them all to the cops. That is all, and we can put the issue to bed to-

day. Release the full documents to the RCMP, not at a committee and not in their redacted form. If the Liberals truly had nothing to hide, then they should not be scared of anything, certainly not of turning the documents over. There is no reason why the release cannot happen, except for the government's own obstinance in this place.

We can tell by the arguments they are making that the Liberals are desperate to avoid accountability. They are blathering on about their endless nonsense about the charter, which they have used to trample on the rights of Canadians when it suits them, and about committees so that the issue dies a slow death under the guise of transparency, and so on. The charter was created to protect Canadians from their government; it was not created to protect the government from Canadians and from accountability, from the people who actually voted them in here.

Equally, if there are allegations and there is wrongdoing, we do not call a committee; we call the RCMP, the institution with the power to prosecute the corruption and to get Canadian taxpayers their money back and get them accountability to see what their government is doing with their money. That is the least the government can do in this place after a month of arguing about the motion.

That is what has come after nine years of the Liberal government: We now need the Mounties to come in to sort things out because the Prime Minister is obviously not able to sort things out by himself, or more likely, because he is covering up something.

The Prime Minister is out of his depth in every single way. When it comes to representing Canada on the world stage, he allows the nation to be humiliated and embarrassed time and time again, whether it is with a stirring rendition of *Bohemian Rhapsody*, allowing our country to become a playground for hostile foreign governments, or managing our economy. It is a shocker that the guy who says that the economy grows out from the heart believes that the budget will balance itself. He does not think of monetary policy and could not grow the economy, balance the budget, control inflation rates or interest rates in any way not just for this generation but for generations to come.

Even when it comes to doing basic things, the government could not even make a simple app work. It took months, and it sent 10,000 people inadvertently, unjustified, to a quarantine. The app should have never existed. We did not need it, and it could have been built in a weekend if we had needed it at all. Certainly there is also corruption in that case.

It is no wonder that the Prime Minister's caucus and his party are revolting against the Prime Minister, even in former fortresses like downtown Montreal and downtown Toronto, where people have just repudiated nine years of the Prime Minister by electing members from other parties.

One thing the Prime Minister excels at and we should give him some credit for is shipping off other people's money to line the pockets of Liberal insiders, as well as to fund pet projects and money to massive corporations, while Canadians go hungry and lose sight of the country we all once knew and loved. He has given \$12 million to Loblaw's; \$26 million to Costco; over \$100 million to McKinsey; \$107 million to GC Strategies, the two-person company run out of a basement in Ottawa; \$900 million to the WE Charity; \$50 million to Mastercard; and billions of dollars of bloated bureaucracy to Bombardier and, of course, to the CBC.

Additionally, no one can forgive or forget the \$100 million that the government has shipped to UNRWA, an agency founded to employ terrorists, which participated in the October 7 massacre and is now trying to argue that it is legally immune from being responsible for doing so. Again, the money is being spent while Canadians go dumpster diving because they cannot afford the price of food.

The Conservatives will put an end to all of this. We will put an end to the corporate welfare that lines the pockets of Liberal insiders doing nothing to create jobs or prosperity in this country.

• (1355)

We will immediately stop funding UNRWA and start funding our own NATO allies instead. We will of course defund CBC, without question, and maybe CBC first. Simply put, we will give Canadians back control of their money, their wallets and their lives, which is something the government has refused to do time and time again. It is why we are here.

It has been almost a month of arguing over why the government will not turn over documents that you, Mr. Speaker, told it to turn over, and why the Liberals will cower from accountability for the people, the taxpayers, to know where their money went, who it enriched and what is in the documents. If the Liberals had nothing to hide, they would turn the documents over today and we could end this.

We can then get back to Parliament and fix the things the Liberals have broken in this country after nine years. We can cut taxes, build homes, fix the budget and stop crime. There are any number of issues that the Liberals have screwed up over nine years, and we can get back to business if they just turn over the documents to the RCMP, exactly like you, Mr. Speaker, told them to.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

HON. MURRAY SINCLAIR

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to Murray Sinclair.

Murray Sinclair strengthened the fabric of this country in ways that few others have. I had the true honour of working closely with him while at Canadian Heritage. As a young staffer, I was in awe of him. I had the true honour of seeing his kindness, how measured he was and that he was wise beyond words. He was instrumental in

Statements by Members

providing us with guidance on the creation of legislation to protect indigenous languages. I have never seen a public figure so universally revered as he was.

Senator Sinclair is nothing short of a national hero. Most notably, his work leading the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission changed the trajectory of this country in the most important of ways. His work to help heal and propel Canada forward will serve us well for decades to come.

As a member of Parliament from Manitoba, it is with particular pride and gratitude that I thank Senator Sinclair for helping us to find the best versions of ourselves in service of this beautiful country.

* * *

EDWARD E. FAST

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week we laid my father, Edward E. Fast, to rest. He was 97. He was raised in Manitoba as a child of Mennonite immigrants. Dad's family barely survived the dirty thirties. By the time he was 14, he and his six siblings were orphans. A kind stepmother struggled to feed them. Although poor, Dad was an excellent student and studied dentistry in Toronto.

Nine months after he married Helene Schulz, I was born and we moved to Vancouver. There my father practised dentistry for many years. Seven more children were born, and my parents ensured that we were deeply loved and properly educated. What animated my father was his deep Christian faith, his family and an intense interest in politics. It was he who, 60 years ago, inspired my own career in politics.

I know that our father in heaven will have welcomed Dad with the words "Well done, good and faithful servant." Predeceased by our mother, Dad leaves behind eight children, 35 grandchildren and, at last count, 109 great-grandchildren.

We love our dad.

* * *

DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month.

Statements by Members

Every three minutes, one person in this country is diagnosed with diabetes. I want to recognize organizations like Diabetes Canada, Breakthrough T1D, Diabetes Action Canada, CDA, NIDA, CINA, Diabetes Québec and all the researchers, advocates and volunteers who are doing great work for diabetes in Canada.

This month is a time to raise awareness for diabetes. I encourage all parliamentarians to attend the Kids for a Cure reception happening tonight on Parliament Hill. The kids are here today from across Canada to raise awareness on diabetes. Also this week, on November 8, I will be hosting the fourth annual World Diabetes Day flag-raising ceremony in my city of Brampton. I encourage everyone to join with me there.

I am so proud of the work our government has done to pass the Pharmacare Act so Canadians living with diabetes will have access to diabetes medication. Just as the House stood united behind my Bill C-237 to create a national framework for diabetes, by working together we can defeat diabetes.

* * *

[Translation]

HERBY MOREAU

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's arts and media community was saddened to learn yesterday that cultural journalist and TV personality Herby Moreau has passed away at the age of 56.

No stranger to red carpets and opening nights, Herby knew everyone, and everyone knew and liked him. He had a natural talent for drawing people out, and he infused our cultural scene with a touch of glamour and prestige that would have been lacking had he not been a part of it. He rubbed shoulders with A-list celebrities and had access to the biggest stars in Hollywood and the world, but his passion for our own cultural industry never wavered. He knew how to showcase our homegrown artists with an approach that was both professional and entertaining.

The Bloc Québécois would like to offer its sincere condolences to his son Julien, his family, his loved ones and the dozens of collaborators who worked with him over the years. The Bloc Québécois would like to join in the tributes to this son of Haiti, who became one of the most influential and beloved cultural figures in Quebec's arts community.

* * *

● (1405)

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 14 is World Diabetes Day. It is an opportunity to raise public awareness about a disease that affects one in 10 adults around the world. In Canada, more than 300,000 people live with type 1 diabetes.

Today I met two young girls with diabetes who are visiting Parliament. They told me their story and talked to me about what it is like to live with this disease on a daily basis. I was impressed by their courage and their resilience, but also by their determination to

pursue their hopes and dreams despite their diagnosis. I can relate to what these two young girls are experiencing, because my son Charles was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in February 2017, when he was 18.

Thanks to research, the supplies Charles uses have gotten a lot better. Now it is much easier for him to manage his disease on a daily basis, which enables him to thrive as a phys ed teacher. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the people living with diabetes and the loved ones who support them. I am pleased that our government is working to develop a national universal plan that will provide coverage for a wide range of medications.

The Speaker: Before moving on to the next speakers, I would like to remind all members that they should limit their statements to 60 seconds. There is some flexibility, but I do not want people to exceed the time limit too much.

* * *

[English]

FOOD SECURITY

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine long years, Canadians are desperate for a change from the NDP-Liberal government. Food Banks Canada recently released its HungerCount report. Over two million Canadians are visiting food banks each month. The report found a 6% increase in food bank visits compared to the previous year, which had already broken a previous record. That is what we are seeing happen under this carbon tax regime. The failed socialist experiment starves Canadians and attacks our energy industry, which is key to western Canada's economy and fuels prosperity across the country.

Back home in Saskatchewan, Food Banks of Saskatchewan has said that children make up 30% of people in need nationally. However, in Saskatchewan, that number jumps to 39% for children. That is almost a 10% increase. Meanwhile, the total number of visits has gone up 42% since 2019 due to the carbon tax, inflation and housing costs.

The Liberals refuse to fix what they broke, and that is exactly why Canadians are demanding change. The Conservatives stand ready to axe the tax and bring home affordability. It is time for the Prime Minister to call a carbon tax election.

*Statements by Members***101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. On October 29, 1923, Turkey was formally declared a republic. It was also the day it elected its first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk is beloved to this day by Turks all around the world and is credited with creating the foundations of modern-day Turkey.

Canadians of Turkish origin are a vibrant community whose language, culture and traditions have enriched the social fabric of Canadian society. Now, in 2024, the Turkish Canadian community has grown to more than 75,000 strong. Organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations and the Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada work hard to put on important events for the community throughout the year. I want to acknowledge them and thank them for their contributions.

Canada is stronger because of our diversity, and the Turkish Canadian community has made us a stronger and better country.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Conservative leader announced his plan to shut down housing projects across the country. He is proposing reckless cuts that will devastate housing progress in Canada, including in my own riding of St. Catharines. Even his own MPs are going behind his back to secretly write the housing minister to support the housing accelerator fund and advocate that their communities get the funding their leader wants to cut.

Let us be clear about what is at stake. Reckless Conservative housing cuts could jeopardize up to 750,000 homes over the next decade. By his own math, the Conservative leader wants to build at least 450,000 fewer homes. Canadians cannot afford these cuts to housing.

Conservative MPs need to stand up for their communities and stand up against their leader's reckless housing cuts. We need to build more homes, not fewer. It is painfully obvious that the Conservative leader is not serious about housing.

* * *

● (1410)

ECONOMIC ADVISER TO THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year, a report from an international tax watchdog accused Brookfield of dodging taxes around the world, stating, "there is an apparent pattern of aggressive tax avoidance consistent across its global operations." It is no coincidence that last week, Brookfield, a megacorporation chaired by senior Liberal economic adviser Mark "carbon tax" Carney, announced it is moving its headquarters from Toronto to Wall Street.

Reports say Brookfield pays a measly average tax rate of 6.1%, but the average Canadian family pays a whopping 45% of their average household income in taxes. Here is the reality: Carney gets

paid more if Brookfield pays less tax. While he works to make sure that his company pays less tax, he wants Canadians to pay more carbon tax, all while he is formally advising the Prime Minister on economic policies without ethics or lobbying guidelines.

This is wrong. It is time for the NDP-Liberals to stop letting this man put his own profit over the people of Canada.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, we learned that the Conservative leader will reverse Canada's housing progress and cut programs that are building more homes faster in Surrey and across the country. It is not just his own MPs who disagree with his reckless housing cuts. Mayors across the country, including former Conservative MPs, are sounding the alarm over the cuts.

The housing accelerator fund invests in housing in Surrey and every local community across Canada, but the Conservative leader wants to shut housing projects down. Interest rates are down. Housing starts are up. Housing permits are up. We need to build on this progress, not take it backwards to the days when the Conservative leader was Harper's failed housing minister. He failed to build more homes back then and he wants to reverse housing progress now.

Canadians cannot afford these Conservative housing cuts. We need more homes, and we will not let the Conservative leader stand in our way.

* * *

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal costly coalition, there is only one person keeping the Prime Minister in power. That is the leader of the NDP.

Remember the NDP leader's big stunt when he told Canadians he ripped up the coalition deal with the Liberals? It was just a scam on the poor voters of Elmwood—Transcona right before a by-election. The NDP leader said, "The fact is, the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for [Canadians]."

Statements by Members

While the NDP leader supports the punishing carbon tax, voting for it over 24 times, Canadians visit food banks in record-smashing numbers. Every day the Prime Minister stays in power is because of the leader of the NDP, who lacks courage. It is time for the Prime Minister to call a carbon tax election now so Canadians can make the choice.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the “Liberal Bloc” is not worth the cost of housing.

Rents, mortgage payments and down payments have doubled. The good news is that a Conservative government is going to axe the federal sales tax on new homes sold in Canada. This tax cut will save homebuyers \$40,000, or \$2,200 a year in mortgage payments, on an \$800,000 house.

This tax cut will spark 30,000 extra homes built every year and give a break to buyers struggling to find housing. Our Conservative proposal has been hailed by the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec, the Quebec landlords' association, as “a step in the right direction” that will “lower housing costs”.

It is clear that only common-sense Conservatives will bring home Canada's promise that hard work earns a powerful paycheque that buys affordable food and homes in safe neighbourhoods.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Friday, my wife and I were honoured to join the vibrant and growing Sikh community in Windsor—Tecumseh to celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas. We prayed together, lit clay lamps, rolled roti in the kitchen and shared langar.

The news from the RCMP that foreign agents of the Government of India participated in serious crimes on Canadian soil against Sikh Canadians has shaken my community, just as it has shaken all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. To think for even one second that a member of my community could be targeted or killed for their religious or political beliefs by an agent working on behalf of a foreign government is abhorrent. An attack on one Canadian is an attack on all Canadians and our shared values of democracy and freedom.

It is past time for the leader of the Conservative Party to join all opposition leaders in getting his security clearance. It is past time to put the nation ahead of himself. There is nothing more important than protecting Canadians.

* * *

● (1415)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, we are fortunate to have individuals and organizations championing the rights of those living

with disabilities. One such group is the Self Advocates of Nanaimo, providing a platform for people with diverse abilities to have a voice and join together in advocacy, mentorship, education and community building.

It was such an honour to meet with self-advocates Miranda, Barbara, Pat, Crystal, CJ, Nick and Ryan, as well as the advisory and outreach supporters Gwen and Cheyanne. These incredible self-advocates shared with me important stories of strength and stories of unacceptable challenges.

People living with disabilities need and deserve enough to live with dignity and respect. Up to \$200 a month is nowhere near enough. The applications necessary for supports need to be free and accessible, and housing is in dire need. I hear the Self Advocates of Nanaimo and stand with it.

* * *

[Translation]

ADISQ GALA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec culture shone brightly last night, as its stars dressed up for the biggest event of the year in the music and entertainment industry, the ADISQ Gala.

It was so nice to see and hear Quebec artists of every generation who continue to enrich our culture, playing everything from trad and pop to rap and hip hop. It was magical to see Les Trois Accords, Karkwa, Elisapie, Souldia, Roxane Bruneau, Roch Voisine and Isabelle Boulay give such electrifying performances. It was so moving to reflect on the people we lost this year, like Jean-Pierre Ferland and Karl Tremblay. It was so heartwarming to see Les Cowboys Fringants walk away with three Félix awards, including the most prestigious, which went to Jean-François Pauzé, the brilliant songwriter who has been writing award-worthy songs from the very start. What an amazing celebration it was.

The gala was a lot of fun, but it is important to remember that the cultural sector needs to be taken seriously when it asks for support, including things like copyright reform to ensure our creators have a future. Nevertheless, despite the challenges they face, artists are always there to sing about our joys, our sorrows and our hopes.

To borrow from a Les Cowboys Fringants song, thanks to Quebec artists, we are a long way from “la fin du show”, the end of the show.

[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, they are not worth the cost of homes and housing. The sad reality is that the government is focused on building deficits, not homes, and young Canadians are paying the price. Over half of Canadians under 35 say they want to own a home, and that same amount are saying the government's economic mismanagement is making that dream impossible.

Common-sense Conservatives will axe the tax on new homes sold. On an \$800,000 home, this tax cut would save homebuyers \$2,200 a month in mortgage payments. The response to this plan has been impressive. The Canadian Real Estate Association said, “a positive move toward lowering building costs, increasing housing supply, and making homeownership more attainable for Canadians”, and Habitat for Humanity concluded that the plan would reduce costs, passing on savings to Habitat homeowners.

It is only the Conservatives who have united industry, advocates and Canadians regarding housing, and it is only Conservatives who will build the houses and bring young Canadians home.

* * *

DIWALI

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish you a happy Diwali. Last week, I celebrated the festival of lights in my riding by going to local mandirs and gurdwaras. What made Diwali even more special was that the Prime Minister dropped by to celebrate with Bramptonians.

Today, we will continue the grand celebration on the Hill, hosted by the Liberal caucus, with many in attendance from across the country. The celebration on the Hill is a testament to our commitment to inclusivity and respect for all communities. In contrast, the Conservative caucus cancelled its Diwali celebration, proving that all the Conservatives care about is themselves.

The celebration of Diwali is shared among Hindus and Sikhs, and over the last few days I have witnessed these communities celebrating together in harmony. However, I am also deeply troubled by what took place yesterday: first the protests and acts of violence that took place outside the Hindu Sabha Mandir, and then the counter-protests and violence that took place at Guru Singh Sabha gurdwara.

Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected in their places of worship. There is no room for such actions in our society. Let us respect the true essence and teachings of Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas, come together and respect community.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister's economic vandalism, over two million Canadians are visiting a food bank in a single month, housing costs have doubled and inflation continues to eat away at Canadians' paycheques.

The Prime Minister's massive deficits and tax hikes are causing extreme damage to the Canadian economy. For eight out of the last nine quarters, Canadian per-person GDP is down. This is a made-in-Canada, per-person GDP recession. That means Canadian workers work harder but bring home less.

Will the Prime Minister stop his economic vandalism and cancel his job-killing, paycheque-shrinking tax hikes?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning we heard the sad news of the passing of the Hon. Murray Sinclair. Let me take a moment before we begin today to say a few words about him.

As a former judge, senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Murray was determined to help Canada reckon with its colonial realities and bring healing to this country. He was a visionary and a leader, and his kind and fierce commitment to truth has pushed Canada forward in profound and lasting ways.

Our hearts and minds are with his family. Canada is a much better place for his service.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I join in my hon. colleague's sending of condolences.

However, we are witnessing economic vandalism in real time. Last Thursday, the government was briefed that the only sector of the Canadian economy that was actually producing any growth was the energy sector. What did the government do today? It slapped a punishing cap on Canadian production. This will only chase investments and jobs to other countries, but that is something the Prime Minister is good at. He increased Canadian investment in the US by \$63 billion last year alone.

Will the Prime Minister stop fuelling the U.S. economy, cancel his tax hikes and cancel the production cap to bring those investment dollars back home?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, we were very pleased to announce an emissions cap with respect to the oil and gas sector in this country.

Oral Questions

Given that oil and gas constitutes 31% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, it is important that we work with the sector to reduce emissions, just as we do with every sector. It is also true that, as we move towards a lower carbon economy across the world, oil and gas produced with the lowest emissions is going to have value around the world.

We are moving forward with a plan to address climate change and build a strong economy going forward. The Conservatives are stuck in the past and ignoring the science of climate.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Before I get to the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, I would just ask the hon. member for Calgary Centre to hold on until it is his turn to ask a question.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all this production cap will do is make other countries richer while making Canadians poorer. That is something the Prime Minister is so good at.

Members can consider this: GDP per capita in Canada is down. In the U.S., it is up. Nine years ago, average wages in the U.S. and Canada were almost identical. Now, an American worker brings home \$22,000 more than their Canadian counterpart. As well, half a trillion dollars in investments has fled Canada to the United States, creating bigger paycheques for American workers. All of this is because of the Prime Minister's high taxes and massive deficits.

The Prime Minister is the number one job creator in the United States. Instead of helping the U.S. economy, why does he not fight for Canada for once?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite should take the time to actually read the information about the pollution cap. Production is forecast to increase 16% by 2030. The idea that we are somehow cutting production is simply not true.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois, half a billion dollars has left Canada for the United States. The Conservatives will bring home investments, money and jobs.

Because of this Prime Minister's high taxes and astronomical deficits, American workers are thriving, while Canadian workers are losing hope because they can no longer afford to put a roof over their head or food on the table. American workers are now earning \$22,000 more than their Canadian counterparts.

Will the Prime Minister bring our money, investments and jobs back to Canada, or will he once again shirk his responsibilities?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a patriotic Canadian and I know that our country is a great country. I do not want to be American. If the Conservatives want to make comparisons, here is what

they should be comparing. Inflation is lower in Canada. The interest rate is lower in Canada. The average Canadian will live four years longer than the average American. The Conservatives are wrong if they think that the United States is better than Canada.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that after nine years of this Prime Minister and three different U.S. presidents, this Liberal government has been unable to create wealth in Canada.

The gap between the United States and Canada is widening. Look at the softwood lumber deal and the Buy America Act. This Prime Minister failed miserably at defending Canadian factories and workers. No one has created more jobs in the U.S. than the Prime Minister. Per capita income is down in Canada, yet it is up 18% in the U.S.

When will the Prime Minister stand up for Canada, cut taxes, and bring home our money, jobs and investment?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, let me tell the House what we do better in Canada. Inflation is lower. The interest rate is lower. The average lifespan is longer.

I want to share a comment from David Rosenberg, a well-known economist. He said last week that that U.S.-based investors should strongly consider leaving New York for Toronto. That is because he knows that Canadian companies have stronger returns. That is the reality.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the American election, we must stop Senators Peter Boehm and Peter Harder from blocking Bill C-282. They want to prevent us from protecting supply management in free trade agreements, when we know that the U.S. can reopen CUSMA, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, as early as 2026. The fact that these two senators are blocking this bill is not just undemocratic and harmful, it is also dangerous. It is dangerous because it is jeopardizing 6,000 businesses and 100,000 jobs in Quebec.

Will the Prime Minister finally ask them to stop threatening Quebec farmers?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having been a farmer all my life and involved in the supply management system for all of my agricultural career, I am fully aware of how valuable the supply management system is to this country. I belong to a government and a party that has initiated supply management and continues to support supply management. I can tell my hon. colleague and this country that the government will continue to support the supply management program.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that the next president of the United States can reopen CUSMA as early as 2026. On the one hand, we have Trump, who wants to eliminate our supply management system altogether. On the other, we have Kamala Harris, whose running mate is the Governor of Wisconsin, a state that will benefit hugely if our supply management system is weakened. Caught in the middle are Quebec farmers, who are appalled that the will of the elected members of the House of Commons is being thwarted by two unelected senators. That is undemocratic. It is shocking and it is dangerous.

Will the Prime Minister finally ask Peter Boehm and Peter Hard-er to pass Bill C-282?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already explained to our Bloc Québécois colleagues that senators are independent. However, what I also understand is that the Bloc is admitting that it is unable to protect supply management. The only one that can protect this system, no matter what happens on the other side of the border, is a Liberal government, because it is truly willing and committed to doing so. Only the Liberals will protect supply management.

* * *

• (1430)

*[English]***HEALTH**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, we believe health care should be there when we need it, and it should be free.

Today, Collège des médecins du Québec president, Dr. Mauril Gaudreault, was quoted saying that patients are typically being told by doctors that they could do the surgery in 14 months, but if the patient goes to their private clinic, they could get it done in one month and it would cost \$25,000. Dr. Gaudreault says that is questionable, if not illegal.

I think it is pretty clearly illegal. Does the Prime Minister agree?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, health care should be public, universal and available for all. Most of all, we are making sure that the patient does not pay. In our country, we ensure that, when people come in for care, they are taken care of on the basis of their need, not the size of their bank account. That is what distinguishes us from so many countries in the world. That is a principle that we stand up proudly for.

I would suggest to the leader of the NDP that we have worked well together on things from pharmacare to dental care. There are many different challenges the provinces are presenting to health care right now, and certainly the party opposite, the Conservatives, would seek to ravage our health care system. Let us work together to make sure we protect it.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are letting people get charged to get to the front of the line, which should be illegal.

[Translation]

In Quebec, the private sector is playing an increasingly greater role in health care. The Collège des médecins du Québec is asking for an immediate halt to any further private sector expansion into medical care. Studies clearly show that for-profit clinics increase wait times. The Prime Minister, however, calls that innovation.

Why is the Prime Minister allowing American-style companies to profit from the pain of Canadians?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is to ensure that our health care system is universal, public, and accessible to all Canadians. That is unequivocal. We have made significant strides in oral health care and pharmacare. I think that a lot more work remains to be done.

In contrast, the Conservative Party wants to drastically cut health care funding. That is absolutely unacceptable.

* * *

*[English]***HOUSING**

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, almost 50% of young Canadians believe they will never own a home.

This Liberal housing accelerator is an absolute joke. Common-sense Conservatives have a plan. We would axe the GST on new home builds. On an \$800,000 house, this would save \$40,000. The Conservative leader has now written to the premier of every province asking them to match this tax cut.

When will the NDP-Liberals finally get it through their heads that they are funding bureaucracies and axe the tax on new builds so young people can buy a house?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said that the housing accelerator fund is a joke. Has he consulted with his caucus? A dozen, probably more, Conservative members have advocated specifically for that program. They went behind the back of the Leader of the Opposition because they wanted to advocate for their constituents to see more homes built.

By calling for the end of the housing accelerator fund, which is how the Conservatives would pay for this so-called new, bold idea, they would end support to communities for homelessness, and they would end support for more building for middle-class Canadians. It is an unacceptable, untenable position.

Oral Questions

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal housing adviser Mike P. Moffatt has asked, about the Liberal housing accelerator, if anyone in the federal government could tell him why Toronto deserves \$471 million in housing accelerator funds to massively hike development taxes. Housing starts in Toronto are down 20%. Even Liberal advisers know that the housing accelerator is a joke.

Will the NDP-Liberals finally realize that they are funding bureaucracies, tripling development charges and not getting any houses built for young Canadians?

• (1435)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about young Canadians and about homebuilding in Canada. However, the Conservatives have six homes to point to from when they were in office. That is the sum total of their work when they were in office, when the Leader of the Opposition held the so-called role of minister of housing. He was not a minister at all. In fact, if we look at the 190,000 number that they talk about from their time in office, that was home builders who did that. It was not them. They know nothing about getting homes built. They only know about cuts. They would make cuts to communities. It is not an acceptable position.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this NDP-Liberal government, we know it is not worth the cost of housing. In fact, its record is so bad that 80% of young Canadians believe that home ownership is only for the very rich.

Conservatives would axe the federal sales tax on new homes sold for under a million dollars, which would save Canadians up to \$50,000, or \$2,200 a year, in mortgage payments. The Conservative leader has written premiers asking them to match our Conservative plan to axe the tax on housing to save Canadians thousands more. This would mean real relief for young Canadians who are desperately trying to buy a home.

Will the NDP-Liberals axe the tax on housing so that young Canadians can finally buy a home?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I worked with the hon. member on the House of Commons committee that is responsible for housing. He almost always brings up good points, except today there is a credibility issue at stake.

When the member was mayor of Huntsville, prior to becoming a member of Parliament, he increased development charges, which we agree are an impediment to homebuilding and a tax on homebuilding. How much did he increase development charges? It was not by 2% or 3%, but by 16%.

The Conservatives cannot speak about these issues. They have no credibility on the matter.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I was on council, we actually cut development charges by 50%. I also knew, as a mayor, that if we get bureaucracy out of the way, we get more homes built. These guys do not under-

stand that. All they are doing is funding the bureaucracy. Since the minister has given billions of dollars to cities all across this country, they have raised development charges and housing starts have dropped. Our common-sense plan would save Canadians up to \$50,000 on a new home. This is real relief for Canadians.

Why can they not get on board and axe the tax on new homes?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like former Conservatives, people like Joe Clark, for example, I recognize that Canada is a community of communities. As an urban-based MP, I want to assure the hon. member opposite that I read the Huntsville Doppler, the newspaper of record in his community. He increased development charges by 16%. It was reported time and again in that newspaper. They want to cut support for communities. They want to cut support for housing. Do not be fooled.

The Leader of the Opposition ditched his glasses. It is the same guy who wants to cut pensions, support for housing, support for young people and support for EI. They are not serious.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the “Liberal Bloc” has discouraged young people from owning their home. It doubled rent, mortgage payments and down payments. As we speak, 80% of Canadians say that home ownership is reserved for the rich. Our leader made a common-sense proposal to eliminate the GST from new homes and this idea has the support of the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec.

My question is very simple. Will the Liberals, supported by the Bloc Québécois, cut the federal tax on housing or will they continue to fund their programs that are not building any houses?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's proposal is ill-conceived. Not only would it not help increase the supply of housing, but it would also be done at the expense of the most vulnerable. The Conservatives' hidden intentions are very clear now. They want to help those who want to buy a home, but cut the help to those who are in need.

I have a question for my colleague. How does she explain to people in her riding that she is going to abolish affordable housing and jeopardize the rentals that people need?

Oral Questions

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister can ask questions when she is in opposition. The Conservative leader's proposal to eliminate the GST on homes valued at less than \$1 million is giving young people hope that they will be able to buy a home and perhaps even start a family. With this program to eliminate the GST, some 30,000 new homes could be built. For a house worth \$800,000, for example, the savings would amount to \$40,000.

What will it take for the Liberal-Bloc government to show some compassion and common sense and implement our proposal?

• (1440)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to make three points. The first, which my colleague knows, is that the Conservative leader built a total of six affordable housing units across the country during his entire term in office. The second point is that, a week ago, the Conservative leader announced that he would cancel a \$900-million agreement with the Quebec government that is about to launch the construction of 8,000 affordable housing units. My third point is that she need only look at her own riding, where the Mission Unitairnés project will build 100 affordable housing units for seniors on Guillaume-Couture Boulevard. That project is being funded by the program that her Conservative leader wants to cut.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec continues to take in more than its fair share of asylum seekers, yet there is still no plan to distribute the numbers more equally among the provinces. This is a serious matter, especially as migration could skyrocket again with tomorrow's U.S. election. Donald Trump has announced that, if he wins, he will launch the biggest deportation program in American history. He wants to deport 18 million people.

We asked the minister the other day if he has a plan in case Trump's promises drive people to come to Canada. He told us he does. That is good news. Now, can he explain his plan?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is well aware that, over the past few months, we have reduced the percentage of asylum seekers arriving at Montréal-Trudeau airport, which now stands at 29%. He knows very well that we have made a lot of progress working with Quebec. As for the plan to have a well-managed border with the United States, that will continue to happen, no matter who wins the presidency tomorrow. What is more, it would be very unwise to talk about it 24 hours before the election.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, governing is all about planning ahead. At every single opportunity, the immigration department has proven itself incapable of planning ahead. We will keep asking the minister for details about his plan because without details, we have no good reason to believe that a plan exists.

If Donald Trump wins tomorrow, he has promised to deport 18 million people. Our agencies tell us that they are concerned

about a wave of immigration at a time when Canada is already incapable of managing the existing influx of asylum seekers.

What is the plan if Donald Trump wins?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a plan, but the member is not going to find out what it is 24 hours ahead the election. He knows that. It would be extremely reckless to unveil such a plan on the floor of the House of Commons.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if he does not want to answer questions, he does not have to attend question period.

The last time Donald Trump threatened to deport people, many headed for Canada. That led to the problems at Roxham Road, the consequences of which are still being felt today. Roxham Road became a problem because the federal government did not have a plan. The Prime Minister literally extended an invitation to a wave of asylum seekers without making any preparations to welcome them. It took him years to respond.

Today, Donald Trump is setting the stage for an even bigger wave than what we saw at Roxham Road. No one wants to go through that whole scenario again.

What is the plan?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the plan is to not be afraid of our own shadow, as the Bloc Québécois always seems to be.

We have a plan. We are working on it, no matter who the president turns out to be tomorrow morning, but we are not going to reveal it on the floor of the House of Commons 24 hours before the election. We will respect what happens tomorrow.

We can discuss it with the Bloc Québécois after the election.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of these NDP-Liberals, they are not worth the cost of housing. Fifty per cent of young Canadians have abandoned the dream of buying a home one day. Rent, mortgage and down payment costs have all doubled. Common-sense Conservatives will axe the federal sales tax on new homes sold. On an \$800,000 house, this will save homebuyers \$40,000 or \$2,200 a year in mortgage payments. Our plan means more housing for young Canadians desperately trying to enter the housing market for the first time.

Will the NDP-Liberals axe the GST on housing for more young Canadians so they can finally buy a home?

Oral Questions

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have seen, the Conservatives continue to say they will make cuts to pay for their proposals, including this so-called GST initiative. What will that mean? It means the accelerator fund will come to an end. The member is from Kelowna. A few weeks ago, I met with Kelowna's mayor, Mayor Tom Dyas, who shared with me that federal funding secured through the housing accelerator fund has led to a digital permit system that has improved approvals that would have taken, even a year ago, a year and a half-plus to approve. That approval permit process now is less than 10 days.

• (1445)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even the Liberal housing adviser, Mike P. Moffatt, on the failed Liberal housing plan said, “the federal Liberals have lost the plot”. Habitat for Humanity said reducing GST would reduce costs. Canadian Home Builders Association said it “will make a big difference”. Canadian Real Estate Association said, “This proposed step is a positive move toward lowering building costs, increasing housing supply, and making homeownership more attainable for Canadians.”

Will the NDP-Liberals axe the GST on housing so more young Canadians can finally buy a home?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is the Conservative policy on housing is a dud. That is the bottom line.

Let me speak about an issue Canadians are truly concerned about. We have the leader of the Conservative Party who continues to refuse to get a security clearance. I believe Canadians have a right to know why it is the Conservative leader refuses to get it. What is he hiding? Is there something about his past Canadians should know about? It is time the leader step up and be honest with Canadians.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, they are simply not worth the cost of housing. There are encampments all over the city of Abbotsford, including the beloved cenotaph. Young people are feeling hopeless, knowing even with a good salary, they will not be able to afford a new house. Conservatives understand that and that is why we have proposed a federal GST cut on new homes, a tax cut that will spark 30,000 new developments.

Will the NDP-Liberals axe the federal GST on housing so more young Canadians can finally buy a home?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they want to pay for this idea by slashing the housing accelerator fund, so let us understand what that means.

This is support for communities across the country, large and small, support for communities to get people off the street and into homes; support for zoning changes that will allow for more building, giving young people, the ones they talk about and claim to care about here today, more options. If we give people more options, the costs come down. This is infrastructure support, so that water con-

nections, for example, can be connected to housing. They do not believe in that either. As well, this is support for vacant buildings to be converted into housing.

All of this is on the table.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Persian Gulf War veterans are asking the government for recognition. Brave soldiers came home with Gulf War illness, PTSD and burn pit poisoning, and still they have to fight the Liberals to get the recognition and benefits they deserve, just like they had to fight the Conservatives before them. It is shameful.

Will the minister make this right and grant these veterans wartime status, or will she hide behind legislation and disrespect their service?

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the committee on veterans affairs is currently studying this matter. We are waiting for its report. I can assure colleagues that the government will respond to that forthwith. The Persian Gulf War veterans have done a great service for this country, and we all deserve to see the response to this report.

I assure colleagues that the government will respond accordingly.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have done nothing to protect Canadians from giant telcos' price gouging. For weeks, hundreds of Canadians have been raising their voices because they feel bamboozled. They signed a service contract, were promised a price and then the bills came in with even higher prices. Giant telcos are digging deeper in Canadian pockets. Meanwhile, Liberals sit on their hands and Conservatives are silent so as to not upset their CEO donors.

Canadians deserve better. Will the minister finally use his powers to stop these snake oil salesperson tactics that the telcos use to trick Canadians?

Oral Questions

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we expect all telecommunication companies to clearly communicate contract terms and pricing changes to its customers. The minister has spoken directly with Rogers on this important issue.

In the past two budgets, we have taken critical steps to crack down on unnecessary fees and to eliminate switching charges so customers can cancel and switch to cheaper plans and access lower charges.

* * *

• (1450)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very recently we have seen acts of unlawfulness and indecency at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton and the Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Malton. The vast majority of Canadians are peace-loving and believe that every Canadian should have the right to practise their faith freely and safely.

We have also heard from the RCMP that foreign elements are seeking to destabilize the harmony in our communities to provide evidence for their own rhetoric. These actions must be condemned.

Can the minister please comment on these incidents and tell Canadians what the government is doing to keep them safe?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we strongly condemn acts of violence and hate that took place outside Hindu Sabha Mandir and Sri Guru Singh Sabha gurdwara. These acts need to stop. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their places of worship. I have spoken to Chief Nishan of the Peel Regional Police and have full confidence in our local authorities to investigate and to de-escalate.

As Canadians, we must stand united against hate and against all those who try to destabilize peace and unity between our communities.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, Canada has become the caboose to America's high-flying economic engine. The GDP per capita has become so stark that the average American worker is now making \$22,000 more than the Canadian worker. Why? Well, because Americans do not pay a carbon tax. They do not have high-flying capital gains taxes and they do not have soft trade policies.

When will the Prime Minister finally admit that his high taxes and soft trade policies have derailed Canadian prosperity or is he content in keeping Canadian workers riding in the back in the caboose?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives may have an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the United States, but I sure do not. Let me tell colleagues what is better in Canada. Inflation is lower.

Interest rates are lower. We live four years longer because we have a universal single-payer health care system.

Investors are noticing the Canadian advantage. Here is what David Rosenberg said last week: U.S.-based investors should strongly consider moving from New York to Toronto, because returns here are better, too.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): That is amazing, Mr. Speaker, because Liberal candidate Mark Carney moved his company to New York.

Let me tell everyone what is happening in the Canadian economy. Some 90,000 jobs have been lost since 2015 in the softwood lumber industry, 40,000 of them in B.C. alone. The last prime minister figured out a softwood lumber deal in 79 days. It has been nine years and three U.S. presidents.

How many jobs have to be chopped before the Prime Minister figures out that high taxes and a weak, soft spine will not bring jobs back and paycheques to Canadians across the softwood lumber industry?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the weak Conservatives when it comes to standing up for the Canadian national interest. That is because we remember the 232 steel and aluminum interest that the U.S. imposed on us. When it did that, we retaliated. We had the guts to do that. What did the Conservatives say? They urged us to back down. They said retaliation was dumb.

The Conservatives would sell Canadian interests out again in a minute. We will never do that.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years and three U.S. presidents, the Prime Minister has failed to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement. He has failed where the previous Conservative prime minister succeeded 80 days after he was elected.

After the closure of the Maniwaki sawmill and the one in Mauricie, now we find out that the Petit Paris sawmill in Saint-Ludger-de-Milot had to close its doors a day earlier.

Why do the Liberals always find a way to abandon forestry workers?

Oral Questions

• (1455)

[English]

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, softwood lumber and the forestry industry are really important for creating thousands and thousands of jobs across this country. We have been working very hard with the forestry industry, and what I have learned from the sector is that it is looking to expand into new markets. I am very pleased that our government, through the trade commissioner service, is helping it access new markets while at the same time working to try to get a deal with the United States.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that there have been three U.S. presidents, one after the other. Nine years later, the Liberal Prime Minister still has not managed to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement. It is pure incompetence and an obvious lack of leadership. Three sawmills have had to close their doors in a matter of months. The latest one is in Saint-Ludger-de-Milot, a village of 600 people. One hundred of them are going to lose their jobs.

When will there be an election so that our leader can succeed where this Prime Minister has sadly failed?

[English]

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I would say to those wonderful workers and the sector they belong to is they contribute tremendously not only to the economy of Quebec but certainly to the economy of Canada. However, I have a question for the leader of the member opposite. Why is the leader not going to get his security clearance so he can protect Canadians?

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*[Translation]***OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today's announcement from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is distressing. It has been two years since he presented his plans for regulations to cap greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas. We had every right to be impatient, did we not? However, there is nothing in the minister's announcement about reducing oil production. On the contrary, he is actually boasting that production will increase by 16%. No effort required from black gold multimillionaires. Oil companies will be able to help break production records with the blessing of the Liberal government.

When will the government start to really fight global warming?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what to say. The Bloc Québécois is encouraging us to encroach on areas of provincial jurisdiction. What is this world coming to?

As the Bloc Québécois knows full well, the use of natural resources falls under provincial jurisdiction. What we can do is take action on pollution, and that is exactly what we are doing. The sector will have to limit its greenhouse gas emissions to 35% below

2019 levels. This is an important part of our plan to fight climate change.

On this side of the House, we believe that climate change is real. We have a plan for the economy and we have a plan for the future of working men and women.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the minister is not saying is that a significant chunk of the money that the government puts into oil comes from Quebec.

For the nine years that the Liberals have been in power, the Bloc has been calling for an emissions cap for oil and gas companies. The Liberals finally promised to implement such a cap three years ago. Two years ago, they tabled draft regulations but did not implement them. They did all that only to end up with regulations that do not require oil companies to produce any results until 2030. It is this inaction that is setting us up for disaster in 2030, not the next election or the opposition parties.

Why is the minister incapable of demanding even a little effort from oil companies before 2030?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my hon. colleague, but I would sincerely encourage him to read the documentation on the project to cap emissions in the oil and gas industry, which indicates that this regulatory framework will take effect on January 1, 2026, not in 2030 as he said.

We tabled that document last year. It was not two years ago, just one. The Bloc Québécois seems bent on triggering an election by working with the Conservatives, but if that happens there will be no cap on greenhouse gas emissions. Thanks to the Bloc Québécois, the oil and gas industry will be able to pollute as much as it wants.

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*[English]***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The cost of the carbon tax is sending record numbers of Canadians to food banks, but food banks are struggling with the carbon tax too. For one Alberta food bank, paying the carbon tax means there is \$280,000 less food for those who are going hungry.

The Prime Minister's policies are hurting the most vulnerable and those who work to help them, so will the Prime Minister finally call a carbon tax election so Conservatives can fix what he broke?

• (1500)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know the leader of the Conservative Party had a flip-flop when it came to the price on pollution, but where we are really disappointed is that the leader of the Conservative Party refuses to put Canadians' interests ahead of his personal interests and the interests of the Conservative Party.

It is time for the Conservative leader to step up to the plate and get the security clearance needed to deal with foreign interference. What is he hiding? He needs to be transparent. He has to tell us about his past. There is something there that he needs to tell Canadians.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what an insult that is to Canadians who are going hungry. Not only that, but it is Veterans' Week, and far too many heroes who bravely served Canada now cannot count on sitting down for their next meal. In fact, food insecurity among veterans has gotten so bad due to the NDP-Liberal carbon tax that some legions are having to divert funds from their poppy campaigns to instead help keep the local food banks afloat.

When will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election so common-sense Conservatives can ensure that veterans finally get the respect they deserve?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell members what an insult is. It is the leader of the Conservative Party continuing to focus his attention on his personal interests and the interests of the Conservative Party.

Let us be clear: The leader of the Conservative Party is hiding something. There is something about his past he does not want Canadians to know. There is an obligation for the leader of the Conservative Party to come clean and tell Canadians what he is hiding. Why will he not get a security clearance?

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Moose Jaw's food bank faced a temporary closure due to rising costs of food and a lack of donations this summer. It used to be that people facing temporary hardship were the ones who used the food bank. Now it is people with good jobs being forced to use the food bank because the cost of everything has gone up.

When will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election so people can put something under the tree and on their table this Christmas?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the member opposite use the word “security” again. What the House should be preoccupied with, which all Canadians are preoccupied with, is the overwhelming question that the Conservatives cannot answer: Why will the Conservative leader not get his

Oral Questions

security clearance? It has been months and months that the House has been preoccupied with foreign interference, yet the Conservative leader will not step up and do the very basic thing that all other party leaders in this House have done, which is to get a security clearance and protect the country.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our kids need help. The Internet is not a safe place for them right now. We need to hold online platforms accountable and put the safety of our children first by passing the online harms act. Unfortunately, we cannot debate this bill because all business in the House is stalled by a Conservative delay tactic. Amanda Todd's mother Carol, one of my constituents, recently spoke to The Globe and Mail and called for us to debate and pass Bill C-63.

Can the Minister of Justice and Attorney General explain why parents across the country, including Carol, are urging us to pass the online harms act.

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Carol Todd for her courage. Carol's daughter Amanda tragically died by suicide 12 years ago after being victimized online. Now Carol is calling on every parliamentarian to take action and pass the online harms act. Carol said, “The filibuster that is happening right now and holding everything up, it's so frustrating. It's just wasting time.... I've waited 12 years for this”.

The Conservatives have shown they will not prioritize children or protect them. I put it to the Bloc and the NDP that they have the power right now to stop this filibuster, protect kids and pass this bill. Will they?

* * *

• (1505)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two hardened criminals, a stolen car and a police chase are not from the plot of a blockbuster movie; it is daily life in Canada after nine years of the Prime Minister.

This weekend, Toronto police officers tried to arrest two car thieves, but not before the crooks injured a horse, rammed a bunch of vehicles, destroyed a business and put innocent shoppers in danger. We know that both offenders were out on bail thanks to the Liberal-NDP catch-and-release policy that has made this country more dangerous for victims and more lenient for criminals.

Why is the government putting police and the public at risk instead of putting criminals in jail where they belong?

Oral Questions

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talks a big game, but when it comes to GTA politics, let us assess what police officers are saying. The deputy chief of police in York Region has said that if we want to get tough on bail, we need to support the courts and the Crown and fix detention centres. Guess who has jurisdiction over all of that. The member for Thornhill should know that it is the province. If the Conservatives want to get tough on dealing with bail, let us have the province support criminal justice in this country and keep our communities safe.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I know members are very passionate about many issues. I am going to ask the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and the member for Sarnia—Lambton to please not take the mic unless recognized by the Chair.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that answer is offensive to every single police officer who puts their life on the line and offensive to every single Canadian who has been a victim of violent crime. Last year, eight police officers were killed in just seven months, and violent crime has gone up 30%. Scenes like the one in downtown Toronto are no longer extraordinary; they are becoming the norm under the minister's watch.

Provincial governments, municipalities and police associations all said they want change, but the minister responds with whatever that was. His recklessness is turning criminals out onto the streets and putting the public at risk. Why is he the only one who does not see it?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us listen to police officers. Here is the deputy police chief of York Region: “There’s just simply not enough court space to hold contested bail hearings.” Let us listen to the National Police Federation, which pointed out that, news flash, when we have JPs with no legal training, sometimes there may be some issues with their rendering of decisions and keeping our communities safe. Where do we train JPs legally before we appoint them? It is in Nova Scotia. Maybe that is a lesson Doug Ford could take. If the member needs it in a four-word slogan, here it is: Talk to the premier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a column in the Journal de Montréal, Philippe Léger says that police concerns over Montreal's crime gangs are unsettling. Fady Dagher, chief of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal, or SPVM, believes that Montreal is turning into an “incubator for crime”, like Marseille in France, where authorities have lost all control.

Mr. Léger states that “if the crime world has changed, our laws...have to change too, starting with minimum, aggravated sentences for all criminals who recruit 14-year-olds to commit a crime.”

Does the Prime Minister agree, or would he rather stick with his naive approach to criminals?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to keep working with police forces. My colleague mentioned the SPVM. We hold regular discussions with chief Fady Dagher, among others. I told him as recently as last week that we support their important work.

We also support the work of the RCMP and border services, which play a supportive role for municipal and provincial police forces. This is part of the work we are doing. It is work that the Conservatives forgot about. They made cuts to these organizations.

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DENTAL CARE

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than one million Canadians have received necessary dental care thanks to our government's Canadian dental care plan.

This is an historic investment that benefits Canadians. However, the Conservative members voted day after day against this program that benefits Canadians and Quebecers. They keep saying they do not believe the program exists and that they intend to cut it.

Can the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard explain to us how this program helps Quebecers receive the dental care that they need?

● (1510)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than one million Canadians, including nearly 325,000 Quebecers, have already received care under our dental care program.

The Conservatives are playing games with the health of Canadians and seniors by offering them nothing but slogans and cuts to the programs they need. Canadians and Quebecers deserve a government that takes care of their health. On our side, we know that the Conservatives are thinking only of making cuts no matter how many seniors are affected.

What is the Conservatives' hidden plan?

Routine Proceedings

[English]

LABOUR

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the B.C. Maritime Employers Association imposed a bad-faith lockout on over 700 ILWU Local 514 workers at B.C. ports. This blatant attempt to manipulate the Liberal government into undermining workers' rights is an outrageous assault on free collective bargaining.

Will the Liberal minister categorically reject any intervention that would force these port workers to give up their collective bargaining rights, or will he bow to the employer?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke with the BC MEA and the ILWU on the weekend and reminded them that it is their responsibility to their members, to each other, to Canadians, to farmers, to workers and to businesses to make a deal. It is their responsibility, and they need to do the work necessary to make an agreement.

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OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, keeping track of the tens of billions of dollars the government gives to big oil's gamble on carbon capture is near impossible. However, for proven solutions such as public transit, there are no new funds until after the next election, which is a fraction of what carbon capture gets, and transit operations will not even be eligible. We could add \$4 billion for public transit tomorrow by taxing the excess profits of the oil and gas industry.

When will the government put in place an excess profit tax on the oil and gas industry and put it towards reducing fares and improving service on public transit?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the federal government is investing historic amounts in public transit, at \$30 billion. There are more than 400 kilometres of subway lines being built in Canada right now because of federal investment.

Second, we are the only country in the G20 that has phased out subsidies to fossil fuels. We are the only ones who have done that, despite a commitment made under the previous government to do that, on which it did absolutely nothing. Liberals are there to help Canadians with transit, but we are also there to fight climate change.

* * *

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for First Nations and Inuit Relations for the Province of Quebec.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[English]

HON. MURRAY SINCLAIR

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand that there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the Hon. Murray Sinclair.

I invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1515)

[English]

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 response to 15 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADA-PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth interim report of the Special Committee on the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship, entitled "The nexus between science and national security in Canada: the case of the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg".

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

[Translation]

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Monique Pausé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I move that the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, presented on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, be concurred in.

Routine Proceedings

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to debate this report. I want to thank the people who supported me. The report dates back to 2022, but it remains very current. Let me begin by commending the committee members and the library staff for all their hard work. I also want to thank all the witnesses, the organizations involved in the studies, and the experts who contributed to the public debate on this matter by submitting their comments in the form of letters and briefs. I know some of them are watching us today.

Over the past few years, and especially since 2016, many grassroots environmental organizations, as well as many scientists and experts on radioactive waste management, have expressed their concerns about Canada's governance in this area. The Bloc Québécois believes that the recommendations in this report do not fulfill their own purpose, which is to guide the government and members of Parliament on the best path to take to advance public policy and solve the problems that need to be fixed. That is why we prepared a supplementary report.

It is telling that, of the 41 briefs received, 36 were submitted by individuals and organizations documenting their concerns, reporting questionable regulations or regulations containing irregularities or inconsistencies, as well as disturbing experiences during local consultations. By leaving so little space in this report for their testimony, it becomes disingenuous to claim how important it is to listen to the public and carry out public consultations, whether they are organized by the industry or by a House of Commons standing committee.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to stop the clock. A lot of people are talking and I find it very distracting.

• (1520)

The Speaker: The hon. member raises a very good point. It is very important that only one person speak at a time during debate. That person is the one who has been recognized by the Chair.

[*English*]

If members are going to have conversations, I invite them to please have them either with their colleagues outside the chamber or next to the colleague so that we can hear the discussions that are going on. This includes the member for Don Valley East.

The hon. member for Repentigny has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, If there truly is political will to listen to the communities most directly affected by these issues, then they must be given the consideration they deserve.

If proponents of nuclear industry development want to earn social licence, we think it would serve their cause to improve their decision-making procedures and waste governance. With that in mind, we expected members of the government and the official opposition to look more closely at the challenges of developing the nuclear sector as they relate to the radioactive waste governance issue that such development entails.

First, there is an apparent conflict of interest between the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, or CNSC, and Natural Resources Canada. Earlier this year, the CNSC decided to authorize the proposed near surface disposal facility, or NSDF. In light of that deci-

sion, along with the irregularities that were identified and publicly condemned, it would have been advisable for the committee to take into account more of the concerns raised by witnesses and detailed in the briefs. Issues raised in most of the written submissions were an alleged lack of transparency on behalf of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, or NWMO, the Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, or AECL, and its supplier, privately owned Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, as well as the inadequate approach in the maintenance of national inventories, the lack of transparency in accessing these data, and the appearance of an alleged conflict of interest with the NWMO structure and between the CNSC and Department of Natural Resources.

There is still a lot of noise, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: One moment, please.

The hon. member for Repentigny.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I will continue.

Industry witnesses repeatedly dismissed the public concerns and whistleblowing about the CNSC not acting at arm's length. Nevertheless, several witnesses and most of the briefs received by the Committee raised the appearance of a conflict of interest and recommended various solutions

Unfortunately, these concerns are not adequately reflected in the Committee's report. The Committee failed to provide an accurate overview of the cases that illustrated how the alleged conflict of interest [is possible]. As examples: the short deadlines in the consultation process, the refusal to release information requested, and so forth.

The Bloc Québécois submitted a balanced, implementable recommendation that would have placed Environment and Climate Change Canada in the CNSC's authority process, side-by-side with Natural Resources Canada. The Committee rejected our proposal.

Now let us talk about the near surface disposal facility, or NSDF, at Chalk River.

The critical principle of keeping radioactive waste away from source water is not being followed. In many respects, the project runs counter to the International Atomic Energy Agency...recommendations and guidelines.... Chalk River is located at the intersection of geological fractures and in the Western Quebec Seismic Zone, a seismic belt that spans the Ottawa Valley from Montreal to Temiscaming.... A significant volume of various radioactive wastes will be buried in the NSDF. Witnesses and experts pointed to the lack of clarity and identification of the substances to be placed in the mound.

The Bloc Québécois is extremely concerned about the hazards this project entails. The NSDF poses risks to the main tributary of the Ottawa River, a source of drinking water for millions.

First, there is the problem of the waste category. Specifically, I am referring to the "redefinition of what constitutes intermediate level radioactive waste, hidden inside CNSC 'mega-regulation' in June 2020".

William Turner, a retired Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, or AECL, worker who lives in Deep River and Gilles Provost, a science journalist, said the following:

...we then run into a scientific absurdity: in physics, the level of radioactivity of a given substance depends on its decay rate. The faster it decays, the higher its activity. This means that a radioactive material with [higher] activity according to the law of physics, would now be low-level waste according to the new definition released by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission!

Routine Proceedings

Can the impressive reduction of intermediate level waste inventories be explained...by this new [definition]?...Chalk River...is designed to accommodate only low-level waste.

It appears that, as a result of these regulations, intermediate level waste (according to physics) will end up in the mound, mixed in with low-level waste.

This also raises questions regarding the inventory at Chalk River. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, or CNL, invoked confidentiality. That is its privilege because it is private. However, we will never know the status of the inventory. “Invoking corporate secrecy provides cover for CNL...[however,] this should alert parliamentarians to exercise caution when it comes to the responsibilities of this consortium”.

I will go over some of our recommendations. In order to eliminate the appearance of conflicts of interest and thereby improve public trust in radioactive waste management and the nuclear industry in Canada, the committee recommends that the government make the necessary changes to the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Financial Administration Act “so that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission reports to Parliament through the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Natural Resources.”

In another one of our recommendations, the committee recommends—

• (1525)

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you have also heard the clamour coming from the Liberal lobby. I cannot hear what my hon. friend is saying here in the House because of the noise coming from the Liberal side.

Could you please address that?

The Speaker: I would like to reassure the hon. member that I already did. Before the hon. member got up, I sent some senior pages to ensure there was quiet back behind this place.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Repentigny.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Conservative Party. Another Bloc Québécois recommendation was:

...that the Government of Canada, through the Department of Natural Resources, review its governance practices on the boards of directors of AECL and the CNSC to ensure that they are different from each other; and that seats be set aside for members of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

We also recommended that:

...in order to respect the principles of public consultation, the 140 municipalities and the large number of Indigenous communities that have specifically called for more rigour in the Chalk River NSDF project, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada conduct a regional environmental study as soon as possible.

I am spending a lot of time talking about the NSDF because the drinking water of millions of Quebecers is at stake here, and this touches on everything the indigenous communities have spoken out against. I am going to list 10 reasons why we should oppose the project. They are detailed in a document written by Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County and Area.

First, the mound drains into the Ottawa River. The group says the following:

The Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF) site was chosen for proximity to soil that is seriously radioactive from the nuclear research centre at Chalk River. It is on the side of a hill, partly surrounded by wetlands that drain into the Ottawa River less than one kilometre away [I invite the people who are in favour of the project to go drink the water from the river]. The site is tornado and earthquake prone; the Ottawa River is a major fault line. Underlying bedrock at the site is porous and fractured and the groundwater table is very close to the surface.

Second, the enormous mound would hold more than one million tonnes of hazardous radioactive waste, as the group indicates:

The NSDF would rise up to seven storeys in height [on the hill. Modelled after an ordinary municipal dump, it will] cover an area the size of 70 NHL hockey rinks. Waste destined for the mound has accumulated over eight decades of operation at Chalk River Laboratories; waste is also being imported [from other domestic and international sites] for emplacement in the mound. It would contain dozens of radioactive and hazardous materials and tonnes of heavy metals [I will not list them all, there really are too many of them]. Cobalt-60 and Cesium-137 sources in the dump would give off so much intense gamma radiation that workers must use lead shielding to avoid dangerous radiation exposures. The International Atomic Energy Agency says these are “intermediate-level waste” and require emplacement underground [should not be on a mound]. Dioxin, PCBs, asbestos, mercury, up to 13 tonnes of arsenic and hundreds of tonnes of lead would go into the dump. It would also contain thousands of tonnes of copper and iron, tempting scavengers to dig into the mound after closure.

There is so much waste inside the mound. It is appalling.

Third, the Algonquin first nations and the Assembly of First Nations oppose the plan. I will let my colleague for Abitibi—Témiscamingue discuss the objections of indigenous communities and the Assembly of First Nations in greater detail.

Fourth, this waste site threatens the drinking water of millions of Canadians. We read the following:

The NSDF site is partly surrounded by wetlands that drain through Perch Lake into the Ottawa River, which is the drinking water source for millions of Canadians downstream including Ottawa, Gatineau and parts of Montreal. The mound is expected to leak during operation and break down due to erosion. Studies predict several types of leakage will occur during filling and after closure of the facility. The waste water plant for the NSDF would discharge contaminated water containing large quantities of tritium...and smaller quantities of many other radioactive substances [there are too many for me to list]. The proponent’s Performance Assessment study suggests the mound will break down after its predicted design life of 550 years and contents will be released to the environment and Ottawa River.

People may take the short-sighted view and say it does not matter, since we will not be here in 550 years. However, others will come after us.

Fifth, there is no safe level of exposure to the radiation that would leak into the Ottawa River. We read as follows:

All of the escaping radioactive materials would increase risks of birth defects, genetic damage, cancer and other chronic diseases. The International Atomic Energy Agency says radioactive wastes must be isolated from the biosphere.

• (1530)

Sixth, waste will remain radioactive and hazardous for thousands of years. This point reads as follows:

Routine Proceedings

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says wastes like those produced by Chalk River Laboratories...are likely to be "intermediate-level" and in some cases even "high-level," requiring emplacement tens of meters or more underground.

Reactor accidents have already occurred at Chalk River.

A former senior manager in charge of legacy radioactive wastes at Chalk River Laboratories says the waste proposed for the facility is "intermediate level" and requires underground emplacement. He says the mound would be hazardous and radioactive for many thousands of years, and that radiation doses from the facility would exceed allowable levels.... The radioactive waste will outlive the facility for many thousands of years.

Seventh, 140 municipalities in Quebec and Ontario oppose the NSDF. This point reads as follows:

More than 140 municipalities, including Pontiac County, Ottawa, Gatineau and Montreal have passed resolutions of opposition or serious concern about the proposed project. The City of Ottawa resolution specifically asked for imports of waste to the Ottawa Valley to be stopped; the request was disregarded by the consortium.

Eighth, Canadian taxpayers are paying, but a multinational consortium is calling the shots. The group says the following:

Cleanup of the site was originally estimated to cost \$8 billion in 2015 when a multinational consortium called "Canadian National Energy Alliance" was contracted by the Harper government to manage the Chalk River site and clean up the radioactive waste there and at other federally owned facilities. Since the consortium took over, costs to Canadian taxpayers for the operation and cleanup at Canada's nuclear labs have ballooned from \$336 million dollars per year to over \$1.5 billion per year....Texas-based **Fluor Corporation**, which paid \$4 million to resolve allegations of financial fraud related to nuclear waste cleanup....

This issue therefore also includes the matter of financial fraud associated with the cleanup of nuclear waste.

Ninth, building the NSDF will destroy critical habitat for protected species. We all know about the importance of biodiversity. This point reads as follows:

The NSDF site is very rich in biodiversity due to the fact that it has been fenced off to humans for 80 years. Proximity to the Ottawa River and Perch Lake make it a good feeding ground for larger mammals.... The mature forest on the site hosts three endangered bat species, and several at-risk migratory birds, including Golden-Winged Warblers, Canada Warblers, and Whip-poor-wills. Indigenous led research revealed a healthy population of threatened Eastern Wolves extensively using the site; the Indigenous researchers also found three active dens of Black Bears, protected under Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. In January 2024, Kebaowek First Nation wrote to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada asking for the permit to clearcut the site to be denied.

Tenth, there are better ways to dispose of waste. The group says the following:

An ARTEMIS peer review coordinated by the International Atomic Energy Agency could provide valuable information to the Government of Canada about the best practices for managing wastes like those at Chalk River.

Those were their 10 points. The group also states that "[f]ederal government action to halt the NSDF project is urgently needed."

This brings me to my conclusion. The voices of the people and organizations that contributed to this study through their testimony and submissions did not all generate the same level of interest at the report-writing stage. Discussions were held among committee members on the merit, or lack thereof, of certain written contributions. Choices were made to include some and exclude others, depending on individual leanings.

Hundreds of Canadians are demanding an explanation about the false statements made by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization over the last few years. However, no explanations are forth-

coming. Nothing further has been heard. The Bloc Québécois believes that a study that has gathered well-researched content from the public and is backed by sources and links to support its assertions is a worthy contribution and has merit. Obviously, when such a large number of submissions express positions that clash with the industry's own positions, the content might well be selectively chosen.

● (1535)

The report reflects the choices made by the members of the government and the official opposition. The Bloc Québécois believes that it does not adequately serve the public or the common good.

When these voices feel they are not being heard...citizens turn to the public authority in which they have the most trust and believe they will truly be heard: the democratically elected representatives....

Then again, the democratically elected representatives need to listen.

Everyone should be concerned about efforts to "dismiss individuals and organizations (including many academics, as well as technical and scientific experts from the industry) who specifically bring up alarming issues that affect human health and the environment". What people want is information. They do not want propaganda.

"Under the leadership of Pauline Marois's Parti Québécois government, Quebec made the choice to leave nuclear power behind. Quebec has the resources to accomplish the energy transition and move closer towards a truly net-zero future, without nuclear technologies", but Chalk River is moving us away from that goal.

We stand in solidarity with communities across the country, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, that have serious doubts about the nuclear industry. Our struggles are similar and are linked.

● (1540)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development for her speech.

I want to say that I am proud of Ontario's electricity system because our system is clean and it includes nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is safe and important.

[English]

I am going to get into it in my speech, but in 2005 in Ontario we still burned coal for electricity, and we do not anymore. There were smog days back then, and there are not anymore. Our system in Canada is clean. It is renewable. Nuclear plays a really strong role, but I hear the member opposite disparage the nuclear industry, when it is also responsible for developing isotopes, which save lives. I am eager to get to this in my speech.

Routine Proceedings

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is not saying that it is against all nuclear options. Medical isotopes are very important.

What we are saying is that the nuclear industry, which wants to expand, which wants to grow, never deals with its waste management. It tells us all the time why we could support it, but it never addresses its waste management.

That is what is wrong with the industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, what does my hon. colleague make of the shortage right now of medical isotopes? Last year, there were some critical shortages that unfortunately may have cost lives in Canada, and we are very grateful for Chalk River. Some of the developments of utilizing the CANDU reactor to make medical isotopes would not have been possible without Chalk River, so I thank the men and women who work there for their innovation and hard work to perfect how to make isotopes with the CANDU reactor.

I am just wondering what my colleague's answer would be for the shortage of isotopes, not just in Canada but around the world. We are back-filling some countries that have difficulties creating isotopes; does the member not think it would be wise to pursue this more?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, it is funny how we have just had two questions about medical isotopes. That is a smoke-screen. These are misleading questions, because members know full well that the nuclear industry is not interested in medical isotopes.

The nuclear industry is interested in the famous small modular reactors, which are really just a pipe dream. The nuclear industry was in decline. Now, it is trying to recover and, in order to do that, it is focusing on those small reactors. There are people who listen only to the nuclear industry lobby and are blindly charging forward toward this solution.

How much will it cost taxpayers for something that exists only on paper right now?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Repentigny for her speech and for all the work that she has done on this really important issue.

I have also met with groups of citizens who are extremely concerned about nuclear waste management, particularly when it comes to the Chalk River project, which involves surface disposal near a water table and beside a river. People are understandably concerned about their safety and that of their children. It seems so obvious to me that this is an ill-advised, poorly managed project that should be cancelled.

My colleague met with a lot of witnesses in committee. Why are we moving forward with a project that is obviously very dangerous?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, indeed, why are we moving forward? One hundred and forty municipalities say no. Ottawa says no. Indigenous nations say no. Everyone who is consulted says no, but the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is moving forward. Who is in charge here?

Why bother holding consultations when no one is listening? Of the 41 briefs submitted to the committee, 36—the majority—said no to nuclear expansion. No one is listening. We hear nothing but radio silence because some elected officials are pandering to the nuclear industry and listening to no one but the lobby.

• (1545)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for Repentigny and the Bloc Québécois as a whole for their work.

I read this supplementary report to the report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I agree entirely with all of the Bloc Québécois's recommendations for better protecting our environment and human health from the dangers of nuclear waste.

My only question for my hon. colleague is this. Why does she think our approach leans so heavily in favour of the nuclear industry when there is no evidence?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her question.

Why are we taking this approach? I have some idea why. The nuclear lobby is doing its best to ensure that the regulations are relaxed. Basically, one could argue that nuclear energy is a carbon copy of oil and gas. They all do the same thing. They have a strong presence. They do a lot of lobbying.

What they do is go through the Privy Council Office to make recommendations to cabinet. They go around anything that might stop them and go straight to cabinet. Not only are the majority of nuclear projects exempt from impact assessments under the act, but the industry also wants reactors to be exempted so that there are no constraints on the development and installation of nuclear reactors. They go straight to the Privy Council Office to make recommendations to cabinet. They have a fast track to try to impose their will.

Unfortunately, this country's government is only too eager to listen to what the lobbies want and nod along to whatever they say.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Repentigny on behalf of all Quebeckers, Canadians and even the entire planet for the incredible, sophisticated, rigorous and detailed work that she has done. She has really done an outstanding job. I admire her a lot, and I wanted to take this opportunity to tell her that.

I would like to ask her one last question.

In light of what she said, what could be done to ensure that this powerful lobby is held to account? One day someone will have to answer for these mistakes.

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I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, the recommendations that the Bloc Québécois made in its supplementary report contained at least one thing that could give citizens some reassurance. That was the idea of separating the mandates.

The Department of Natural Resources currently has a mandate to promote nuclear power, but it also has a mandate to oversee nuclear waste governance. It is as though the right hand is undoing what the left hand does. One of our recommendations is to make those mandates separate, as several witnesses suggested.

The Natural Resources Canada should deal with nuclear power and the promotion of nuclear power, while Environment Canada deals with nuclear waste governance. If nuclear power gets developed too quickly without the waste being dealt with properly and Environment Canada demands accountability, this might curb the sector's ambitions a little.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to allow me to go to Questions on the Order Paper so I could read off the questions, as we have done in the past. It will be very brief.

• (1550)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2966, 2970, 2976, 2982 and 2983.

[Text]

Question No. 2966—**Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to simultaneous interpretation services provided by the Translation Bureau since January 1, 2020: how many requests were received for interpretation at meetings of the Cabinet or its committees where the Translation Bureau was unable to fulfill the request at the originally suggested or scheduled time due to a lack of resources, broken down by calendar year?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Translation Bureau, or the bureau, is continuing to meet its clients on a regular basis to review priorities, discuss processes and optimize resource allocation. It is also continuing with its efforts to foster the next generation of interpreters and enhance its interpretation capacity. These efforts enabled the bureau to cover all interpreted events for cabinet and cabinet committee meetings.

The bureau does not track the initial times for scheduled events, as the calendar for cabinet meetings is constantly being updated. Rather, the bureau keeps track of assignments as they are completed. It does not retain information about originally suggested or scheduled times in its records.

Question No. 2970—**Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to the government's commitment in the 2019 National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking to establish a federal advisory committee of victims and survivors: (a) on what date was the committee established; (b) who are the members of the committee; (c) who is the Chair of the committee; (d) how many times, and on what dates, has the committee met; (e) for each meeting in (d), what were the agenda items; (f) what are the details related to the individuals and organizations the government consulted related to the establishment, structure, composition or any other aspect of the committee, including (i) when was each consulted, (ii) what feedback was received; (g) how much was spent on the consultation process, in total, and broken down by type of expense; (h) how much was spent on the committee and what was the committee budget (i) each year since 2019, (ii) for each of the next three years; and (i) what are the details of all memorandums or briefing notes provided to the Minister of Public Safety or his office, or the Prime Minister or his office, including, for each, the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) date, (iii) title, (iv) type of document, (v) sender, (vi) recipient, (vii) summary of the contents?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada's commitment in the 2019 national strategy to combat human trafficking to establish a federal advisory committee of victims and survivors remains pending. A range of preparatory work was commenced and advice was provided in an effort to launch and formally establish a federal advisory committee since its announcement in 2019.

In reference to the details on memorandums or briefing notes provided to the Minister of Public Safety or his office, two dockets were provided to the Minister of Public Safety or his office between 2020 and 2023. The first is PS-032565, from November 2020. This memorandum to the minister, signed by the deputy minister, is entitled "Establishment of a Human Trafficking Survivors Advisory Committee". The contents recommended the establishment of a survivor advisory committee, along with proposed terms of reference and list of those who may be interested in participating. The second is PS-036368, from June 2022. This memorandum to the minister, signed by the deputy minister, is entitled "E-binder – PS-036368 – Establishment of a Human Trafficking Survivors Advisory Committee". The contents are classified secret.

Question No. 2976—**Ms. Leslyn Lewis:**

With regard to the CRA's audit and subsequent revocation of the charitable status of the Jewish National Fund (JNF): (a) since 2015, how many meetings with external stakeholders, either virtual or in-person, did the CRA have regarding the JNF's charitable status; (b) how many meetings did the CRA officials have, either virtual or in-person, with JNF officials since 2015; (c) what are the details of the meetings in (a) and (b), including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) names and titles of the attendees, (iii) purpose of the meeting, (iv) agenda items, (v) summary of what occurred at the meeting, including anything that was agreed to; and (d) what are the details of all meeting requests the CRA declined or did not respond to from the JNF since 2015, including, for each, the (i) date of the request, (ii) names and affiliations of those who made the request, (iii) purpose of the requested meeting, (iv) reason the meeting was declined or not responded to?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, as of September 17, 2024, the date of question.

The CRA is committed to increasing the transparency and accountability of charitable organizations by providing relevant information about them to the public, in accordance with the disclosure provisions of the Income Tax Act, or the act.

The confidentiality provisions of the act prevent the CRA from commenting on specific cases without the consent of an authorized representative of the organization. However, as an exception to the general rules around taxpayer confidentiality, the act allows for certain information about registered and revoked charities to be released to the public. The CRA's legal authority for the public disclosure of that information is found in subsections 149.1(15) and 241(3.2) of the act. Any information or document that is not explicitly identified by those disclosure provisions cannot be provided to the public.

For further details on what information is publicly available, please see "How to get information about a charity" at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/information-about-a-charity.html>.

As such, the information requested in this question is considered taxpayer information and cannot be provided without the consent of an authorized representative of the organization, that is, the Jewish National Fund.

Question No. 2982—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the CBSA Assessment and Revenue Management (CARM) digital initiative: (a) what are the start and end dates of the cutover period during which there will be no activity related to the processing of accounting for imported goods or processing of refunds of duties and taxes; (b) what are importers supposed to do during this period; (c) what specific measures, if any, are in place to ensure that the CARM transition does not cause harm or disrupt any businesses; (d) what measures are in place to ensure that bonds and access to bonds required for merchandise importation are not a problem for businesses during the transition; and (e) is the government projecting that any financial harm will occur to any businesses as a result of constraints faced during the transition, and, if so, (i) how many businesses are projected to be impacted, (ii) what measures is the government taking to address those harms or constraints?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, assessment and revenue management, CARM, cutover period will extend from October 4, 2024, at 4 p.m. ET, to October 21, 2024, at 3 a.m. ET.

With regard to part (b), during this period, the submission of electronic accounting documents, B3s, must be held by trade chain partners until CARM functionality and the commercial accounting declaration, CAD, is available on October 21, 2024. However, paper accounting documents will continue to be accepted and processed at CBSA commercial offices. The ability to release commercial goods at the border and maintain border fluidity is not impacted during the CARM cutover period. The CBSA's system to process commercial releases, known as the accelerated commercial release operations support system, ACROSS, is not impacted by cutover activities and remains available with the exception of a maintenance window that will extend from the evening of Saturday, October 5, 2024, to the morning of Sunday, October 6, 2024.

With regard to part (c), the CBSA has developed transition measures to ensure continued border fluidity and timely submission of accounting and payment of duties after CARM implementation on October 21, 2024. A full account and description of the CARM transitional measures can be found at <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/cn-ad/cn24-27-eng.html>.

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With regard to part (d), regulatory changes will come into force on October 21, 2024. These regulations will introduce a 180-day transition period following CARM implementation, from October 21, 2024, to April 19, 2025, to allow time for importers to obtain financial security. This will give importers and their service providers time to adapt to the new financial security model and avoid border disruptions.

With regard to part (e), the government is not projecting that any business will be subjected to financial harm during the transition period. During the cutover period and for a period of 90 calendar days following the October 21, 2024, implementation, the CBSA will not be issuing late accounting penalties, late payment penalties or late payment interest. The CBSA may adjust this to further mitigate the transition to CARM system if it is deemed necessary.

Question No. 2983—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the hours of operation at all land ports between Canada and the USA: (a) is the CBSA currently considering or planning (i) any reduction in hours or service at any land points of entry, (ii) to close down any land points of entry; (b) if the answer to (a)(i) or (a)(ii) is affirmative, what reductions or closures are being considered or planned; (c) what are the details of any consultations and studies related to any reductions or closures, broken down by point of entry, including (i) who was consulted, (ii) by what method was the consultation posted; and (d) does the CBSA have any plans to use the ArriveCAN application or digital identification to replace staffed border crossings in favour of automated crossings at any land points of entry, and, if so, which points of entry will be impacted by these changes, and by what date?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a)(i), the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, has been analyzing changes to hours of service. With regard to part (a)(ii), the CBSA has no intention to close ports of entry.

With regard to part (b), the CBSA must assess the allocation of its resources against its operations. Recent analysis has focused on the number of cars per hour and locations where the United States Customs and Border Protection, CBP, hours of service differ from CBSA's. No closures are being planned.

With regard to part (c), there has been no public consultation to date on this. The CBSA works closely with the CBP on matters that affect both sides of the border. The CBSA is committed to proactively notifying the public ahead of any adjustments to services and operations.

With regard to part (d), there is no linkage to new technology. Any new technologies that will be introduced as part of traveller modernization will complement and assist border services officers in doing their work.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 2963 to 2965, 2967 to 2969, 2971 to 2975, 2977 to 2981, 2984 and 2985 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2963—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to full-time Governor in Council appointees: (a) what GCQ 9 classified positions are currently (i) vacant, (ii) filled; (b) what GCQ 10 classified positions are currently (i) vacant, (ii) filled; and (c) for each filled position in (a) and (b), who was appointed to the position?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2964—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the filing requirements for the GST and HST for businesses, broken down by calendar year from 2018 through 2023, and by province or territory: how many businesses filed their GST return using (i) only electronic returns, (ii) paper returns for some, or all, of their filings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2965—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to travel expenditures incurred by the government, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what were the total travel expenditures, broken down by object code and type of travel (i.e. 0251 Public servant travel - Operational activities, 0264 Non-public servant travel - Training, etc.) incurred during the (i) 2022-23, (ii) 2023-24, fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2967—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to Jasper National Park, since 2015: (a) did any government department or agency do any consultations on the impact of the invasive mountain pine beetle, fire management, and fire preparedness, and, if so, (i) which groups and people were consulted, (ii) how much money was spent on the consultation process, (iii) what were the results or recommendations of the consultations, (iv) when were the consultations conducted, (v) how were the consultations conducted; (b) what briefings on the impact of the invasive mountain pine beetle, fire management, and fire preparedness were produced for the Privy Council Office, the Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Office of the Prime Minister or any other government department; (c) what conversations, online, written, spoken, or otherwise, took place amongst Parks Canada or Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) officials in determining efforts to mitigate the impact of the mountain pine beetle; (d) following the mountain pine beetle infestation, what consideration led to the decision by the Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to withhold the data on how many hectares of dead pine were left standing in Jasper National Park, and what are the details of all notes, minutes of meetings, briefings or any other documents related to this matter, including, for each, the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) date, (iii) title, (iv) type of document, (v) sender, (vi) recipient; (e) how many hectares of dead pine were left standing in Jasper National Park; (f) following the release of 2021 Briefing Book and its advice that "There is still much work to do to mitigate Mountain Pine Beetle related impacts particularly in the forests surrounding communities within the Rocky Mountain National Parks, e.g. Jasper", what consideration was undertaken by the Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change or ECCC to address this concern, and what are the details of all notes, minutes of meetings, briefings or any other documents related to this matter, including, for each, the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) date, (iii) title, (iv) type of document, (v) sender, (vi) recipient; (g) following the 2022 Parks Canada Implementation Report to Parliament that warned precautions were inadequate and that "Fire has not yet been applied for Whitebark Pine restoration", what consideration was undertaken by the Office of the Minister

of Environment and Climate Change or ECCC to address this concern and what are the details of all notes, minutes of meetings, briefings or any other documents related to this matter, including, for each, the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) date, (iii) title, (iv) type of document, (v) sender, (vi) recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2968—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) risk assessments on imports of honeybee hives, nucleus colonies, package bee imports, and honeybee queens: (a) what are the details of all documents prepared related to the 2003 and 2013 CFIA assessments about the possibility of opening the border with the United States for such imports, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) subject matter, (iii) type of document, (iv) department's internal tracking number, (v) sender, (vi) recipients, (vii) summary of the contents; (b) what is the reason that a risk assessment for such imports was not undertaken between 2013 and 2023; (c) what are the details of all documents related to the matter in (b), including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) subject matter, (iii) type of document, (iv) department's internal tracking number, (v) sender, (vi) recipients, (vii) summary of the contents; (d) what are the details of the proposed 2024 CFIA risk assessment for the import of honeybee hives, nucleus colonies, package bee imports, and honeybee queens from the United States, including, (i) which groups and people were consulted, (ii) how much money was spent on the consultation process, (iii) what were the results or recommendations of the consultations, (iv) when were the consultations conducted, (v) how were the consultations conducted; and (e) what are the details of all notes, minutes of meetings, briefings or any other documents related to matters in (d), including, for each, the (i) internal tracking number, (ii) date, (iii) title, (iv) type of document, (v) sender, (vi) recipient, (vii) summary of the contents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2969—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the \$75 million allocated to the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking announced on September 4, 2019: (a) what is the breakdown of how the \$75 million was spent, including (i) which departments and agencies received funding, (ii) how much each received, (iii) how much was allocated for each initiative, program or organization; (b) what are the details of all projects and programs which have been provided funding, to date, through the strategy, including, for each, the (i) name, (ii) project description, (iii) amount, (iv) date of the funding, (v) start date of the project or program, (vi) end date of the project or program, (vii) duration of the project or program funded, (viii) recipient, (ix) location; and (c) what criteria or process was used to determine which projects were funded and how much each project received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2971—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Projects, since January 1, 2020: (a) how much funding has been provided by the government for any such projects, in total and broken down by individual project; and (b) has the government received any requests for such projects which it has not yet funded, and, if so, what are the details of the requests and the reason why they have not yet been funded?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2972—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to visitor visa applicants and assessments done by the government, including agencies such as the Canada Border Services Agency at border crossings: what are the criteria used to assess the admissibility of applicants, including the amount of funds that applicants must have, broken down by type of visa?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2973—Mr. Larry Brock:**

With regard to the Minister of Public Safety's announcement on May 8, 2023, about the government investing \$390 million "in programs to help stop gun crime and gang violence before it starts": (a) how much of the \$390 million has been spent to date in total, broken down by province or territory; (b) which organizations received the funding and how much did each receive; (c) what were the guidelines used to determine the eligibility of a funding recipient; and (d) what metrics and accountability measures is the government using to ensure that organizations use the funding in an appropriate fashion?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2974—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to Immigration and Refugee Board hearings on refugee claims, in 2021 and 2022: (a) for accepted written hearings, (i) what is the total number of persons on all applications, (ii) what is the amount of applications that had one person's name attached, (iii) what is the amount of applications that had more than one person's name attached, (iv) what is the amount of applications that had a marital partner's name attached, (v) what is the amount of applications that had one or more children's names attached, (vi) what is the amount of applications that had a dependent other than a marital spouse or a child attached, (vii) what is the total amount of persons' names on all applications; and (b) of the total amount of persons' names accepted through written hearings, (i) what is the number broken down by country of origin, (ii) what is the amount of people of each age, broken down by year from 0 to 100 years old, (iii) what is the amount of people broken down by gender, (iv) what is the amount of people showing English language proficiency, (v) what is the amount of people showing French language proficiency, (vi) what is the amount of people showing both English and French language proficiency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2975—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's relationship with the Canadian Climate Institute: (a) what role did the government have in the creation and beginnings of the institute; (b) how much funds to date has the government provided to the institute; (c) what are the details of the government's contribution agreement with the institute, including (i) its duration, (ii) the funding provided each year, (iii) reporting requirements, (iv) independent audit requirements, (v) any other conditions of the agreement; (d) what is the government's understanding related to what percentage of the institute's operating budget comes from government funding as opposed to other sources; (e) does Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) have the complete details of other funding sources the institute draws from on an annual basis; (f) if the answer to (e) is yes, what are the details of all the funding sources, including the (i) type of donor (corporation, not-for-profit corporation, charity, other levels of government, etc.), (ii) amount of the contribution, (iii) year of the contribution; (g) what is the charitable purpose of the institute as per the requirements of the Income Tax Act; and (h) what information does ECCC have regarding other charities or other initiatives with which the institute is formally engaged, including the (i) name of the charity or initiative, (ii) description of the engagement, (iii) amount of the donation or contribution?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2977—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the administration of medical assistance in dying (MAID) in Canada: (a) what is the current national standardized protocol for administering MAID; (b) if the answer to (a) is that there is no standardized protocol, why not; (c) how is the government evaluating the MAID protocols with regard to (i) their effectiveness, especially with regard to minimizing pain, (ii) procedure complications, (iii) procedure risks; (d) since 2016, what independent medical research has the government either commissioned or collected that (i) evaluates MAID clinical practice and studies the evidence with regard to the medical risks and complications in MAID deaths carried out to date, particularly as they pertain to the medications used and dosages given, (ii) analyzes the totality of patients' physical experiences and impacts; (e) if the answer to (d) is none, what are the reasons; (f) how many autopsy reports have been done on MAID patients; (g) if the answer to (f) is none or unknown, what are the reasons; (h) are any of the medications used to administer MAID in Canada used in executions in other countries; (i) are any of the medications used to administer MAID illegal or prohibited in other countries; (j) if the answers to (h) or (i) are in the affirmative, what are the details, including the (i) medication name, (ii) countries where it is used, (iii) method of use for execution or reasons the medication is illegal or prohibited; (k) is the government aware of concerns from some medical professionals that the use of Midazolam and Propofol in MAID has the potential of causing a painful death even if it appears outwardly peaceful,

and, if so, what is the government's response; (l) what is the government doing to investigate the concerns in (k); (m) why does Statistics Canada not classify MAID as a cause of death; and (n) when will the government resolve the death reporting incongruence between Statistics Canada and Health Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2978—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the One Health approach: (a) has the government undertaken a formal and public review of Canada's whole-of-government pandemic response to learn from the past and inform future national pandemic planning; (b) if the answer to (a) is negative, what are the reasons; (c) if the answer to (a) is negative, when will the government conduct a formal and public review of Canada's whole-of-government pandemic response; (d) how does the government define a pandemic; (e) what is the government's current policy with regard to the One Health approach; (f) how does the government define One Health; (g) if this term is not defined by the government, what are the parameters by which it plans to ensure compliance with the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations and the Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response accord; (h) how will the government implement a One Health approach as part of its public health planning in the future; and (i) what is the extent to which efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be included in the government's One Health approach?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2979—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Settlement Program, the Resettlement Assistance Program, the Interim Housing Assistance Program, the International Migration Capacity Building Program, and the Francophone Immigration Support Program, for the fiscal years 2015-16 to 2023-24, broken down by program and province or territory: (a) what organizations applied for grants, contributions or loans; (b) how much did each organization apply for on an annual basis; (c) how much did each organization receive on an annual basis; (d) how much of their funding did IRCC allocate to administrative costs on an annual basis; and (e) what were the actual administrative costs on an annual basis?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2980—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to funding provided through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Settlement Program, the Resettlement Assistance Program, the Interim Housing Assistance Program, the International Migration Capacity Building Program or the Francophone Immigration Support Program for the fiscal years 2015-16 to 2023-24 to any corporation, non-profit organization or other third party that operates within the city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: (a) what are those entities; (b) how much did each entity receive, broken down by fiscal year; (c) how much of that funding was actually spent on initiatives, projects, administration or other activities within the city of Saskatoon; (d) did the government audit or require that audits be conducted on any of these entities, either on a fiscal or program delivery basis, and, if so, what are the details, including, (i) which entities, (ii) whether any of those audits indicated anything unusual that needed to be addressed; and (e) if the answer to (d)(ii) is affirmative, what were these and what remedial actions were taken?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2981—Mrs. Anna Roberts:**

With regard to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP): (a) how many individuals living abroad are currently receiving CPP payments, in total and broken down by country; (b) how much was paid out to recipients living abroad during the last fiscal year, in total and broken down by country; (c) of the countries in (a), which ones have (i) signed, (ii) not signed, a treaty with Canada concerning cooperation which would notify the government when a CPP recipient dies and allow the government to recover any payments made to a deceased person as a result of the CPP not being aware of a recipient's death; (d) last year, how much is estimated to have been wrongfully paid to CPP recipients following a death before the CPP became aware; and (e) of the overpayments in (d), how much (i) has been recovered, (ii) has not been recovered, but is expected to be recovered, (iii) is not expected to be recovered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2984—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Pain and Suffering Compensation benefit and the Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation benefit awarded by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) on what criteria does VAC determine the grade-level assigned to veterans with a barrier that affects their life after service; (b) what is the (i) maximum amount, (ii) minimum amount, of this benefit at each grade-level assigned in (a); and (c) what other criteria does the department use to determine benefit amounts in (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2985—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Pain and Suffering Compensation benefit and the Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation benefit awarded by Veterans Affairs Canada, broken down by fiscal year since 2008-09: (a) how many applications were received; (b) how many applications were (i) approved, (ii) denied; (c) how many applications were from veterans suffering from cancer related to their service in the (i) Royal Canadian Navy, (ii) Canadian Army, (iii) Royal Canadian Air Force; and (d) how many of the applications in (a) were from veterans who identified as women?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to talk about nuclear energy and some other associated important issues. The issues are related to carbon neutrality, net zero and all the efforts our government and various other governments across this country are making to encourage and join a green and clean revolution when it comes to how we generate electricity and how we get our energy in Canada and around the world.

I have to start by acknowledging the devastating impacts climate change is having on Planet Earth, but specifically here in Canada. Our planet is literally burning up and climate change is the root cause. Already we know that Canada is warming at a rate two times greater than the rest of the world. The wildfires last year blanketed Canada with smoke. They burned over 18 million hectares, which

is a size that is unfathomable, larger than many mid-sized countries, and displaced 200 communities and 232,000 Canadians from their homes. In fact, 42% of the world's people displaced due to wildfires were Canadian.

Let us put that in perspective. Canada has 0.5% of the world's population and is responsible for 1.5% of global emissions, which means, for the Conservative members opposite, that our emissions are more than three times higher than average. Therefore it is important to recognize that we measure emissions not by the flag a country has, and most countries have one, but per capita. In Canada, our emissions are very high per capita but are coming down because of technologies like nuclear.

Despite Canada's very small population, more than 40% of the world's population that has been displaced from its home due to wildfires in the last year was Canadian. If that does not tell the Conservative members, who are now having a conversation, that we are vulnerable to climate change and the impacts of extreme weather, then I do not know what does. I think it is clear they drank the oil-and-gas Kool-Aid and there is no coming back to reason for them.

The cost of natural disasters has ballooned by over 1200% since the 1970s. Just this past summer, damages from severe weather costs were over \$7 billion in insurable losses, making it the most destructive season on record.

Doing nothing is not an option. There is no question that the threat of climate change is existential, but today, despite the challenges, Canada finds itself in a unique and actually highly enviable position, because for Canada, action on climate change does not just mitigate floods, fires and droughts but also presents a generational economic opportunity, one we have not seen since the Industrial Revolution.

Global finance and the global economy are beginning to rapidly transform in ways that are creating many economic opportunities for those who approach the transition to a low-carbon future in a thoughtful and focused manner. In the global race to net zero, an electricity grid that powers our homes, businesses, industries, cars and country with clean, reliable and affordable energy is mission-critical in every province and territory right across Canada.

The good news is that Canada already has a head start with a very clean grid. More than 80% is non-emitting; that is because we have hydroelectric, wind, solar, and yes indeed, nuclear. It is true in Ontario, and very much because of nuclear power; in fact, the story of nuclear in Ontario is one of considerable success. Nuclear energy helped make the phase-out of coal possible in Ontario, resulting in smog days' going from 53 in 2005 to zero in 2015, all while dramatically cutting carbon emissions.

Routine Proceedings

I remember 2005, because I relied on the atmosphere for my line of work at that time; I was an endurance athlete. I competed in kayaking on a world stage for Canada. I was just coming off a successful Olympics in 2004, when in 2005, the air in the greater Toronto area was too dirty to breathe for my training. I had to travel to Germany that summer and train in Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands in order to benefit from a clean environment.

How tragic it is that the air in the greater Toronto area in the summer of 2005 was not compatible with endurance sports, where one has to consume hundreds of litres of oxygen every hour in order to perform those activities. Since that time, because we phased out coal, our air is much cleaner. There are measurable impacts on health. People do not get sick and die from cardiovascular- and respiratory-related distress as frequently as they used to, and that is worth the investment.

• (1555)

As we transition our energy grid to net zero in the coming years, nuclear is not only a silver bullet but also in many provinces is likely to play a very important role as a source of baseload power. Canada is a tier-one nuclear nation, and we have been safely operating nuclear energy and safely managing nuclear waste for decades. Under the world-class independent regulator the Canada Nuclear Safety Commission, there is no question that Canada is a leader. From medical isotopes to small modular reactors, responsible uranium development and CANDU technology, Canada is a nuclear leader, and the sector drives significant economic activity within the Canadian economy.

However, I want to point out that earlier when I mentioned isotopes, the Bloc Québécois said it was some kind of a red herring and that I was distracting from the real issues. That could not be farther from the truth. I was visiting a hospital recently where staff talked about how important medical isotopes are for their processes and how about 90% of them get furnished here in Canada because of our systems. They suggested that we could still make medical isotopes, but maybe not the power. It just does not work like that. The system works in conjunction, supplying our energy grid with clean electricity and at the same time providing our medical system with isotopes that literally save lives.

That is why we are supporting provinces that choose to use nuclear energy, so they can further develop renewables, support a zero-emissions electricity grid, create jobs and give businesses and industry an enormous competitive advantage over other jurisdictions. That is why we announced \$74 million to support SaskPower's leadership on the province's deployment of a GE Hitachi small modular nuclear reactor by the middle of next decade. It is why we announced an investment of \$50.5 million for small modular nuclear reactors in New Brunswick and almost \$1 billion to develop Canada's first grid-scale, small modular nuclear reactor in Ontario, set to reduce emissions by 740,000 tonnes, the equivalent of millions of vehicles.

This is a national conversation and effort. Work among provinces, territories and indigenous leaders, utilities and industry, the private sector, unions and academics, as well as civil society, are all needed to build a clean, reliable and affordable electric grid together. It is also an international conversation about how the

world can have non-emitting baseload power that we need in order to fight climate change.

Right now, when there is an on-demand power issue in Ontario, there is a gas-fired power plant just outside my riding in Halton Hills that fires up and provides the grid with intermittent power when necessary. I was driving by it yesterday, and the effluent coming out of the facility was very significant. It was not just steam, as the Conservatives just suggested. Steam is not brown. It is disappointing that in 2024-25, we still burn natural gas in order to produce electricity, because indeed we do not actually need natural gas. There are other options that are cleaner, greener and cheaper, and those are the ones we need in order to fight climate change.

We are going to continue to fight climate change and to power low-carbon economies right around the world. Experts show the world that nuclear power is necessary if we are going to meet our objectives. Scenarios under the IEA and IPCC say nuclear is an important piece of that puzzle. Canada can and will continue to play a role in it, just as we have for decades, helping our allies reduce emissions with our state-of-the-art technology.

The world is looking for leadership in the fight against climate change, so it turns to us as we put a cap on oil and gas pollution. It turns to us as we join it in putting in place a price on pollution, a carbon price, as we build out the clean hydrogen sector and we promote a renewable energy boom, just as we support clean nuclear energy. Building out low-carbon electricity grids is not just a competitiveness issue; it is also a climate change issue and a global security issue and. As I have pointed out, it is also a health care concern.

When Russia launched its illegal, reprehensible invasion of Ukraine, the energy security apparatus moved to the forefront of the global conversation. Our European allies worked to replace Russian energy imports with those from other countries while accelerating their transition towards non-emitting and more secure forms of energy, including renewables, hydrogen and nuclear.

Routine Proceedings

• (1600)

International interest in Canada's nuclear industry is coming from countries looking to refurbish their existing CANDU reactors, one of the greatest Canadian inventions, and to build new reactors as well. Canada was proud to support Romania's clean power future by making available up to \$3 billion in export financing for Canadian CANDU reactors. This will help Romania reduce emissions while also removing its reliance on Russian energy. That is a key way to support Romania, but it is also supporting Ukraine, Poland and other European allies.

One hundred per cent of the dollars being financed by the Canadian government will flow to Canadian companies. Much of this will go to small and medium-sized Canadian companies involved in those energy sectors. There are nearly 200 companies across Canada currently supplying products or services to the nuclear industry, including existing CANDU reactors, that will be well positioned to compete for supply contracts. This means more good jobs and great economic opportunity for Canadians. The benefits of nuclear energy are enormous, for the fight against climate change, our economy and creating good jobs.

However, it must be done safely. Safety is always our top priority when it comes to nuclear energy. Our world-class nuclear safety regime is administered by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, an independent regulator that makes science-based, objective decisions and regularly undergoes peer reviews from world-renowned organizations. As an International Atomic Energy Agency member, Canada implements practices that align with the best practices and guidelines of the international community.

All radioactive waste in Canada is currently being safely managed according to international standards at facilities that are licensed and monitored by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. In fact, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development said in his audit that Canada is successfully managing all radioactive waste.

The Bloc Québécois, however, says these decisions about nuclear safety should be made by politicians. Frankly, I could not disagree more. We in the House are not experts on dealing with nuclear waste. Elected members of Parliament should never intervene in and override the international controls and safety measures that objective science says are needed, and we must always rely on experts, research and science in those decisions.

We have seen objective scientific fact be thrown aside for political purposes. We see it with the Conservatives, who are against doing anything on climate change even though it is hurting our economy and our communities. We see it with the New Democrats, who flip-flopped on the carbon price. Obviously, we are now seeing it with the Bloc Québécois.

The carbon price is a policy that will be responsible for reducing one-third of our emissions; it is already having that impact. The Conservatives want to bring us back to a time under Stephen Harper when they did nothing on climate change. They did not even care about lowering our emissions. They abandoned our Paris commitments. In fact, in the House, I have heard them ridicule the Paris Agreement—

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. I just got confirmation from an engineer that a natural gas plant would not produce brown exhaust—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not a point of order. It is a point of debate. The hon. member can bring that up during his questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

• (1605)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to Halton Hills to see what comes out of a gas-powered electricity-generating station. I can see colour just fine. It was brown effluent. I would invite him to come. I know the member's community still burns coal to create electricity. That is the dirtiest way known to make electricity, and natural gas is not far behind. There are net-zero ways of producing electricity onto our grid. Indeed, sometimes the effluent is brown.

Conservatives who are against doing anything to fight climate change, even though it is hurting our economy and communities, are anti-science. We have seen it with the NDP, which recently flip-flopped on carbon pricing, and we have also seen it with the Bloc Québécois, whose members voted against Bill C-49, even though this legislation enables the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia to build offshore renewable energy for the first time, reducing emissions and creating tens of thousands of jobs. It will attract billions in investment and unlock a \$1-trillion offshore energy industry. What a remarkable thing to vote against. Conservatives voted against Atlantic Canada and so did the Bloc Québécois. It is astonishing.

The decisions around nuclear waste are being managed properly, following rigorous scientific study, consultation and environmental assessment, and with safety measures in place. It is reckless for the Bloc Québécois to suggest politicians should be making these decisions instead.

This report concludes that Canada is safely managing our nuclear waste according to best practices and best international policies. This will continue to be the case and will only be more important as we utilize this technology to reduce our emissions, fight climate change and support good, sustainable jobs as we go forward.

I would like to transition a bit to a bill that I am excited to have come to this House when we can dispense with the current filibuster that the Conservatives are engaging in. I am looking forward to discussing Bill C-73. Bill C-73 is a bill that focuses on biodiversity, our environment and nature-based solutions for fighting climate change.

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I am very proud to live in Halton region. I grew up in Halton region, and it is one of the most biodiverse areas in Canada. It surprised me when I heard that, so I looked it up. It also surprises a lot of people who live in that area because it is home and it does not look or feel like a rainforest or like the most biodiverse area in Canada, but indeed it is. That is something worth protecting. I do a lot of school visits and I hear from kids all the time who are concerned about biodiversity loss and pollution, and the impacts of climate change. We have to fight against that.

As we are fighting against that and trying to make progress, the Conservatives are introducing bills, trivial ones and rather silly ones like a bill to bring back the plastic straw. They are very proud of it. They will applaud. They are very proud of their legislation to promote the use of single-use plastics.

I spend a lot of time on the water. Sometimes when I am on the water, I see Tim Hortons lids and straws—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, to answer the question from my hon. colleague, I do in fact clean it up quite often. I host cleanups in my community with kids and we pick up garbage, but picking up garbage is not going to solve climate change. The members think it is hilarious that a politician might actually get dirty every once in a while and pick up some garbage, but I would invite my colleagues to try to get engaged.

Madam Speaker, I just want to say that I am being heckled and I have not heard any sort of an attempt to ask them to calm down a little. As I have been speaking, I have had three or four of them speaking to me at this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There has been some heckling; it calms down and then it starts up again. I remind members that if they want to ask questions and comments, they should wait for the appropriate time. I would also ask members to not run in here and then run out after they have made some loud comments.

The hon. member will have 10 minutes of questions and comments, so I would ask members to please hold on to their thoughts and comments until the appropriate time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I hope members opposite have not used up all of their clever heckles while they are sitting down, because I want to hear what they have to say when they stand up and it is their turn to speak. Sometimes, when I do school visits, teachers have to remind their students they should not speak out of turn. They are usually in grade 5, so 10 years old and 11 years old. It is disappointing to see the Conservatives using similar tactics as schoolchildren do.

I want to talk about Bill C-73, which is an act respecting transparency and accountability in relation to certain commitments Canada has made under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Canada is a huge country. We have so much biological diversity from coast to coast to coast. We have a global obligation. This is

not a choice. We need to protect it. We are the stewards of this global biodiversity framework. We hosted the meeting in Montreal last year and have made that commitment internationally.

We know the Conservatives have talked about commitments as outlandish as leaving the United Nations altogether. They make fun of the sustainable development goals. They ridicule members like me when we wear our SDG pins in the House. In fact, they promote this misinformation, and actually it is disinformation because it is quite harmful, about some kind of a globalist agenda with respect to the SDGs.

I wonder if the Conservative members ever read what the 17 SDGs are. If they would like, they could perhaps share which sustainable development goal they find most reprehensible. Perhaps it is clean water; perhaps it is no hunger; perhaps it is education for all, or perhaps it is equity. Perhaps it is partnerships, because we know the Conservatives think they can operate in a silo all on their own, without international co-operation, without international frameworks and agreements, and without attending United Nations meetings or going to COP.

The Conservatives think Canada is this tiny island that can operate alone. They think we do not have any obligations to lower our emissions here, despite them being some of the highest in the world, or obligations to promote biodiversity and end nature loss.

I will just end by saying nuclear energy is an asset and a solution to the triple threat of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss we are experiencing. It is irresponsible to suggest otherwise and it is reckless to not take action. I am proud to be standing here on the government side with a government that is taking action on all three and utilizing every tool in our tool box to achieve those goals.

• (1610)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member started off by saying the world is on fire, Canada is on fire.

It was revealed that Parks Canada had wanted to do controlled burns for Jasper since 2022 yet was denied by the government. Did the Liberals intentionally allow Jasper to burn to justify their carbon tax that is sending a million Canadians a month to food banks?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely astonishing that when the member gets up and shares the tabloid-style rhetoric she always does in the House, other Conservative members clap. It is also disgusting that the member would insinuate that our government, or any government, would encourage a park to burn intentionally, where a brave firefighter lost their life and thousands of Canadians lost their homes. That is disgusting.

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Under the Conservative government from 2010 to 2015, there were no controlled burns. That government did no mechanical removals. It cut all funding for Jasper National Park by \$30 million a year. That creates a hangover effect. The Conservative government did not have a mountain beetle strategy. We started that in 2016. We took action in Jasper National Park. We have been doing the mechanical clearing. We have been doing the controlled fire and burning. We have employed the Indigenous Leadership Initiative and the indigenous guardians program.

The members opposite who are on the environment committee know that, because they listened to the amazing people, like Dr. Amy Cardinal, who have been doing that work for over a decade. Those members opposite ought to be absolutely ashamed of themselves that they would insinuate any government would allow a park to burn. It is that kind of rhetoric that leads to the misinformation and disinformation that leads to Canadians feeling less confident about science and the science of climate change. Shame on that disgusting rhetoric.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members on both sides of the House to please wait until the appropriate time to be recognized. At this point, I have recognized the hon. member for Repentigny, and I am sure that everyone wants to hear the question she will ask or the comments she will put forward.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member has, on a number of occasions now, spoken out of turn. Unless he is recognized, I would ask him to please be quiet.

The hon. member for Repentigny.

• (1615)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, my committee colleague kept saying that the Bloc Québécois is against nuclear energy. It is true that the Bloc Québécois does not support nuclear development, but we recognize that it is a legitimate preference for other stakeholders. However, to say that nuclear power is clean energy is just plain wrong. I did not specify all the different types of radioactive waste in my speech, but I could list them all. It is extremely hazardous.

Let us talk numbers. Wall Street estimates that renewables are already three to seven times cheaper than nuclear. Even the International Energy Agency says that, globally, non-hydro renewables will account for 90% of all new electricity generation over the next five years. It seems to me that these are valid alternatives that are cheaper and that may be much cleaner than nuclear energy.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. It is important to note that that Quebec is

very lucky to have a strong electricity generation system thanks to hydro power. That is, of course, a major asset for Quebec, but the other provinces are not in the same boat. Not every province in the country has a system like that. Nuclear power may not be an option or necessity in Quebec, but it is a great opportunity for all the other provinces.

With regard to nuclear waste, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories has confirmed that the waste water is not a radioactive contaminant and does not pose any threat to the public. It is also important to note that public health and safety and environmental health are top priorities for us.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member was speaking about Bill C-373. I would like to ask him about Bill C-372.

António Guterres, the head of the UN, has called fossil fuel companies the “godfathers of climate chaos”. He said they are moving us to a living hell and that countries and governments have to stop acting as “enablers”. Part of that, for Guterres, is a ban on fossil fuel advertising, as it is a threat to human health and a threat to the health of the planet.

Would the member support Bill C-372, which would limit fossil fuel advertising? It is a direct threat to human health.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend and colleague for his work on his private member's bill. I have met with stakeholders who feel very strongly that we ought to pass legislation to ban fossil fuel advertising.

Before I commit to supporting it, I will say that when I was an Olympic athlete, many of our activities were sponsored by Petro-Canada, which is owned by Suncor. I am not going to stand in the House and be a hypocrite. I am going to acknowledge that the oil and gas sector and the energy sectors across the country do good work, providing contributions to our economy and jobs. However, it is also the case that they do a lot of greenwashing. It is very dishonest when a truck with billboards on it, purchased by the Alberta government, is driving around town in Ottawa promoting the idea of getting rid of a cap on pollution.

There are two schools of thought in Canada. One is that we have no obligation to the environment. However, on the Liberal side, we believe that we have to fight climate change, and that involves lowering pollution and addressing our emissions.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have to tell the hon. parliamentary secretary that I think his commitment and his government's commitment to nuclear energy is entirely misplaced and lacking any evidence making any kind of reasonable case that nuclear energy contributes to addressing the climate crisis.

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I note the parliamentary secretary's point to the hon. member for Repentigny about radioisotopes. I recommend that he look at what cyclotrons do, particularly the TRIUMF cyclotron in North Vancouver. The government has also invested in producing radioisotopes without the threats to the environment and human health presented by relying on nuclear energy.

The reason the Greens continue to oppose nuclear energy and do not see it as a solution to climate change is very simple and practical: It does not produce electricity at anything like the cut-rate cost of renewables. We are now getting solar in at less than three cents a kilowatt hour. We can roll out solar, from the minute we decide to do it to when it is producing electricity, in a matter of months. Any new nuclear reactor takes more than a decade, and the costs break the bank of any province.

To that, I would add for the parliamentary secretary to please consider that this Parliament has never once had a debate on nuclear energy and a vote on whether it is a good idea or not. The last time and the only time—

• (1620)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry; I have to allow for one more question after this.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend and colleague for the debate today.

Not all Greens agree with the hon. leader of the Green Party. I know many Greens who believe in nuclear energy. I consider myself an environmentalist and know many environmentalists, and many of us agree with the notion that nuclear energy is green, renewable and necessary to power our green revolution and innovative approach to sustainability across the country. I point to Ontario as a great example. We would still be burning coal if it were not for nuclear in Ontario.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to Bill C-73. I know that at the standing committee on the environment, a motion has been put forth not once but three times to have a prestudy on that piece of legislation. Given what has taken place inside the House of Commons, unfortunately it has not been passed. My understanding is that it is because there is a coalition, which includes the New Democrats and the Conservatives, to prevent a prestudy from taking place.

Perhaps the member could provide his thoughts on that issue.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, unfortunately it is true. The three- or four-week Conservative-led filibuster in the House of Commons has extended to committee as well. The Conservatives open most meetings by saying they would like to see the minister at committee. I presented a motion today that would see the minister come to committee on Wednesday to discuss Bill C-73. Of course, they would be more than welcome to ask any question they like on any subject they like with the minister there. However, they filibustered it and ended debate, so unfortunately we will not be starting the debate on Bill C-73. I hope they will change their minds sometime soon and end the filibuster.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the nuclear-supportive residents of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to speak against the Bloc's dissenting report recommendations that put my constituents' health and safety at risk.

The Bloc calls on the government to pull the plug on over a decade of work toward securing low-level radioactive waste located on the grounds of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited in Chalk River, Ontario. Many of my constituents are deeply troubled by the anti-science ideology this motion represents. If the government were to even entertain the report's recommendation, it would set us back years, if not decades.

Despite the government's best efforts, Canadians can be proud of our history and in particular Canada's incredible contributions to the development of nuclear science. Much of that science was done at Chalk River, just 200 kilometres west of here. What the scientists, engineers and all the staff at Chalk River have accomplished over the years is remarkable. There is an incredible history that not enough Canadians hear about. Maybe if Chalk River was in Montreal or Toronto, the CBC would have told that story by now.

While the Bloc's dissenting report and recommendations are environmentally harmful, this debate provides me with an opportunity to tell more Canadians about the proud legacy of AECL. I think it is important that we understand the history of how we got here, the science behind how we got here and where we go from here.

Before I dive in, if any Canadian watching at home or half-listening in the House wants to know more about the plans for securing low-level waste, they can check out my YouTube channel. That is where I posted a series of videos from an interview that I did with the former president of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories about its plans to secure the waste in what is now known as the near surface disposal facility, or NSDF for short. All they need to do is click the videos and scroll down, way down in fact. This is because the interview is from seven years, which was essentially the halfway point in what has been a long and thorough process.

In the years leading up to that, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories had been conducting in-depth studies on where to locate the near surface disposal facility to contain the low-level radioactive waste from nearly 80 years of operation at Chalk River. The reactors at Chalk River did not produce electricity; they were research reactors. Along with the Nobel Prize-winning research, the reactors produced more than a billion life-saving medical isotopes. Hundreds of thousands of people are living happy, healthy lives because of the work at Chalk River.

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During those 80 years, the staff at Chalk River always sought to apply the best methods to contain waste that were available at the time. This included burying some types of waste in sand pits on site. In fact, 90% of the waste that is to be stored in the facility is at the site right now.

Let me be clear: 90% of the low-level waste is located at Chalk River on the shore of the Ottawa River right now. This Bloc report is recommending that the government politically interfere in the operations of AECL and restart the entire process. That would set us back 15 years and leave the low-level waste where it is currently stored around the campus, including in sand pits. The separatists cannot claim to care about the Ottawa River, then demand we delay cleaning up the waste sites along it. That is like putting a round peg in a “Bloc” hole.

The dissenting report calls on the government to restart the review process, but this time under the Liberals' unconstitutional Impact Assessment Act. Opponents of nuclear science can restart the process as many times as they like, but it will not change that the site selected was the best location based on a detailed geological analysis of the lands around the campus. Those opposed to the project claim its location is the problem; it is only a kilometre away from the Ottawa River.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Saskatoon—University, by the way.

● (1625)

How far or how close the river is is not as important as what is underneath the chosen site and its elevation. The selected site sits on bedrock, and the foundations would be 50 metres above the water. That would ensure that it would be safe from flooding. Moving the site further from the river would increase the chance of flooding and leakage. That obviously sounds counterintuitive, but countering our intuitions is why we invented the scientific method. The scientific method allows humans to check their bias.

I will give some credit to the Bloc. The separatists are open and upfront about their bias in the report. Here is what the Bloc wrote in the dissenting report:

The Bloc Québécois's energy policy does not support the development of the nuclear industry...

Under the leadership of Pauline Marois's Parti Québécois government, Quebec made the choice to leave nuclear power behind. Quebec has the resources to accomplish the energy transition and move closer towards a truly net-zero future, without nuclear technologies.

Most people know not to make virtue out of a necessity, but the Bloc seeks to make virtue out of opportunity. As the Bloc made clear, who needs nuclear power when we can flood more indigenous territory for the next dam project? Quebec's access to hydro power does not make it more virtuous. Claiming that one opposes nuclear science based on environmental and indigenous concerns is highly hypocritical for a party that seeks to build a new nation atop the legacy of Hydro-Québec.

The Bloc believes that Quebec can reach net-zero carbon emission without nuclear science. It is wrong. Whether it is fission or fusion, nuclear power is the only way humanity could power a net-zero world. The laws of physics set an absolute minimum amount of energy required to pull CO₂ out of the air. Unless the church of

climate socialism has a plan to have all animals stop exhaling, the energy of the future will be powered by nuclear science.

Ontario's electric grid operator examined the power requirements to reach net zero. It found that using renewables would require an area of land 400 times the size of Toronto. There is no future in which Canadians would accept the destruction of the environment to save the planet. If the far left truly wants a net-zero future, it must reconcile with a fundamental truth: A net-zero future is a nuclear-powered future.

I do not expect those of the far left to accept that truth. They will cover their ears and stomp their feet in their Marxist temper tantrums. They will resist pursuing the leading-edge technology to reduce emissions because, for them, this is just the latest excuse to pursue their socialist agenda to de-industrialize and decapitalize the world.

While the government's response to the committee's report says all things about nuclear science in Canada, it was prepared by the Minister of Natural Resources. If the Bloc had its way, the power to meddle in nuclear science and safety would be moved to the Minister of the Environment.

The Bloc should be happy to know that that proudly socialist anti-nuclear minister is working hard to invent new species of wolves that just happen to call Chalk River home. Whether the government will scrap 15 years of research, public consultations, environmental studies and multiple rounds of hearings before the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission because of a wolf-coyote crossbreed is now an open question. That should satisfy the anti-science MPs in the Bloc, yet no matter what the minister decides, or what the Bloc writes in its report, it will not change the facts on the ground.

The fact is that the Government of Canada has a responsibility to clean up Chalk River. The constant demands by the anti-nuclear, anti-science activists to restart the process are not about health and safety. As each concern that opponents had were addressed, new concerns were invented. Those concerns are starting to sound more and more desperate. One of the Bloc recommendations demands that the government set aside seats on the board of AECL and the Canada's Nuclear Safety Commission for “members of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.”

Does the Bloc believe that these boards are controlled by hermits? I can assure the Bloc that every person on those boards is currently from either an indigenous community or a non-indigenous community. That is because everybody in Canada is from either an indigenous or non-indigenous community.

● (1630)

The Bloc may be sad and desperate, but I am happy that I could share with Canadians that the dedicated staff at Chalk River is working hard to keep the community, the Ottawa River and all of Canada safe and healthy.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are having this debate today because ultimately there is a question of privilege, which is being filibustered by the member's party, as it has now had well over 100 people stand up to speak to it.

Interesting enough, I received an email with a list of many organizations whose members are quite concerned about the fact that we have legislation, Bill C-63, that is on the Order Paper. We have attempted to get the bill debated, but it is not being debated because of the ongoing filibustering by the Conservative Party. Can the member provide her thoughts as to why it is that—

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, how is this relevant to the debate?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary was not finished his question, so I do not know what the question was. As the hon. member knows, there is some latitude during debate, but I do want to remind members that they are to speak to the issue that is before the House. I am assuming the parliamentary secretary's question will be in reference to that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, with respect to what is taking place today, when there seems to be a will to talk about an issue affecting our environment, it is a very important issue that I hope to be speaking to shortly.

Constituents are asking why the Conservatives will not allow for other debates to take place. How would the member respond to her constituents who are genuinely concerned about other topics of debate, not just nuclear energy?

• (1635)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the debate we are having today is in respect to an environmental statement that is wrong-headed and totally full of disinformation. We are correcting the record now.

Quite apart from that, the fact that at least \$400 million was misappropriated and Canadians want it to be paid back just goes to show us what little disdain the Liberals think Canadians have for their waste of money. Canadians want to see that all the documents are presented so that we can get to the bottom of what exactly happened and perhaps how much deeper this corruption on the part of the government goes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, there are many things in my colleague's speech that I could talk about.

First, if we are going to talk about civil society groups, they include experts, academics, engineers and physicists. They are all against the Chalk River NSDF. They also question the financial aspect. They want to know how much it will cost. Nuclear power is extremely expensive. Projects always go over budget. They take time to build. Meanwhile, we are in a climate emergency. Wind power, solar power, geothermal power and energy storage cost far less.

Here is my question for my colleague. Why is there no credible cost estimate for the Chalk River NSDF, which is the flagship waste disposal project?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, there was a similar facility built just outside of Port Hope. Now, it is not exactly the same as the one at Chalk River because the one at Port Hope was specifically designed to work with the geology of the land in much the same way that the one in Chalk River would. With nuclear production, in any type of nuclear business, what is required is that, before the operators of the facility get their licence, they have to have a legacy plan and have that legacy plan fully funded.

My question back to the Bloc is this: With all this renewable energy, such as the wind turbines and the millions of acres of solar panels, where are the plans and the money put aside for when those fields become inoperable and go to waste?

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a quick question. In the NDP's supplemental report to this report, we spoke about the fact that AECL, which the member acknowledged in her speech, used to be government-owned. It was a Crown corp, but the Conservatives under Stephen Harper sold it in 2011 to SNC-Lavalin. SNC-Lavalin, of course, was charged with scandal, bribery, the defrauding of the Libyan government and so forth.

I want the member's explanation for why that happened at the time and how it impacts Canada now given that SNC-Lavalin effectively owns and operates many of Canada's nuclear assets.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I have two points to make. First, the member opposite and her party are propping up a government that was involved in trying to get SNC-Lavalin off the hook for all its corruption. Second, the real big piece of misinformation or disinformation, whichever we choose, is that the Government of Canada sold it off. AECL still owns Chalk River Laboratories. The company that came in to operate it is the operator. That is why we have a government-owned and company-operated, or GO-CO, in CNL.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Courtenay—Alberni, Telecommunications; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment.

• (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, those watching this debate today should be thanking a nuclear worker.

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We thank the nuclear workers for keeping the lights on. Nuclear energy is the one technology that we have that has proven to have zero emissions, and it is low in cost and reliable. It is because of the workers, the men and women who work in nuclear, that this is possible. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. It is the technology that is going to get us through the challenging times right now with the Liberals.

We have a lot of things to be thankful for when it comes to nuclear, the supply chain that we have in Canada and the CANDU technology. Lights are on right now in this building, and 60% of electricity in Ontario comes from nuclear. It is true that we were able to phase out coal in Ontario and eliminate smog because of nuclear, but there are still some radicals who do not like nuclear. Some people just never change.

However, it was nuclear that got Ontario off coal. Nuclear is in a renaissance right now because of security. We have war in Europe and hot spots around the world. Its energy security is what future societies will need. Nuclear is positioned well to take advantage of that.

Another great benefit of nuclear is medical isotopes. There are literally millions of lives saved because of nuclear, and we are very grateful for the medical isotopes and the research that is done at facilities across Canada, especially at Chalk River. Some of the breakthroughs out of Chalk River have been a game-changer, as described to me by oncologists and other specialists in the medical community.

We have a debt of gratitude for all the workers in the nuclear supply chain as well. It keeps the lights on and drives our economy with powerful paycheques. It is something that should be championed, not disparaged.

Those same workers have been getting a little whiplash with the current government. Sometimes, it is very cold to nuclear, calling it a sin stock and refusing to fund nuclear in the ways that it should be funded. It is typical.

Something was mentioned earlier in the debate about SDTC, which is the Sustainable Development Technology Fund from which the Liberals got caught funnelling \$400 million to Liberal insiders: Those dollars were to go to technology. I cannot think of a better one than nuclear. Whenever we have an election and there is a change in government, the workers out there will be respected for the good work they do in providing clean, affordable electricity for all Canadians. We will see that change as soon as we elect common-sense Conservatives in the next election.

Another big change that is going to happen is for Conservatives to get rid of the carbon tax. People have probably heard this many times: It is technology, not taxes. There are a lot of different technologies to pick from. Renewables have a place in our grid, but there are issues with renewables. The waste that comes from renewables is the biggest issue, but we will get into that in a bit.

A newly elected Conservative government will axe the carbon tax and invest in such technologies as nuclear, which has emissions-free electricity that has powered Ontario for decades. Now, with the right support and environment, I believe that nuclear can make the next renaissance here in Canada.

This is a stark difference from what the NDP-Liberal government is promising to do. It is talking about quadrupling that tax to 61¢ per litre. When that happens, there will be economic carnage from coast to coast to coast. We are all suffering in a cost of living crisis, and they are planning to quadruple the tax. A better solution would be to invest in nuclear. We should be having the conversation on what is the best way to encourage more nuclear power production across Canada. It is happening.

Today, the Liberals might be a little bit warm on nuclear; I know that many mistrust them in the industry, and it is for good reason. There is a long history of a lot of lip service from the Liberals but not a lot of the action that is required to fully fulfill the promise that is nuclear in Canada.

● (1645)

We talked about the SDTC green slush fund the Liberals set up. Right now, we have such companies as Cameco and Westinghouse out of Saskatoon developing an eVinci microreactor that could be used in northern Canada to meet the electrical needs of industry or consumers, or for security. If we only had a government that believed in nuclear, it would have allowed an eVinci reactor to access some of those funds; instead, the funds went out the side door. Some funds went to the chair of the board itself. A Liberal insider gave money to herself, which is just horrendous when we know that there are solutions out there.

There is great hope at Darlington with GE Hitachi and the SMRs. I am really excited to see how they come onto the grid scale. That is a technology that SDTC could have helped bring to market quicker; instead, the money went to Liberal insiders.

There is the CANDU reactor itself, the Canadian-owned pride of the nuclear world. Our contribution is CANDU. What could we do with that technology if, instead of utilizing the green slush fund for Liberal insiders, we actually invested in CANDU? Could members imagine, for the men and women who work on that reactor, the refurbishments and the supply chain, if we had a government that actually had common sense and used a fund like the SDTC not to get their friends rich, as the Liberals have done, but to invest in technology? That is where this has to go.

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We talked about waste. There is waste. Roughly, if we used nothing but nuclear electricity for our whole life, on average, it would be enough. The waste would be only one cupful. That is a concern. We have technologies for how we properly store that, but we do not have a proper way to recycle some of the other technologies out there. We know that solar panels are mostly created in China and shipped over to North America. They may be assembled on a structure or a house here, but that is not really helping the economy in great numbers. However, it is a technology that, in remote areas and for select grids, could provide a solution. I would say that the worst thing about it is that there is no way to recycle the panels, which are the waste that comes from solar. We have to compare that to alternatives, and we will get to nuclear waste in a minute. However, the panels are just buried. The leaching of the chemicals found in the solar panels is a real concern; we should be debating that, talking about it and figuring out how to fix it. For some of the other renewables, such as the blades on wind turbines, there is no way of recycling them. We dig a hole in the ground, put the blades in there and cover them up. That is the end of life for those renewables. It does not have to be that way.

How did nuclear get it right? There is a service charge embedded in our power rate. In Ontario, a portion of the rate we pay for that power goes into a fund that takes care of the waste. That sounds pretty good versus renewables. It is probably going to come down to the taxpayers or the environment that will pay if we rely solely on them. There has to be a balancing act. One is not better than the other in all circumstances, but for baseload power generation, there is nothing that beats clean, reliable nuclear.

The debate today is a bit about what we do with Chalk River. It has managed our nuclear research. It has facilitated breakthroughs in medical isotopes. The smartest people working on nuclear are working at Chalk River. They live in and around that area, upstream or downstream, and they know the positive impacts that the Chalk River laboratory has had on the environment, not just locally, but internationally.

Earlier we heard another speaker talk about the export of the CANDU technology, which is wonderful. We should be encouraging more of that.

I want to come back to the workers in nuclear and make this commitment to them. The new, common-sense Conservatives respect them and their technology, and we appreciate the work they do. We thank them for keeping the lights on.

• (1650)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide are gaseous air pollutants composed of nitrogen, sulfur and oxygen. They are one of the groups of related gases called nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxides. The health effects of nitrogen dioxide pollution include increased inflammation of the airways, worsening coughs and wheezing, reduced lung function and increased asthma attacks. They are, in fact, all a group of gases that, when we burn fossil fuels like natural gas and diesel, are burned at high temperatures. NO₂, CO₂ and other nitrogen oxides occur in the air and contribute to particle pollution; indeed, those effluents, those exhausts, are yellow-brown in colour.

This is in response to my hon. colleague's earlier point of order when I suggested that the Halton Hills gas-fired power plant emits yellow and brown fumes. It does.

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, that is a lot of hot air coming from that politician. There are no words to describe the hypocrisy of this. We have a Prime Minister who jet-sets all over the world, not worrying about the carbon he is emitting, and then lectures us to turn down the heat, to not drive our car and to be better for the planet. His boss is jet-setting everywhere and anywhere he wants to go. The carbon footprint of the current Prime Minister is larger than the footprints of every other prime minister combined. It is the hypocrisy in the Liberal Party, which is worried about brown smoke coming from stacks. They have to look at what is coming out of the back of the Prime Minister's jet to understand how much of a hypocrite these guys are.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the member talked a lot about small modular reactors. I had a strong hunch that his question would be about that.

In November 2023, the first small reactor project, NuScale, was launched in the United States. It was cancelled because prospective clients were put off by the rising costs. The United States has transparency requirement that we do not have here in Canada. Some provinces have made progress in producing or developing small reactors, but the costs are not known.

What does my colleague think about the need for transparency when developing such things?

[*English*]

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, on the question on SMRs, the GE Hitachi reactor being developed at Darlington is the very first of its kind. We do not know what the price is actually going to be on that SMR, just as when we have innovations and we try a new model of something.

The story she recapped, that NuScale SMRs were actually leading the campaign to bring a grid-scale reactor online, is accurate. I would not celebrate anyone's failure, but this is almost a good thing for Darlington. Once we prove the technology with GE Hitachi, as is hoped, we will know its cost and reliability. We will then be able to lead once again in nuclear, as when we brought forward CANDU.

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[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Chalk River project is meeting with a lot of public resistance. Communities are extremely concerned and want nothing to do with this project. The Algonquin first nations share that opinion, with 10 of the 11 groups opposing the project.

What does my colleague have to say about the fact that there is no social licence for the project? Does he want to force people to accept a project that many have deemed dangerous?

[English]

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, the Algonquins supported it from day one, so his facts are wrong. As for the process, we welcome feedback. Most government programs should be run this way. It does not mean someone will get their way, but they will get a say. Encouraging dialogue has taken place with indigenous groups, suppliers and local communities that want this technology and want nuclear in their community.

• (1655)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I will be sharing my time with my outstanding colleague from Windsor West, who will share his thoughts on this critical issue with us.

I want to talk about the environment, because the Minister of Environment and Climate Change made an important announcement today about the much-vaunted cap on oil and gas emissions that which we have been waiting for for years. This is an old Liberal promise, and yet the oil and gas industry is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. The government also set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 38% to 43% by 2030. What is mind-boggling about today's announcement is that the emissions cap for the oil and gas industry will take effect only in 2030. How are we supposed to meet our 2030 targets if the most polluting industry only has to start making an effort to reduce its emissions in 2030?

I just do not get it. Once again, the government is putting off taking action. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change cannot be serious. How many federal elections will there be between now and then? He may not even be Minister of Environment at that point. These are decisions that should have been made years ago. Once again, thanks to their lack of political courage, the Liberals have just punted the issue to future generations. It also undermines Canada's credibility on the international stage when the government fails to live up to its Paris commitments.

The topic we are discussing is the environment in general, but I want to get back to some very concrete concerns expressed by people who live near nuclear facilities. I find it interesting that the Liberals and Conservatives, who are both proud supporters of the nuclear industry, are not saying much about renewable energy. I am making a connection with today's announcement by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Nuclear energy is not evil. It is a technology that is available. I love science, and it is absolutely fascinating that humans were capable of creating this.

However, the very concrete result is that it produces radioactive waste that cannot be dealt with and that will remain in the environ-

ment and in ecosystems for thousands of years. Why should we continue to produce energy that is highly polluting and potentially hazardous when we have much cleaner, greener renewable alternatives? That is what I do not understand. Is it stubbornness? There are other technologies, other ways of producing electricity and energy. Why not invest in them instead of having projects that are potentially dangerous for the public?

Of course, I am talking about Chalk River and the plan to have a nuclear waste dump on the surface near a water table, very close to a river that supplies drinking water to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people. These people are worried because if there were ever a leak or runoff, if the water ever became contaminated, it would be extremely harmful to people's health. There is widespread public opposition in the region from concerned citizens' groups, municipalities as well as the Algonquin first nations. As I said earlier, 10 out of the 11 communities oppose the project. I do not understand why the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission insists on going down this path when things could be done differently.

The Chalk River site is already problematic. Canada's first nuclear laboratory began operating there in 1952, and a huge amount of radioactive nuclear waste has already been stored in trenches in the ground, in aging facilities that were not designed for the long term.

• (1700)

These facilities were meant to be temporary but were never replaced, so I can understand why people are even more concerned about what could happen in the future. These storage facilities do not meet today's international standards and obligations. Contaminants from the Chalk River laboratory have already been found in the Ottawa River. The thing that is truly worrisome is the government's decision to build a near surface dump and facility for nuclear waste despite opposition from first nations and despite the fact that this probably goes against the spirit of reconciliation with first nations and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There are problems on many levels.

In this report, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development examined radioactive waste management. The NDP submitted a supplementary opinion because we agreed with some of the recommendations. There are some interesting things in the report, but a few things are also missing. One of the recommendations we support, of course, is that Canada comply with international standards. It is frankly astonishing that Canada, a G7 country, is not meeting the 2024 international standards for radioactive waste management. The least we can do is meet them. I learned that we are still not meeting them, and that is rather troubling.

Our supplementary opinion states:

The focus of this study was the governance of radioactive waste in Canada. It was not within the scope of this study to look at the role of nuclear power generation in Canada's energy mix. Regardless of the future of nuclear power generation in Canada, existing radioactive waste and waste that will be created by existing and future nuclear power generation is a pressing issue that must be dealt with seriously to protect the health and safety of Canadians and the environment.

The committee heard from witnesses and received numerous briefs that raised concerns about the governance of radioactive waste in Canada, with particular focus on the consultation for the proposed Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF) at Chalk River and the search for a suitable site for a future Deep Geological Repository (DGR). It is important that these concerns are taken seriously, and that Canadians are able to meaningfully participate in the process around decisions that could have serious consequences to the environment and the health and safety of Canadians, now and into the future.

With regards to the governance structure for radioactive waste, the committee heard concerns about potential and perceived conflicts of interest and concerns about independence from industry. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) currently reports to Parliament through the Minister of Natural Resources, who is responsible for promoting and regulating the nuclear industry. While this may not create an actual conflict of interest, it was clear from witness testimony that the perception of the possibility of a conflict of interest impacts public trust in Canada's radioactive waste management. [The commission and the industry representatives who promote this type of energy are far too close.]

To eliminate the appearance of a potential conflict of interest and ensure that Canada is in alignment with guidance [from] the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), New Democrats recommend that the government make the necessary changes under the Nuclear Safety Control Act and the Financial Administration Act so that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission report[s] to Parliament through the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, instead of through the Minister of Natural Resources.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), which is responsible for the management of used nuclear fuel, is funded by, and comprised of[,] nuclear energy producers, effectively putting industry in charge of designing and implementing Canada's plan for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel.

This concern over the commission's independence was a key component of the testimony we heard during the study. I could talk about that at greater length when I answer my colleagues' questions.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are some people within our communities who are concerned about what appears to be the New Democrats' shifts in policy. One of them is in regard to the price on pollution and backing away from a price on carbon. Another one is just dealing with Bill C-73, which is a very important piece of legislation that is very beneficial to the environment. On at least three occasions, we have tried to get a prestudy done on that legislation. It seems that the NDP members are siding with the Conservatives and it is causing some frustration.

Can the member provide some clarity in terms of the NDP position in regard to Bill C-73? Would he be okay with getting into a prestudy? Let us keep in mind what is taking place today and in the last number of weeks in the House in terms of the Conservative filibuster.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I do not wish to speak for my colleague, the member for Victoria, our environment

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critic. I am not familiar enough with this issue to provide an informed answer.

However, I would like to keep speaking to the responsibility of the current and former Liberal governments as it relates to concerns over the commission's independence and potential conflicts of interest. During the testimony, Chief Duncan Malcolm Michano said, "I liken it to putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop."

In fact, when it created the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission in 2002, the Chrétien government, a Liberal government, disregarded the unanimous 1998 recommendation of the Seaborn commission concerning the creation of an independent, arms-length organization responsible for radioactive waste.

That is where the problem started. The Liberals caused it and they are refusing to fix it now.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear the member talk about a fox in the henhouse when the NDP's supply and confidence agreement with the Liberals has allowed the foxes to be in charge of the henhouse for the last two and a half years in their coalition.

I really do believe that nuclear is an important part of our energy mix that is required with everything that we are doing, not just in reducing emissions but also in ensuring that we have a robust and diverse energy supply out there to do everything from powering our laptops and iPhones, to continuing to electrify with more and more vehicles.

We know that renewables like hydro, which we have an abundance of in Manitoba, are not available to everyone out there. If we are going to provide clean energy to small communities, northern communities and remote communities, SMRs are the way to go.

In my riding, we have Whiteshell Laboratories. It is being decommissioned. It is safely disposing of all that nuclear-contaminated waste there, incinerating it and then entombing it. Nobody in the area is one bit concerned about it.

Does the member support the development of small modular nuclear reactors as a way to bring more energy to communities right now that are reliant upon diesel generation, as well as provide that diversity in energy that we need to keep Canada going toward green?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, one thing is certain: The solution to meeting our Paris commitments and combatting climate change is not to produce more oil, drive more cars and consume more fossil fuels. The Conservative Party and I have fundamentally different positions on that point.

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Second, of course we need to have a mix of energy to produce the energy that communities need. However, the current technology of small modular reactors is not ready. It is extremely expensive. There are other potential along the lines of cleaner, greener energy for the future.

● (1710)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want my colleague to talk about the nuclear lobby. Right now, the nuclear lobby is going directly through the Privy Council Office to recommend that there be no environmental assessment. They want to turn it over to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. As we said earlier, that would mean putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop.

What does my colleague think about that?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I have the same concern.

I remember back in the day, when Catherine McKenna was the environment minister, and she passed the new environmental assessment bill, Bill C-69. I asked her directly whether there would be assessments for these small reactors. The answer she gave me at the time was clearly no.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the important issue before us. The NDP environment critic is under the weather at the moment. I wish she could be in my place, but I will try to do some justice to the file, which I have been working on in the Ontario region for quite some time, in the South Bruce region.

South Bruce has had proposals for the storage of nuclear waste facilities that have had complications because they have threatened the Great Lakes Basin system and international relations. It has been highly complex, and force has been thrust upon the community to make a decision. It has already said no to one project. Recently there was a referendum for another project that passed with only 51% in favour. Despite the fact that the project passed, the lobbying was intense and significant, and the voting process, I have to say, was rather suspect in the sense that no paper balloting was allowed and there were people who felt they could not get their vote. It passed with only 51% and, ironically, it still has to go through more hurdles.

Some of the proposals in the past have failed in other countries when it comes to nuclear waste. In fact, to go back to what I learned about it, an OPG scientist involved was a whistle-blower who talked about the proposal at that time to bury intermittent nuclear waste for the length of the CN Tower into the ground in Ontario, within about a kilometre of the Great Lakes Basin waterway system. The proposal to bury it in rock formations that were known to be suspect for containment and expect it to be there in safety and perpetuity, for over 100 million years, boiled down to a decision of the small community.

Ironically, in the past the Conservatives under Joe Clark, a Progressive Conservative, intervened. I was fortunate enough to be in the chamber when he was here. It was a much different Progressive Conservative Party than what we are faced with now, which is the

Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservative Party becoming the Conservative Party. Clark was foreign affairs minister at the time and intervened in the U.S. decision, saying not to put nuclear waste next to our Great Lakes. That was lived up to, and now there is a series of letters from Congress members and Senate members in the United States who have been actively lobbying against Canada's proposal for another project.

The Chalk River project is similar to what South Bruce went through. Chalk River, of course, is by fresh water as well. It is very significant heritage-wise with first nations, similar to South Bruce. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization has been described as being the fox guarding the henhouse, but I think it is more significant than that because it is an active lobbying organization that gets deep-rooted into the communities. What is sad is that it divides communities with promises of a magical vision of how things will be versus what can and will take place afterward.

Ironically, successive Conservative and Liberal governments have tried to pass on the Nuclear Waste Management Organization as something they cannot touch or be involved in or that is independent, such as in the case that happened most recently, in October. There were 1,604 people who voted in favour of hosting a nuclear waste facility versus 1,526 who voted against it, to determine the outcome of the Great Lakes and its future should there be a failure or a problem. We need to think about the gravity of that.

I have been in South Bruce several times over the years to meet with people there. I have met with Michelle and others who have very much done the right thing. They are farmers. What is not being said and what is always pushed against them as neighbour is pitted against neighbour are the issues that come up about whether their properties can even be used for the businesses they have right now.

● (1715)

Some businesses, like the famous Chapman's ice cream business, will be opposed because, with U.S. export and import laws, there are different conditions that can actually be put on products that go into the United States and that have nuclear waste associated with them.

There are also issues, as I have mentioned, for some of the farms, whether they be sheep farms, beef farms, dairy farms or other livestock farms. They could lose their insurance, or their insurance companies threaten them by saying that they are not sure whether they will insure them in the future. We are looking at some of the largest farm operations, significant businesses, and health. Even if there were never a problem, they would have consequences put on them, their families and the agricultural food industry, which is very significant in a practical, immediate term. Heaven forbid something else happens, as it would be long-term.

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What is always put to the residents, which is insulting, is that they have to come up with the solution. There have been a couple of recent developments that have some elements that are new and different but that, in the history of storage of nuclear waste, have failed. We have gone through some really wild rides when it comes to nuclear waste. At times there were people who proposed putting it in rockets and sending it off into space.

There have been other times when nuclear waste machinery, equipment and so forth has been proposed to be shipped across the Great Lakes over to Europe for the waste to get processed and shipped back. It was said that the only concern people should have if they were standing on the shore is that they might get nuclear radiation similar to that from an X-ray. Heaven forbid that an accident or something else would take place.

In addition, what nobody will talk about in the situation is the fact that we have to transport nuclear waste across communities. They focus specifically on the hosting communities and about lobbying supporting organizations, trying to get money into the hands of different projects that electorally are significant to people and so forth, to put pressure on winning the vote.

I am concerned that winning the vote becomes the excuse, because it says to people and organizations, whether in Chalk River or South Bruce, “You asked for this”, which will be forever remembered. There is no funding or response of a “no” with regard to the situation of all the community organizations, no commitment there, so when the first one in South Bruce failed, they just moved over a little and another project emerged.

Yes, we have to deal with the storage of nuclear waste. I want to thank Bruce Power for having me there and allowing me to tour the facility and see it. It is independent because of the way Ontario has set up the system of the production of energy versus transmission and versus storage. However, we do not factor storage and treatment, the billions upon billions of dollars' worth, and the legacy, into the cost of nuclear energy. We just kick it down the road and expect somebody else to deal with it.

What was amazing about the situation that I saw was the mere fact that there has been the expectation and the push placed on the residents to find a solution, dividing residents from one another, instead of there being the proper accountability that is necessary.

I want to at least thank the committee for putting in some recommendations and shedding some light on this, but the reality is that nuclear energy is something of a legacy that still is not being treated responsibly.

● (1720)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member the same question I asked his colleagues.

There have been concerns in regard to the NDP's backing away from sound environmental policy. One of them, of course, is related to the carbon tax, the price on pollution, versus the carbon rebate, and the NDP's most recent position on the issue. The second one is in regard to Bill C-73, nature accountability legislation on which

we have attempted three times now to get a prestudy done in committee.

The member is familiar with the filibustering that has been taking place in the House. Having a prestudy would be a good thing, but again we are just not able to get it through without support from the NDP.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, we cannot get that through because of you and your colleagues. That is why we cannot get that through and we cannot even have that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Please remember to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that.

We cannot get that through because the government will not live up to its expectations with regard to the documents, so we are stuck where we are.

As for the carbon price and the carbon taxing, the reality is that in Ontario, where I come from, we had cap and trade. Had the Liberals lived up to a proper policy on cap and trade, we would not have ever been in a carbon tax system, and the only reason we are in a carbon tax system in Ontario is that Doug Ford took us out of the cap and trade system, paid \$2 billion to his industrial buddies for that, and now we are stuck with the carbon tax. Therefore, we got the carbon tax because of the Conservatives and we do not have a more progressive environmental issue to deal with that because of the Liberals' not even wanting to deal with it. That is the reality.

As far as getting to that point goes, we are happy and we have been supportive to get to that point. However, we cannot get to that point because we cannot get to a vote and the parliamentary secretary is partly responsible.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, an individual working around the near surface disposal facility will receive less exposure to radiation in a year than an individual taking a flight from Vancouver to Toronto. What insurance company is denying, or potentially denying, coverage to anyone along the Ottawa River on the basis of the building of this near surface disposal facility?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I can only speak with respect to the people whose farms I went to in South Bruce, and the member could go there herself as well, where the insurance agents have said to them that they do not know whether they are going to cover their insurance in the future should this go ahead. That is what the farmers have said. These are agriculture livestock farms. They have been sheep farmers, cow farmers and dairy farmers whose operations are there. Those are the specifics I know about that.

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With regard to Chalk River, I am sure we are going to find some of that. I am willing to bet that the people in Chalk River, some in the agriculture community, do not realize or probably have not been told that their agricultural products might get tagged later when they actually leave the country and go to the United States. It has a whole certain program of identifying shipments of agricultural products that come from nuclear places like Russia, Ukraine and a series of different places across the globe that have contaminants in their area, and they get tagged.

We saw what happened before when the Conservatives mismanaged the COOL system with regard to supply, labelling and management of livestock and other products to the United States. We can imagine what would happen with Canadian products going to the United States and being tagged, but nobody wants to tell the Conservatives that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois recommended that Environment and Climate Change Canada be part of the authorization process at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, just like the Department of Natural Resources.

Does my colleague approve of our proposal?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I think that is a great suggestion. Again, there needs to be more transparency about this and to tie it right back to Parliament. We are the ones who are generating and allowing nuclear waste to be managed. It also needs to be discussed with regard to openness and information in this place. In fact, the NDP has been trying to fix Crown copyright, which provides more of the research and data information that is done in-house, that other parties will not support here. Hopefully, the Bloc would support that if it wants more transparency in the use of publicly funded documents to go to citizens, individuals and businesses, so they can make educated decisions.

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise to address this issue in two ways. We all, or at least, the government and a number of other members, recognize the true value of nuclear power and having that discussion. Having said that, I am going to tag on to that after a few opening remarks about what I believe are legitimate concerns of Canadians about what is taking place in the House of Commons.

This report we are debating today has been around for a couple of years, but it was a decision made by the Bloc party to bring it forward. I suspect, as we have witnessed more and more concurrence reports being brought to the floor of the House of Commons, it is because members are upset with the Conservative Party and the multi-million dollar game the leader of the Conservative Party is playing. That is the reason we are debating nuclear power today.

I will be sharing my time, by the way, with one of my friends from the Bloc. This is a wonderful compromise, I must say.

I received a letter from someone who has been mailing a number of members of Parliament. This email was a plea to all members of

the House of Commons, and it was signed off by some very impressive groups that are in support of Bill C-63. One might wonder why that is relevant; it is relevant because the Bloc has brought forward a motion. It brought forward that motion because of frustration with the Conservative game being played. As opposed to debating the game, members want to talk about the importance of the nuclear industry here in Canada. If everyone stopped playing the game and we dealt with the concerns Canadians have, like the concerns in the email I have received from a long list of organizations, we would actually talk about what it is they are asking us to deal with, and that is Bill C-63, the online harms act.

The lengthy list of organizations includes the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Association of School System Administrators, Children's Healthcare, Canadian Medical Association, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and Empowered Kids Ontario.

What Canadians want us to be talking about is issues they know we can actually deal with, legislation that is before the House. Instead of dealing with that, we are talking about nuclear power. Nuclear power is an important issue, I do not question that. What I question is the motivation in the House to change the channel of what we should be dealing with. We should be dealing with issues Canadians want us to deal with, not the desires of the leader of the Conservative Party to become the prime minister or the filibustering the Conservatives do day in and day out.

That is something that I believe ultimately does need to be addressed. When I think of the issue of nuclear power, I think it is important for us to recognize that it does have a role to play as an industry. We hear a great deal about the benefits of nuclear power; I do not know to what degree people realize there are actually tens of thousands of Canadians directly employed.

• (1730)

We have two provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick, where nuclear power plays an important role in their economies and their communities as a whole. Ontario's consumption of nuclear power has increased over the years, as we have seen a shift away from emissions-sourced power generation to nuclear power generation. Ontarians have been a great beneficiary of it.

Even though my province and the province of Quebec, which I care very much about, have hydroelectricity in common, and I support green energy sources, there is absolutely nothing wrong in recognizing that nuclear power does have a role here in Canada. We should recognize and support it. When people think of nuclear power, they often think of power stations and that is it, when in fact, we have all sorts of uses for nuclear technology out there and how it is developed.

I would encourage members to reflect on health care, whether it is isotopes or how radioactive materials ultimately advance medicine here in Canada, it is an area of technological advancement using science that will do wonderful things in medicine into the future.

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I recognize many ways that Canada could lead the world. CANDU reactors have been of great benefit not only to Canada, but also outside of Canada, where we have seen other countries look to us to see how we have been successful at generating energy through nuclear power production with these small, modular reactors. We have the technology and the expertise for Canada to play a very strong leading role. It is interesting to see the Bloc and their opposition to it.

Bill C-49 was the offshore wind energy legislation, which was huge for Atlantic Canada, and it is green energy. It is something the Prime Minister and the government have put right up front through supporting legislation. Now we have Atlantic provinces that are bringing in, or have brought in, mirror legislation because we have recognized that it is not only better for our environment but also good for the economy and the communities in which we live. It will generate millions, if not billions, of dollars of investment.

Whether it is looking to the future of green energy or taking a look at how it has benefited some of our provinces, in particular Ontario and New Brunswick, nuclear power is a major contributor to our economy in a very real and tangible way. It contributes immensely to our GDP, both directly and indirectly.

Whether it is members from the Bloc or the Conservatives, especially the Conservatives in their destructive approach to the House, rest assured that the Prime Minister and the government will continue to be focused on the interests of Canadians. That is why I would ask, again, about the concerns to stop the filibuster and let us start dealing with the important legislation that needs to be dealt with, along with other issues.

• (1735)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we have a rare opportunity to talk about nuclear energy, although it is far too brief and without enough time for me to have a speaking slot.

The government over the years, starting with the government of former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, began shovelling billions toward the nuclear industry and set up Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. Then the government of Stephen Harper sold AECL for a song, at less than \$17 million, to SNC-Lavalin. In all that time, there has never been a debate or a vote in the House on whether nuclear energy was a good idea.

The only prime minister who supported such an inquiry was the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and since his government was defeated, we have never had another chance.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the idea that Canadians as a whole would not support the government's approach, whether it was the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau or that of the current Prime Minister in dealing with the issue of green energy and, in fact, the important role that nuclear energy plays in our communities today. We are talking about close to 60% of all power in Ontario. That is 16 million-plus people.

We are not in a position where we can ignore the need for nuclear energy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of to unpack in my colleague's speech. First, whether it is still a question of small modular reactors, I will remind the House of the situation in New Brunswick. There were warnings that the two developers were young companies that needed money from the government. They always needed money from the government and taxpayers. It is funny, taxpayers are left footing the bill when small reactor companies go bankrupt. The New Brunswick nuclear power plant has been down for months and the province is nearly bankrupt.

My question is about Chalk River and the waste. Why will almost all the radioactive waste be moved to Chalk River?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, especially if I were from Atlantic Canada, I would find frustrating the degree to which members of the Bloc are prepared to write off Atlantic Canada, its energy needs and its potential to be a world leader in using offshore resources to generate power. When the Conservatives and the Bloc voted against that legislation, that was to the detriment of Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we heard some nice words from the Liberals today about nuclear energy, which nuclear workers are used to. It is a lot of lip service but very little support. That is historical. It goes back decades and decades. The Liberals say one thing to one group and then something different to another group.

I am encouraged by the member's new and profound love of nuclear energy. I know the nuclear workers will probably be a little suspicious of the Liberals for a while now. However, where was he two years ago when his government labelled nuclear companies as sin stocks?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have actually been very focused on how we can support that industry. In fact, we can think about the legislation we passed in regard to net zero by 2050, which the Conservatives voted against, of course. Nuclear energy has to play a role in Canada being able to achieve net zero by 2050.

The Prime Minister and the government have consistently shown that we are looking toward sustainable development, caring for the environment and developing a stronger economy. This builds a stronger middle class in Canada, which is good for all of us. At the same time, we continue to work on programs that the Conservatives continue to oppose, such as dental care.

I did not even get a chance to talk about foreign interference and ask the leader of the Conservative Party to do the right thing and get that done.

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• (1740)

[*Translation*]

M. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for agreeing to share his time with me. I especially thank my colleague from Repentigny for her leadership, her vision of a more pristine Quebec and Canada, and her commitment to bringing this debate forward today.

I rise to speak to the issue of nuclear waste and the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on this topic. This is not the first time I have raised the issue of nuclear power here in the House. I have asked various ministers questions but none of them have offered us any answer about the botched consultations with first nations on establishing a near surface nuclear waste disposal facility along the shores of a vital waterway that supplies drinking water to cities like Gatineau and Ottawa, among others.

Last night, as I was leaving Témiscamingue, after taking part in the Remembrance Day ceremony, I drove back along the Ontario highway that goes through the Chalk River site where construction of a near surface nuclear waste disposal facility is planned, at the same location and in close proximity to Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, or CNL.

First, I cannot get over the fact that anyone can accept taking such a risk with drinking water. It makes no sense. It is a completely illogical decision. Why even consider burying nuclear waste near our drinking water source, which is so dear to our lives? Putting it at risk for highly toxic waste that we know can cause irreversible damage to our health and our environment is an absurdity that we cannot ignore. Neighbouring areas are home to precious biodiversity that could be irreparably damaged by this initiative. What a foreseeable mess. It is shameful.

The Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs is currently studying Bill C-61, a bill on first nations water. I hope someone will put an end to this very risky project and that the ministers will stop being wilfully blind and start committing to respecting the will of the Anishinabe and their land where they practice their culture. In fact, they came to committee to oppose the Chalk River project and I asked them whether they had any concerns about the drinking water.

Having said that, there is also the issue of false indigenous claims, because that is what we are talking about here as well. In the pre-consultations, the government made room for “pretendians”. The government’s actions have seriously harmed the Anishinabe people. It is inconceivable that, in 2024, no one is acknowledging this and we are still on the wrong track. The Algonquins of Ontario have no legitimacy to speak. These are Métis groups that are not currently recognized by law, and referring to them to build social licence is highly questionable.

Furthermore, as Canadian Nuclear Laboratories seeks to reassure the public that its storage mound will be secure, it is vital to remember that intermediate-level waste, while accounting for less than 2% of the volume, remains a major concern. This is waste that can last thousands of years, well beyond the promised monitoring period. We cannot afford to play games with the safety of our envi-

ronment and our health for a project that, despite the technical promises, could have long-term consequences for our precious river. It is our duty to question and denounce this short-term vision, because the future of our region and its resources is at stake. We are talking about a one-million-cubic-metre reservoir of waste that they want to store right next to the Ottawa River, the *Kichi Sibi*, the *rivière des Outaouais*, which flows, let us not forget, just below Parliament Hill. This affects us directly.

Second, it is in violation of UNDRIP. This declaration emphasizes the need for informed and respectful consultation with communities affected by such projects. We know that there has not been adequate or sufficient consultation. I was there in August 2023 when they opposed the project. More importantly, I was at the Supreme Court when they challenged the decision, precisely because they had not been consulted. I would like to commend the leadership of the Anishinabe community of Kebaowek, in my riding, whose ancestral lands include the Chalk River territory, and its chief, Lance Haymond.

• (1745)

There is a very worrisome pattern of overlap between the roles of the government, the private sector and the lobbyists. I would like someone to explain that strategy to us. People who were appointed by the Liberals and who worked for ministers under this government are the ones who are on the ground right now campaigning for the nuclear industry. I am talking about former Liberal candidates and advisers to the justice, environment, indigenous affairs and industry ministers.

The former commissioner is currently in Europe lobbying for her company. The chair of a ministerial advisory committee was appointed as president of the commission. What is more, he is the owner of a nuclear company. Today, Lou Riccoboni, a former Liberal ministerial adviser and public servant, is introduced on the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories website as the vice-president of corporate affairs and vice-president of business development at CNL.

How much of taxpayers’ money is being used to lobby ministers? He is a partner at Prospectus Associates, where he brags about assisting with procurement captures in the defence and nuclear sectors, including the first-ever government-owned, contractor-operated, or GoCo, management of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories. That is not all. He is also the president of Nexus Government Services, a lobbying firm described on its site as assisting international companies pursue, position, capture, and execute significant federal government procurements. Looks like this is a small world with many close friends.

We have to ask questions and get to the bottom of things. The committee report is just the prelude to another scandal. The federal government is paying a consortium big bucks to manage its nuclear facilities, and the same consortium is lobbying the government to have its contract renewed. How much public money has been used to pay the salaries of these private industry executives so that they can lobby for big money? Did they disclose it on the lobbyist registry? No, they did not. When will there be real transparency? Honestly, the jig is up.

I am certain the Auditor General of Canada would be interested in Chalk River labs' contract renewal. Also, why is there such contempt for indigenous people? Why is hazardous material being moved to their land without notification? I would like someone to explain that to me. I look forward to seeing who is condoning everyone's actions in the House. On this side of the House, we have a talent for getting to the bottom of things and we will continue to do so.

We must question the transparency around this project. The contract for this waste site is about to be renewed without thorough review or open discussion in the House of Commons. This raises basic questions about the responsibility and diligence of our elected representatives. How could there have been no public discussion or democratic debate on an expense that exceeds the entire CBC/Radio-Canada budget, a considerable amount? It violates the very principle of transparency, whose implementation is long overdue.

Considering the recent declaration of bankruptcy by Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation, which was also involved in an ambitious SMR project at the Chalk River lab, how much has the government already invested in this project and what financial risks did it take in pursuing its strategy of partnering on nuclear projects with the private sector? I hope the House gets some answers to these questions.

In conclusion, I invite all my colleagues to reflect deeply on these troubling issues and facts. The Anishinabe people are not the only ones paying the price for political decisions designed to separate them from their ancestral territory at a time of reconciliation with indigenous peoples. There is nothing encouraging about this project, whether in terms of transparency, good governance or management of public funds. Above all, there are environmental questions that arise, and I am still convinced that there is no such thing as zero risk. Waste will not just appear there. It will be transported, and there will be risks at every stage of transportation. We know that water has already leaked from the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories site. In this case, the incident was not made public because the laws are too lax.

I thank my colleagues for their attention and commitment to this fight for our future.

• (1750)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Bloc Québécois member for his speech. However, there is one thing I did not hear mentioned even once, and that is the importance of nuclear energy. The focus seems to be on waste, which I can understand, but no one is talking about the importance of nuclear energy. In Canada, 15% of our electricity

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comes from nuclear power. In France, it is 63%. Nuclear power is a source of energy that emits no greenhouse gases and is inexpensive.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. Is he for or against nuclear energy?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that makes me proud to be a Quebecker, it is the fact that we have turned our backs on nuclear power. We chose the safety of the people, both present and future generations, for centuries to come, even millennia. It was a responsible choice.

That said, Quebec and its border do not have to become the nuclear garbage dump for the rest of Canada. We know that small modular reactors are popping up, that they are going to be everywhere; that is the Canadian way. However, Quebec is assuming the risks, and that is totally unacceptable.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Chalk River site is directly opposite my riding. I am very concerned about the waste already there now, on the banks of the river. Although a plan exists to secure this waste, I would like to hear from my colleague about his plans for the waste currently on the riverbank, in an old building slated for demolition.

The current plan involves securing the waste. Does my colleague think the waste should be left at the site?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pontiac for her interesting comment. I would like to add that 140 municipalities in Quebec and Ontario oppose this project, including the Pontiac RCM.

My colleague's question deserves an answer. Yes, nuclear activities were conducted at the Chalk River site a long time ago. Yes, a safe way and a safe location to store the waste must be found. I am especially concerned about the fact that waste is being classified at lower danger ratings so quickly these days, even though this will have long-term consequences.

To answer the question specifically, the Canadian Shield is certainly a safe location, if it were not for the fact that it sits atop a small hill from which water trickles down as it flows directly into the Ottawa River. That is totally unacceptable.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having to ask my question in English.

[*English*]

The NDP's supplementary opinion to this report discussed, as the member spoke about, that numerous witnesses, like the chiefs from the Anishinabek Nation, talked about a lack of respect. One chief said that a nuclear waste management organization told his community that it could explain the process of nuclear processing, but the community would not understand it anyway.

Is that something the member heard consistently? This was one example, but in the desire to truly find out what Conservatives like to talk about as economic reconciliation—

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• (1755)

The Speaker: I am sorry. I want to leave enough time for the hon. member to answer the question. He should have an equal time to answer the question as the member had to ask it.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, first nations have taken it upon themselves to respect and protect Mother Earth. In that regard, I commend their leadership, especially the leadership shown by the Kebaowek First Nation, which is being forced to challenge this in court. We are anxiously awaiting the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on this.

Let me share a personal anecdote that explains my fear of nuclear energy. I went to Fukushima with the Canada-Japan Interparliamentary Group, and we visited the city. Some of our colleagues here were with me. Once we got to the site, we saw a radioactivity index on a device we were wearing. Near a site that exploded 10 years ago, radiation levels were still above 72. This means that the problems we are going to experience could go on forever. We do not have the luxury of prioritizing short-term economics when making those decisions.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Durham. In fact, I am the warm-up act, because he is the great orator.

I am very happy to participate in this debate on an energy source that Canada and the world need: nuclear energy. It helps supply us with energy, and God knows we need it. Nuclear energy is one of the five green energy sources that we on this side of the House have been promoting for years. Yes, we need to decarbonize, but we also need to have practical solutions, and nuclear energy is one of them.

On March 22, I visited the Chalk River facility. Like all Canadians, I had obviously heard about it. I had seen documentaries and news reports on it. There are some entirely valid and relevant concerns about the safety of this site, which, let us not forget, has been around for more than 80 years. It employs thousands of people and produces hundreds of millions of isotopes to help people overcome cancer. It is not a minor part of our history. It is not minor in terms of environmental impact, and it is not minor in terms of the impact on public health and applied health when it comes to treating cancer.

The question is where to put the nuclear waste. Let us not forget that the site itself has already had a place for storing nuclear waste for decades. Yes, it is very close to the research centre and lab, about a kilometre away. Yes, it is very close to a river. Because of its layout, this site has been protected, to a certain extent, for decades.

That is why assessments have been carried out over the years since 2016. Atomic Energy of Canada conducted assessments and consulted with people across Canada, particularly those who live nearby, to see which locations were the most favourable. Approximately 15 locations were analyzed, and the assessment found that this is the best place to store the waste and continue processing it.

This finding is based on decades of experience and on the type of waste involved. We are not talking about nuclear bombs here. What we are talking about is used materials, like old wooden planks, coverings that had to be worn on certain visits, tools that people used while working in the research centres, or debris from buildings. This waste is no longer useful, but it was directly involved in production. Ninety per cent of it is low-level radioactive waste.

I want to make a very clear distinction here. Low does not mean insignificant. On the contrary, it is very significant, but in this case, every possible measure has been taken for decades. It has not prevented incidents from happening. I will talk about that later. In general, however, overall, the situation at Chalk River is well managed.

Also, the waste centre will be located 50 metres above the river and 163 metres above sea level. It does not sit right on the river. It is also important to understand that this site has already been made safe, in a way. It has been extensively studied, and so has the water quality. Of course, there have been incidents, as I said earlier, but overall, it is considered to be the safest place.

It is also important to note that some first nations are concerned, while others are less so. However, we have to look at the whole picture. There is an expression we sometimes use back home that relates to an idea that is currently going around, and that is “not in my backyard”. Most people do not want certain things in their backyard. However, the people in Chalk River who work there and are linked to the facility are not concerned about it. It is not everyone, but some people have lived there for generations and are not unhappy about the situation.

That is why we need to address this issue properly, seriously and rigorously. Yes, the drinking water is there. Yes, there have been incidents, but generally speaking, people are still able to drink the water there on a regular basis. As I said earlier, the Chalk River facility has been around for over 80 years. Millions of isotopes have been produced there. Nobel Prize winners have worked there.

• (1800)

Chalk River is also the locus of Canada's nuclear energy development. For example, the CANDU reactor was developed there. Some regions of Canada, such as Ontario, which is not exactly a minor player in the Canadian Confederation, get 60% of their energy from nuclear power. Quebec once had expertise in nuclear power, but it was not successful, to say the least. The nuclear power plant in Quebec operated for a total of 183 days.

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Let us not forget that, in the early 1960s, when hydroelectricity was booming thanks to the very wise decisions made in the 1940s and 1950s and implemented in the 1960s, including the construction of the iconic Manic-5 generating station, the Lesage, Johnson and Bertrand governments considered the possibility of building a nuclear power plant. The decision to move forward was made in the early 1970s, but the primary focus was to be hydroelectricity and the James Bay megaproject. Need I remind members that some people wanted us to put that project aside and focus all of our efforts on nuclear power? Mr. Bourassa, the premier at the time, who, as we know, was willing to compromise, said that we were going to do both at the same time.

Let us also not forget that, at the time, a certain person said that he was not against hydroelectricity, but that he thought that maybe Quebec was already producing enough. He said that it was not necessarily smart to erect a dam on every single Catholic French-Canadian river. The person who said that was none other than former premier Jacques Parizeau. He later changed his mind, as did the party he represented at the time. Yes, we have been down this road in Quebec. It did not produce the desired results, but we are currently reviewing nuclear energy in Quebec, and it is not impossible that, as some prominent politicians and energy stakeholders have said, perhaps within a few decades, we will need nuclear energy. We are therefore studying the possibility of reviving the Gentilly-2 plant, which, I should note, was shut down in 2010 or 2012, if memory serves. As I recall, I was one of the last politicians in Quebec City to defend nuclear energy, not in order to put all our eggs in one basket, but rather to open it up to everyone.

In closing, I would simply like to say a word about the history of Chalk River. As I said earlier, its story began in 1942, in the middle of a world war. On July 11, 1944, General de Gaulle, head of the provisional government of the French Republic, came here on a visit. He met with three French scientists who were working at Chalk River specifically to develop nuclear energy. As we know, later on, in 1945, that energy was used in warfare.

I would also like to mention a few historical events. On December 13, 1952, a major incident occurred at Chalk River, requiring an emergency response. Not that many people knew what nuclear energy was or how to handle it, so a dozen people were brought in from the United States, some of whom had worked on a nuclear submarine. The young lieutenant who led the clean-up efforts eventually rose through the ranks to reach the highest office in his nation, becoming president of the United States. The person who responded to the incident at Chalk River in 1952 was none other than Jimmy Carter.

In closing, we are fully aware that nothing is perfect and that every form of energy has its challenges and risks. However, after more than 80 years in operation, after enabling millions of people around the world to beat cancer thanks to the isotopes produced at Chalk River, we feel that we have good track record overall. It can be improved, but it is good overall. After studying this for nearly eight years and evaluating some 15 potential sites, we feel that this is the right choice. We have to say yes to Chalk River. We have to have this disposal facility for very low-level radioactive waste.

• (1805)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his intervention, which represented his values well, all in all. I would like to appeal to him as a Quebecker. We know that the federal government has announced major investments in Volkswagen, Stellantis and Honda, all of which are located in Ontario. Why? It is because Ontario has no reservations about its energy needs.

That will cost it dearly later on, because it is choosing nuclear power. However, Quebec is the one that is going to bear the brunt of the risks Ontario is taking. If the Chalk River site has a spill or something, five million Quebecers who live down the Ottawa River could suffer the consequences. My colleague trusts the experts, but I would remind him that it was experts who downgraded Chalk River and, according to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, they are industry people.

Would my colleague at least be in favour of an ARTEMIS review so that international experts could speak to the Chalk River issue—

The Speaker: I will stop the clock for a moment so I can explain to everyone that I am trying to give each person 45 seconds of speaking time. This will allow members to ask a 45-second question, but also to give a 45-second answer. This way, a representative from each political party will be able to speak, and we may have enough time for a fifth question.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I think I was clear earlier when I said that nothing comes without risk. I think I was also clear when I said that Chalk River has been around for 80 years. I think I was clear when I said that hundreds of millions of people have benefited from the work that has been done at Chalk River. I think I also mentioned the major incident that occurred in 1952. Some of the people listening may not have known that Jimmy Carter came in response to that incident. The reality is that the record over those 80 years has been acceptable.

I do not need a lesson in Quebec nationalism or what it means to be a Quebecker from anyone. When I am here, I represent the people of Louis-Saint-Laurent, who are Quebeckers. When I am here, I am very proud to speak on behalf of Quebec, just as I am very proud to speak on behalf of Canada.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his speech. I too am very proud to represent Quebeckers.

I would like to ask him a question about the planned radioactive waste dump in Chalk River. There is a great deal of public concern about it. Several municipalities have spoken against the project, as have several Algonquin first nations.

What does my colleague make of the issue of social licence?

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Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question from my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who also proudly represents Quebec and knows what it means to be a Quebecker, as do the Bloc Québécois, Conservative and Liberal members. No one has any lessons to teach about Quebec nationalism or about being a Quebecker to anyone here in the House. I am sorry, but I do not take kindly to that.

On the issue of social licence, the member is absolutely right. That is why there were inquiries and consultations. Some people were in favour of the project, while others were against it. It is part of the public debate. It is always suspicious when everyone agrees on a particular topic. It is okay to have disagreements. We call that democracy. However, there comes a time when we have to choose, and our choice was based on the historical record.

We think that Chalk River's record over its 80 years of existence is acceptable. Of course we have to take people's concerns into account and respect them. We must not shove this project down their throats, but we must also allow them to benefit from this project, just as millions of people around the world have been able to benefit from the isotopes made here in Chalk River.

• (1810)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague had some reservations when the issue of the near-surface disposal facility arose. The member who asked a prior question from the Bloc talked about a catastrophic failure. I do not believe he has actually gone there or understands that there is no active reactor on site.

Did my colleague take the time to go to Chalk River to have all his questions answered? It does not sound as though anyone else in this chamber has.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I will answer in English. I respect my colleague who asked the question; by the way, she is the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, which is where Chalk River is. She knows a few things about that.

I had the pleasure and, I would say, the professionalism to have been at Chalk River. I was there on March 22; yes, I asked a lot of questions. I was asking why we have to put it there when there are a billion places we could put it here in Canada. We have the Canadian Shield. We have a lot of places for that.

However, based on the experience of the 88 years that we have, I think this is the safest place.

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, nuclear waste will not have to be transported if this can be done very close to the laboratory.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here listening to the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Green Party spread anti-nuclear energy propaganda, attacking an industry that is part of my community and that means jobs and energy in my community. I am very happy to stand here and correct the record. Durham is home to the Darlington nuclear facility. We are home to members of the Power Workers' Union and UA Local 401, the

hard-working men and women who put their time and energy into powering our region and powering our province. To sit here and listen to the Bloc Québécois and their buddies in the other parties spread anti-nuclear messaging is mind-blowing.

They go to great lengths to promote a conflict between economic growth and environmental stewardship. We would think they would respect an industry proving that those two things are not at odds with one another. In fact, we are proving, locally in Durham and in the nuclear industry across Canada, that we can pursue economic growth and environmental stewardship hand in hand. Instead of appreciating that and celebrating the hard-working men and women who make that possible, we are getting slander from the other parties of the House.

Let me be very clear. The Bloc Québécois has, through its dissenting report, tried to couch this as some sort of generational issue. I will quote from its introductory paragraph: "The Canadian governance of radioactive waste raises important issues that will have a significant impact on future generations." Let us talk about those future generations. Let us talk about the young people in our country right now who are proving that we can pursue economic growth and environmental stewardship hand in hand.

I would like to share what someone from the North American Young Generation in Nuclear said, a constituent of mine, Matthew Mairinger. He said very clearly that nuclear energy has the lowest CO₂ emissions by energy source and the highest capacity factor, operates 24-7, has among the lowest land footprints per energy produced and provides well-paying, stable careers for those in the community. As a young professional supporting nuclear energy, he feels it is one of the best ways he is helping society move forward.

This is from a young man who works in the nuclear energy industry, but he is far from alone. The data shows that the nuclear industry generates over \$2 billion in labour income and \$2.5 billion in direct and secondary economic activity annually in this country. The sector also contributes \$1.5 billion in tax revenue to federal and provincial governments, accounting for approximately 89,000 jobs nationwide. This goes back to the young people of this country.

Do members know that around 40% of the workers in the nuclear industry are under the age of 40? This is a young industry made up of hard-working people who believe that economic growth and environmental stewardship go hand in hand. That is why it is very important that we stand for this industry, not just because of my local economy in Durham, but because of what these young people are doing for the country as a whole.

When Bloc Québécois members say they are very concerned about future generations, pretending that this is some generational battle, they are not looking at the math, they are not looking at the facts and there are not looking at the stats, which show that this industry is creating opportunity for young men and women all across our country.

I would like to continue with some additional points about the environmental impact of the nuclear industry. Over 180 private sector suppliers, 95% of which are based in Canada, benefit from international nuclear projects that utilize Canadian intellectual property and manufactured goods. All the concerns that Bloc members are pretending to have about the environment are easily dismissed when we factor in the worldwide effect of Canadian energy. That is not just nuclear, but in this case, we are going to emphasize nuclear.

We are making it easier for countries all around the world to displace high-emission sources of energy with clean Canadian energy. The Bloc wants to pit nuclear against other forms of energy as if we are all competing. The reality is that the menu of options that Canada can give the world so it can have cleaner energy sources is incredible.

I want to emphasize once again that the hard-working men and women in the nuclear industry, including in my home community of Durham, deserve strong advocacy at the federal level. They deserve a strong voice shining a light on all the wonderful work they are doing every day, including to power places like where we stand right now.

● (1815)

I strongly and very clearly would like to oppose the anti-nuclear energy propaganda the House has been hearing over the last several hours. It is ill-informed and it is misrepresenting what is best for our country and what is best for the young people who, again, believe very strongly in pursuing economic growth and environmental stewardship hand in hand.

The Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

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.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, November 5, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PUBLIC SAFETY

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

I rise for the 55th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The community of Swan River is struggling with the rising rate of crime in the area. Statistics Canada reports that after nine years of the Liber-

al government, violent crime has risen by over 50% and gang-related homicides have nearly doubled. Within the last five years, the town's crime severity index has increased by over 50%.

The people of Swan River see the devastating effects this crime has on the community's safety and economic stability. The people of Swan River are calling for jail not bail for violent repeat offenders. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

● (1820)

The Speaker: I would like to remind all hon. members, please, that during this rubric of petitions, it is important to summarize the petition. Also, please, although the hon. member did mention that he supports his people, it is important just to let other members know not to say they support or do not support the petition at hand.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by the great people of Pickering, Ajax and Whitby.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to end all wasteful spending that is fuelling inflation and the cost of living crisis, confront the bureaucrats and the gatekeepers who prevent new housing construction and ensure all federal infrastructure funds be earmarked for increased home construction.

SHIP RECYCLING

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I again rise on behalf of frustrated constituents of mine from Union Bay on Vancouver Island, who are trying to draw the House's attention and the government's attention to the fact that Canada does not have strong laws when it comes to shipbreaking and ship recycling. In fact, we have extremely weak ones, if anything.

Petitioners are calling on the government to develop enforceable federal standards to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts of ship recycling that meet or exceed those set out in the EU ship recycling regulations, provide assistance through loans or grants to long-term reputable ship recycling companies that are closed-contained in a floating dry dock to facilitate implementation of new federal standards into their operations, and develop a strategy for recycling end-of-life for federally owned marine vessels.

Privilege

Petitioners cite the significant risk to workers and the environment associated with ship recycling due to the presence of a wide variety of hazardous materials in end-of-life marine vessels. Also, unlike other jurisdictions, Canada lacks standards on ship recycling and unregulated ship recycling activities, which are putting our oceans, coastal communities like where I live on Vancouver Island and workers at risk. The lack of domestic oversight of ship recycling and the disposal of end-of-life marine vessels frustrates Canada's ability to ensure compliance with its international obligations under the Basel Convention.

GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to be brief, the petitioners in my constituency are very concerned about the inequality in pay for work of equal value, which has been ongoing for decades. In this country, women still receive 21¢ less than men for every dollar, on average, for doing basically the same work. In order to ensure that women and children are not living in poverty, we must have pay equity.

The petitioners urge the House of Commons to enact effective pay equality and pay equity for all women in Canada.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a month that the House has been at a complete standstill, paralyzed in the business of looking out for Canadians and of actually solving the problems that the House should be seized with. It may not be the worst news in the world. Certainly, many want to see the government take a walk after nine years; I hope Canadians can finally decide to send the government packing in a soon-to-come carbon tax election. Therefore, it may not be the worst thing.

After nine years of the government and its destructive policies, we have been at a standstill for a brief while. The government of the day, the Liberals and their NDP counterparts, can no longer ruin the lives of Canadians even more than they have, at least in the short term. In nine years, the government has doubled the cost of housing and rent. It has doubled a mortgage payment in this country over the course of the last nine years.

We have inflation and interest rates burning out of control because of the government's irresponsible spending. We do not have a revenue problem in this country; we have a spending problem. The Liberal government spends more than it has on things we do not want or need. Two million people are eating from a food bank in a single month. Hundreds of tent cities are popping up in Toronto and all across the country, from coast to coast to coast.

We have crime, drugs, chaos and disorder in our streets. There are violent offenders turned out on bail as soon as they commit a

crime. We saw this weekend, in Toronto, a scene from what seemed to be a movie. Police were chasing down criminals who stole a car, who hurt a police horse, who put citizens shopping on a weekend at risk and who ruined a business, all to find out that these culprits were out on bail because of the government's weak bail policy.

Today, the justice minister told the House that he is not responsible for any of it, that he is not responsible for Bill C-75, which allows that to happen. He also cannot count; he was trying to make slogans using three words or four words. I do not know what that answer was, but the issue is that the justice minister in this country does not think he is responsible for the justice system.

We could be speaking about anything else in the House. However, it is because the Liberal government will not turn the documents over to the police that we are here debating this, and we will continue to do that until they hand them over.

• (1825)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying to everyone celebrating, happy Bandi Chhor Diwas and happy Diwali. Tonight, Liberals will be celebrating Bandi Chhor Diwas and Diwali on the Hill because no one can take away the light of Canadians. We know that light will conquer darkness. We know that hope will conquer fear. We know that knowledge will beat ignorance any single day.

Today, I know the member has given so many comments about what we could be doing. Taking the time to really appreciate Canadians and everything that they offer is important to be doing. The Conservatives choose to be debating privilege, rather than policies and bills that could be helping Canadians and yet, they want to play partisan politics. Does the member agree that light will conquer darkness, hope will conquer fear and that we should be celebrating the diversity of our country?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I wish my hon. colleague happy Diwali; and a happy holiday season to all colleagues in this House.

To answer the member's question, light will trample darkness and good will win over evil when Canadians get their chance and their say in a carbon tax election and when these guys finally hit the road and stop ruining the lives of Canadians. Until then, no matter who they are, no matter why they celebrate and no matter what language they speak or when they came to this country, there is a place for people in the Conservative Party and more and more Canadians are realizing that, and thank goodness.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled by the last comment from the member of Parliament for Waterloo. Deepak Obhrai, who was a wonderful Conservative member of Parliament, whom we miss, used to host Diwali on the Hill. What happened—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

• (1830)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I invite the hon. member to Diwali by the Conservatives tomorrow, and I hope to see her there. I am not sure whether she is going to come, but she is welcome, as everyone else is.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Thornhill for the invitation.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that with fraud, many people have not come forward because they felt the stigma, the shame and the embarrassment of dealing with fraud. It is like dealing with mental health. We need to do a better job to change the public's outlook when it comes to sharing about fraud because fraud is happening, and it is sophisticated. It is happening because of organized crime, which is using highly sophisticated devices and attitudes to go after vulnerable people. I am going to talk a little bit about that tonight.

Recently, a senior in my riding, Peggy Christian from Courtenay, was scammed out of \$100,000, her life savings. She was tricked into making wire transfers in huge amounts to scammers from Thailand, while her bank, Coast Capital Savings on Vancouver Island, did not have the protocols or the safeguards in place to protect Peggy. Peggy, who was 76 at the time, had been with Coast Capital Savings for more than 30 years. She had never gotten any transfers like this, and it should have been caught. Now, Peggy has had to sell her house and cut her costs in half just to stay above water, and her bank and the Canadian government have failed to return what she has lost.

This is a heartbreaking story that should never have happened. We know that, often, when Canadians are victimized by scams, the Canadian government punishes the victim, not the perpetrator, and I am going to tell a story about that as well.

In 2022, Canadian investors, as members have probably heard, were swept into what has been described as a more than \$300-million Ponzi scheme, allegedly perpetrated by Greg Martel. Many of those investors, who come from all walks of life, are struggling to move on from their losses.

One of my constituents, Lana McKenzie, invested in that Ponzi scheme. She was already hurting from the scam, and she was actually hit again when the CRA taxed her based on the fraudulent T5s that Lana had received from the scammer himself. Ever since then, Lana has been fighting for fairness from the CRA, but the federal government, instead of acting swiftly, has been moving incredibly slowly on Lana and other victims' objections at a time when many of those victims are already financially vulnerable.

They are living with the shame, but have come forward with courage, and I applaud them for having the courage to come for-

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ward. At the same time, we have seen no evidence that the federal government is working to return the alleged perpetrator, Greg Martel, from overseas, so he can face justice. Much of that stolen money has never been returned, and the government has not used the levers through Interpol to go after him.

We know that online fraud is impacting more and more Canadians. In 2022, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre reported that it had observed \$530 million in reported victim losses. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre also received nearly 91,000 reports from Canadians that same year. According to the RCMP, fraud was the second largest contributor to the severity of crime last year. The rate of fraud, in 2023, went up by 12% and the rate of extortion went up by 35%.

It should not be so easy for Canadians to get scammed, and it should not be so hard for victims to recoup their losses. The government needs to do a lot more. We need to make sure that the banks, which benefit from these illegitimate transactions, are being held to account as well. We can look at the recent case of TD in the U.S., which allowed criminal activity because it profited from them. In fact, Merrick Garland, the U.S. attorney general, said, "TD Bank created an environment that allowed financial crime to flourish. By making its services convenient for criminals, it became one." That is how bad it is getting.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here for adjournment debate with my friend and colleague from Courtenay—Alberni. Before I start, I would like to extend my sympathies to Peggy, who has experienced this fraud in her life. I have had constituents in my riding as well who have lost sizable amounts of their life savings to these heartless scammers. It is a disgusting practice and we certainly need to find solutions.

We carry these little devices around in our pockets now and take for granted that we can achieve so much on that phone. However, for people who are less familiar with that technology, because it has just been in the last 5% or 10% of their lives that it has become commonplace to have a very high-powered computer in their pocket with the capacity of going into their bank account and everything, it is intimidating. I think the onset of that technology has caused a lot of harm across our society with respect to seniors and fraudulent activity. Therefore, I offer my condolences to the member's constituent.

Fraudulent telephone calls are a significant source of concern for Canadians. They are not just annoying but very damaging as well. That is why our government continues to take concrete actions to combat these crimes. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, Canada's national independent telecommunications regulator, has developed a series of requirements for industry to combat fraudulent telecommunications and help protect Canadians.

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The CRTC works with telecommunications companies to block incoming scam calls. For example, the CRTC approved a proposal from Bell Canada to permanently implement a call-blocking solution that uses artificial intelligence to prevent scam calls originating from outside of Canada from ever reaching Canadians. I am happy to share that from January 2020 to November 2023, this program prevented over 1.6 billion calls from reaching Canadians. That is a large number.

The CRTC also requires service providers to block calls when the originating phone number does not conform to a standard numbering plan, a common sign of a fraudulent call.

Furthermore, the CRTC is also working to improve a call traceback solution used to trace unsolicited calls back to their point of origin. As part of this process, in late February, the CRTC launched public consultations to identify solutions to particular operational issues with the traceback process. We know this approach to combatting fraud calls requires close collaboration with industry, tech leaders and experts. The CRTC is also working with industry to alert Canadians if an incoming call might be part of a scam. This approach, known as STIR/SHAKEN, works by notifying Canadians whether an incoming call originates from a real number. While it is not currently possible to authenticate all incoming calls, this approach will become more effective as telecom companies upgrade their networks and more Canadians use telephones that work with this approach.

Beyond the initiatives taken by the CRTC, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Competition Bureau are responsible for the enforcement of activities. Their work is facilitated by that of the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, which is jointly operated by the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Competition Bureau, which enables law enforcement agencies to investigate complex fraud schemes by collecting information on fraud-related issues.

The government is also taking steps to enhance the quality of information on fraud in Canada by improving the processes by which Canadians can report fraud. For example, the National Cybercrime Coordination Centre and the CAFC are developing a new national crime and fraud reporting system to improve the processes used to report fraud and cybercrime incidents to law enforcement. It is expected to be fully operational in the coming months and will help improve the quality of data on fraud in Canada, as well as making it easier for Canadians to report fraud.

The Government of Canada will always work to protect Canadians. It will continue to use the tools at its disposal to combat these crimes, but it goes without saying that it has to do more. It has to protect seniors. They are most commonly the victims of these crimes and I am in favour of any action to do that.

● (1835)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, as of November 1, Canada introduced the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments, who is meant to help resolve scam issues with banks. That is a great start, but since the ombudsperson's recommendations are non-binding, it is only a half measure. We have a financial system that rewards criminals and costs Canadians. We need to hold big banks to account and make sure there is a cost to doing business with criminals.

We need to make it easier for Canadians to work with the CRA to correct their finances after being victims of fraud. My colleague the member for Windsor West has called for a first ministers conference to tackle cybercrime.

It is high time the federal government takes these instances of online fraud and extortion seriously instead of just putting the burden on Canadians. Bell, Rogers and Telus need to be held accountable for being a portal to crime and the CRTC needs to do much more. We know the Conservatives are not going to go after those big players. It is high time the Liberals hold them to account.

● (1840)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, in my opening, I went as fast as I could to get through the eight pages of details on all the actions this government has taken. As to the 1.6 billion calls that were prevented, we have all experienced the duct cleaning calls and the CRA scam calls. Fortunately, most young people have the wherewithal just to hang up, but victims are increasingly seniors who are unfamiliar with technology. We have to do more, there is no doubt, but the long list of actions taken is already having results.

The outcomes are pretty good, but Canada's telecommunications regulator will continue to work with the industry to develop technical solutions to combat these criminals. The member is right that the banking sector has an obligation to do more as well. We also have to educate Canadians about the dangers of online scams and all the progress on the countermeasures that are under way. Education goes a really long way. I know the Milton Public Library does a lot to educate seniors, so I encourage more people to be cautious and diligent.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am picking up on a question that I asked on World Environment Day, June 5 every year. On June 5, 2024, I asked the government and the Prime Minister how they could reconcile claiming to want to protect the endangered southern resident killer whale while also expanding the activities that we know put the survival of that species at risk. The activities I specifically mentioned were the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which is now developed, paid for and owned by the Trans Mountain Corporation, a Crown corporation. This means the people of Canada had to spend \$34 billion to expand a pipeline that had not been approved by the first nations over whose territory it crossed.

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I note that earlier today, the Minister of Finance claimed that the first nations along the route were compliant, but that does not meet UNDRIP because it sure was not done with free or prior consent. It was often after the fact that the Trans Mountain Corporation, now a Canadian Crown corporation, coerced nations into signing agreements, saying that since they could not stop the pipeline, they might as well sign so it could give them some money. As described by other first nations, this has amounted to economic smallpox, referring to smallpox in blankets in the first wave of colonial settlement on this continent of Turtle Island.

I also noted in my question that the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline has vastly increased the traffic noise of tankers and the risk of tanker accidents involving dilbit, which cannot be cleaned up in a marine environment. In fact, recently, Simon Fraser University found that since the pipeline's completion, the increase in tanker traffic has been tenfold. That is one of the most severe risks to the survival of the southern resident killer whale, and when a spill occurs, the damage to all marine species is incalculable. I also noted in my question that the expansion of the Roberts Bank terminal in the port of Vancouver is a direct threat to the survival of the southern resident killer whale as well as other species, including the western sandpiper.

The response I got from the parliamentary secretary at the time mentioned a number of commitments that I do not think are at all sufficient for the climate crisis, but were not responsive to the fundamental question of how we think we can protect the southern resident killer whale, which the government is bound to do by the Species at Risk Act, while vastly increasing the threats to that very species. When I asked the question on June 5, I referenced that there are only 75 whales left in that population. Since then, the number has declined. We now have 73 southern resident killer whales left.

I want to again thank the local volunteer groups that work so hard on this, particularly the southern Gulf Islands whale sighting network, which keeps a close eye on the number of vessels violating the rules, like recreational vessels coming too close to the whales and commercial vessels violating the interim protocols that were supposed to be created for sanctuaries in the areas of most critical habitat.

To the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to everyone in the government, if there is any concern for the survival of the species, the government has to pay attention to reducing noise, reducing the volume of vessels and prosecuting those who violate the protocols and the distance requirements to save our whales.

• (1845)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her advocacy for killer whales tonight. I know that she has been a steadfast champion of mammals that do not vote. It is important to recognize that many aspects of our environment depend on us to be their stewards and their stakeholders. Killer whales are very intelligent animals, but obviously they do not have the right to cast a ballot.

Back in 2019, the Government of Canada announced an enhanced recovery strategy for the southern resident killer whale population. Environment and Climate Change Canada and three other federal partners took measures to help with the conservation and recovery of this population. This specific group of orcas, the southern resident killer whales, faced a triple threat of pollution, declining numbers of the chinook salmon that they feed on, and acoustic and physical disturbances from busy shipping lanes and other marine activity. This is not new, but it is undeniably urgent. That is why our government is taking action through an enhanced recovery strategy. This past spring and for the last six years, the federal government announced the implementation of new seasonal measures and funding to protect these whales, restore their population and conserve the health of their food sources.

Environment and Climate Change Canada continues to fund and support the chemicals management plan. This is one of several pollution prevention initiatives that have implemented measures and allowed enforcement officials to intervene to protect the killer whales and the environment from harmful pollutants.

In addition, new approaches and innovations are changing how we ship goods through the waters, and Canada's marine safety system must also evolve to continue to protect Canadians and the environment. Last summer, the Minister of Transport announced the passage of Bill C-47, which took budget funds and allocated them to specific oceans protection measures and we created better compensation for communities that would feel the impact in the event of a hazardous substance spill.

Canada's oceans protection plan strengthens marine safety within our waters, and we now have vastly faster responses to emergencies, such as marine firefighting and emergency towing. The vessels that travel to the Trans Mountain terminal in Burnaby, British Columbia are monitored and must adhere to strict safety and incident regulations because our government is committed to protecting our waters. Canada targets problem vessels. There is a fund and a protocol in place to remove hazards to navigation and to wildlife, and these measures were created in response to feedback from indigenous peoples, stakeholders, Canadians and I imagine some of the whale-sighting volunteers that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands mentioned, as well. We all agree that the oceans are hurting, and the protection of our oceans is a national priority. It is in everyone's best interest to advance this federal government's oceans protection plan.

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We stand with all Canadians in our love of these B.C. orcas and the natural environment around us, and we stand behind the protections that we have written into Canadian law. Together, we walk a delicate line between preserving biodiversity and species at risk, tackling climate change and keeping our economy evolving.

With the remaining time, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work on this subject that Senator Murray Sinclair did. He was a steadfast advocate for whales, dolphins and other marine mammals, particularly when they were being held in captivity for entertainment. We lost Senator Murray Sinclair today. Canada is a poorer nation without his mind and advocacy, but we are so much richer for his many contributions.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the hon. parliamentary secretary for the reference to the late and extraordinary Judge Murray Sinclair, who was the sponsor in the Senate of the bill I took through the House of Commons to ban the keeping of whales in captivity. He will be deeply missed.

In the 45 seconds I have left, let me just say to the parliamentary secretary that the Southern Gulf Islands Whale Sighting Network is documenting increasing intrusions and violations that affect the southern resident killer whales. Things are getting much worse, and no matter how many press releases the Liberals issue, it is not affecting the numbers of southern resident killer whales because we are not enforcing our laws. With the increased numbers of tankers and the commitment to expand the Roberts Bank Terminal, we are going in the opposite direction of what the whales need. If there ever were a spill, no matter how fast the emergency vessels could get there, all I can imagine is that they would stand on the side and weep because we have no technology to clean up a dilbit spill.

• (1850)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her extraordinary work on the file, which goes back many, many years if not more than a decade.

As the new Canadian clean-energy economy matures and oil and gas pollution measures are made toward Canada's net-zero target, stricter controls on protecting our waters and marine life are absolutely critical. In the event of a spill, there is a faster and better emergency response, and there is better compensation for all types of harvesting impacted, from fishing and hunting to the gathering of indigenous traditional medicines.

Canada is transforming its economy incrementally, but I would also like to be optimistic in the hopes we never have to endure such a horrible event. Oil spills are really a disgusting event of capitalism and dependence on shipping fossil fuels across the ocean. I saw an infographic recently about how far fewer ships would be necessary if we did not send fossil fuels across the ocean.

Our government is committed to protecting our natural wonders, and I thank the member from the Green Party for her advocacy.

The Speaker: I thank all hon. members for their participation in the adjournment debate.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:51 p.m.)

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