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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 8, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

Prayer

• (1000)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE WHEN QUOTING FROM
CORRESPONDENCE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am now going to read my decision on the point of order that was raised late during yesterday's sitting. A point of order was raised by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader in relation to language used by the member for King—Vaughan when quoting from correspondence.

In quoting from the said document, the member for King—Vaughan had taken the appropriate step of replacing the name of the Prime Minister by his title; however, she did read into the record a relatively strong and offensive term in relation to that member. In his intervention, the parliamentary secretary argued that one should not do indirectly what cannot be done directly. As we were getting close to the Adjournment Proceedings, I undertook to take the matter under consideration and come back to the House if necessary.

First off, it is an acceptable practice for members to quote from correspondence they receive. As mentioned in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 614:

[Members] may quote from private correspondence as long as they identify the sender by name or take full responsibility for its contents

It also says, on the same page, that:

There is no Standing Order which governs the citation of documents; the House is guided mainly by custom and precedent. Generally, the reading of articles from newspapers, books or other documents by a Member during debate has become an accepted practice and is not ruled out of order provided that such quotations do not...use language which would be out of order if spoken by a Member.

[Translation]

This principle has been confirmed by multiple rulings by Speakers. For example, in Speaker Milliken's ruling of November 8, 2006, on page 4895 of the Debates, he pointed out, and I quote:

Hon. members cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly. Using language that is unparliamentary because they are quoting somebody is not satisfactory. We will not have these quotes read this way.

I would urge all members to stay away from such comments even when quoting from documents. Taking unparliamentary language from a quotation and then attributing it to another individual does not make it more acceptable.

I thank all members for their attention.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1005)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE
AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 7 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to remind the House that I am continuing my intervention from last night where I was reading into the record correspondence I received from Stephanie. These are her words.

"I am watching clips of what is going on in the House of Commons and in Parliament all the time and we are going in circles. It does not matter how many scandals or how much corruption has taken place with these [NDP-Liberals]. They are getting away with all of them. It is as if they are completely above the law. What will it take for an election to happen? How much more damage will this [Prime Minister] and his little sinister sidekicks do between now and the next election?"

"We are all reeling here about what has happened to a member of our work family in our community. Do we collectively stop giving a cent to the CRA? Do we have any power at all? Is it all a ruse?"

Privilege

"I'm counting on the leader of the Conservatives for change. I'm deeply concerned and devastated by what has happened to my country and what a mess my kids now have to navigate. I have a message for the Liberal-NDP MPs in Ottawa next time you see them, if you will kindly oblige me. 'To all of you sitting on the Liberals' side, you, who are fully aware by now of the criminal acts and corruption of several members of this government. You made a promise to your constituents to represent them in Ottawa, yet you are sitting here today saying and doing absolutely nothing. Somehow, I don't think the people who elected you would be okay with \$400 million unaccounted for and the multitude of scandals that have taken place with the government in the last nine years, and brazenly stolen tax dollars on the backs of hard-working Canadians who put their trust in you.

"The member from Vaughan—Woodbridge even tried to gaslight Canadians by telling them that this is their decade and they have never had it so good. Are you kidding me? Have you actually spoken to anyone in Woodbridge recently? I have and I beg to differ. Take a good hard look at yourselves. Did you not go into this line of work for the love of country and your communities? I find it very hard to believe that every single one of you went into this to steal, lie and deceive. It can't be possible. Yet here we are. Your collective inactions are complicit, and your complicit behaviour is treasonous. Shame on all of you."

The Liberals will be held to account when the next government takes over and has to clean up the mess they have created.

The correspondence from Stephanie continues:

"[To the] cowards wanting a secret ballot because you know that what is going on is wrong and you are not willing to speak the truth, you should be calling their crimes out from the rooftops in full light of day. We are looking, we are listening and we are watching. We will not forget. What do I say to my friends and family to give them hope and convince them to cast their vote despite their fatigue and frustrations? We need inspiration here. We are tired, we are sad and we don't recognize our country anymore. You and the leader of the Conservative Party got my vote. Please do not let us down. Please, continue to fight hard and give us hope.

"With all my heart and sincerity, Stephanie."

I hear her anger, I feel her frustration and I share her concerns. She is not alone. I hope the Prime Minister and all the supporters in the NDP-Liberal government, who have remained quiet, heard her as well. She has touched so many issues and concerns in her letter that are shared by many Canadians. Crime, lack of transparency and continuous scandals and corruption have led to their fatigue and frustration.

• (1010)

If Stephanie is watching, here is our promise to her. Conservatives will axe the tax, which will make the cost of everything more affordable. Conservatives will build the homes so that our children can realize their dream of home ownership. Conservatives will fix the budget and stop the crime in the hope that no other little boy will ever have to witness his father being shot and feel it was his fault.

I will leave the NDP-Liberals with a sentiment of British philosopher Edmund Burke that has been quoted by many others over the years, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [and good women] to do nothing." These are the words of constituents from my riding of King—Vaughan.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the hon. member's speech, she mentioned what happened to the country. I can say what happened. While the opposition parties were involved in petty politics, we were working hard for Canadians. With our actions and programs, the inflation rate is at a historic low, interest rates have been cut four times and the consumer price index is at a 30-month high. Rents in Toronto have fallen by 9.4% year over year. These are the kinds of things we are focused on. We are working hard for Canadians while the Conservative Party is playing petty politics.

I would ask the hon. member to specifically address the things that are happening today in the economy, how global inflation has been tamed by the actions of our government, how we have addressed the affordability issues of Canadians and what the results are that we are seeing today.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I am a little concerned. We are talking about \$400 million of hard-earned taxpayer money. We need to report to the Canadian public why the government refuses to release the documents. Liberals need to be held accountable.

The member can talk about everything he wants, but what about the 1,400 tent encampments? What about the lineups of over two million people at food banks? What about the 5.42 million meals served by Sai Dham Food Bank in one month? How does he explain the \$400 million of hard-earned taxpayer money being wasted by the corrupt government?

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, honestly, I think we have to be realistic right now. The Leader of the Opposition refuses to get security clearance so he can get that information. He refuses to get security clearance, period. Even if he did not want the information about how his own party is implicated in foreign interference, even if he did not want the information about the leadership race that put him in the position he is in and how it was corrupted by foreign interference, he could still get his security clearance, except he has chosen not to.

The Conservatives have spent weeks rage farming all over the country, but their leader, who wants to be the prime minister of this country, refuses to get a security clearance, and every single Canadian should be worried about that.

Privilege

• (1015)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, like Stephanie said in her letter, the NDP-Liberal government is in a coalition. The member is trying to deflect from the fact that the government has created a \$400-million scandal when individuals are lining up at the food bank.

The Prime Minister is the only one who can release those names. Why does he not do that?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, after hearing my colleague's remarks, I just have one thing to say. I would like to extend my condolences to Stephanie and to the family of the man who was murdered, especially his son.

I would like to tell his son that he was very brave and that he must not blame himself. Now, he should grow up in the light. That would be the best way to keep his father with him and to make his father proud. He should be proud of his courage in an extremely difficult moment that no one should have to experience.

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I want to explain that it was very hard for me to read that letter about this six-year-old boy who witnessed the shooting of his father. He called his grandmother and said it was his fault that he could not protect his daddy.

That is not the Canada my grandfather came to in 1950. Criminals have more luxuries and freedom than survivors and victims. There has been a 75% increase in violence against women and children. Why is that? I will tell the House. It is because the laws need to be changed if we are going to protect our communities. I thank my hon. colleague for her kind words, and I agree with her. This little boy is a hero.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speeches, today and yesterday, were very interesting. In my riding, I am often asked to speak at high schools and talk to civics and leadership classes. More than ever, there really seems to be a distrust of many politicians of all stripes. We can name all the scandals one after another. Is the member opposite hearing this as well because of the continual scandals, and what will it take for the public to trust in members of Parliament once again?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I hear the same comments day in, day out. My phone rings continuously, and people are tired. They are fed up. They are fed up that their hard work is not bringing home the paycheques that allow them to support their families. We need a carbon tax election. Not only are the Conservatives saying it, but the country is also saying it. We need to convince the Liberal-NDP members that what they are doing is not helping the country. People are leaving this country because they cannot afford to live here anymore. We need a carbon tax election now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree in many ways with a lot of the misleading information that is put on the record, and the previous speaker is a good example of that.

I give my condolences to Stephanie and appreciate the hardship she has experienced. However, I would challenge the member op-

posite, as I have done with other members. If they really believe what they are saying and want to be genuine to individuals such as Stephanie, why will no Conservative MP step up and discuss the issue we have been debating with me? In this case, I will go to the Niagara University in Ontario and challenge the member; we will invite Stephanie to be in the audience with us. Let us go to the university and talk to a class of individuals who are not political partisans. They can listen to what the member has to say compared with what I have to say to them and allow those students to pass a judgment in terms of a vote.

I will make the trip to Niagara University, and let us see if we can generate a classroom, invite Stephanie and listen to the arguments the member makes related to the motion we are talking about today. Will the member opposite do what none of her colleagues has done and accept the challenge?

• (1020)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I accept that challenge, and so will Stephanie. I had a long conversation with her, and she explained to me that, when her family came to this country, they could afford a home and could afford to support their families. Working hard meant that people were able to save up for a vacation. People could have their children play hockey in the streets and not worry about the crime running rampant in our country. They could make sure the government was accountable and transparent. That is not happening today.

Why will the Liberals not release the documents to the RCMP so that we can explain to Stephanie and all the other constituents what the government has done with the constituents' \$400 million?

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that people are really struggling right now. In Vancouver Kingsway, people are having trouble paying their skyrocketing rent; they cannot afford a home, and they are living paycheque to paycheque. They are facing food insecurity. People need help.

My colleague referred to one of her constituents, Stephanie. One of my constituents, a senior named Mary, contacted me last week. She told me that she went to the dentist for the first time and got dentures. She had been living without teeth for years. She could not eat an apple. Her nutrition and her overall health suffered. She got dental care, primary health care, because of what the NDP has done in Parliament.

Cutting dental care would hurt millions of Canadians, including seniors who need it. If the member's party forms government, will she cut dental care, or will she stand up today and say here in the House that she will support, keep and expand the dental care that is helping Canadians in this country?

Privilege

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I will say this: If the wasteful spending of the Liberal-NDP government had not occurred, we would have had the funds to support our seniors and to make sure they are able to go to the dentist. We are not talking about just \$400 million. How many other scandals are there? There is the \$60 million scandal. It totals in the billions. Let us be honest here. The money wasted because of the NDP coalition with the Liberals could have helped millions of seniors, but they refuse to stand firm.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am always pleased to rise in the House on behalf of the great people of Sturgeon River—Parkland to talk about their priorities in Parliament.

After nine years, the evidence is clear that the NDP-Liberal government has proven too costly in terms of crime, taxes, corruption and just plain incompetence. I am proud to rise in the House once again to hold the Liberal government to account for its corruption and incompetence before Parliament, for our democracy and for all Canadians. In Parliament today, we are speaking about a ruling the Speaker made that the Liberal government violated an order of the House of Commons by refusing to submit full, unredacted evidence for a criminal investigation into a \$400-million green slush fund scandal. This ruling, combined with the government's actions, has paralyzed Parliament, which is preventing us from focusing on issues, such as the skyrocketing cost of housing, Liberal inflation's effect on food prices and the rising rate of crime.

Today, we are dealing with an issue of the Liberal government's incompetence and negligence in the form of \$400 million of inappropriately diverted money at Sustainable Development Technology Canada. It was funnelled into the hands of directors who had a conflict of interest. They had a financial interest in the companies they were sending taxpayer money to. The directors were appointed by the Liberal government; they were accountable to the Liberal government and the Minister of Industry, yet the government refused to act while \$400 million in taxpayer money was misappropriated for personal gain.

Until the Prime Minister meets our demands to release the full, unredacted documents to the RCMP, Parliament will be forced to continue with this very important privilege debate. Until then, Liberals will find no rest. Conservatives will continue to fight tooth and nail to stand up for the rights of Parliament in the House, stand up to the government's corruption and ensure that taxpayers get every single stolen dollar back.

We are talking about parliamentary privilege. For those Canadians who are tuning in and may not understand what parliamentary privilege means, it means that members of the House of Commons have rights. This is a sacred principle we inherited from the mother of parliaments, Westminster. The Liberal government has violated the rights of Parliament by refusing to release documents that Parliament demanded. These powers to call for documents are rooted in the very Constitution of this country, from 1867, and in the Parliament of Canada Act. This issue is so significant that the Speaker had to rule on it. We have been debating it for weeks in the House, to the exclusion of all other issues, because the government continues to paralyze Parliament and refuses to hand over the documents Parliament requested.

If the Liberals think they have a mandate from Canadians to refuse to hand over documents Parliament has demanded, they must take it to a higher power, the people of Canada, to get a mandate to withhold these documents. They do not have that mandate; they do not have the courage to call an election, so we are here today with a paralyzed Parliament.

The Liberals have claimed that they cannot release these documents because that would infringe on charter rights. This is a very novel argument. It is an appeal to ignorance, one would say. They say that releasing the documents might infringe on rights, so they must withhold them, but they do not offer any clear or concrete evidence to back up this claim. I say that the charter was created to protect Canadians from the excesses and evils of government, not to protect government from accountability, Canadians or Canada's Parliament.

The documents that were provided were heavily redacted, censored and blacked out. This level of secrecy in a country such as Canada, or anywhere across the world, is wrong. It is preventing us from holding the government to account for the way it spends our money. Parliament has the authority to spend taxpayers' money. These are hard-won privileges; they were fought for in the 1600s and 1700s in the British Parliament, and we inherited them here in Canada's Parliament. There were literal wars fought over the rights of Parliament to raise and spend money and to hold government to account. In fact, a king was killed because he refused to submit to the will of Parliament. That is how serious a precedent this is, and it is why the Speaker had to make a ruling that Parliament's rights were violated.

Before this matter can go to committee, we have to insist that the RCMP and Parliament have full access to the information we have called for. This issue deserves to be handled with the utmost seriousness, and it needs to be made a priority for Parliament. All opposition parties agree that this demand must be met, except for the Liberals. They do not have a majority, and they do not have the right or the votes to defy the will of the House.

• (1025)

If they want a mandate to defy the will of the House, they need to take it to the Canadian people. That is something they refuse to do, because they know exactly what is going to happen if they ask Canadians whether they support their move to withhold these documents. It is not going to look pretty for them. This is a scandal that reflects on all the Liberal scandals we have seen over the nine years of the NDP-Liberal government.

Privilege

Why is the government working so hard to hide these documents? When we are talking about \$400 million, it is not chump change. As Canadians are facing a cost of living crisis across this country, it is more important than ever to ensure that every single taxpayer dollar is spent rightly and efficiently and has the best possible result for Canadians. Canadians need to hold the government to account in the next election, but as the government refuses to call an election, it is up to Parliament to hold it to account. While the ballot box might be the ultimate judge, the government refuses to let us go to the ballot box, so we are going to keep fighting tooth and nail until it gives Canadians the documents they deserve.

We are in an affordability crisis, and the Liberals are acting in exactly the opposite way that Canadians would expect a government to act, especially a government they only gave a minority and expect to work with other parties in the House, not defy the will of Parliament. Instead of finding ways to serve Canadians, we have to sit here and discuss the government's negligence, its incompetence and its ongoing corruption and refusal to be transparent and hand over documents about its mismanagement.

According to the 2024 HungerCount report, food banks have recorded over two million visits this past March, and more than a quarter of those visits were by children. We are discussing these things today because the government has paralyzed Parliament. It is removing our ability to discuss how to bring results for Canadians. While the government holds Parliament hostage by preventing these documents from going forward, we cannot deal with the very important issues Canadians want to deal with.

Getting back to the issue of SDTC, the industry minister is the main perpetrator of this scandal. He violated a House order. I want to go back to a document the Prime Minister released back in 2015 when the Liberals first formed government. In 2015, the Prime Minister sent each cabinet minister a letter entitled "Open and Accountable Government". It outlined their responsibilities. I want to quote from the document today:

To be worthy of Canadians' trust, we must always act with integrity. This is not merely a matter of adopting the right rules, or of ensuring technical compliance with those rules. As Ministers, you and your staff must uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality, and both the performance of your official duties and the arrangement of your private affairs should bear the closest public scrutiny. This is an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law.

Another section reads, "The trust of Canadians will also rest on the accountability of our government. In our system, the highest manifestation of democratic accountability is the forum of Parliament." That does not sound like the government of today. It does not think the forum of Parliament is the authority in this country.

The document continues:

You are accountable to Parliament for the exercise of the powers, duties and functions with which you have been entrusted. This requires you to be present in Parliament to answer honestly and accurately about your areas of responsibility, to take corrective action as appropriate to address problems that may arise in your portfolios, to correct any inadvertent errors in answering to Parliament at the earliest opportunity, and to work with parliamentary colleagues of all political persuasions in a respectful and constructive manner.

We have come a long way since 2015. I doubt the government would put out a letter like this to cabinet ministers today with a straight face, because that is not the NDP-Liberal government we have been seeing over the past nine years.

The document further says that ministers must answer Parliament's questions on how "public monies were spent, as well as to account for that use. Whether a Minister has discharged responsibilities appropriately is a matter of political judgment by Parliament. The Prime Minister has the prerogative to reaffirm support for that Minister or to ask for his or her resignation."

The government is refusing to hand over documents about how \$400 million of taxpayer money in the industry minister's portfolio was misdirected to insiders. Some of the insiders are very close to the Liberal government, including the Liberal environment minister, who still holds shares in one of the companies that received at least \$10 million through this program. Before he became the environment minister, he was a very effective lobbyist for it. This is an insider thing. This is Liberal cronies at the trough with taxpayer dollars.

● (1030)

"Open and Accountable Government" says, "The Prime Minister has the prerogative to reaffirm support for that Minister or to ask for his or her resignation." I just want to think about the past history of Liberal ministers who have resigned in the government. It seems like the only ministers whose resignation the Prime Minister has ever asked for or ministers whom he has forced to resign have been the ministers who have stood up to him.

Why is it that only the ministers who stand up to the Prime Minister are asked to resign? It is not the ministers who misplaced \$400 million of taxpayer money because they were not holding their board of directors accountable under conflict of interest rules that the ministers fully knew were being violated. In fact, members of the board even raised the conflict of interest rules to the industry minister at the time and were ignored. They knew full well that there were conflicts of interest going on, and they did nothing to prevent it from happening. Now \$400 million has been misspent.

Why is the Minister of Industry not being held to account for the mismanagement? It just does not appear that mismanagement or negligence is really a cause for firing in the Liberal government. The only thing that is a cause for that is standing up to the boss.

Parliament is all about standing up to the powerful. It is all about standing up against the sort of obscurity and the sort of opaque government that refuses to hand over documents and be fully truthful and honest about how things went down, who got rich and how they were connected. If one can cover up those things, they can be in cabinet.

Privilege

If we stand up, let us say if there is a scandal related to a company that is facing prosecution and we are facing pressure from a prime minister and a PMO that are calling for us to intervene in an active investigation by asking a special prosecutor to give a deferred prosecution agreement, that is not allowed. We are out of cabinet. However, if we allow \$400 million of taxpayer money to be misspent, there are no consequences.

Has the government met its own standards of integrity and accountability? As outlined in the 2015 document, I think it is very clear to all Canadians that they have not. Canadians do not expect perfection. They know that governments are going to fail and that mistakes are going to be made, but they do expect accountability. They expect openness, honesty and transparency, and they expect that the trust they put in the House and in the government is going to be respected.

I know there are many Liberal MPs in their caucus who agree. I encourage them to have the courage, like the ministers the Prime Minister fired for standing up to him, to stand up to the Prime Minister and to the government for their mismanagement. Unless more members of the House stand up to the Liberal government's mismanagement, its negligence and its corruption, we are not going to get any results until we have an election.

The debate today brings up another issue from the past: the sponsorship scandal, which involved over \$40 million and led to the collapse of the Liberal government at the time. The green slush fund is a \$400-million scandal. I know inflation is bad under the Liberals but it certainly has not gone up 1000%. The cost of Liberal corruption inflation appears to be about 1000%. It was \$40 million in the 90s and 2000s. It is now \$400 million today. That is inflation. The Auditor General found that the green slush fund violated conflict of interest laws 186 times.

The Liberals also showed massive indifference during the arrive scam scandal of \$56 million and change. Developers who came forward said that they could have done the app for a fraction of the cost, less than a million dollars, yet we had sole-source, backdoor contracts going toward a company that was not actually even making the app. It was all being fed to subcontractors.

This is what we have seen after nine years of the Liberal government: We are not able to do the kind of things that we used to be able to do in this country; we have to contract them out to somebody else, and they cannot even do it. They are a middleman and have to subcontract it to the people who actually do the things.

When there are multiple levels of contracting and subcontracting, the costs keep going up. People know that the Liberal government is not watching the cash register. It does not care how much money is going out. Very quickly, something that should have cost less than a million dollars is costing \$56 million. That is the cost of Liberal inflation, Liberal negligence and Liberal mismanagement.

• (1035)

The Prime Minister does not seem to think the rules apply to him. We saw this when he travelled to a private island, despite conflict of interest rules and ethics rules showing that taking private planes and going to islands owned by private interests was wrong. In fact some very interesting revelations have been made years later

about how people in the Prime Minister's Office did not even know that the Prime Minister was going to be going. When they did find out, they begged him not to go, but nobody was going to convince the Prime Minister not to go on that bleep trip. I am not going to say their exact words in the House.

That is the Prime Minister's arrogance. He was not going to be dissuaded from something he wanted. People look at leadership and ask what our leader is doing. When they see what the Prime Minister of Canada is doing, it gives them an opportunity, the licence, to do the same.

Therefore it is no surprise that under the Liberal government there have been cabinet ministers who, when they were in the private sector between elections, allegedly claimed that they had indigenous heritage in order to try to score lucrative government contracts. Ministers appointed their friends to boards where they would be in a massive conflict of interest. In the case of SDTC, hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money were being misdirected to companies where there were conflicts of interest. It is because of the Prime Minister's leadership, and it has filtered down into his cabinet.

The fact is that the Prime Minister has set a precedent. He has made it very clear that if someone does what he says; if they cover up; if they deny, deny, deny; and if they keep pushing forward and do whatever he says, they will be protected and will still be in cabinet. However, if someone stands up to what the Prime Minister is doing and says he is wrong, they are out of cabinet. That is what happened with Jody Wilson-Raybould and with Jane Philpott. They stood up to the Prime Minister and suffered the consequences.

The message has been heard loud and clear in the Liberal Party. It is why its members have to ask permission to even stand up at the microphone and speak in their caucus meetings. It is why they have to beg for the opportunity to have a secret ballot in this country. A secret ballot is a fundamental part of our modern democracy, and someone is not even allowed to have it inside the Liberal caucus.

A whistle-blower testified, saying, "I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves [and letting the public nightmare continue]. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere." They also said, "It's one thing to say nothing has been found as of yet, but that obfuscates the fact that nothing was looked into, for that matter."

Conservatives, unlike the Liberals, applaud the whistle-blowers who stand up for Canadians. It should be the Liberals going to the department, asking the questions, finding the truth, and saying that this is what happened, here is who is responsible, here is how we are holding them accountable and this is what we are going to do to make sure it never happens again. However, the Liberals are preventing us from doing that. They are withholding the documents and they say that the RCMP says it does not want them.

Privilege

Even if the RCMP does not want the documents, the Liberals can send them and the RCMP can do whatever it wants with them. It can use the documents or it cannot use them. The fact that the government seems so eager to defy the will of Parliament to prevent the documents from seeing the light of day is really suspicious. Why are the Liberals burning weeks of parliamentary time on the privilege debate, all to prevent the documents from seeing the light of day? The Liberals say the RCMP says it might or might not use them—

• (1040)

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I greatly regret interrupting the proceedings, but I think that if you look for quorum, you will find that we do not have it. We should take care of that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will double-check on that right now.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is also rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there were members of the Conservative Party behind the curtains. Do they count as part of quorum?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will check whether there is quorum.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do have quorum.

The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland has the floor

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, it is not going to take me much of a minute to outline what Canadians already know, which is that the government is too costly and too corrupt to be trusted to continue governing this country. We need a carbon tax election. We need an election to deal with the government's corruption and waste.

The Liberal government is undermining our democracy. Throughout this scandal, the Conservative Party has fought to uphold our democratic principles in the House, principles like the supremacy of Parliament, but the government is disrespecting Canadians and the House of Commons by refusing to hand over documents that Parliament has demanded.

The Speaker of the House of Commons himself, Parliament's highest authority, who is from the Liberal caucus, has ordered the Prime Minister to hand over these documents, yet the order has been defied. Parties across the House have voted to have these documents. This is not just the Conservatives going after the Liberals; this is what Canadians want to see. They want these documents handed over.

The government has broken its trust with Canadians, and after months, it still refuses to comply with the will of the House. If the government does not want to comply with the will of the House, it is time to take this to a higher power, to the Canadian people, so it can get a mandate. It is not going to get a mandate, so let us go to an election right now.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member started his speech with the words, "After nine years, the evidence is clear". Let me tell him what evidence is clear after nine years of our government.

We have created 1.1 million jobs since 2015. The inflation rate, at a high of 8.1% in June 2022, is now at 1.6%. The Canadian consumer index is at a 30-month high. We have the lowest deficit-to-GDP ratio among all the G7 countries. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio among all the G7 countries.

I know the hon. member is knowledgeable. I would ask him to show one economic indicator where Canada is not the best among all G7 countries.

• (1045)

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, it is mighty generous of the member to ask me for one. I could name several. The GDP per capita in this country has been collapsing under the Liberal government.

It sounds as if the Liberals are saying that Canadians have never had it so good. I said in my speech that two million Canadians are going to the food bank. If that is not an economic indicator, I do not know what is. There are 1,400-plus homeless encampments across this country. The government is failing Canadians.

The Liberals are talking about GDP numbers. An article recently came out that said Canada needs to stop chasing American-style GDP as if GDP was a theme, not an economic indicator. Under the Liberal-NDP government, every single Canadian is worse off, other than Liberal insiders in this scandal, perhaps, who are very well off. The GDP per capita of this country is collapsing under the Liberal government, and our dollar is losing strength. Our dollar underpins our purchasing power, and inflation will rise when the dollar falls because of the Liberal government's policies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party no longer has confidence in this government. That is good, because the Bloc Québécois does not either. However, we have been debating this question of privilege for three weeks now, and the Conservative Party has not moved a non-confidence motion to bring down the government. The Conservative Party is saying one thing and doing the opposite.

Can my colleague give me a clear answer about when the Conservatives will call for a confidence vote to bring down this government?

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, the rights of Parliament have been violated. That is not just my opinion. That is the opinion of the Speaker of the House of Commons, somebody who was elected by a vote of all the people in this place. He has ruled that the government violated the rights of Parliament by refusing to hand over documents in a fully unredacted form, as Parliament requested, relating to a \$400-million green slush fund scandal.

Privilege

The Conservatives will not stop fighting until we get the documents that Parliament has demanded. We have a right to demand those documents, we have a right to receive those documents and we are not going to stop fighting until we get them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, my Conservative colleague raises an important point about confidence. Confidence also means the confidence that people have in institutions. In light of the legitimate fears of potential foreign political interference, how is it that every federal party leader here in the House has received their security clearance to find out what is going on with their party and their caucus and the only one who refuses to do so is the leader of the Conservative Party? How can someone who wants to become prime minister choose ignorance over knowledge?

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, the Canada we knew nine years ago seems so far away.

It was a Canada where we did not have widespread foreign interference in our elections. In the 2021 election, my colleague Kenny Chiu, a Conservative who lost his seat in this place, faced significant foreign interference that was not dealt with by the Prime Minister and the government. They allowed it to happen because they benefited from it. They won those seats where foreign interference happened.

Canadians will never apologize. When Conservatives were in power, our streets were safer, houses were more affordable, we did not have a carbon tax on food, fuel and home heating, and Canadians could get ahead. Canadians could build a life. The dream of Canada was still real. The dream can still be brought back. That is why we want to see a carbon tax election, so we can get back to the Canada we know and love, and have always loved.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was an honour and a pleasure to listen to my colleague from Sturgeon River—Parkland give his great speech this morning on this scandal we are once again faced with.

I was very curious to hear, after his remarks, a member from the Liberal side stand up and talk about how great the economy is in Canada. In Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, what I am hearing is far from that. A lot of people are struggling. Food bank usage is up. Over 7,000 people a month now in Barrie are using the local food bank.

I would like to ask the member for Sturgeon River—Parkland if he is hearing the same thing in his riding, about the poor, tough economic times, as I am in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

• (1050)

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, this issue is not relegated to just one part of our country. We are seeing this issue across the country.

As we go into Remembrance Day next week, it is very relevant to talk about veterans' food banks. There are veterans' food banks in this country that are seeing a massive increase in the number of veterans who are reporting homelessness and food insecurity.

The way the Liberal government talks, veterans have never had it so good. Veterans from my riding were told directly by the Prime Minister that they are asking for more than the government can give. When veterans call the government for help, the response they get is, "Have you considered medical assistance in dying?"

It is shameful, what the Liberal government has allowed to happen to this country. It can try to hide behind all its funny accounting, but the fact is that Canadians are struggling because of the NDP-Liberal government's policies.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to see everyone this morning.

Statistics Canada revised the economic growth for Canada from 2021 to 2023, putting it higher by 1.3%. The per capita GDP story that is being told or spun from the other side of the House actually does not work anymore. Our per capita GDP recovered fully after the COVID pandemic, even with global inflation. From 2019 to 2023, that story is not true anymore. Statistics Canada demonstrated it. A couple of the economic shops demonstrated it.

We know when Canadians go to the grocery store and see the everyday prices, they are feeling global inflation. We are helping Canadians. We will always help them with affordability issues with a number of measures.

Would the hon. member not agree that the numbers reported by Statistics Canada is a good news story for the Canadian economy, for both economic growth, per capita GDP growth, and our future outlook with the IMF, giving us a 2.4% GDP growth for 2025, the highest in the G7?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I go out and talk to my constituents.

I had a senior couple reach out to my office. During the pandemic, the government told everyone to take CERB money, saying, "Just take the money. We will deal with the issues afterwards." This senior couple did not really know what they were doing, but they took the money. Once the government decided to claw that money back because it was not appropriate in this family's case, it impoverished the family. It sent them to the food bank. They called my office and said, "Mr. Lloyd, we have eaten nothing but bread for three months."

Privilege

That is the record under the NDP-Liberal government. People cannot even get the nutrition that they need. We are seeing malnutrition in children on the rise. We are seeing scurvy make a comeback. The Liberals are standing up in this House and telling Canadians that they have never had it so good. It reminds me a quote from Marie Antoinette, “Let them eat cake.” That is what they say every day in the House.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a quick comment that goes back to the question my colleague got from the Bloc member about when we are going to have the next confidence vote in this government. I just thought it would be important to put it on the record. We have actually had two since we came back this fall, and both times the Bloc Québécois and the NDP continued to prop up the Liberal government.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, when I door-knock in my riding, people say to me, “Just get rid of the Prime Minister. We need to get rid of the Liberal government.” That is what they want, and that is what Canadians across this country are saying. They are sick and tired of nine years of Liberal costs, Liberal carbon taxes and Liberal corruption, and they want a carbon tax election. They want a confidence vote. We have had two confidence votes. We are going to keep holding the government accountable. We are going to fight so Canadians can get the carbon tax election they deserve and choose which government they want to give a mandate to.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and address what has been a littering of misinformation on the floor of the House of Commons.

Over the last number of weeks, I have witnessed well over 150 Conservative speeches, and it can be fairly depressing at times, with the amount of misinformation they consistently put on the record. One would think there is someone in the back who is telling them what to say, they are so repetitive. It is not easy to throw them off track because they have been instructed by the leader of the Conservative Party on exactly what they have to say. It does not have to be the truth, but they have to say it. Rumour has it that if they actually say it and say it right, they get a gold star, and a number of them get a lot of gold stars.

Let us give a reality check on what is actually taking place. We have the leader of the Conservative Party, who I would ultimately argue is in borderline contempt for what is taking place on the floor of the House of Commons, and I do not say that lightly. We can think about it. The leader of the Conservative Party today was the parliamentary secretary to Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper was the only prime minister, not only in Canada but in the entire British Commonwealth, to be held in contempt of Parliament.

Why am I not surprised to see that the current leader is following suit? After all, not only was he Stephen Harper's parliamentary secretary, but they were also very close—

• (1055)

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have no idea, but it strikes me that the member's statement that the Leader of the Opposition is in borderline contempt is an attempt to

say something through the back door that cannot be said through the front door. I hope the member would withdraw that.

While he is at it, his factually incorrect statement about Stephen Harper being held in contempt should also be withdrawn. That is not what happened back in 2011. It is a matter of public record.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is becoming a point of debate. I will certainly look at what the hon. parliamentary secretary said, and if need be, we will come back to the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the truth might hurt the members opposite, but it is about time they stopped listening to the spin and the Conservative misinformation that comes out of the back rooms. They spread it throughout the country, and it is really quite unfortunate because it has the type of impact we witnessed in a letter quoted by the member for King—Vaughan earlier. I hope the member follows through and takes me up on that challenge. She said she would have a public debate with me at Niagara University in Ontario and I hope that actually takes place this year.

It is absolutely atrocious, the amount of misinformation that consistently comes out of the Conservative Party. They spread misinformation primarily on social media and they do not have a problem saying it. They say as soon as we produce the papers they will stop talking and allow the House to go on to different issues. The reality is that the Conservative Party of Canada introduced a motion. The motion was that the issue be given to the procedure and House affairs committee.

They have put up over 150 speakers. Everyone wants to vote on the motion, but the Conservatives do not want that. They do not even want to have their own motion voted on. They move an amendment, they move an amendment to the amendment, and they run out of speakers so they drop that amendment, and then they move another amendment to the amendment to the motion. It is nothing but a political game. The leader of the Conservative Party—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. We are told multiple times throughout the day to be cognizant of our microphones and the placement of our cellphones and papers. The member knows full well there is no need to raise his voice, if not for the sake of the members in here, then for the sake of the translators.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is not a point of order.

There are two more points of order, and one of them is from the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask members to respect points of order. If they have a legitimate one, they should rise up, but to intentionally disrupt a member who is speaking, I believe, is disrespectful to the House. Members know the debate is ending right away, and what they are doing is very disrespectful for debate inside the chamber. I would ask that the members be advised of that.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Statements by Members

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would ask the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George to be respectful and not speak out of turn.

The interpreters have the ability to lower the level of sound on what they are listening to. The hon. member knows full well, because he raises his voice at times in the House as well.

I am going to finalize this point of order, and then we are going to go back to the orders of the day.

The hon. member for Nepean, on a point of order.

• (1100)

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I strongly object to the member telling another member not to speak in a loud voice. Tomorrow somebody may say that because a member speaks with an accent, the translator may not understand, or because their English is not good enough or has grammatical mistakes, the translator may not understand. This is what it leads to when we start indulging in this sort of stuff.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate everybody's input. As I have indicated, this is getting to be a point of debate. I do want members to respect each other in the House. As I have indicated, the interpreters have the ability to lower the sound in their booths. I hope that will put everything to rest at this point.

The hon. parliamentary secretary will be able to continue his speech the next time this matter is before the House, which will probably be right after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, every year, at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, we pause to remember the end of World War I. We gather to honour the brave Canadians who served and continue to serve our country.

This Monday, November 11, I will be commemorating Remembrance Day with many Vaughan residents at the Woodbridge Cenotaph. We will gather to remember the sacrifices of those in the Canadian Armed Forces and reflect on the freedoms they fought so hard to protect.

With each passing year, we are reminded that the cost of peace is not free. With it comes much responsibility to all Canadians. Our liberties were earned through the dedication and sacrifice of countless men and women. Their sacrifices have shaped the Canada we know and love today: free, peaceful and united.

As we observe a moment of silence, let us remember those who continue to serve at home and abroad and who stand for freedom and democracy and against tyranny. I thank the generations of those in the Canadian Armed Forces who have served.

Lest we forget.

MARIE TRAINER

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, on October 31, 2024, Haldimand County lost one of its most dedicated and longest-serving community leaders, Marie Trainer.

Marie was someone who exemplified service. Even after holding the highest level of municipal office, serving as mayor after winning three mayoral elections, she came out of retirement and ran as a councillor, representing her hometown of Hagersville. That was who Marie was: a devoted, humble, selfless leader and ground-breaker. Marie became a friend and mentor to me, always supportive as I took on the role of member of Parliament and always showing me what good leadership looked like.

I extend my heartfelt prayers and condolences to her family, who is mourning her loss. While we will miss her deeply, her contributions to Haldimand County and her legacy will live on in our hearts.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, tomorrow I will have the privilege of attending the Remembrance Day ceremony of the Markham District Veterans Association in my riding. It will be a solemn occasion where we will come together to honour those who have fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we live with today. The association is a reminder of the value of community and our duty to promote the recognition of memories of the members who have served Markham.

As we pause to reflect on their sacrifices, we must also renew our commitment to supporting veterans and their families across Canada. Remembrance Day is not only a day of reflection, but a reminder of our collective responsibility to safeguard the values they fought to protect.

Finally, I want to remember my mother-in-law, who passed away yesterday at the age of 99.

Lest we forget.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL INUIT DAY

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): [*Member spoke in Inuktitut, interpreted as follows:*]

Madam Speaker, yesterday was International Inuit Day. For a people whose governments and churches tried to eradicate, we sure have achieved a lot. Just to name a few, we have lawyers, doctors, people in the trades, care workers and great entertainers.

I thank Ilisaqsivik, where I enjoyed such laughter playing *Inugait*.

I thank Northern Haze, who continue to inspire me through their music. I thank Johnny Ningeongan, Mary Wilman, Beatrice and her husband Lucassie and many more.

Statements by Members

I mourn the loss of great elders. Losing them must remind us to keep learning from their strengths. We must take care of them in our communities.

* * *

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the eve of Remembrance Day, I suggest that we pay tribute to the veterans who served our country, the women and men who sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom to ensure our future and that of our children. We must never forget their sacrifices and the terrible consequences of war.

Let us also pay tribute to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*English*]

On Remembrance Day, we have a duty of recognition and memory toward the women and men who sacrificed everything. Let us give our thanks to serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*Translation*]

We will remember them.

* * *

[*English*]

RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS VETERANS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, today is Indigenous Veterans Day, a time set aside to remember and recognize the often overlooked stories of indigenous veterans who answered the call of duty with unwavering courage and dedication.

Indigenous people in Canada have served in every conflict, from the First World War to the present day. Many indigenous men and women stepped forward, often in the face of discrimination, marginalization and injustice, to secure and protect future generations.

We thank the first nations, Inuit and Métis veterans who have served Canada. We thank them for their bravery, their sacrifices and their dedication to protecting not only the land but the values of peace, equality and respect. Their service, like that of all veterans, deserves to be remembered and celebrated today and every day.

Let us stand together to honour all those who have served and uplift indigenous veterans, ensuring they are never forgotten.

Lest we forget.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, on the eve of Remembrance Day, I rise to pay tribute to Canada's past and present veterans, who have sacrificed so much.

[*English*]

Across our great country, we pause to reflect on the extraordinary courage, commitment and selflessness of the men and women who have served and continue to serve to protect our freedom and democracy.

Today, we also mark Indigenous Veterans Day. We recognize the bravery and sacrifices of indigenous veterans, paying our deepest respect and gratitude for their unwavering dedication to protecting our country's cherished values and rights.

[*Translation*]

In Ottawa Centre and in every community across the country, we are gathering on November 11 to lay wreaths, observe moments of silence and share stories of heroism, to keep the memory of our veterans alive.

[*English*]

Lest we forget.

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RECOGNITION OF MILITARY SERVICE

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we near the end of Veterans' Week and approach Remembrance Day, I want to take this time to recognize the brave men and women across Canada, particularly in my riding of Don Valley West, who have fought for this country.

Over the years, millions of Canadians have bravely fought in World War I and World War II, in the Korean War, in Iraq and in Afghanistan. More than 125,000 Canadian Armed Forces members have served in international peacekeeping efforts in dozens of countries over the decades.

The world is dangerous. There are growing international tensions, and we as Canadians owe our security both to our courageous veterans throughout history and to the over 63,000 active military personnel who currently dedicate their lives to keeping us safe.

I encourage everyone to attend a Remembrance Day ceremony this Monday to thank veterans and to pay tribute to those who currently serve in our armed forces.

Statements by Members

● (1110)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal Prime Minister, violent crime is up, gun crime is up and home invasions are up in Toronto and the GTA. Canadians no longer feel safe on the streets, and some communities are even hiring their own private security to patrol their neighbourhoods.

In Toronto, there have been 126 more shootings this year than there were last year. One of the victims, Trevor Dalton, is the brother of my staff member. This hits close to home in Toronto—St. Paul's. We have also seen cars stolen at gunpoint, homes invaded with guns and a police officer shot at Yonge and Eglinton.

The government has done nothing to stop the iron pipeline of illegal guns coming from the United States, which make up 85% of those seized by Toronto police officers. What the NDP-Liberals have done is make life easier for repeat violent criminals with their catch-and-release bail policies. Only the Conservatives have a plan to stop the crime and bring home safe streets.

* * *

RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS VETERANS

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on November 8, Canadians pay tribute to the first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, all of whom have served Canada in times of war and peace for more than 200 years.

Thousands of indigenous people have proudly served in uniform. However, despite their service and their sacrifice on the front lines, indigenous veterans were subjected to repeated injustice and discrimination. Often, they were denied access to the benefits and supports given to other veterans, making their transition back to civilian life even more difficult. Decades of advocacy and activism led to a formal apology and compensation from the federal government in 2002.

On Indigenous Veterans Day, we honour the service, struggle, courage and sacrifice of all those who serve at home, around the world and across generations.

[Member spoke in Mi'kmaq and provided the following text:]

Welaliek Smaknisk ujit tan teli Melkita'tioq.

[Member provided the following translation:]

I thank indigenous veterans for their bravery.

[English]

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LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, actions speak louder than words. Just a few short weeks ago, the NDP leader said, "The fact is, the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people." Instead of listening to the will of the people he claims to rep-

resent, the sellout leader of the NDP continues to prop up the corrupt Prime Minister.

As it turns out, when he claimed that he had ripped up his coalition deal with the Liberals, it was all just a big Hollywood stunt. He is complicit in every Liberal scandal and failed Liberal policy: inflationary deficits, the failed drug legalization experiment, giving hard drugs to kids instead of treatment and the hug-a-thug catch-and-release policies that have led to a 50% increase in violent crime.

Every day the Prime Minister remains in power is because of the sellout NDP leader. It is time for him to put his money where his mouth is, stop being Twitter tough and join us in calling for a carbon tax election.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Although they did not elicit any reaction, I want to remind members to be very careful with the words they use and to be respectful toward other members.

* * *

INDIGENOUS PROCUREMENT

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, the House is seized with the question everybody wants to know: Who is Randy? After months of speculation, there is yet another astonishing twist in the fraudulent indigenous procurement scandal that has seen billions of dollars shelled out to people pretending to be indigenous for financial gain. Just yesterday, news broke that the Liberal minister for Edmonton Centre's company bid on federal contracts while claiming to be indigenous-owned.

This is not the first time the Liberal minister has clouded his identity. When discussing government contracts, his business partner said the name Randy appeared several times due to autocorrect. Then he refused to say who the other Randy was.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, it has never been so good to be a Liberal insider. Even the Minister of Employment thinks it is okay to take advantage of indigenous businesses. The Prime Minister needs to remove him from cabinet and recover those taxpayers' dollars, or the common-sense Conservatives will root out their corruption after a carbon tax election.

* * *

RECOGNITION OF MILITARY SERVICE

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this Remembrance Week, we do more than remember those who sacrificed for our country; we also remember why they served.

Statements by Members

My father's family was in the Dutch resistance during World War II. He was just a little boy, but he never forgot the liberation. My father got his first candy from a Canadian soldier. Particularly today, after what happened last night in Amsterdam, it is more important than ever that we learn the lessons of history and never again allow xenophobia and hatred to take hold.

We need to defend and protect our pluralism, democracy and shared humanity. For all of those who served, for the women who had to fight just to stand shoulder to shoulder, for indigenous veterans who faced discrimination, for 2SLGBTQI+ veterans who were purged, for Persian Gulf War veterans who are still fighting for recognition, for those who came home with visible and invisible wounds and for those who never came home at all, we honour and thank them. Lest we forget.

* * *

● (1115)

OVERCOMING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, with the Trump election, I hear the words of Antonio Gramsci: “The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters.” It is a time of monsters when the world watches a genocide in real time and does nothing. It is a time of monsters when our world is on fire and our government bankrolls the planet burners.

The Trump election was all about empowering the monsters, about validating blame and hate in order to ignore the immense challenges we face. However, Canadian democracy is also toxified by those who would chase the algorithms of rage rather than doing the hard work of building community.

Evil has always fed on stupidity, and they only succeed if we give them space, so stay focused. A new world is being born. Our job is to birth that world into a better place, to step up and resist the monsters. *No pasarán.*

* * *

*[Translation]***NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY**

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, November 15 is National Philanthropy Day. It is a day for us to celebrate the agents of change who make an important contribution to our communities. Their engagement makes the world a better place in so many ways. Over and over again, I am impressed by the positive impact that community organizations can have in our communities when given the means to get involved. I am thinking of the young people who can start the school year with dignity or discover they can enjoy a sport, music or nature by spending a week at a summer camp, for example. I am thinking of how buildings and land are transformed into community projects, like PAX Habitat in Joliette. I am thinking of all the work that Philanthropie Lanaudière does.

To philanthropy professionals, donors, volunteers and those who sometimes need a helping hand, and to everyone here, I wish you an excellent National Philanthropy Day.

*[English]***REMEMBRANCE DAY**

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, Monday is Remembrance Day, the day when we pause to remember those who serve, those who continue to serve, those injured in body or mind, and those who gave their lives in service to Canada. Canada was built on eternal foundational values, values that include freedom, democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, peace and orderliness, yet our way of life has often been threatened or attacked, and it has had to be defended by the force of arms from those who would deny us our cherished values.

In Flanders Fields and the Somme, in Italy, on Juno Beach, the hills of Korea, on the DEW Line, in the air and on the seas, from Bosnia to Kandahar, to the war on ISIS, and today in Latvia, where brave Canadians lead a NATO battle group that gives reassurance to our allies, we who live in peace and comfort owe them a sacred obligation of remembrance, lest we forget.

* * *

VETERANS' WEEK

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today in recognition of Veterans' Week.

Over the past nine years, our government has made the well-being of veterans and their families a top priority. We have invested over \$11 billion to provide new and enhanced services for veterans. We have reduced wait times and improved quality. We have reduced veterans' homelessness in Canada. We have supported veterans facing mental health challenges and other service-related injuries and illnesses. We have ensured that the families and caregivers of veterans are taken care of. We have recognized the unique needs of the women and 2SLGBTQI+ veterans.

We know that there is much more to be done. By collaborating with veterans, other levels of government, not-for-profits and other stakeholders, we can ensure that veterans can live with the dignity and the respect that they have earned and that they deserve for their services through the dedication to our great country. Lest we forget.

● (1120)

[Translation]

We will remember them.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals' cap on Canada's prosperity is a threat to the livelihood of all Canadians. All Canadians benefit from the support of our oil and gas sector, in terms of jobs, investment, royalties, taxes and, perhaps most importantly, our dollar. This production cap will mean fewer jobs, less investment, less taxes to fund hospitals and schools and higher inflation on everything, as our dollar collapses against the U.S. Meanwhile, there are more jobs for American energy workers and steelworkers.

Will the Liberal government finally put aside its obsession with grinding our energy sector down, unleash Canada's energy superpower and scrap the cap?

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, let us stick to the facts. Canada's overall emissions are the lowest they have been since 1997, the year Connor McDavid was born, and they are going down thanks to climate action undertaken by this Liberal government. The Alberta oil sands are by far the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, and the Conservatives want to turn a blind eye to unlimited pollution in the oil sands. Alberta's far-right Premier, Danielle Smith, has spent \$7 million on a misinformation campaign here in Ottawa to make polluting free again. That is \$7 million that could have hired new teachers, new nurses, new doctors, but instead she is shilling for big oil and gas, and these Conservatives are helping her do it.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, speaking of misinformation from this Liberal, the Environment Commissioner confirmed that the Liberal government is not on track to meet its own emissions reduction targets. Canadians are paying the cost of the Liberal government's carbon tax, and it is all pain and no gain. Under the Conservatives, Canada's economy grew and emissions actually went down, but under the Liberals, Canada's GDP per capita is collapsing under the weight of tax hikes. The Liberals' real plan to hit their emissions targets is to collapse our economy and move more jobs south of the border.

When will they have the courage to finally admit it, and let Canadians decide in a carbon tax election?

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, that is not true. Under the Harper government, pollution went up and up and up. In million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, it went 716, 721, 738, 753. Under this government, we have brought it down under 750 million metric tons, after it was rising under the Harper government, to an average of under 700 million metric tons over the past three years. Under a Conservative government, emissions were projected to be 41% higher by 2030. Conservatives want

to abandon our climate commitments to future generations and make polluting free again, and that is not okay.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will tell you what is not okay. The Salvation Army released yet another devastating report on rising food costs. The Liberals' tax and spend policies are driving up costs for farmers who grow the food, for truckers who ship the food and sadly, for families who eat the food. With malnutrition on the rise and scurvy making a comeback, it is no wonder that Canadians are dissatisfied with the menu of higher taxes and inflationary spending offered by the Liberals.

It is time to axe the tax so Canadians can afford to heat, eat and get themselves to work. When will the NDP-Liberal government let Canadians decide in a carbon tax election?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that we are going through expensive times. This is exactly why we have made investments like the Canada child benefit. This means that we send parents over \$7,000 per year to help with the cost of raising kids. When the Conservative leader talks about cuts, he is saying that he will cut these cheques and make families worse off. Is this what families need? No, I do not think so. We fight for Canadians and we are there when times are tough.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, new data from Statistics Canada confirm this government has failed. GDP per capita has declined in eight of the last nine quarters, spreading poverty among Canadians, while growth in the United States has reached 2.8%. It is much stronger there than here. With its carbon tax hikes and capital gains tax, the government is once again driving down the per capita GDP, with the foreseeable impact on families.

The question is simple. Will the Prime Minister axe these tax hikes that are making Canadians poorer?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I get the feeling that Conservatives have an inferiority complex when it comes to the United States. The IMF predicts that Canada's growth will outpace growth in the United States next year. This morning, Statistics Canada revealed that we created 15,000 jobs in October. I hope my colleague understands that we will be there to ensure that the economy keeps growing. I am proud to be Canadian. Why can they not say that?

• (1125)

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, The Economist has reported that Canada is now poorer than Alabama, which is the fourth-poorest state in the U.S. However, under this Liberal government, \$450 billion in investments have left Canada to support the American economy, which, I would remind members, is growing faster than ours.

I have another very simple question. Will the Prime Minister cut taxes to support Canadian families? It is simple and easy to do.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not think my colleague has seen the Statistics Canada figures that came out yesterday.

Statistics Canada revealed yesterday that our growth is even stronger than expected, and this is actually because of increased investments in Canada. Investors from around the world want to invest in Canada because we offer stability. That is what matters.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we must not expect Donald Trump to temper his deportation promises. On the contrary, he confirmed in an interview yesterday that he would take action, regardless of the cost to the American economy. The risk of a wave of migration hitting our border is both real and high.

Meanwhile, in committee yesterday, as Trump was reiterating his threats, the Minister of Public Safety referred to Quebeckers' concerns as a misplaced fear. He said he would not take action until there was a crisis.

Is it really a misplaced fear to want to avoid more Roxham Roads?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Public Safety said yesterday, both the RCMP and CBSA have operational plans for any eventuality. We can reassure the House. Our borders will be protected.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the federal government may still be asleep at the switch, but there are some people at the border who are getting ready. I am not talking about the government, but about illegal human trafficking networks.

These networks are calling the shots at the border as they take advantage of the RCMP's lack of resources. They exploited asylum seekers back in the days of Roxham Road, and they are still ex-

Oral Questions

ploiting people migrating from Canada to the United States now. On Tuesday, when Trump won, they popped the champagne. They are getting ready for a wave of migration.

When is the federal government going to get ready too?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, naturally, the government is always ready to ensure that our borders are protected. The RCMP has operational plans in place to deal with the possibility that a mass of people may try to cross the border.

Of course, we are not going to comment on the operational plans of the RCMP or CBSA, to avoid compromising security.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, according to the Salvation Army's annual report, one in four parents is cutting back on their own food consumption to ensure their children have enough to eat. Where are we, exactly? Are we in a Dickens novel or *Les Misérables*?

It is unacceptable in our society that parents are having to skip meals to feed their children. What are the Liberals doing about it? They are meeting with wealthy grocery chain CEOs to ask them if they could please be nice and drop their prices. What a joke.

When will the Liberals actually do something to ensure that families can eat properly?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are there for Canadian families with programs like \$10-a-day child care, the Canada child benefit and the Canadian dental care plan. These are all programs that allow families to keep more money in their pockets, so they can cope with things being a little tougher right now, put food on the table and be there to provide for their children.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, no one should go hungry in Canada, but the Salvation Army reports one in four parents are skipping meals to save money to feed their kids. Meanwhile, grocery CEOs are gouging Canadians and raking in record profits. While the Liberals do nothing, the Conservatives will let families go hungry because CEOs fund their election campaigns.

It is time to cap essential food prices so everyone can put food on the table. Will the Liberals take action or continue to stick by greedy grocery giants like the Conservatives?

Oral Questions

● (1130)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government provides hundreds of dollars a month, tax-free, to help families with the cost of raising a kid.

We have also helped implement a national child care program, which is saving families \$800 a month on average. We are investing to feed 400,000 more kids healthy meals at school.

I note that the member worked on a national school food program for many years, advocating for that. Is he not happy that our government is stepping up to invest over \$1 billion over five years to feed 400,000 more kids across Canada?

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THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost to Canada. We have the worst decline in living standards in four decades, the worst drop in income per person in the G7 and the worst economic growth in the OECD. What is their wacko plan now? It is to slap a job-killing oil and gas cap on Canada, make everything even more expensive and drive out jobs, businesses, money, tech and talent. Over \$450 billion has fled Canada, fled the Liberals, to the U.S.

When will the Liberals stop fuelling the U.S. and help Canadians instead?

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, let us talk about GDP per capita over time in Canada. Between 2006 and 2016, Canada's GDP per capita under Harper grew from \$40,504 to \$42,134. That is about \$1,800 over 10 years. Under the current Liberal government, it has grown from \$42,000 a year to \$53,372 in 2023. That is more than \$11,000. Conservatives do not need to pull out their calculators: \$11,000 is more than \$1,800.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, they keep telling Canadians they have never had it so good. The truth is that the NDP-Liberals hurt Canadians every time but help the U.S. and hostile regimes. It is nuts because so many countries want Canada's energy. Ukraine, Germany, Poland, Japan, South Korea, Greece and Latvia all ask for LNG, but the NDP-Liberals say no. A million Canadians need powerful paycheques from oil and gas jobs, but over nine years of killed pipelines, energy tax hikes and oil and gas caps, jobs and monies have been sent to the U.S., Canada's top ally and competitor.

Why do the NDP-Liberals send Canada's jobs to the U.S. and make Canadian workers suffer?

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, we are working on the challenges Canadians face with real solutions.

At the current time, inflation is down, interest rates are down, unemployment rates are down and greenhouse gas pollution rates are down. Despite what these climate change-denying Conservatives say, CO₂ is not plant food. That absurd Conservative claim that reducing our carbon emissions would somehow be bad for crop growth is straight-up anti-science, disinformation and climate denialism.

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas. We learned that in elementary school. The oil sands are Canada's largest source of industrial carbon emissions, and our pollution cap asks them to invest some of their astonishing \$60 billion in profits in innovating and making sure Canadians can afford green, affordable—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal government has shown again that it is not worth the cost. This week, the government announced a new policy, a cap on the Canadian economy. Since 2015, the United States has increased oil and gas production by 40%, which is much more than Canada has done. The world needs Canadian oil and gas. With the incoming U.S. administration promising to unleash American energy, the government has announced a cap on the economy, costing Canada 150,000 jobs.

How can the government justify this economic vandalism?

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the pollution cap will ensure that our energy sector can increase its production while decreasing its emissions. Countries around the world are looking at Canada for less-polluting energy. If we want our energy to stay competitive, we must lower our emissions. The pollution cap will provide long-term competitiveness in Canadian energy so that we can keep being an energy superpower for the world.

Under the do-nothing approach of the previous Conservative government, Canada's imports of foreign oil were two times higher. It failed to promote Canadian energy. I would be happy to offer the Conservative leader and his party a briefing on climate change. He does not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will quote Canada's destructive environment minister. He said, "Look around the world, no other...oil and gas producer is doing what we're doing." One could wonder why; one could also ask why he ignored the warnings of the economic destruction this Canadian energy cap would cause while offering no environmental benefit. Any reduction in Canada will automatically be met by supply from other producers around the world. The minister's announcement is nothing but performative.

Will the Prime Minister get serious about actual solutions and fire the environment minister?

• (1135)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is no wonder that the Conservatives are not talking about the economy today. This is because Statistics Canada raised its numbers yesterday. In fact, it revised growth in Canada upward. Do members know why? It is because business investment is streaming into Canada. Investors are looking to Canada because we offer stability and certainty. That is translating into growth and into higher paycheques for Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister was so excited about the new U.S. President that he sent him a gift: thousands of Canadian jobs, millions of Canadian investment dollars. The Liberal government's carbon tax and failure to stand up for Canada has created an exodus of capital from Canada to the United States. The Prime Minister's policy has created a made-in-Canada per capita GDP recession. While American workers are thriving, Canadians can barely afford food and rent.

Will the Prime Minister stop sabotaging the Canadian economy and axe this self-imposed tariff?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Conservatives seem so intent on talking down the Canadian economy. They do not seem to be able to recognize the positive signs of economic progress and recovery.

Inflation is down to 1.6%. In Canada, our central bank has decreased interest rates four times. We have attracted over \$50 billion in foreign direct investment, propelling us to number one per capita in the G20. That has led to tens of thousands of well-paying jobs in this country, jobs that are projected to grow in the clean economy to over 400,000 by 2030.

Those are real opportunities that pay the bills, unlike Conservative cuts—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals keep telling Canadians at food banks that they have never had it so good.

Oral Questions

Here are the facts: *The Economist* says that Canada is now poorer than Alabama, the fourth-poorest state in the United States. Further, over the past five years, America's economic growth has outstripped Canada's by nearly double.

Simply, when will Canadians get an opportunity to vote for common-sense Conservatives so that we can turn their hurt into hope and restore the promise of Canada?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we respond to the needs of Canadians. That is why we brought in programs such as the Canada child benefit; we know that Canadian families need extra help right now.

What did the Conservatives do? They said not to send those cheques to Canadians. They said we should cut those programs. When they talk with their crocodile tears for Canadians, they are not actually doing anything to help.

We know Canadians are struggling, and that is why we have responded with programs that actually help them.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, Donald Trump's deportation threats are dangerous. The federal government needs to wake up when it comes to the border. We keep telling it that.

Today, we are not the only ones saying so. Fen Hampson, president of the World Refugee and Migration Council, was quoted in today's *Le Devoir* as saying, "The government needs to get ready to deal with a potential humanitarian crisis". He is calling it a humanitarian crisis.

If a potential humanitarian crisis is not enough to get the federal government to wake up and boost its resources at the border, what is?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us calm down. The Bloc Québécois keeps making up scenarios that are absolutely not in play. Our border services have a plan. They have always had a plan and will always have a plan to keep our border secure.

We will work with the U.S. administration, regardless of which party is in power. We will collaborate with our partners in the United States.

The Bloc Québécois should rest assured and stop scaremongering.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, if the federal government stays asleep at the switch when it comes to our borders, then there are dark days ahead for both asylum seekers and Quebeckers.

There could be a wave of people crossing the border illegally, and they may be exploited by criminal organizations. These people may have to hide out, possibly under dangerous circumstances, for two weeks before they are able to claim asylum, only to then discover that Quebec no longer has the capacity to provide them with services and that the provinces are refusing to do their share. A crisis is looming.

When will the federal government wake up and take action to prevent this from happening?

• (1140)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have made the necessary plans to secure our borders and, obviously, we are also working with the Government of Quebec. We have given more funding to provide asylum seekers with shelter and services. These are perhaps the most vulnerable people in the world.

Once again, the Bloc Québécois members cannot stop talking about immigration, because they have discovered that they can score political points off this issue. The Bloc Québécois needs to stop—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Madam Speaker, last year, the Liberals imposed a ban on military chaplains from reciting prayers on Remembrance Day.

Chaplains, veterans and Canadians immediately fought back, and the government relented. Well, they did for a year. However, the directive is back. The Liberals are imposing their ideological ban yet again.

Remembrance Day is a time for reflection, healing and hope. For many veterans, praying is part of that journey.

Will the government end its attack on the vocation of chaplains and allow them the freedom to pray?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, I want to take this opportunity to thank our members and our veterans for their service and their sacrifice. However, let us be absolutely clear: The chaplain general issued this directive independently, and it does not ban prayer. Actually, the directive simply seeks to help our CAF chaplains make their public addresses more inclusive, reflecting the spiritual diversity of Canadians and our CAF members.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Madam Speaker, after relenting last year, the Liberal Minister of Defence promised that “chaplains are not — and will not — be banned from prayer on Remembrance Day”. However, that is not

true. The Liberals have now issued an even more draconian order, saying that chaplains will be monitored and that disciplinary measures will be imposed on those who say the word “God” or those who pray. This censorship is unthinkable.

Will the government finally relent, end its attack on the work of chaplains and allow them the freedom to pray?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to once again take the opportunity to thank our members and our veterans for their service—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to ask the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton to please calm down and wait. If he has not been recognized, he should not be speaking.

[Translation]

The hon. parliamentary secretary can start from the top.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank our members and our veterans for their service and their sacrifice.

[English]

What the member is alleging is absolutely not true, and I feel ashamed that he is proclaiming this. As we said, we have not banned prayer. We are looking to reflect the diversity of our CAF, and this is a directive that comes from the chaplain general.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister has doubled the cost of housing and put an entire generation of Canadians through housing hell, but whom does he have empathy for? It is his buddy from Bell Media, Tom Clark. The Prime Minister used \$9 million of taxpayer money to purchase a luxury condo for Tom Clark in Manhattan, in a neighbourhood called Billionaires' Row.

When will the NDP-Liberals finally stop the abuse of taxpayer dollars and fire Tom Clark?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, while the Conservative members of Parliament are focused on distractions, we are focused on delivering housing for Canadians who live in this country.

We are currently in a debate with the Conservatives based on their big commitment to cut billions of dollars from housing directly to communities right across this country. On this side of the House, we know that it takes investments to build housing so that we can make it easier to build and make housing more affordable. What is the Conservative solution? It is to cut, cut, cut. We have a long history of Conservative cuts to housing. It is part of the reason we are facing a housing crisis today. We will make the investments necessary to deliver affordability to Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1145)

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I did hear the Liberal minister's answer, and I feel bad for him because he is out here selling a generation, which he is part of, a bunch of policies from the Prime Minister that have failed our time. They have failed our people.

He has a tough job ahead of him to even rationalize what is going on in the government. Let us be very clear that Tom Clark, the Prime Minister's buddy from Bell Media, said that the housing he had in Manhattan required immediate replacement. The government went on to spend \$9 million of taxpayer money to get him a condo in Billionaires' Row. When will they stop abusing the taxpayers' money?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hope I get equal time to answer that ridiculous question.

In light of what has gone on this last week, Canadians are worried about our economy; we are worried about our relationship. There is no time like the present to have a strong presence in the United States of America. Our representatives will be working extremely hard to protect Canadians' interests and Canadians' jobs every day. It is the cost of doing business, and we will do it well. We will represent Canadians' interests in New York City, the largest city in the United States of America. We will be there to ensure that Canada's interests are protected.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): [*Member spoke in Inuktitut, interpreted as follows:*]

Recently, the UN Special Rapporteur visited Canada and said that the government is not upholding the basic human right to clean drinking water for indigenous peoples. He urged profound changes.

Now, Liberals and Conservatives are teaming up together. They will not give first nations their autonomy and proper funding. They are rejecting amendments to Bill C-61 that came directly from first nations.

When will the government stop working with Conservatives against first nations?

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congrat-

Oral Questions

ulate the member. It is an honour and a privilege to hear Inuktitut spoken in the House. I thank her for her efforts.

I want to assure the member that we are absolutely committed to seeing Bill C-61 passed in the House, reflecting the wishes of our partners. We are working collaboratively with all parties of the House. I would hope that the NDP would join us in that. We are working to ensure that we enshrine a human right to drinking water in this country, which we were successfully able to do with government amendments.

It is quite a surprise to receive the member's question today because, again, it is going to take all parties in the House to make sure that the bill passes.

PENSIONS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, last night Danielle Smith and the UCP fired their pension management team, another step to pulling Alberta out of the Canada pension plan. This attack on the CPP will not just hurt Albertans; it will hurt all Canadians, and we are running out of time. We know that the Conservatives will cut Canadians' pensions. I sent the finance minister my private member's bill that would stop Danielle Smith from pulling out of the CPP, and I am more than happy to have the Liberals use my homework.

Will the minister adopt my bill to protect Canadian pensions today?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we join with the hon. member in worrying about the hare-brained schemes to put Albertans' pensions at risk.

The Canada pension plan is a sterling pension plan that Canadians rightly have come to rely on and that, the world over, has been recognized as a model of good management and stability. In fact Canadians can be reassured that the Canada pension plan will be there for them for 75 years, as confirmed by the chief actuary. The hare-brained schemes coming out of Alberta put Albertans at risk.

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadian women and the 2SLGBTQI+ community have played an important role in our country's military efforts. However, many among them have overcome barriers and discrimination. This includes the LGBTQ purge and the sexual misconduct within the Canadian army.

Oral Questions

During this Veterans Week, could the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth share with the House our government's dedication and support to uplift the Canadian Armed Forces?

• (1150)

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadian women and 2SLGBTQI+ veterans have faced painful hurdles while serving. This includes the LGBT purge and sexual misconduct within the culture of the armed forces.

Canadian military personnel and veterans deserve to be treated with the utmost respect. That is why our government introduced military culture change legislation and a 2SLGBTQI+ national monument that acknowledges the discrimination.

We thank the heroes for their service and never forget what they have sacrificed to keep our country safe.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost or the corruption. Yesterday we learned that Global Health Imports, a company co-owned by the employment minister, bid on federal contracts while claiming to be wholly indigenous-owned. However, the minister has so far refused to present documents supporting his company's statement. No wonder GHI has at least eight criminal court cases against it.

Will the minister produce the documents or will he admit he lied and resign?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the company in question has never received contracts as an indigenous business and has never been listed on the indigenous business directory.

However, unlike the Conservatives, we will continue to work and partner with indigenous people so they have economic reconciliation.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the company that the employment minister co-owned checked the box claiming to be indigenous-owned. If so, that is fraud. That is the point of the whole thing. It is amazing. Not only that, but the Liberals circumvent the regular procurement process. They have no shame. They would rather push down indigenous-owned businesses in order to secure contracts and enrich themselves.

If the minister will not produce the documents or answer any questions, will the Prime Minister do the right thing and fire him?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me reiterate. The company in question never received a contract as an indigenous business. The company was never on the indigenous business directory. We continue to work very closely with indigenous partners to ensure their success. We will do so even without the Conservatives, who are blocking and obstructing the very ne-

cessity of working closely with indigenous people so they too can succeed, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Employment is embroiled in allegations of conflict and fraud. Yesterday it was revealed that he falsely represented that his business is wholly indigenous-owned, in an effort to secure millions of dollars in federal contracts. This is disgusting cultural appropriation and outright fraud. In the face of that, why is he still in cabinet?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, the company has never been listed on the indigenous business directory and has never received a contract with our procurement strategy for indigenous businesses, which is meant to uplift indigenous entrepreneurs.

Our focus is on building up indigenous businesses through the procurement program. It is all about economic reconciliation.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the point is that the minister lied. Let us look at the facts. He tried to scam taxpayers by stealing millions of dollars in government contracts from legitimately owned indigenous businesses.

The minister is a fraud. He is a disgrace. He needs to go and he needs to go now. Why will the Prime Minister not fire him?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows full well that quite a few of the words he used are not acceptable when addressing Parliament, so I would ask members to please refrain from using those words to attack individuals.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services has the floor.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, the company was never listed on the indigenous business directory and never received a contract.

While we are talking about the indigenous business directory, I would like to highlight that since we announced that 5% target, there has been a surge in indigenous entrepreneurs' interest in investment in the program.

The Conservatives were aimless. They did not set targets, and it showed. Only 1% of contracts were going toward indigenous businesses. The Conservatives' hidden agenda here is obvious, and on the issue, they are being disingenuous.

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, senators Peter Boehm and Peter Harder just stabbed our farmers in the back. They just amended Bill C-282 to prevent it from protecting supply management in trade renegotiations. At the very moment that Donald Trump is saying that he wants to renegotiate CUSMA, these two senators are guaranteeing that supply management will be back on the table.

The Prime Minister appointed these two senators, his two buddies, and he is responsible for them. Will he personally ask the Senate to defeat their amendment?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on October 29, the Bloc Québécois pulled the plug on our farmers. The leader of the Bloc Québécois decided that he wants an election more than he wants to ensure that Bill C-282 passes in the other chamber. That is the reality.

On this side of the House, we call the Senate every day. I encourage the Bloc Québécois to do the same. I know that some Bloc Québécois members are making calls, but I encourage all Bloc Québécois members and the Bloc Québécois leader to call the other chamber as well. It is an independent chamber, and I encourage the Conservative Party to do likewise, because I am not hearing much from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, they are so independent that it was this Prime Minister who appointed them and, apparently, they are all good buddies. These two unelected individuals, Peter Boehm and Peter Harder, are working against the interests of our farmers. They are working against the will of elected officials from all parties who supported Bill C-282. They are working against our constituents. They are working against our democracy. The one person they are working for is Donald Trump. They are assuring Trump that he will still be able to demand concessions on supply management in the upcoming CUSMA negotiations.

What do we call two people who are working against their country's democracy, against their country's interests, and in favour of the interests of another country?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Liberal Party and our federal government have always supported supply management. It was our party that created supply management over 50 years ago, and our party will always support it.

The leader of the Conservative Party has not had much to say on this issue. This is because his caucus is divided. It was divided during the last vote here in the House. In contrast, our party unanimously supports Bill C-282, and we expect the other place to pass it.

Oral Questions

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, this NDP Liberal government is not worth the cost.

The Minister of Environment invested \$275 million in a company that he owns. The government continues to hide the documents. The green fund continues to paralyze the House.

When will we receive the documents?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what the opposition member is saying is absolutely not true.

The government has already tabled all the documents related to what the House asked for, but did so in a way that respects Canadians' Charter rights. The Conservative Party members are the ones who are obstructing their own obstruction in the House.

On our side, we respect democracy, we respect the rights of Canadians and we respect the independence of the police. It is odd to listen to the Conservatives, because nothing they say is true.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, what is funny is that the worse the scandal, the more quietly the government House leader speaks.

After nine years, there is another scam in the arrive scam scandal. There are three new cases of fraudulent billing that have been sent to the RCMP. This is now a total of seven cases of fraudulent billing that have been sent to the RCMP.

Canadian taxpayers have been scammed a total of \$5 million in the arrive scam scandal fraudulent billing. Why is the government always intent on giving money to fraudsters and scamsters while Canadians are lined up at food banks?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the concerns that we all have about ensuring that we can maintain transparency and have adequate procurement processes in place, which we do. We have initiated a number of practices and have worked closely with the Auditor General and the procurement officer to ensure that all of the processes are adhered to.

I recognize that the member opposite is always looking for clips on her YouTube hit, but we are working for Canadians, not for her.

Oral Questions

● (1200)

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost or the corruption. Do members remember the ArriveCAN scandal, an app that should have cost \$80,000 that ended up costing the taxpayers \$50 million? It gets worse than that. Now there are three more cases being referred to the RCMP for fraudulent billing practices.

When will the government admit that it has allowed millions of dollars to be siphoned off in fraudulent contracts to enrich its Liberal buddies?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us be clear: It is completely unacceptable that there are any fraudulent billings. It is completely unacceptable for anyone in the public to try to abuse the system of working with government.

That is why we have taken the necessary steps to protect Canadians and taxpayers by putting proper processes in place. We will continue to fight, and we will always support Canadians and support taxpayers to ensure that those people who need the opportunity to work with government have that opportunity but not abuse it. We recognize that the members opposite would agree, as long as they also do not abuse the system.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this week is Veterans' Week. It is an important time for Canadians to reflect on the work done by members of the Canadian Armed Forces and to commemorate the service of veterans. We know that the well-being of our forces members during and after their service is key to their success.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence tell the House what our government is doing to support our Canadian Armed Forces and our veterans?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has been clear.

Our CAF members and veterans deserve better than Conservative cuts and office closures. This week, I was pleased to join the Minister of Veterans Affairs and my colleagues from the national capital region in announcing more than \$11 million to support the veteran well-being fund. We will always stand up for our serving members and veterans.

Today and every day, we thank them for their service and we will remember them.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the crime. Canadians recently learned that Paul Bernardo, the

vile serial killer and rapist, is scheduled for his third parole hearing later this month. This comes after the Liberal government allowed him to be transferred to a medium-security prison. These parole hearings are deeply retraumatizing to the French and Mahaffy families, who need to travel far from their homes to provide victim impact statements every two years, despite the fact that this monster is serving an indeterminate sentence.

Will the Prime Minister finally stand up for victims and assure Canadians that Paul Bernardo will remain behind bars, where he belongs, for the rest of his life?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the minister said something yesterday that I think is important for all members in the House, not to repeat the name of a killer.

We agree that public safety is number one in this country. As the hon. member knows, the Parole board is independent, but obviously, public safety will be taken into account as it makes its decision, and we trust it will make the right decision.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Information Commissioner has forced the public safety minister to release previously redacted briefing notes from 2018 that reveal Corrections Canada recommended against opening the Kingston prison farms because they would not enhance the likelihood of post-incarceration employment, not reduce recidivism, cost millions of dollars to operate and make public safety results worse.

Why did the government ignore this evidence-based advice, and why did it try to keep the advice secret for so long?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the minister is not involved in the day-to-day operations of our correctional services. I am surprised to hear the member be so against prison farms. I too am a member of eastern Ontario; I am far east in Ontario. I can assure the member that I was approached by farmers who said this program was important. I do not know where the member is coming from on this particular issue, but the community is supportive.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is coming from the documents that were withheld from all of us for six years.

*Routine Proceedings***LABOUR**

On October 15, Corrections Canada closed the bidding in what it characterized as an “invitation to submit an expression of interest...to operate a commercial activity from a building(s) located at Joyceville Institution...and provide offender employment and vocational training.” I think this refers to the on-site slaughter facility, but the wording of the invitation is so vague that neither the building nor the nature of the employment is specified. Presumably, this was done to subvert the tender process so only the preferred candidate could submit a bid and therefore get the contract.

Will the minister advise the House as to the outcome of the bidding process and as to whether a contract has been awarded?

• (1205)

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, ministers are not involved in procurement processes. What I can do is work with the hon. member, and the minister can come back to him with a more precise answer. As the member well knows, ministers and politicians do not get involved in RFP processes.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Halifax regional municipality is on the front lines when it comes to responding to the housing crisis. That is why last year we announced an \$80 million federal housing investment in HRM to unlock nearly 9,000 homes over the next decade.

Last week, the Conservative leader announced his plan to shut down homebuilding in HRM and across the country by making dangerous cuts to federal housing investments. People in my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour could not afford these reckless Conservative housing cuts.

To the Minister of Housing, how can we stop these Conservative cuts and solve the housing crisis?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy on behalf of his community, which helped secure tens of millions of dollars for the community he calls home.

We are both from Nova Scotia. We have seen small towns and the city receive significant funding to make it easier to build homes more quickly at prices that people can actually afford. We know it takes investment to get homes built in this country, which is why we put billions of dollars on the table to help cities build homes more quickly.

The Conservative response to this important program would be to cut. They would try to deny communities access to this funding, and cities would have to raise property taxes to make it up. We are going to make the investments necessary—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, with the return of Donald Trump and his reckless administration, Canadian industries and workers are at serious risk of being squeezed out. Now more than ever, we need to fight to protect Canadians and their jobs. Canadians need assurances that their jobs, wages and labour rights will not be sacrificed in any renegotiation.

Will the Liberals do the right thing and reach out to labour leaders on both sides of the border to stand up to Trump and defend the interests of Canadian workers?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we will always stand up for Canadian workers. We stood up for Canadian workers previously, and we will stand up for Canadian workers at all times. In fact, even today, I know the Deputy Prime Minister is dialoguing with labour leaders across the country. On many levels, all members of the government, on a regular basis, talk to working men and women from our communities to make sure we are creating a prosperous and secure future for them.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Considering that the government has stated there is no prayer ban, the House calls on the government to confirm that military—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no agreement to move the motion. I would ask members to please talk with each other to make sure everyone is in agreement before they try to table motions or anything like that.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and in accordance with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour and privilege to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Amendments to the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development”, adopted by the board of governors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on May 18, 2023.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition. This return will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

● (1210)

PETITIONS**HOMELESSNESS**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise this afternoon. The petitioners have asked that the House assembled take action on the situation for the homeless in Canada. They note in this petition that the homeless are mistreated and discriminated against in a routine fashion. Many NGOs and governments are approaching the issue with what they term are best described as band-aid methods.

The petitioners ask that instead of marginalizing this already precarious community, the government pass a law to make it illegal to discriminate against any homeless person and to make it illegal to confiscate their personal property, which routinely happens when encampments are torn down by police action, forcing homeless people to move from public property when they have nowhere to go. In short, the petitioners ask that criminalizing homelessness end in this country and that the rights of the homeless be protected.

[Translation]

PARENTAL ALIENATION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, women who report domestic violence committed against themselves or their child are often accused of parental alienation. These accusations are based on a scientifically invalid theory that is used to undermine the credibility of mothers who report domestic violence. These accusations result in court rulings that endanger the safety of children, including rulings that force children to live with a violent father against their will.

That is why over 200 feminist organizations from every province and two territories of Canada are calling for urgent legislative reform to eliminate parental alienation accusations in proceedings under the Divorce Act.

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[English]

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. 2994, 2997 and 2998.

[Text]

Question No. 2994—**Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to government contracts with healthcare agencies to serve inmate populations in all federal penitentiaries at Correctional Service Canada, broken down by fiscal year, since 2017-18: (a) what is the total number of contracts signed;

(b) what are the details of all contracts signed, including the (i) agency contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) number of healthcare practitioners provided, (iv) duration of the contract; and (c) what is the total amount of extra costs incurred as a result of relying on contracted services instead of employing healthcare practitioners directly?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. It was concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response in the time allotted is not possible and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

CSC adheres to the Treasury Board Secretariat, TBS, directive on the management of procurement and the government's contracts regulations for all its awarded contracts.

Information pertaining to contracts over \$10,000 is publicly available on the Open Canada website at <https://search.open.canada.ca/en/ct/>.

Question No. 2997—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the government's response to Order Paper question Q-2804 which lists Afghanistan, Palestinian Territories (Gaza), Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, Haiti, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Venezuela, and Yemen (hereinafter referred to as "entities") as having all received funds through Global Affairs Canada's Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details for each CFLI grant, including (i) the total amount, (ii) the file number, (iii) the website where the grant is applicable online, (iv) the department, (v) the purpose of the grant, (vi) who specifically requested the CFLI grant from the list of above entities, (vii) the date of the application, (viii) the recipient, (ix) whether the grant was given directly to a foreign government or another organization; and (b) for cases where the grant was given to an organization, what are the names of each organization, the dates when the grant was provided, and the rationale for selecting the organization?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to parts (a) and (b), the Canada fund for local initiatives, CFLI, is an international assistance contribution program under the authority of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with an annual operating budget of \$26.89 million. Each year, the CFLI supports over 800 small-scale, high-impact projects with an average budget of \$32,000, implemented in over 120 official development assistance, ODA, eligible countries.

The department undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The response would require the retrieval of information stored in various databases for over 820 contributions agreements. The department concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require an extensive collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Routine Proceedings

CFLI contributions of a value above \$10,000 are subject to proactive disclosure and are published on the Open Government site under proactive disclosure at the following link: <https://open.canada.ca/en>.

CFLI initiatives align with the six action areas established under Canada's feminist international assistance policy and seek to contribute to advancing democracy, protecting and promoting human rights, and ensuring security and stability. The CFLI is also geared to assist in the advocacy of Canada's values and interests and the strengthening of Canada's bilateral relations with foreign countries and their civil societies. CFLI funding can also be deployed for humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of natural disasters and other emergencies. By funding and supporting projects developed by local organizations that may not otherwise qualify for funding from larger donors, the CFLI program fosters stronger and more resilient civil society sectors among ODA-eligible countries.

The recipients of CFLI contributions are, with few exceptions, local civil society organizations, CSOs, active at the community and grassroots level. While the CFLI does on occasion partner with local government entities when deemed strategic to do so to meet Canadian objectives, it is rare. For example, the CFLI partnered with government entities in 1.25% of projects in programming in the fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

The selection of CFLI projects is performed on an annual basis by designated committees within 69 implementing missions and with initiatives being submitted through calls for proposals published on a dedicated website: <https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/cfli-fcil/index.aspx?lang=eng>. Projects are selected based on criteria identified by the program's terms and conditions, including the degree of alignment with Canada's international assistance, as well as its foreign affairs priorities and interests. The financial authorities for the CFLI are held by the head of missions.

Question No. 2998—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the carbon tax revenues collected from small businesses since 2019 and the over \$2.5 billion in fuel charge rebates owed to small businesses: (a) what is the average processing time for the Canada Carbon Rebate for Small Businesses as announced in budget 2024; (b) when can businesses who filed their 2023 taxes before the deadline of July 15, 2024, expect their rebate; and (c) how many businesses who filed their 2023 taxes before the deadline of July 15, 2024, have received their tax credit as of September 23, 2024?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question noted above, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, for the time period of January 1, 2019, to September 23, 2024, the date of the question.

With regard to part (a), no small business rebates have been processed as of the date of the question, as the payment rates had not yet been established. On October 1, 2024, the Department of Finance announced the payment rates for each designated province for an applicable calendar year, which the CRA will use to calculate and automatically issue the rebate amounts to eligible Canadian-controlled private corporations, CCPCs.

With regard to part (b), eligible businesses that filed their 2023 tax return by July 15, 2024, will receive their payment by Decem-

ber 16, 2024, if registered for direct deposit from the CRA, or by December 31, 2024, if receiving payment by cheque.

To further support CCPCs, the CRA launched an online estimator tool to assist in determining an estimated rebate amount based on business operations between 2019 and 2023.

With regard to part (c), no eligible CCPCs have received their tax credit as of September 23, 2024. On October 1, the Department of Finance announced the payment rates for each designated province for an applicable calendar year, which the CRA will use to calculate and automatically issue the rebate amounts to an estimated 600,000 eligible businesses.

For additional information, refer to "Canada Carbon Rebate for Small Businesses Payment Amounts, 2019-20 to 2023-24" at <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/news/2024/10/canada-carbon-rebate-for-small-businesses-payment-amounts-2019-20-to-2023-24.html>.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2995 and 2996 could be made orders for returns, 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. 2995—**Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to the CRA's assessment and collection data on vessel registrations, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: how many pleasure crafts, broken down by new and used, were registered in Canada with a total sales price (i) below \$250,000, (ii) between \$250,000 and \$500,000, (iii) above \$500,000 and up to \$1 million, (iv) above \$1 million?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2996—**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:**

With regard to government funding allocated to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA): (a) what are the details of all funding allocated by the government to the UNRWA since November 4, 2015, broken down by each appropriations act or estimate, including each Main or Supplementary Estimate which contained funding for the UNRWA and the associated amounts; and (b) for each instance of a funding allocation in (a), what specific projects, transfers or other items were funded with the allocation, and how much funding did each project, transfer, or other item receive?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Privilege***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.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to go over what we are actually supposed to be talking about and why the leader of the Conservative Party has decided to be in what I have said is borderline contempt of the House of Commons regarding the rules and procedures, and how he is attempting to hold for ransom all members of the chamber because of his personal interests.

Let me expand on it. The Conservative Party, after a ruling from the Speaker, moved a motion that the—

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the allegation by the member, what he characterizes as borderline contempt of Parliament, is itself unparliamentary. I would ask him to withdraw it. It is the second time he has done this. Doing it twice when it is wrong does not make it right.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): After consulting with the table officers, I would ask each member to be measured and disciplined in the use of their words. If need be, we can come back and intervene, but for the time being, debates must be respectful.

I invite the hon. parliamentary secretary to continue his speech.

- (1215)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that the Conservatives are very sensitive on this issue. At the end of the day, everything I am saying I feel very comfortable in justifying. If they stop interrupting, they will find out why one can easily draw the conclusion that what we have witnessed on the floor of the House of Commons today and for the last number of weeks is borderline contempt.

I have listened to over 150 Conservative speeches littered with all forms of misinformation that is spread through social media. Then when it comes to hearing a little truth, they have an allergic reaction to it and feel they can stand up on points of order to disrupt what I am saying. I would encourage them to leave the chamber if they are not comfortable with what is being said.

I recommend, as I did last week, that we understand what the Conservatives are being asked to do by the leader of the Conservative Party. They are being told that they should oppose the government and, however they can do it, raise scandals. That is what their agenda really is. It has in good part—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Do we have quorum, Mr. Speaker?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We will check.

And the count having been taken:

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I am five minutes into my speech, and the Conservatives continue to rise on points of order, some of which are very frivolous. The Conservative Party is trying to censor what I am saying in the chamber.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the parliamentary secretary. His intervention seems to be more a matter of debate.

I invite all members, when rising on a point of order, to specify which standing order they are referring to.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has 14 minutes to continue his speech.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Conservative Party is denying my privilege to address the House of Commons. I cannot cite specific quotes, but I can assure you, whether it is in Beaudesne's or the Standing Orders, that you will find that all members have the right to speak in the House of Commons. I have only been able to speak for five minutes, and a number of Conservatives have interrupted my train of thought for the purpose of disrupting what I am saying. I should be allowed to start from the beginning because they are consistently playing a game. It is disrespectful to our House rules.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The parliamentary secretary's point was understood. It is more a matter of debate.

I therefore invite the hon. parliamentary secretary to continue his speech. He has 14 minutes left.

Privilege

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that does not take away from the behaviour we have seen from the leader of the Conservative Party. At the end of the day, we have a Conservative motion on the floor indicating that the Conservatives would like to push the issue at hand to the procedure and House affairs committee. I would suggest that is the right way to deal with the issue. In fact, all members of all political parties except for the Conservatives, who have proposed the motion, want the motion to be accepted so the matter can go to the procedure and House affairs committee.

The Conservatives have not only moved a motion, but moved an amendment to the motion and a subamendment. Then after they had 100 members speak to the subamendment, they allowed the subamendment to drop and moved another subamendment. The purpose of this is to paralyze the House, as they continue to stand up for speech after speech while not necessarily being relevant to the motion. Rather, they focus on what I would suggest is the ongoing issue of character assassination. They started with the Prime Minister back when he was elected leader of the Liberal Party when we were the third party inside this chamber, and nothing has changed.

The Conservatives today are saying they want unredacted information, and they believe they have an entitlement to it because they say that a majority of members of the House argued for that and voted in favour of it. There are two quotes that I would like to bring forward to the Conservative Party, particularly the leader of the Conservative Party.

First and foremost, what the Conservative Party is asking for is inappropriate. It is a Conservative game. It is a multi-million dollar political game that serves the personal interests of the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party as a whole. The Conservatives are asking us to give out unredacted documents from a collection, handing them not only to opposition members but directly to the RCMP. This is what the RCMP commissioner has said regarding that: "There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections."

The Conservative Party does not give a darn about that. The Conservatives do not care about charter protections. They are not listening to what the RCMP is saying, and the RCMP is not alone. The Auditor General has also been critical of the tactic being used by the Conservative Party. The former law clerk is critical of the tactic being used by the Conservative Party as well.

The Conservative Party is saying to wait a minute; it wants people to believe the Conservative Party over the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and other professionals and experts out there. The Conservatives know full well that we are not going to do that, as well we should not. That is why the Speaker's ruling tells us to send this matter to committee and allow the committee to review it. However, the Conservatives do not like that, and that is where, in my opinion, they are borderline in contempt of Parliament. I would articulate that to whomever. The Conservative Party is saying that they are not going to allow the House to deal with any issue until this matter has been resolved to their liking.

● (1220)

I would like to quote a story from The Hill Times. We have a one-week break, and I would like every Conservative member, because we are going to hear from another 100 of them no doubt, to say they read The Hill Times story from October 31 that Steven Chaplin wrote and say they disagree with that individual. If they are not prepared to say that, then they should look at themselves in a mirror and recognize the reality of the type of abuse the leader of the Conservative Party has been putting into the House of Commons for weeks now.

I will not read the whole article, but for those following the debate, Steven Chaplin is the former senior legal counsel in the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. He is someone who truly understands this. He is apolitical. I could not even identify him on the street or the sidewalk. Here is what he says as an expert: "It is time for the House of Commons to admit it was wrong, and to move on. There has now been three weeks of debate on a questionable matter of privilege based on the misuse of the House' power". He wrote this story last week.

The article goes on, and here is what members really need to appreciate. A member could think of themselves as a parliamentarian first, believing that serving their constituents is the most important role they have to play, but they should also recognize they are a parliamentarian. Every parliamentarian of the House of Commons needs to listen carefully to this statement. Again, this comes from Steven Chaplin: "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." That is a warning to all parliamentarians about the abuse of power that the leader of the Conservative Party is imposing on his Conservative caucus, which none of them is taking seriously based on the discussions and debates we are hearing.

I am not surprised that the leader of the Conservative Party continues to push this issue. I am not surprised because we see that in his history and his pattern of behaviour. Stephen Harper was the only prime minister in Canada in the British Commonwealth to be held in contempt of Parliament. Guess who his parliamentary secretary was. It was none other than the leader of the Conservative Party.

The leader of the Conservative Party is the only leader in the House of Commons without a security clearance. Leaders of the Bloc, the Greens and the NDP, as well as the Prime Minister, all have a security clearance. Outside the Hill, there is a serious concern in regard to foreign interference. We have seen the killing and murdering of individuals and extortion. We have seen the influencing of parliamentarians, both past and present, of different political parties. That means the Conservatives also. We have seen serious allegations that the leadership convention in which the Conservative leader was elected had foreign interference.

Privilege

Every leader in the House of Commons today is saying they recognize the seriousness of this, and they got the security clearance necessary to be informed by Canada's agencies, including the RCMP, about the personalities and information that are vital to know as a leader, except for one. The only leader who refuses to get a security clearance is the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada.

• (1225)

Does that surprise people? It should, actually. Yes, the Conservative leader was the parliamentary secretary to the prime minister who was held in contempt. Yes, he continues to play an abuse of power on the floor of the House of Commons, which is ultimately leading to challenges for all of us as parliamentarians. Yes, he has been manipulating the floor and concurrence reports to take control over standing committees in the last week. We have witnessed that on at least two occasions.

Now, we even get Conservatives who stand up on points of order to try to censor the types of things I am saying in the House, because they do not like to hear the truth. The truth is that the leader of the Conservative Party owes it to Canadians to get that security clearance, and if he is not going to get that security clearance, then he had better tell Canadians why not and tell Canadians what he is hiding. I believe that he is hiding something from Canadians, and that is the reason he does not want to get that security clearance, yet Canadians have a right to know.

What is it about the Conservative leader's past, or is it strictly in regard to the leadership? Is it some of the Conservatives? Is he one of the Conservatives dealing with foreign interference? Instead, he says, "I am not going to get it. I will wait until we are after the next election". It is highly irresponsible.

I go back in terms of the motion itself, because the leader of the Conservative Party has chosen to play this multi-million dollar game. As a direct result of his behaviour, we are not able to deal with important issues that are affecting Canadians throughout the country. The leader of the Conservative Party has made the decision to put his self-interest and the interests of the Conservative Party of Canada ahead of Canadians, and that is the reality.

I think collectively the Conservatives need to start listening to what the experts are saying, in terms of what their expectation is as an opposition party, not just as Conservatives, and think of their roles as parliamentarians. They should recognize the abuse that we are witnessing every day, for weeks, and start holding their own leader accountable to their own caucus, if not all Canadians. If the Conservatives are not prepared to do that, at the very least, let us get the leader sharing with Canadians why he refuses to get security clearance and why he has chosen to be held, from my perspective, in borderline contempt of the House of Commons by not allowing work on issues like the Citizenship Act; the military court and the civilian court for sexual complaints, which would be dealt with through Bill C-66; the online harms act to protect our children; the rail and marine safety legislation to support supply lines; or the fall fiscal statement.

All of these are being put off to the side because of the self-interest of one individual who is the leader of the Conservative Party. I

think he needs to get off the rock, recognize that the House can work, start co-operating and stop the filibuster.

• (1230)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct some of the misinformation in the member's speech first, and then I will ask my question.

He is maintaining that it is the Conservatives who are keeping government legislation from coming forward, when, in fact, it was the Speaker's ruling that, until the government produces the unredacted documents, no government business or private members' business will come forward.

The member has described this as a multi-million dollar Conservative game, so what I would ask the member is this: Does he think it is a game that cabinet ministers knowingly put people with conflicts of interest into the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, which became the green slush fund? Does he think it is a game that \$400 million of taxpayer money has been given in conflicts of interest, sometimes to companies that cabinet ministers are invested in? Does he think it is a game that, contrary to the government's own rules that when it wrongly gives out money, it has to get it back, the government has gotten zero taxpayer dollars back? Does he think it is a game to keep hiding the truth of these documents from Canadians?

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member starts off by providing misinformation. She said this is about providing unredacted information; that is not what it is about. The motion is about referring the matter to the procedure and House affairs committee. The Conservative Party is twisting it to talk about that issue because they want to talk about scandals. It is not just one; they will talk about several.

I would love for 150 Liberal MPs at some point in time to be able to stand up and talk about Stephen Harper, the current leader and the scandals they were involved in. I have a booklet entitled, "Stephen Harper, Serial Abuser of Power". There is a list here of 70 scandals and instances of corruption, and it does not even talk about the ETS scandal, which is a \$400-million scandal.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary referred to the content of the motion that we are debating today, but this motion was motivated by the government's refusal to comply with an order of the House to hand over certain documents. The real issue here is our right to know what is happening so that, if need be, we can hold the government to account for any questionable or illegal acts that may have been committed.

The parliamentary secretary is talking about the importance of transparency and of knowing what is happening in reference to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has not applied for his security clearance. I agree with him on that, but what he is saying should apply to the entire House, to our right to know. I would like to hear the parliamentary secretary's comments on that.

We are being told that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Should that also not apply in this context?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I support the idea of us passing the motion. By passing the motion, the issue the member is referring to will go to standing committee, then members of the standing committee can ask why the RCMP believe that the documents should not be unredacted. People who are following the debate should understand there are literally thousands of pages of information already provided.

Do we believe the RCMP is being genuine when it says we should not provide it unredacted? The Speaker's ruling is that discussion, that debate should be taking place in the procedure and House affairs committee. That is what the motion is saying: push the debate to the procedure and House affairs committee. If this chamber had to deal with all the committee business, we would never be able to do anything. No government could do anything. That is why we have standing committees.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is always good to see you in the chair.

[English]

My comment to the parliamentary secretary is to stay within the focus of today's debate, even though I certainly sympathize with the unusual aspect of overruling the cautions of the Auditor General and the RCMP. I am still very troubled. It is just not the government's position to do the easiest thing and, however many boxes of documents there are, ship them over to us. It would end this horrible waste of time we are locked into.

Based on the Speaker's ruling that there is a matter of privilege here, all other critical issues, like Bill C-33, are making no progress at all to the finish line, even though they have cleared almost every step in processing. Bills, like Bill C-33, which is on rail safety and marine matters, are waiting for report stage votes.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear and put it really simply here. All we have to do is stop the filibuster the Conservatives are doing and allow the matter to go to the procedure and House affairs committee. That is what the motion is asking for, and that is what will in fact happen if the Conservatives allow the vote to occur. After that, we can have the RCMP commissioner come before the committee and we can ask the RCMP commission-

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er why it is he believes we should not be directly providing the RCMP the documents being requested.

It is the RCMP that does not want the documents, it is the Conservatives saying to give them the documents, and it is the RCMP commissioner saying to not do that. It seems to me we should send it to PROC, get the commissioner before PROC, and today, just like we could have three, four weeks ago, we would be able to continue doing House work.

● (1240)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member whether the reason for filibustering the privilege motion by Conservatives is that they do not want to discuss economic issues within Canada.

Coincidentally, this filibuster started when the economy started rolling back. In fact, the Canadian consumer index reached a 30-month high when this debate started, and interest rates have been cut four times. The IMF has projected that Canada will be the best-performing economy in 2025. Rents, which were a major concern for affordability in Canada, started softening. In fact, they went down by over 9% in Toronto and Vancouver. Would my hon. colleague like to comment?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. It is kind of like, anything that is good news for Canadians is bad news for Conservatives. They want to stay on "Canada is broken," which is not true.

Canada is the best country in the world to call home, but the Conservatives want to stay on that theme, emphasizing one issue, character assassination, whatever it takes to try to make politicians look bad. If the Conservatives want to talk about corruption, they should bring it forward on an opposition day and open the floodgates. I would love to talk about all the corruption of Stephen Harper. I was here, inside the chamber, witnessing a lot of that corruption.

Quite frankly, I do not think it would be overly productive. It would be far more productive to deal with the substantial legislation that is going to ultimately, hopefully, pass, because it is for the betterment of all Canadians.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the member has referred to sending this to committee. He knows quite well that if it goes to committee, the Liberals will filibuster to never turn over the documents.

The member talked about the RCMP and his concerns about sending documents to the RCMP staff. I have listened to them swear their oath, where they have to keep everything that they come across in their investigations confidential. Does he not trust the RCMP?

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if the member believes her very last statement, for the sake of argument let us say that the Conservative Party actually trusted the RCMP and the testimony, then why would they not allow it to go to committee and get the RCMP to say that it is fine for a motion on Parliament Hill to gather information unredacted and send it directly to the RCMP?

However, that is not what the RCMP members are saying. Let us listen to what the RCMP members are saying. Let them go to committee, and listen to what they have to say. The Conservatives do not respect the office, and they do not respect the RCMP. That is the reason they continue to play this multi-million dollar game.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place. It is Veterans' Week; Remembrance Day is coming up. When I rise, whether it is in this place or the other place, I think of what an incredible privilege it is to be able to stand and represent the people of Barrie—Innisfil and all Canadians, frankly. Whether we align ideologically or not, our job is to represent everyone.

When I think about the incredible responsibility of being a member of Parliament and being able to stand in this place, especially during weeks like this, as we lead up to Remembrance Day, I think of those who have fought throughout the course of our history in world wars and conflicts. I think of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while trying to keep the peace around the world, defending democracy and standing up for the rule of law, human rights and human dignity.

I think about that often as I stand here. I think of the blood that has been spilled, the lives that have been lost and the families who have been decimated by war to allow us the privilege, all 338 of us and those who have come before us, to stand up in this place and defend the values they fought for. We can never repay those sacrifices. However, it is incumbent upon us to treat this place with the respect and reverence it deserves because of the bloodshed that happened in order for us to be able to do that. That is our responsibility as parliamentarians,

The context of what we are talking about today is the obstruction of documents and the lack of respect for this institution. We are talking about the fact that Parliament is here to function in what is supposed to be a functioning democracy, yet we have a government that is obstructing the will, the right and the privilege of Parliament. It is doing so because it does not want to turn over documents that Parliament has rightly asked for and requested.

This obstruction is an affront to democracy and to the very values that many fought and died for in defending this institution before us. I do not think it is the right tribute to be paying to them, quite frankly. This standoff has now effectively been going on for a month, yet the government has talked about the fact that it is not going to hand over these documents. Of the ones that have been handed over, many were redacted. We are aware, for example, that there are 11,000 documents from the Department of Justice that have not been handed to the parliamentary law clerk, not to mention all the other documents related to this SDTC scandal that have not been sent to the parliamentary law clerk for Parliament.

Innovation and Science is where this whole scandal started. What conversations were going on between department officials? We

know that there were some taped conversations, and we know Doug McConnachie, who came before the ethics committee, spoke on tape about how upset the minister was that this was going on. He talked about this being on a sponsorship scandal level. The sponsorship scandal was \$40 million, and it took down the Chrétien-Martin government.

This is a \$400-million scandal in which insiders, who were connected to and appointed by the Liberal Party, were free to make decisions, regardless of any conflicts. There were many conflicts, but they did not care about them. These insiders were benefiting and funnelling taxpayer money to their own companies, to the tune of \$400 million. My wife's Uncle Jackie was killed in a Lancaster bomber on his last mission over Poland, defending democracy and the rule of law. He and millions of other Canadians have fought for this country and defended democracy and those rights I spoke about earlier.

• (1245)

Imagine what they would be thinking today, or even those families who have been decimated by war. They are watching what the government is doing today, making a mockery of this institution by not abiding by a decision of elected officials to hand over documents so we can get to the bottom of this scandal.

It is absolutely absurd that we are in this position today, especially from a government and Prime Minister who said in 2015 that they were going to be open and transparent by default. Every one of the ministerial letters he sent reminded ministers that they were to be open and transparent by default. What did that mean? Maybe there were good intentions at the time, but after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, we see that it is not open and transparent by default.

It is not just with this scandal; there have been other scandals. The Winnipeg lab documents scandal is the one that stands out for me. The Liberals were going to take the Speaker to court in order to protect those documents from being publicly released and given to parliamentarians after a very similar situation occurred where Parliament ordered documents to be handed over. They prorogued Parliament. That is how bad this scandal was and how bad they did not want the information to come out.

Here we are again in not the same but a closely similar situation to what we were dealing with before. It speaks to contempt of Parliament, the decline in democracy. The fact is, this is a government that holds this place in contempt every chance it gets, and we are in this standoff now because we and other parties in this place are trying to do the right thing. I believe the Speaker did the right thing in his ruling regarding the privileges of the members of this place, which are paramount and supreme in this land when it comes to calling for document production. He made the right decision. That is why we are in this place today.

I want to focus on the context of what I said about those who defended democracies, those who stood up for the rule of law, those who defended human rights and human dignity, because we are heading into a very critical weekend. The most important day of the calendar year is Remembrance Day. That is arguable, but that is my opinion. It is when we pay tribute to and honour those who served our nation and those who continue to serve our nation.

We are very lucky. When I say “we”, I include the members for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, Simcoe—Grey, Simcoe North and Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. We are part of Simcoe County and are very fortunate to have a long and storied military tradition and history that all centres around Canada's largest training base, Base Borden, which is in Simcoe County.

I recall when I was the critic for Veterans Affairs for roughly two years, I used to travel around the country meeting with veterans, their families and stakeholders. I would always ask how many of them had been to Base Borden. If I was in a room where there were 100 veterans or active military people, 99 hands would go up and they would say they had gone to Base Borden, as it is Canada's largest training base. Then I would ask how many of them had been to the Queens Hotel in Barrie. I see the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte has been there, but 99 hands would go up, because if they trained at Base Borden, many a time they would end up in downtown Barrie at the Queens Hotel.

With its long and storied history, Base Borden, which is in the member for Simcoe—Grey's riding, is a big part of our local economy. It is a big part of our history. In fact, the base is where many Canadians in the expeditionary force trained to fight for the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Trenches were built there. The Grey and Simcoe Foresters, of which I am an honorary member, were a big part of the preparation for the Battle of Vimy Ridge. I am going to the Remembrance Day dinner with them tomorrow night with my wife.

• (1250)

Of course, we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Canadian Forces Base Borden was the home of the RCAF. There were hundreds of thousands of Canadian airmen and airwomen who were trained throughout the First World War and Second World War in Base Borden to be able to fly missions like the Battle of Britain, for example, which was the great defence of Europe. That long and storied history of military heritage is one that we are very proud of in our riding.

There are several people, too, who we are proud of. There are members of our military who will be participating in ceremonies.

Nantyr Shores Secondary School Remembrance Day dinner is happening this evening. Craig Froese is a teacher at Nantyr Shore Secondary School and has done a terrific job with young people talking about our proud military history. He has written books. For example, when the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge was happening, Craig took a group of students to Vimy Ridge. I was there as the critic for veterans affairs at the time. There were roughly 30,000 people at Vimy Ridge celebrating the 100th anniversary of that great Canadian battle. I knew Craig was there, I was not sure how I was going to find him and the students among 30,000 people. All of a sudden I heard faint voices in the crowd yelling my name. I ended up finding them and we took some great photos at Vimy Ridge.

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That is the kind of stuff that Craig does with those students. I am sorry that I will be travelling back to Barrie this evening and I will not be able to attend that dinner. However, the Honourable Guard of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters are having their dinner tomorrow night.

At Mapleview Church, Pastor Jay Davis does a great job. On Sunday, it is having three services for Remembrance Day.

The Sandycove Acres Remembrance Day ceremony is happening on Sunday. The organizers do a terrific job.

The City of Barrie is having its ceremony on Monday. The Town of Innisfil is having its ceremony and the Innisfil Legion Branch 547 Remembrance Day service is going on.

The Cookstown and District Lions Club is having its annual veterans' dinner and, of course, Base Borden will be having its Remembrance Day service on Monday.

I encourage anybody in Simcoe County to find a Remembrance Day service and pay tribute to those who served and those who continue to serve our nation and their families as well.

We are talking about veterans who fought for this institution to function, who fought for democracy and fought for the rule of law. There are a few I want to mention in the short time that I have. Marcel Vigneault, who is the president of the Barrie Legion, is doing great things with outreach to veterans and their families; Phil George is the past president; and Steve Glover is the public relations officer. I know the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte knows Steve very well. He is one of the historians at the Barrie Legion. He does a terrific job with commemoration and making sure that not just the legion but our whole area in Simcoe County is aware of that military heritage. I cannot say enough about Fern Taillefer as the first VP. He is the veterans service officer. Fern will be front and centre, I am sure, at the Barrie Remembrance Day parade as the sergeant-at-arms leading the ceremony that day. Tim Shaughnessy is the second VP. There is, of course, Judi Giovannetti who is a conflict resolution officer there and a former district commander of the Royal Canadian Legion. They do some great work there.

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The Innisfil Legion will be having its ceremony on Sunday. Denis Mainville is the president there. It will be in Lefroy. About three or four years ago the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte and I started a poppy launch campaign. We invited people from all over the county, politicians, to amplify the start of the poppy campaign. We held it about two weeks ago when the poppy launch was initiated. We had the honour of presenting, on behalf of the Ambassador of Kuwait, a Kuwait service medal, to Denis because he served in the Persian Gulf War. The mayor of Innisfil, Lynn Dollin, was the one who presented it and pinned it on Denis. It was a really special moment. Again, that is all part of that military heritage. Laurie Sprink is the vice-president of the Innisfil Legion and Olga Cherry is the second vice-president.

● (1255)

Of course, there will also be the Sandycove veterans I mentioned earlier. We have a terrific ceremony happening on Sunday afternoon. Fred White is the president, and I cannot say enough about Ted Gemmell and the work that he has done, really, in putting on this ceremony. Hundreds and hundreds of people from the Sandycove Acres community will be at that Remembrance Day ceremony. There is something special this year. This is Marilyn Sehn and her volunteers. They started this in the summer, and they have crocheted and knitted poppies to honour military members, past and present. All of that will be on display at the Sandycove Acres Remembrance Day ceremony on Sunday, and it happens at two o'clock.

The Innisfil ceremony is going to be happening on Monday. I know that the Innisfil ideaLAB and Library is holding a special presentation on November 9 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the branch in Cookstown, telling stories of veterans from the town of Innisfil.

When we talk about those stories, I cannot help but speak of Brigadier-General John Hayter, who served in the Canadian Forces from 1951 to 2009. In 1952, General Hayter joined the Grey and Simcoe Foresters, of which I am an honorary member. At the age of 18, he began training at CFB Borden, and then headed over to the Korean War. Just this past summer, the City of Barrie renamed a community centre, the Southshore Community Centre, as the General John Hayter Southshore Community Centre. This is a fitting tribute for a man who has dedicated so much to his community and so much of his life to this country.

This past weekend, in Stayner, which is in the member for Simcoe—Grey's riding, World War II veteran Allister "Mac" MacDonald celebrated his 101st birthday at the Stayner Legion branch.

I mentioned Craig Froese, the Nantyr Shores teacher who does great work with young people. To encapsulate the work that he does, I would say that he really pays tribute to the legacy of those who have fallen, not just from the town of Innisfil but from Simcoe County.

We are so lucky, the member for Simcoe—Grey and I. We have Peacekeepers Park in Angus, which has been there for a long time; it is a tremendous tribute to those who have kept the peace around the world. There are memorial walls. There are LAVs. It really is a destination. I encourage anybody from across this country who is passing through Angus, Ontario, which is just next to Base Borden, to visit Peacekeepers Park and pay tribute to those peacekeepers.

It has not only been Fern Taillefer, in the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping, but also Bob George and Don Ward, who have done all the graphics displays in that park. They have just been incredible.

Of course, we have had those who have passed away in the service of our nation. As we head toward Remembrance Day, I think of Private Kevin McKay, who was 24; he was killed in Afghanistan two days before his tour was to end. Of course, I think of his Silver Cross Mother, Elizabeth, and his father, Fred. I think of them as we head toward Remembrance Day.

Sapper Brian Collier, who died in 2010, grew up in Bradford. I think of his mom, Carol, and his father, Jim, who attended the poppy launch a couple of years ago.

This is the 100th anniversary of the RCAF. As I said earlier, we have a proud tradition at Base Borden because it is the home, the birthplace of the RCAF. This year marked a very special centennial celebration at Base Borden, with the addition of the Ad Astra monument, "to the stars", and it really was the community that came together. I want to commend Wayne Hay and Jamie Massie for the work that they did. We know that 133,000 aircrew trained at Base Borden.

As we get into the weekend, as we get closer to Remembrance Day, poppies are being sold all over Simcoe County. Tomorrow, for example, at nine o'clock, I am going to be at the LCBO in Alcona for a couple of hours with members from the Innisfil Legion to sell poppies. Every dollar that is raised in that poppy campaign will go toward helping veterans and their families. I want to give a special tribute to the cadets, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Vents, high school students, veterans and many other members of our community who have kept that legacy alive. They are out there selling poppies so that our veterans can be looked after in the way that they have earned and the way that they deserve.

● (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to echo many of the positive words that the member opposite has put on the record in regard to service people both past and present who have served our country so well, recognizing the importance of November 11 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Every year, I have had the opportunity to participate in one way or another. We all participate in different ways. On Machray Avenue at McGregor Armoury, a heritage building, the local armoury, there will be a presentation and a moment of silence. I have attended ceremonies at cemeteries. I have even had the opportunity in the Philippines to pay tribute to fallen soldiers of allied forces who were born here in Canada. It is important that we recognize November 11, and I appreciate the member's statements in regard to it.

I have had the opportunity to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, and during the 1980s I actually marched with World War II veterans. Therefore I am very sympathetic to the member's argument in regard to how the veterans would see what the government is doing today. I would suggest to the member that I have held myself high, that the government has held itself high and that the individuals with whom I marched would in fact have been very comfortable with it.

• (1305)

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I addressed that at the beginning of my speech. We have seen the contempt for the institution of Parliament play itself out over the last nine years of the current government through the levels of scandal, the levels of corruption and the insiders' connected cronies who have been benefiting far greater than Canadians have because Canadians, whether the Liberals like to think so or not, are hurting right now, and I would say that this place is not being represented with the honour and the integrity that many who served our nation have.

Just today, we are finding out again that there has been a directive that there will be no prayers at military services or Remembrance Day services. Men and women, before doing their duty and before they were called to duty, would say prayers to their god in order to protect themselves. This is what we are hearing today. It is sad, where we are at.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask if there is quorum in the House.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (The Assistant Deputy Speaker, NDP): We will check.

And the count having been taken:

Mrs. Carol Hughes (The Assistant Deputy Speaker, NDP): There is quorum.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): I would like to thank my colleague for the words he shared today in honour of Remembrance Day, which is coming up next week. I am a proud granddaughter of a veteran who fought in the Second World War. My grandfather Daniel Albert McCoy was a gunner, shot down over Belgium, and he actually lived in the underground for two years before he was able to get back to my mother and my grandmother.

I noticed that the member did not mention that today is Indigenous Veterans Day, and the stories we often do not hear are the stories of indigenous veterans: first nations, Métis and Inuit men and women who so bravely fought for our country and for our freedom. I think about people like Tommy George Prince, William Cleary, Tom Charles Longboat and so many others whose stories have not been told. Today of all days we need to acknowledge indigenous veterans.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has been in this place for quite a while. She understands how quickly time goes when we get on a roll and we are talking about the people who

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have served their nation. I actually had some notes on indigenous people who have served our nation. Over 12,000 indigenous men and women are estimated to have served in three wars, including 7,000 first nations members. They enlisted as soldiers, as nurses and in other roles, many serving with distinction, winning medals for bravery in every action.

The hon. member mentioned Tommy Prince. I would mention Mary Greyeyes as well. She joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps as the first indigenous woman to join the Canadian army. Noel Knockwood, a residential school survivor, enlisted in the Canadian army, served during the Korean War and went on to become the sergeant-at-arms in Nova Scotia.

We are very fortunate where I live in Barrie—Innisfil that we not only acknowledge the people who served and continue to serve our nation, but that there are also indigenous veterans as well who proudly wear the uniform and their medals and are honoured just as greatly as everyone else is honoured.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to thank my colleague for highlighting the incredible service that so many veterans rendered to Canada and for tying it to what we are here to do as a democracy. It is important.

I want to highlight his recognizing retired brigadier-general Hayter, a man who served in my regiment. One of my first tasks as a subaltern was to be his aide at a mess dinner. I cannot repeat some of the stories that occurred that night and the dance I had to do for him and another general I was the aide to at the same time.

I want to thank the member for recognizing indigenous veterans as well. I encourage and invite all parliamentarians, if they get the opportunity, to come to my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and go to the town of Wiarton. There is a brand new mural there, done by Silvia Pecota, that pays incredible tribute to the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, which I think had the highest percentage of any first nation in Canada serving in the First World War. I think something like over 60% of that first nation's members served in the First World War.

• (1310)

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, as we get closer to Remembrance Day, and I know we are going through Remembrance Week, it is important for us to remember all those who have served and continue to serve and their families, who in many ways serve beyond the battlefield.

I was the critic for Veterans Affairs, and I still wear bracelets 24 hours a day and seven days a week, lest we forget. There is a tribute on my arm to the wounded warriors as well. Some people may think they are props, but they are not. They are not only a way for me to remember my obligation to our veterans every time they call my office for help, as anybody does, but also a tribute. It is the kind of tribute that I pay to remind me of my obligation every single day that I function as a member of Parliament. It is the same obligation I am going to have when my time is up here.

Because of the profound respect that I have for veterans and their families and the prices they paid to serve this nation, I wear them proudly and as a reminder of my obligation not just as a human being, but as a parliamentarian as well.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking a member of the member's caucus, who was speaking moments ago, the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, for his service on behalf of this country in Afghanistan and for his work to help rescue women from Afghanistan. We can work together across party lines in this place.

My question for the parliamentary secretary might be taken from a Conservative point of view: Why does the government not just present the documents? As such, I want to ask the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil, because I am truly baffled by this, why the leader of the Conservative Party will not get top secret security clearance. It would really clear the air about the line in the report from the committee of parliamentarians on foreign interference that mentions foreign interference in the Conservative Party leadership race.

I would appreciate it if the hon. leader of the official opposition would seek his top secret security clearance. Can the member for Barrie—Innisfil shed any light on why the leader of the official opposition still refuses to do so?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition has stated very clearly and succinctly his reason. In fact, the former leader of the NDP, Tom Mulcair, agrees with the Leader of the Opposition.

It is baffling that the government was talking to the Washington Post about foreign interference a week before the announcement on Thanksgiving Day. If it is truly an issue of national security, why are the Liberals giving the information to an American newspaper? There are sections in the CSIS Act allowing the Prime Minister to inform the Leader of the Opposition, if he wanted to, about this. The same provisions that were afforded to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, for example, could be afforded to the Leader of the Opposition, so this is completely a red herring. It is an issue to distract from the failed economic policies of the government, and the Liberals are going to continue to use it as a means to distract and divide.

* * *

PRAYERS BY MILITARY CHAPLAINS

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among the parties, and I believe if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, considering the government has stated that there is no prayer ban, the House call on the government to confirm that military chaplains, ahead of Remembrance Day ceremonies, have the right to offer prayers in their denominations in public spaces and will never be restricted on Remembrance Day or any day nor will any military chaplain face any disciplinary or administrative actions for praying in public spaces.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

[*English*]

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

The motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

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.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, that is probably the greatest news I have heard all week. That was very well done by my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound; I thank him so much. It puts a big smile on my face.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague, the member for Barrie—Innisfil, who just gave a very compassionate and passionate speech and did an excellent job. He stole a bunch of my thunder, so I guess I will be somewhat sticking to the reason we are really here today.

I am honoured to represent the people of Essex and to address the House today. I will discuss the ruling of the Speaker regarding the production of documents ordered by the House on the scandal involving Sustainable Development Technology Canada. The Liberal government refuses to comply with an order from the House to produce unredacted documents regarding the \$400-million green slush fund scandal. This is truly a disheartening example of governance.

Again, I want to highlight the government's mishandling of the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, which is often called the green slush fund. The program was created in 2001 to support innovation and sustainable technologies, and it ran smoothly under both Liberal and Conservative governments until the current Prime Minister took office.

It is unacceptable that the Liberals refused to hand over all the documents related to the Prime Minister's green slush fund to the RCMP within the required 14 days. I, along with my colleagues, am frustrated by the lack of transparency, which only fuels distrust and frustration among Canadians.

The Prime Minister-appointed board began approving funding for companies where executives had clear conflicts of interest with SDTC members who were already receiving money from the board and were still appointed to it despite knowledge of the conflicts. This is truly unbelievable. Governance standards at the fund quickly collapsed under the leadership of the new chair, Annette Verschuren. Following whistle-blower allegations of financial mismanagement, the Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner each launched separate investigations.

Privilege

The government's sheer lack of attention to detail is staggering, leading to avoidable errors and costly oversights at every turn. The negligence not only wastes taxpayers' dollars but also undermines the public's trust in its ability to govern effectively.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, the situation is so bad that there are now 1,400 homeless encampments in Ontario alone. In my riding of Essex, I am constantly hearing about the struggles my constituents face regarding the cost of living. Last month, CBC reported on how homelessness is increasing in the Windsor—Essex area. According to Jeanie Diamond-Francis, manager of community services for County of Essex, the need for affordable housing in that county is “consistently” growing. The latest number of people experiencing homelessness in the region is over 900, and that is only capturing people who are experiencing such homelessness.

While many Canadians are struggling with rising housing and food costs, it is deeply disappointing that we are still talking about the Liberal government's \$400-million slush fund scandal. The Liberals do not care about everyday Canadians; they care only about making their insider friends richer.

However, it is not just my constituents who are struggling; Canadians across the country are struggling more than ever. Food Banks Canada's 2024 poverty report card shows that almost 50% of Canadians feel financially worse off compared to last year, while 25% of Canadians are experiencing food insecurity. On top of this, Food Banks Canada reported that the cost of living has become so high that there has been a 50% increase in food bank visits since 2021. As a direct consequence of the Liberal government's inflationary spending and taxes, millions of Canadians are struggling to keep their head above water.

New research from the Salvation Army shows that nearly one-third of Canadians continue to feel pessimistic about the future of their personal finances, while 25% of Canadians continue to be extremely concerned about having enough income to cover their basic needs. The Salvation Army also reported that nearly 75% of Canadians face challenges managing limited financial resources, which has contributed to a wave of Canadians who, for financial reasons, continue to deprioritize seeking medical health. For this reason, Food Banks Canada downgraded the Liberal government's grade of B in 2023 to a D minus in 2024.

● (1320)

Whether it is the stress of an uncertain economy, increased living expenses or inflation, Canadians are in urgent need of assistance. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister appears more disconnected from the realities that ordinary Canadians face.

The Auditor General has made it clear that both the former and current Liberal industry ministers are responsible for this debacle as they failed to properly oversee contracts awarded to Liberal insiders. This lack of oversight has severely undermined public trust, particularly at a time when transparency and accountability are more important than ever.

A scandal involving the misappropriation and transfer of \$400 million in public funds to political insiders has engulfed the Liberal government. The Liberals are focused on defending their own inter-

ests, while working Canadians bear the expense, rather than tackling these pressing challenges.

It is understandable that Canadians are beginning to recognize the NDP-Liberal administration for what it is: a government that rewards its allies while making life more difficult for families. Costs, taxes and corruption have all increased throughout the past nine years. In addition to mismanaging public funds and giving preference to their political supporters, the Liberals have burdened Canadians with policies like the carbon tax.

Canadians have to deal with the fact that they are paying more and receiving less. For example, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, the Canadian dream is lost. The dream of owning a home is slipping away from countless Canadians.

As I said earlier, I hear from my constituents every day about how they are grappling with the harsh reality of affording basic necessities. The Prime Minister promised to lower the price of housing, rents and mortgages, which have since then doubled. Middle-class Canadians are forced to live in tent encampments in nearly every city across Canada. Before the Liberal government in 2015, it took 25 years to pay off a mortgage. Now it takes 25 years just to save up for a down payment. Things have gotten so bad that some families have been forced into 90-year mortgages that they will never pay off.

A woman in my riding reached out to me in desperation this year. She had one very touching story. She is a mother who gets up, works, prepares dinner and then goes to bed, just to do the same thing all over again. She said there are a lot of bills, and she is having a hard time making ends meet. Despite her best efforts to shield her kids from the stress, she is forced to tell them that she cannot even keep the lights on because of the \$2,000 monthly rent. She lives within her means, works hard and pays her taxes, yet the government that promised to support her is making things more difficult for her. She is not alone in feeling this way, and she is drowning. Many people in my riding and across Canada are having the same difficulties, and they are worthy of better.

The NDP-Liberal government's preference for rewarding its political allies over tackling the problems that ordinary Canadians face is becoming more and more obvious. Costs have increased, taxes have increased and corruption has spread unchecked over the last nine years.

The Liberals have not only mismanaged public funds, but also increased the cost of life for Canadians by enacting measures like the carbon tax. Canadians are getting less in exchange or paying more for everything including groceries, gas and heating. This is the unpleasant truth that many families, both in Essex and nationwide, must deal with.

Privilege

A government that prioritizes the demands of its constituents before those of its wealthy friends is long overdue. The growing cost of living is a major issue for all Canadians, but things are just going to get worse. For already struggling families, the Prime Minister's proposal to double the carbon tax by 2030 will only make matters worse. Despite our repeated calls for a carbon tax election on this side of the House, we continue to be bogged down in document cover-ups rather than tackling the underlying problems. The idea that Canadians receive larger carbon refunds than they pay in taxes is one of the most common myths we encounter, and the carbon tax raises the cost of everything, particularly food.

● (1325)

In my riding of Essex, I have been deeply involved in the community for many years, even serving as a municipal councillor before coming here. Local government works because it operates with transparency by default. Every council meeting and committee session is open to the public, except in rare, exceptional cases. Everything else is accessible and transparent. Local governments would not survive long if they were as closed up as the Liberals have been with their green slush fund.

Trust in every political system, whether municipal, provincial or federal, is based on accountability and transparency. The people should not have to put up with being kept in the dark, particularly when taxpayer funds are being mismanaged. How harmful a lack of transparency can be is demonstrated by the Liberals' failure to be transparent about the \$400-million slush fund scandal, which funnelled money to political insiders. In local politics, we are aware that leaders are promptly held responsible when the public loses faith in them. At the federal level, the same ought to hold true.

As I mentioned in my speech just over a week ago, the heart of the issue is the Auditor General's finding that Liberal appointees allocated \$400 million in taxpayers' money to their own companies, resulting in 186 documented conflicts of interest. Transparency is desperately needed, and this is more than simply a scandal. It is a breach of the confidence that Canadians have in their government. This money could have gone back into the pockets of hard-working Canadians or toward beneficial programs that help our communities. This money could have been used to support neighbourhood projects, support the growth of small enterprises or lessen the financial strain on families dealing with growing expenses. It is a lost chance that may have had significant impact on the lives of regular people.

Again, we are talking about \$400 million in taxpayer funds that may have been wasted or stolen while everyday Canadians struggle to afford food, heating and housing. This situation is unbearable, especially when so many are suffering due to the government's lack of accountability.

When discussing the Liberal green slush fund, in which \$400 million from taxpayers has been spent, Conservatives focus on issues that actually affect Canadians. Rather than using taxpayers' dollars to enrich friends, my private member's bill, Bill C-241, focuses on hard-working Canadians, specifically tradespeople, and how they are struggling to make ends meet. The purpose of Bill C-241 is to amend Canada's Income Tax Act to permit eligible apprentices and tradespeople who travel to a job site 120 kilometres

from their primary residence to claim a tax deduction for their temporary relocation and travel expenses.

Despite being the backbone of our economy, these men and women are expected to work all over the region, giving up valuable family time to ensure that their kids have access to necessities like food and medicine. What do they receive in exchange? They receive a meagre \$4,000 tax deduction, which is insufficient to pay for living expenses and transportation when living far away from home. In comparison to the millions the government is wasting on questionable, unaccountable projects, it is an insult. This goes beyond oversight. It is about acknowledging the needs of Canadians who are putting in a lot of effort to grow our nation, while the Liberals are squandering funds on vanity projects that do not actually advance the common good.

Bill C-241 is more than simply a fair travelling tradesperson's bill. It is about justice for the workers who drive our economy, and I am honoured to support them, particularly in light of the green slush fund incident and other instances where our tax dollars are being misspent. My Conservative colleagues and I are aware of the true issues, and I am determined to see that they are addressed.

The NDP-Liberals must put an end to their cover-up and hand over the evidence to the police. Only then can Parliament get back to its critical work of serving the interests of Canadians. Their continued obstruction is unacceptable. The division between those in government and regular Canadians who must deal with the fallout from such carelessness is only widened by this incident.

● (1330)

If the Liberal government would only produce the records it has been required to release, Parliament could return to addressing the problems that are most important to Canadians, such as family and affordability. It is really that easy. The government could resume its task of addressing the growing cost of living that families in Essex and throughout the nation face if it put an end to this cover-up and turned over the proof to the authorities. Rather, the Liberals keep blocking progress, putting their personal interests ahead of the pressing needs of Canadians.

Helping Canadians make ends meet is what really matters. Therefore, it is time to end the secrecy. Why will NDP-Liberals not stop hiding behind the green slush fund and release the required documentation so Canadians can have the openness and accountability they deserve?

Privilege

We hear from dozens of people every day, regular Canadians, who are having a hard time making ends meet. Whether they are workers in Canada dealing with the rapidly rising cost of living or families in the Essex neighbourhood, they are battling insane food costs, expensive housing and a government that appears to be losing touch with reality.

The Liberals, however, are still committed to supporting their political friends and allocating public funds to special interests and insiders, while abandoning regular Canadians to fend for themselves. It is now painfully obvious the government would rather enrich its own elite and the wealthy than deal with the problems hard-working Canadians face.

The people of Essex and in communities across this country deserve better than a government that only looks out for itself. For over a month, the Liberals have offered shifting excuses for not complying with the House's clear demand for documents, despite knowing the House has full authority to require the release.

Only our sensible Conservative colleagues will put an end to the turmoil and corruption, figure out what happened to the \$400 million and provide some justice and clarity to the people of our nation. As we return to the privilege motion before us, it is not just about the production of documents. More importantly, it is about the message the government is sending to the entire country that corruption is acceptable and the mismanagement of public funds would be tolerated.

Lastly, I want to note this is not a partisan issue. Weeks ago, the Speaker ruled on a question of privilege raised by the House leader of the official opposition. His ruling confirmed what Conservatives have said all along, that the government violated the extensive powers of the House by failing to surrender crucial records related to SDTC.

In his ruling, the Speaker referenced page 985 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, affirming, "No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect". This clearly establishes that the House has the inherent authority to compel the production of the documents vital to our oversight functions. We must ensure the House retains the authority to demand accountability from the government.

Ultimately, the Speaker of the House, the highest authority in Parliament, ruled that the government, specifically the Prime Minister, was required to hand over the documents to Parliament. Even though the Speaker is a member of the Liberal Party, he upheld Parliament's authority. What action did the Prime Minister take? He acted as though he were above the law and Parliament. He disregarded the order and simply produced censored documents rather than following it.

As I close, I just want to echo the comments of so many of my colleagues today and thank every single veteran who has served and continues to serve. They have given me the opportunity to serve our great country of Canada. Without them, quite frankly, I would not be here and I would not have the opportunity to leave the world a better place than we found it.

• (1335)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to be clear, when the government first found out about what was taking place, immediate action was taken. Thousands of pages of documents have been provided. Yes, a number of them are in fact redacted. The Conservative Party is saying it does not want the government to listen to the RCMP or the Auditor General, who are saying it should not be providing the information directly to the RCMP. The Conservatives disagree with the RCMP, the Auditor General and others.

We are listening to the experts. The Conservatives are listening to their leader, and their leader is listening to his own personal self-interest. This has, unfortunately, caused the situation we are in today. There was an individual, and yes, she was an adviser to Stephen Harper, Brian Mulroney and Jim Flaherty. She donated thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party, and yes, she was the chair of this organization that Conservatives are referring to.

Having said that, why does the Conservative Party continue to not want to vote on its own motion, which would deal with the issue by sending it over to PROC?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, what is really mind-boggling to me is that this could have all been done right away. Give over the documents. The Prime Minister was told by the Speaker himself to hand them over unredacted. If the hon. member is that excited about the thousands of pages, some of which were redacted, what is being hidden?

Let us move on with this. Let us get the documents and look over the 400 million Canadian taxpayers' dollars, which could be feeding children, making houses more affordable and getting people out of lineups at the food banks. Let us just get them and move on with business.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been hearing a lot of outrage in my riding about the green slush fund. Normally, a lot of people do not pay attention to politics. These scandals come and go, and people do not always know about them. However, I am hearing outrage, and the government, as this has gone on longer and longer, is not doing anything to produce the papers.

What is the member hearing in his riding?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I am hearing the exact same thing, and not once or twice, but over and over again. This is the resounding message: "If we are allowed to have green slush funds, why is my family suffering and I have to work more overtime and my wife has to work more overtime?"

When is the next election? When are we going to have a carbon tax election so we can get this train back on the tracks and make life more affordable for Canadians?

Privilege

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise with a bit of confusion. Perhaps the member has a different collective agreement than the rest of us, but did he just state that he gets overtime? If so, how do the rest of us apply for it?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I did not suggest for a moment that I get overtime. If there is a private member's bill the member wants to bring forward, we can discuss it, but I never said that at all. I mentioned the folks in my riding of Essex who have to work overtime to make ends meet. Certainly, the great member for Hamilton Centre understands exactly what I was saying.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great 20-minute speech on this issue. We heard some questions earlier about how we got here. We got here because there is a lack of producing documents. That is why we have been here for almost a month now.

Why does the member think we are here? What are the Liberals so afraid of with respect to these documents and why are they not producing them? Maybe he can expand on that for me.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I do not know that I can answer the question of why we are here. Obviously, if there are redactions in the documents that have been sent forward, there is something to hide. If I go to the bank, ask for a mortgage and redact my pay stub when asked to show it, I am probably not going to get a mortgage.

Why are the documents redacted? What is the reason behind it? The most honest answer I can give my hon. colleague is there is something brewing. Where there is smoke, there is fire. This is not the first time we have seen this with the NDP-Liberal government. We know of the WE scandal and all the other scandals. There is definitely smoke and there is more than likely fire.

• (1340)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will take a stab at answering the question of why we are here. We are here because the Conservative leader wants to play a multi-million dollar game, believing he has a right to filibuster to the extent that all other things are pushed to the side. At the end of the day, I would suggest he believes it is okay to abuse the authority of the House of Commons. He believes that as a Parliament, we can ask for anything we want of society, whether we agree or disagree with the RCMP. In this case, the Conservative leader disagrees with the RCMP and wants to override it and claim otherwise.

Does the member believe, as his leader believes, that we can completely disregard the RCMP commissioner's opinion on the political game the Conservatives are playing? The RCMP has said it does not want to receive the documents the Conservatives are forcing through by a rule in the House of Commons.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, what I believe is if the documents were handed over we could get on to certainly taking care of Canadians, feeding the families of little ones, putting diapers on little ones, making small businesses just that much easier to run. What I also believe is the hon. member across the way could easily sit outside the Prime Minister's Office and ask the Prime Minister to move on with business, ask him to give over the unredacted documents so Canadians and businesses can get on with their lives.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's speech today. I wanted to talk about the ineligible companies that received monies from SDTC despite the Auditor General saying they were not even eligible to receive the monies in the first place. In my riding, there were constituents who either were paid too much CERB or were found to be ineligible, after the fact, for CERB. They had to pay it back to the CRA.

Does this member believe those companies should have to pay back the money they were ineligible to receive because the government trusted a group of people who were only thinking of themselves and their companies first?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, one hundred per cent. We do not have to look too much further to realize that a lot of folks have been fired or reprimanded for receiving ineligible funds during COVID. Especially if it came from the government, surely somebody should know better. When we have so many folks and so many companies, especially small businesses, those storefronts and our small towns struggling, why are they getting a benefit? Why are some people getting a slush fund when other folks are suffering just to make ends meet?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, Parliament is still at a standstill after six weeks because the Liberals refused to turn over documents related to their Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, SDTC, or better known by Canadians now, more accurately, as the Liberal green slush fund. Common-sense Conservatives want transparency and accountability for Canadians about the Liberals' repeated pattern of entitled and immoral abuse of Canadian tax dollars.

None of the money belongs to government; it belongs to the people. Canadians are right to ask what the government is covering up as the Liberals continue to ignore an order from most MPs to provide unredacted documents related to their \$400-million green slush fund scandal.

In June, my common-sense Conservative colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets uncovered it when he requested a breakdown of the approved funding by the Liberals' tax dollar slush fund. The information is crucial, too, for the RCMP to properly investigate alleged corruption among Liberal insiders at the slush fund, since the RCMP has said an investigation is ongoing.

Even the Prime Minister's Speaker has said, "The House has the undoubted right to order the production of any and all documents from any entity or individual it deems necessary to carry out its duties."

Privilege

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure you would be concerned. The member indicated it is the Prime Minister's Speaker. The Speaker serves all members; that should be pointed out.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate that, and it is something that has been brought up on a number of occasions. I want to remind members that the Speaker is elected by the House and rules the House impartially.

The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, that very Speaker has, of course, said that the House has the undoubted right to order the production of all of the documents, so the Liberals should give them to us.

Common-sense Conservatives are here to hold the government accountable for its failures, corruption and wrongdoing. MPs request the documents for scrutiny, not only by the RCMP but also by members of Parliament, as is our duty to Canadians who sent us here to represent them. In response, government departments either outright refused to comply or heavily covered up the documents they did provide, using the Privacy Act or the Access to Information Act to justify the hidden sections.

The truth is that nothing within the House order justified such redactions. The House of Commons possesses absolute and unrestricted power on behalf of all Canadians, grounded in the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Parliament of Canada Act, to order document production, unbound by statutory limits.

After the government blocked out and withheld the requested documents, our common-sense Conservative House leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, brought forward the motion because MPs' rights to get information for Canadians had been violated by the government's refusal to comply. Personally, I hate the use of the customary word “privilege” for such debates because, for me, what it is actually about is my duty as an elected representative and the rights of my constituents to know.

While it is sad to say, the scandals and cover-ups of the current government are no longer surprising. After nine years, the Liberals have shown shocking disregard for transparency and for adherence to the rule of law. It has never been more clear that the government, backed by its accomplices in the NDP, is not worth the cost or the government's corruption.

Of the billion dollars involved in scandals, nearly half is now in question for being distributed inappropriately. That is no small amount, especially when Canadians are struggling with historically high living costs and financial burdens because of the federal government's inflationary tax-and-spend agenda. The \$400 million in tax dollars could have been used to aid vulnerable people, stop crime, build homes or fix the budget, or it could have been kept in the pockets of Canadians in the first place. Instead, the NDP-Liberal coalition is digging in to carry on its cover-up while blaming everyone else, as usual.

Five months ago, the independent Auditor General revealed that nearly half a billion of those tax dollars were funnelled by officials to their own companies through improperly awarded contracts. The

AG found there were 186 conflicts of interest in the corrupt in-and-out scam among politically appointed senior government officials and superwealthy elites.

It is particularly appalling that during the six weeks of the NDP-Liberals' cover-up, Food Banks Canada's new report indicated that food bank use is record-high, worse than last year, which had already set a horrifying record. Two million Canadians are forced to go to food banks in just one month. The most heartbreaking part is that a third of the visits are by people desperate to feed children. This is all caused by the NDP-Liberals' inflationary taxes, spending and red tape.

St. Paul's food bank in Lakeland has served over 5,000 adults and nearly 4,000 children so far in 2024, in a town with fewer than 6,000 people. The Vermilion Food Bank struggles with a 7% increase in the number of adults and a 46% increase in the number of children it is supporting this year compared to last year. Food bank users report in conversations that the cost of food, housing, utilities, power, and fuel affects and hurts them the most. After nine years, the NDP-Liberals have made everything too expensive for everyone, while they are making out just fine for themselves.

Ten years ago, a headline from The New York Times read, “Life in Canada, Home of the World's Most Affluent Middle Class”. That was in 2014, under the former Conservative government, when Canada had the richest middle class in the world and the median income was higher than in the United States. Today, Canadian workers earn \$34,000 less than their American counterparts after the Liberal tax hikes and economic vandalism.

What happened in 2015? The Liberals came to power. Today, they have hurt Canadians everywhere. Life has never been so difficult for everyday Canadians, but it has never been so good for rich, elite NDP-Liberal buddies and cronies.

It was only after the Prime Minister's hand-picked Liberal board members were installed that the slush fund began approving excessive amounts in tax dollars for itself while hiding the corrupt redirection to companies owned by board members. In fact, SDTC was deemed in good standing before the board members were appointed by the Liberals. Even though the Prime Minister was warned of the risks associated with appointing a conflicted chair, she was still appointed to chair the board, which did not even have the minimum number of members required by law.

It is really obvious that the government has lost its moral compass, that it knew there were conflicts of interest and that it was warned. It just did not care.

Privilege

● (1350)

All of this could be resolved right now if any Liberal would stand up and announce that all documents Parliament has requested will be produced, but they will not. Instead, they distract, evade, divide and gaslight. The blindingly obvious question is why. Canadians can be forgiven for suspecting that they are full of details the Liberals want to hide. Canadians are rightfully concerned about all of this Liberal corruption.

Kyle from Lakeland said, "I'm absolutely horrified that people still put trust in this Liberal government. It's very hard for people to buy gas and groceries nowadays and I'm just absolutely upset." Nick from Lakeland said, "Not only are Canadians fed up with [the Prime Minister] and his party's actions, they are losing faith in the very institutions of freedom and democracy, which are being made a mockery of by this government."

It was the current Prime Minister who victoriously said in 2015, "Sunny ways, my friends, sunny ways.... You want a Prime Minister who knows that if Canadians are to trust their government, their government needs to trust Canadians, a PM who understands that openness and transparency means better, smarter decisions." After nine years, they are worse and dumber decisions, are they not? After nine years, a flailing PM and the Liberals are the opposite of everything they claimed.

This ongoing cover-up speaks to the very core of Canadian democracy and the accountability we owe to the people that each of us represent here. It is not just about some bureaucratic documents, it is not about some parliamentary procedure, it is about upholding the principles of good governance that are crucial to maintain already almost non-existent public trust in government and elected representatives.

The ongoing redactions and refusals to release key documents reveal much about the real character of the government and its allies. These are not the actions of people with nothing to hide. One of the worst offenders is, of course, the radical, previously arrested environment minister. He continues, even today, to profit off the corruption in his government's green slush fund. Cycle Capital received hundreds of millions of dollars from the slush fund, but the environment minister lobbied the Liberals on behalf of his company, Cycle Capital, nearly 25 times before he was elected in 2019. One of the Cycle Capital board members now admits to committee that several of her companies received millions of dollars from the slush fund while she sat on the board of the slush fund. Still today, the environment minister holds interests in Cycle Capital while it receives tax money. Talk about a conflict of interest.

No wonder the NDP-Liberals are working so hard to cover up this massive scandal. Of course, it is far from the first time the Liberals have breached Parliament's and government's rules. Take the Winnipeg lab scandal, where scientists gave a hostile regime classified information from Canada's top virus lab for foreign intervention. What was the Prime Minister's response to the House's demand for transparency? He chose to sue the Speaker to prevent disclosure and then called an election to try to get away with it all, even though the Speaker had formally reprimanded the Public Health Agency of Canada in an unprecedented act for a Speaker in nearly a century.

Then there's the net-zero accelerator, another costly Liberal sham that fails to deliver, just like almost every single thing they say on the environment. Similar to the Liberals' housing accelerator that does not actually build houses, the net-zero accelerator is not about proven emissions reduction. According to the environment commissioner, \$8 billion was handed out to ineligible companies that lacked any real emissions reduction plans or outcomes. Only six months ago, his report highlighted that this money was "not part of any coherent...policy on decarbonization". He reported that the vast majority of funded projects had no formal commitment to cut emissions by any specified amount.

Now, to no one's surprise, the Prime Minister's favourite new economic adviser, carbon tax Mark Carney, was also flagged in a potential conflict of interest with the government and his company Brookfield Asset Management, which could involve billions of Canadians' money. The Globe and Mail reports the government is in talks to give Brookfield \$10 billion of Canadian tax money, where carbon tax Carney is the chair and holds \$1 million in stock options. This screams conflict of interest, but once again the Prime Minister turns a blind eye because this kind of behaviour always starts at the top.

It is outrageous that the Prime Minister gave carbon tax Carney the position to advise on economic and fiscal policy when it does relate to the very company he chairs, but he has been shielded by it so that he will not have to declare his conflict of interest being a political adviser. It is clear that the Liberals know he is in a conflict of interest, but still appointed him and deliberately hide the facts from Canadians. That begs the question of how much he will personally profit from in his conflict of interest with Brookfield and the government. While that is obvious to all Canadians, the NDP and Liberals worked hard to protect him from answering questions at committee.

• (1355)

Despite what the Liberals claim, pushing for transparency is not a threat to privacy or due process. It is a call for accountability. Including the Privacy Commissioner and other officials in the investigation is a necessary step toward a fair and comprehensive review. Of course, this is all a recurring pattern. Time and again, information is kept from Canadians and the official opposition as the government prevents Conservatives from getting that information for Canadians about government fiscal mismanagement and scandals. Canadians deserve to know exactly what governments are doing with their money and exactly what the hell is going on here.

Unlike many officials, the Privacy Commissioner did provide unredacted documents and walked the talk on transparency that aligns with principles of public trust and accountability. This is notable as the Privacy Commissioner is perhaps the most qualified authority on the delicate balance between privacy and transparency. He knows the complexities and potential risks, but ultimately found it reasonable and responsible to release them in full. He signals a commitment to transparency and trustworthiness that is in stark contrast to the persistent opposition from the Liberal government.

The NDP-Liberals claim the release could infringe on privacy rights or cause other issues, while they themselves perpetuate harm to the public's trust. If the Privacy Commissioner, who is a literal expert in privacy rights, believes unredacted disclosures are appropriate, then it is fair and necessary to question the sincerity of the government's resistance.

There are whistle-blowers who have come forward to call out that blatant corruption. One said:

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

Another said:

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

That is from a whistle-blower who was there.

If that was not damning enough, the whistle-blower said:

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

The Auditor General found evidence that the Liberal slush fund handed out \$58 million to projects without a promise that the terms for the money were actually met. Another \$58 million went to 10 projects deemed ineligible as environmental benefits or green technology development could not even be proven. This should shock all Canadians, but that is a well-known pattern after nine years. Corruption runs deep.

Despite all the Liberals' claims, they repeatedly opt for secrecy over openness and avoidance over accountability. Their actual track record is a series of increasing scandals and corruption, where in-

Privilege

formation is obscured, withheld or trickles out only after pressure from the opposition, the public or the media. In the last three years alone, it has reached a staggering level, no matter how much they scramble to cover it up. It is more clear than ever that the NDP-Liberals focus on protecting their own power and their own agendas instead of on serving Canadians.

The Liberals wail and flail to deflect and insist the RCMP should not get these unredacted documents and are willing to stop all of Parliament to distract from the fact that they do not want Canadians to see the information we deserve. The RCMP has already received redacted versions, so why not allow them access to the full unaltered documents?

Canadians should ask themselves why a government would so strongly resist if it has nothing to hide. If the truth is straightforward, then the solution is equally so. Release the unredacted documents. Every argument from the NDP-Liberals is smoke and mirrors, deflection, distraction, division and an attempt to defend indefensible actions, all a calculated strategy to justify actions that threaten the very foundations of our parliamentary democracy.

Common-sense Conservatives say that is why, among so many other reasons, Canadians deserve a carbon tax election so they can decide. The Liberals should call one if they have nothing to hide. This is not just a disagreement over documents, but an assault on Parliament's authority and an affront to the principles of transparency and accountability that our democracy is built on. All the men, women and their loved ones we are remembering during Remembrance Week fought and died for those values, those principles: the rule of law, democracy and accountability. That is what is at stake here. That is what this is all about.

• (1400)

It has never been more clear that after nine years, the Liberals' corruption, chaos and crime are just not worth the cost. They are happening because the Prime Minister has engaged in what can only be described as economic vandalism, with punishing taxes and reckless spending driving Canada's decline. That trust fund multi-millionaire uses taxes like his own personal piggy bank for himself and his rich cronies, but after nine years, the Liberals have caused the steepest decline in living standards seen in the past four decades.

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Canadians are facing an unprecedented housing crisis, the sharpest drop in income per person and the lowest economic growth against OECD countries, and, make no mistake, the NDP-Liberals will continue to just make it worse.

What Canadians are experiencing is not a coincidence; it is a direct result of all the NDP-Liberal policies that have enabled corruption, mismanagement and a lack of transparency.

It is MPs' fundamental job to represent the Canadian people. We are elected to this place not for our own political or personal gain or advancement or titles but to represent the concerns and the needs of the people who send us here and who make this country so great. Therefore, as we honour those brave Canadians who fought and sacrificed so much for our freedoms, and all their loved ones who sacrificed right along with them, we must recommit ourselves to upholding the principles that they defended.

Those courageous individuals did not just fight for our borders. They fought to safeguard the values that define Canada: freedom, democracy, the rule of law and justice. Today and every day, it is our duty to protect those values by demanding transparency and accountability from government.

It is not just about good governance either. It is about ensuring that the freedoms that serving military members and veterans secure at great cost are not taken for granted and are not eroded. We owe it to those who served, and to the generations who will follow, to ensure that Canada remains a nation, or can become again a nation, where truth, integrity and justice prevail.

Let us never forget that the peace and comfort we enjoy are hard won. It is our sacred obligation to remember, and it is our responsibility to uphold the principles for which so many Canadians gave and give their lives. By doing so, we honour their memory, not just in words, but in actions.

The Liberals need to stop the cover-up. They need to hand over the evidence. They need to let Parliament get back to working on behalf of all Canadians. If they have nothing to hide, they should call a carbon tax election to let Canadians decide to end wasteful spending, restore accountability and bring home transparency to Ottawa, because all Canadians by now know that only common-sense Conservatives will work to turn hurt into hope, to axe the tax, to build the homes, to fix the budget and to stop the crime.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the experiences Canadians are having. Let me talk about that. Due to global inflation, Canadians have faced a lot of cost of living increases and affordability issues. While the Conservatives wanted us to have austerity measures, we continue to invest in Canadians, and our actions, our programs and our policies have helped Canadians. Inflation has come down to a historic low of 1.6%. The Canadian consumer price index has risen to a 30-month high. Interest rates have been cut four times. The stock exchange, where a lot of Canadians invest, which lost in 2022, year to date has made 18%.

Canadians did face a lot of issues due to global inflation, and our actions have brought back economic prosperity. Going forward, we are going to look much better, so that the IMF has projected that

Canada will be the best-performing economy among all G7 countries. I would like to have the member's opinion on that.

• (1405)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, the member of Parliament seems like a very kind gentleman, and I appreciate his demeanour in the House of Commons, which is certainly one that I cannot claim to have, and the way in which he made his comments. However, I would just say that it is exactly that kind of answer that Canadians watch and that makes them think elected people, particularly government members, literally have no idea what is going on in their real lives. He can rattle off a bunch of cherry-picked stats in the context that he wants to have them, but every single day, Canadians are losing hope for their futures.

Every single day, young people know they are staring down a future that, for the first time in Canadian history, looks worse than it did for the generations before theirs. Every single day, people are making choices between essentials that they need and that are not luxuries in our big, cold country. They are deciding between food and how to heat their homes, whether they can drive, whether they can take their kids to any kind of recreational activity and whether they have a little extra to support their senior relatives. People cannot find jobs. They cannot find homes. This is what is actually going on in the everyday lives of Canadians, and I just think it is answers like that member's that show exactly why, in the next election, if given the chance, Canadians are going to say that time is up.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are talking about \$400 million in the green slush fund. Liberal insiders got rich by voting to give themselves money at a time when the government is, once again, waging war on the western economy.

I know the member has some very strong feelings about the energy industry. We even heard about some of the things today in question period, just nonsense from the other side about the effects of their policies on the economy in her riding and in my province.

While they are forcing us to debate their own conflict of interest and refusal to table documents ordered by the House, would she care to comment on that?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is an incredible advocate for fiscal sanity, common sense and actions actually matching words. He is an advocate for the energy sector and the oil and gas workers, not just in Alberta but in every single part of this country. They help fuel and power our country, and we need them more than ever.

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The member is exactly right. Nine years of coercive chaos and corruption, increasing crime and scandals have Canadians wondering exactly what the heck is going on here. It is also nine years of layers of patterns of anti-energy policies, taxes and laws that have driven billions of dollars into the United States, including jobs, money and technology.

The Liberals' latest wacko plan to be the first among all oil and gas-producing jurisdictions in the world to cap oil and gas in our country helps the United States. It will send even more jobs, money, investment, technology and talent there. The truth is it helps despotic regimes, regimes that are hostile to Canada and to Canadians.

The worst part is, exactly as he said, that all of these things together have gotten Canadians to the point where they cannot find jobs, do not have hope for their future and cannot pay their bills. It is all exactly because of these policies.

Whether these guys like it or not, despite how much they have tried, the oil and gas sector remains the leading private sector investor in the Canadian economy right now. It remains Canada's biggest export. It remains the driver of jobs of all the other sectors right across this whole country, and it remains the main employer of indigenous and visible minority Canadians, who ought to be able to rely on the sustainability of their powerful paycheques long into the future.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, when I grow up, I want to speak just like my hon. colleague from Lakeland. She speaks beautifully.

The member mentioned crime, and I know she listened to the heartfelt story of my constituent, Stephanie, whose colleague's little boy watched as his father was shot. He felt guilty because he could not protect his father. The crime in this country has gotten out of control.

Could the member speak to what Conservatives would do when we take government to ensure that all criminals are kept behind bars?

• (1410)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I thank my powerful, compassionate, joyful, loving colleague from King—Vaughan.

I was moved and appalled by the experience that she talked about last night. The worst part is that it is becoming common; violent crimes, crimes by gangsters, drive-by shootings, kidnappings, violent thefts and robberies have all skyrocketed, by more than 100%, since the Liberals took office.

That is why Conservatives believe in jail, not bail, and cracking down on gangsters, as well as illegal drug and criminal trafficking. That is why we believe in putting the rights of victims and innocent Canadians first. We believe that a government's highest priority must be protecting public safety, as well as ensuring that vulnerable and innocent Canadians can live in peace, safety and security in neighbourhoods right across Canada. This is instead of the appalling violence in our biggest cities and the crime in rural areas that grows more brazen. All of that is a consequence of the Liberals' woke, hug-a-thug, soft-on-crime agenda.

If Canadians make a different choice in the next election, we will stop the crime.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the thoughtful speech by my colleague from Lakeland. I would be interested in her insights and perspective on the message the government is sending to Canadians. It is punishing them with its carbon tax on everything, while the Prime Minister jet-sets across the country for vacations and photo ops, and does nothing to help Canadians who are struggling just to feed themselves and their families and to put enough gas in the car to get to work. All the while, the Liberals are lining the pockets of insiders, as we have seen in this \$400-million scandal where they are refusing to turn over documents to the RCMP. It is absolutely egregious. It shows that the current government, after nine years, is not worth the cost and the corruption.

It is getting cold outside. Canadians are worried about how they will be able to heat their homes. What is the message it sends when the Prime Minister and carbon tax Carney are jet-setting around the world while Canadians are forced to pay a punishing carbon tax that does nothing to reduce emissions?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, is that eloquent, articulate, powerful colleague not exactly right on? That is what is so disgusting: these high-flying, high-carbon hypocrites bringing in tax after tax and ban after ban and punishment after punishment to make it so Canadians cannot afford to heat, house, fuel, power or drive themselves, especially, as the member just said, as our big northern country heads right into winter.

The worst part is that the Prime Minister and the sellout leader of the NDP are really rich. These guys are the super elite. They have been that their whole lives and still are now, yet their policy agenda has hollowed out the middle class and hurts vulnerable and low-income Canadians the most. All those reasons are also exactly why Canadians need a carbon tax election so common-sense Conservatives could come in and fix the budget and help turn hurt into hope for all the people in all the communities that nine years of the NDP-Liberals have damaged.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think at this time the interpreters may get a bit of a break in the speed of the discussion, which might be nice going into the weekend.

Privilege

I want to quickly say, as I am the last speaker today, that with Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day, it is important for all of us to pay tribute and make sure we attend services. To everyone watching, I am very fortunate to have Base Borden in Simcoe-Gray. Not only do I represent all the people there, but I represent the largest training base. The military is an important part of our community, and not just for what its members do in the military, but for what they do for all of us citizens and civilians, whether it is by volunteering for hockey teams, baseball teams or whatever else. Hopefully, everyone has an opportunity to go to one of those services.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to the amended motion concerning the Liberal green slush fund. Known to some as Sustainable Development Technology Canada, this fund has become arguably the biggest transfer of contracts and tax dollars to Liberal friends since the sponsorship scandal, which toppled the Paul Martin government. However, there is one fundamental difference between then and now: It was not as hard to make ends meet back in 2004.

While Liberals rewarding their friends is nothing new, back in 2004 people just saw it as business as usual. In 2004, yearly inflation was 1.27%. Most people had jobs, and this allowed them to pay their bills and save for a vacation and for their future and children's future. The Liberals' waste was frustrating, definitely, but that is just how Liberals do business. People were not struggling as they watched Liberals line their friends' pockets with tax dollars back then.

Let us fast-forward to 2024 to see how things have changed. We have tent cities in the major centres, and now they are even in small towns in my riding. Crime rates have soared. Daily essentials are no longer affordable since double-digit inflation has driven up the price of almost everything. It is difficult to save for family vacations. Liberals here in the House even mock Canadians' desire for a great summer road trip. It is near impossible to save for retirement or to put money away for our children's future.

A good government would do whatever it could to lower the cost of living for its citizens, but we do not have a good government here in Canada. The Liberal-NDP government instead raises taxes and takes more money from all of us, making it harder and harder for a regular middle-class family to get ahead. It takes all that money and hands some of it back to certain targeted groups, and then screams that Conservatives are going to all of a sudden take it all away. This is how Liberals operate: take from everyone and then throw some pennies out to Canadians and have them fight it out among themselves. "Tax, divide and conquer" is the ethos of today's Liberal Party.

However, Canadians, now more than ever, see through this strategy. Canadians who have done everything they were told to do are finally fed up. Getting an education, working hard, being honest, obeying the law, paying taxes and then being rewarded seems like a quaint idea. Instead, Canadians watch more and more of their paycheques get taken by a federal Liberal-NDP government that continues to get bigger while it spends their hard-earned money on pet projects and sweetheart deals for its friends.

In 2004, Liberal corruption and mismanagement annoyed Canadians. In 2024, it has made them angry. The most surprising thing about this is that Liberal-NDP government members seem to be in shock as to why Canadians are so angry.

When I last spoke to the green slush fund a couple weeks ago, I outlined that this was just another in a long line of Liberal scandals. There was WE Charity and the billion dollars it was given after hiring the Prime Minister's brother and mother. There was SNC-Lavalin, which had the Prime Minister personally intervening to help it get out of fraud charges for the low cost of \$100,000 in donations to the Liberal Party. There was also the Aga Khan scandal, which saw the Prime Minister, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl and their families get a \$271,000 vacation in exchange for \$50 million in tax dollars.

● (1415)

We cannot forget the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation taking money from a Beijing-connected billionaire in exchange for future considerations from the Communist government. I barely even got to touch on the \$237 million that former Liberal MP Frank Baylis got for ventilators, which may not have even been delivered, or GC Strategies, which got \$20 million to build the arrive scam, which was supposed to only cost \$80,000.

Most Canadians are not better off after nine years of Liberal corruption and mismanagement but their insiders and friends are way better off, friends like the environment minister's former boss, the founder and owner of Cycle Capital, Andrée-Lise Méthot. While Ms. Méthot sat on the board of the green slush fund, she helped herself to \$114 million in tax dollars, which she funnelled to companies she had invested in. Her then-senior adviser, the current Minister of the Environment, had 25 meetings with the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of Industry to help seal the deal. Ms. Méthot says her company tripled in value during this time. We know that the environment minister remains a shareholder in this company to this day. He will not say how much he owns but he certainly has personally benefited from this overt corruption.

It may be hard to believe for many of us but the environment minister was actually a very wanted commodity by the federal Liberals in 2019. How better to demonstrate our adherence to the climate change agenda than by recruiting one of the most radical environmentalists out there? Despite some association with Quebec separatists and his public support for socialism, the Liberal Party was desperate to improve its image among eco-activists, so landing the present environment minister was a challenge the Prime Minister relished, but what did it cost?

How many of the 25 meetings were also about recruiting the environment minister to run for the Liberal Party? What was the price to get a rumoured separatist and committed socialist to become part of the pipeline-owning Liberal government?

Canadians are frustrated. They are frustrated because, in Canada, for the longest time, we were told that if we work hard, we will get ahead, and that if we work hard and pay our taxes, we will be taken care of when we retire, but those promises have been broken. After nine years of the Liberal government, the Canada so many of us grew up in is gone. People are working harder than ever before. The price of housing and the commute to get to work have grown while the wages of the working people have stagnated in Canada. What is worse, the Liberal government has overseen the biggest increase in the cost of living since another Trudeau was prime minister.

Under the Liberals, we pay more for groceries. We pay more for gas, for our home, for our family, and we drive longer to get to our job but since our wage has likely not increased much and the cost of everything has skyrocketed, our quality of life and the time we enjoy with our family have declined. This is a reality for many Canadians as they watch Liberals, their friends and insiders get multi-million dollar contracts and sweetheart perks they can only imagine.

Every day I get people in my riding either phoning or emailing the office saying how frustrated they are or how hard it is to get by. I say “to get by” because that is all. They have given up on getting ahead under the government; they just want to get by.

I think of people like Carolyn, a senior in my riding. Carolyn turned 65 in March. She had been collecting CPP and expected to automatically receive OAS after her 65th birthday as her husband had. When May came and she had not received anything, she contacted Service Canada. She was told it does not necessarily start automatically for some people and that she needed to apply. Carolyn completed her application and submitted it. She was told that it would take over 100 days to process, so she waited.

● (1420)

Over 100 days, in fact, she waited and nothing: crickets. She contacted Service Canada again and again, only to be told that she had missed completing one small section in her application. No one ever thought to tell her. Despite 100,000 new bureaucrats being hired since the Liberals took office, over 100 days went by and not one person at the Government of Canada thought it might be a good idea to reach out and let her know. She was told to start over, apply again and wait 100 more days. There was no “let’s fill that section out together” or “let me fill it in for you” or “apply again, but we’ll process it immediately because it’s already been 100 days.”

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She applied again from scratch, but she also contacted my office shortly thereafter to let us know how ridiculous this whole process was. We pushed on her behalf. Now she will be getting her arrears in five days, and regular payments will start at the end of this month.

We have lots of stories like this about the frustration of dealing with the biggest, most expensive government in Canadian history. Carolyn faced an unresponsive bureaucracy for months to get the few hundred bucks she was entitled to as a senior, while Liberal friends and insiders continued to get millions of dollars in contracts and zero accountability. That is really why people are so frustrated.

What about people like Travis in my riding? Travis works hard. He pays his taxes. Travis is proud of his family. Travis has lived in Angus since 1996 and in the same home since 2007. Recently, though, there has been a lot of growth in this area, with many new developments taking place as people have left Toronto for slightly more affordable properties, and obviously better federal representation, and moved to Simcoe—Grey.

There has been so much growth that Canada Post had to change postal codes. Inexplicably, it was the existing residents who were given new postal codes, instead of the people moving into the new developments. What is worse is that, when these residents began updating their new postal codes with their insurance companies, their rates jumped. In Travis’s case, his home insurance went up 50% and his car went up 50% as well. That seemed bizarre, so my office investigated it further. It turns out the new postal codes put long-time rural residents like Travis into what is now considered an urban postal code.

Because crime is now out of control in our cities, thanks to the Liberals’ soft-on-crime policies, insurance rates have skyrocketed. If we are lucky enough to have what is considered an urban postal code, our rates will have jumped as well, even if we are in the same house for many years. Since Canada Post is about as accountable as the Liberal government, Travis was stuck trying to appeal this rip-off to the ombudsman, but even they could not help.

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There are hundreds of people in my riding who have faced that this year. I have been bombarded with calls because their insurance went up, but they have not moved. It is ridiculous right now because people are having a tough time getting by. It has been extremely frustrating and expensive, and it has been a hassle for all these hard-working people just trying to get ahead. All the while, Liberal insiders are getting millions of dollars, no questions asked.

Liberal members pretend to be outraged as to why we are still talking about this matter. How dare opposition members take them to task over corruption and complete mismanagement? It is because of people like Travis and Carolyn, who play by the rules but have a harder and harder time getting ahead.

How about Colleen, another constituent of mine in Simcoe—Grey? She contacted my office back in March when the CRA sent her notice that she had an \$8,000 debt dating back to 2017 for benefits she was not entitled to. CRA took issue with the fact that Colleen had said she was separated but was still living in the same house with her former partner. Life is really expensive for Canadians post-COVID, but even in 2017, it was difficult for those going through a divorce or a separation to get a new home.

• (1425)

Colleen took the advice of her lawyer and, for financial reasons, remained in the lower level of the house until it could be sold. The

sale took a year. Colleen is not the only person who has faced this sort of situation. I am sure some of the members in the House are aware of similar cases.

Colleen and her husband's separation was documented as of May 1, 2017. They began separate lives. They even had separate schedules to use the one kitchen in the home. Oddly, while the CRA came after her demanding \$8,000 in payments, it accepted the date of separation for her now ex-husband, who was living at the same address.

• (1430)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume consideration of the privilege motion at 11 a.m. on Monday, November 18.

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

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, November 18, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 28(2) and 24(1).

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

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