



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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# House of Commons Debates

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Tuesday, November 26, 2024

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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1000)

[*Translation*]

## INTERPRETATION ACT

(Bill S-13. On the Order: Government Orders:)

November 25, 2024—The Minister of Justice—Consideration at report stage of Bill S-13, An Act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, as deemed reported by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights without amendment.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, November 19, Bill S-13, an act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other acts, is deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in without amendment at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

(Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “The Role of McKinsey & Company in the Creation and the Beginnings of the Canada Infrastructure Bank”.

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

[*English*]

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my privilege and honour to present a supplementary report on behalf of the Conservative Party. We continue to call for the abolishment of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and we call for greater transparency in order to prevent future conflicts of interest, such as those that Dominic Barton had.

We need a government that works for Canada, not a government that continues to take from our people.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-420, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal organizations and proceeds of crime).

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill today that aims to create a registry of criminal organizations. This idea has been raised in the House a number of times in recent years. This is the third time I personally have proposed it. The bill also includes provisions for freezing and confiscating property obtained by criminal organizations in the course of their criminal activities. I am pleased to table this bill and hope it receives the approval of all my colleagues in the House.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

• (1005)

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I move that the third report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, presented on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, be concurred in.

I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Today, we are talking about the third report, and the motion reads as follows:

That the committee report to the house its deep condemnation of the CBC using a Paris-based audio studio to record a podcast, choosing it over a Quebecois-based recording studio to avoid the Quebec accent.

*Routine Proceedings*

I am proud to rise in the House this morning to represent the people of the wonderful riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, but I am also proud to live in a bilingual country where people speak French and English. I am taking the time to focus on French and English because it is important to remember that the Prime Minister of this Liberal government appointed a Governor General who is bilingual but does not speak one of the two official languages, French. Worse still, he appointed a unilingual anglophone lieutenant governor for Canada's only bilingual province, New Brunswick.

The list of examples demonstrating this Liberal government's lack of intention or willingness to protect French is too long for me to read right now. I would not want to run out of time for my speech.

Bilingualism is central to our Canadian identity. I stand here today in our nation's most important democratic chamber, where French and English have been granted equal privileges since its creation in 1867. Canada's francophonie outside Quebec is vibrant and resilient, reflecting the perseverance of a language and a culture that have endured for generations despite facing challenges. At the same time, Quebec's francophonie, with its rich culture and its role as the stronghold of French in North America, bears witness to a strong, proud collective identity. Together, these two distinct, but complementary, facets of the francophonie enrich Canada's identity and remind us about the importance of preserving this unique linguistic duality, which is a source of national pride.

Why am I talking about Canadian identity? The answer is quite simple. The Broadcasting Act states that the programming provided by the CBC should:

- (i) be predominantly and distinctively Canadian,
- ...(iv) be in English and in French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community, including the specific needs and interests of official language minority communities,
- (v) strive to be of equivalent quality in English and in French,
- (vi) contribute to shared national consciousness and identity,
- ...(viii) reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada;

Understandably, I nearly fell off my chair when I saw a headline in the *Journal de Montréal* on October 11, 2023, that read: "CBC Podcasts translated podcast into French in Paris to avoid the Quebec accent". What a disgrace. I thought I must have read it wrong. As I read the article, I learned that CBC Podcasts chose to contract a studio in Paris instead of local talent to adapt the hit Canadian podcast *Alone: A Love Story* into French—I said the title in English because I am a staunch defender of English-French bilingualism in Canada—because the Quebec accent would have less international potential. Is that part of CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate?

When confronted in committee, Ms. Tait, the CEO of CBC/Radio Canada, told us that it was just a mistake and that it would never happen again. Can such contempt for Quebecers and Canada's francophones be so easily excused? She said this as the person who was CEO during the period when the CBC's audience numbers plummeted by nearly 50%, forcing her to cut 800 jobs last December.

● (1010)

Yesterday, Ms. Tait told the Canadian heritage committee that she was entitled to a performance bonus. Wow. After failing to pro-

duce content that Canadians actually want to consume, and after missing 79% of the key performance targets that they made for themselves, it is clear that the last thing CBC executives deserve is more bonuses. To all the Radio-Canada fans out there, I want to be crystal clear that we in the Conservative Party of Canada will defund the CBC, which is an antiquated broadcaster that has fallen out of touch with the interests of Canadian anglophones, but we will maintain funding for Radio-Canada and its French-language programming. It is important that we make this clear.

The role of a public broadcaster is to offer content that the private market cannot deliver, and the CBC's English-language services are no longer getting the job done. By contrast, Radio-Canada remains an essential broadcaster for Quebecers and francophone minority communities. For them, there simply are no other comparable sources of news. By refocusing Radio-Canada's resources, we could enhance the services offered to francophone communities from the standpoint of programming quality or access to local and national news that actually reflects their reality. The Conservative Party's goals when it comes to official languages have always been clear. We must halt the decline of French and protect and defend both official languages, both in Quebec and across Canada.

Yesterday in committee, my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot moved a motion to halt the payment of bonuses to CBC executives. When I found out how it went, I fell off my chair again, and now my hip is a little sore. Do my colleagues know which members voted with their Liberal friends against the cancellation of these bonuses? It was the members of the Bloc Québécois. How disappointing. How can they justify paying a bonus to a CEO who holds Quebecers and francophones in contempt? What is the point of the Bloc Québécois? Whom is it good for? The Bloc poses as the defender of Quebecers and Canada's francophones, but it is in cahoots with the Liberals. What happened yesterday in committee was just the latest demonstration. I would add that the Bloc has introduced a bill that would add an extra layer of bureaucracy and worsen the daily struggles of official language minority communities.

I have the privilege of working with official language minority communities and organizations that fight for their rights on a daily basis, and I can assure the House that they are showing perseverance and determination in their fight to keep French alive in minority communities across Canada. Here is an example. Outside Quebec, the place where the use of French as a second language is increasing the most is Yukon. I commend Yukon's communities for their hard work and perseverance. The results are very clear. All across Canada, people are proud to be Quebecers and Canadians and proud to be interested in learning the other official language. According to a report from the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, 87% of Canadians want to be bilingual.

In conclusion, the only party that really wants to halt the decline of French throughout Canada, including in Quebec, and protect and promote both official languages is the Conservative Party of Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

• (1015)

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his remarks.

[*English*]

I want to ask about the English-language CBC. It is the Conservative Party's position, as articulated in the member's speech, to cut off English-language services from the CBC, but for the English-language minority communities of Quebec outside of Montreal, the CBC offers a vital service. In many rural parts of Quebec, the CBC is the only link to news that English-speaking communities have.

How will the member address the issue of English-speaking minorities in Quebec if he cuts funding to the CBC's English-language branch?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, I would remind the House and everyone tuning in that my colleague is the only person who has voted against the Official Languages Act.

To answer his question, I would just like to say that the status of English in North America and the status of French in Canada are completely separate. I can assure Quebec anglophones that they will have access to news in English, in their language.

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thought it was pretty funny to hear my colleague say that his party is the only one defending French in the House. I think Pierre Bourgault put it best when he said that putting the two languages on an equal footing means stomping on one language with both feet. My colleague's celebration of bilingualism strikes me as being completely at odds with his purported desire to protect French.

That said, I have a question about CBC/Radio Canada. The Liberal government is currently putting in place a plan to integrate the operations of the CBC and Radio-Canada to prevent a Conservative government from defunding the CBC.

Here is my question. If the public service succeeds in doing this, what will my colleague's government do? Will it defund Radio-Canada, which provides a space for francophone creators and culture? Will his government make cuts to it?

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

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the new member for LaSalle-Émard-Verdun on his recent election. He managed to capture a Liberal stronghold, so I commend him for that.

Now, had he listened to my speech, he would know that we in the Conservative Party of Canada have made it clear that we will allow Radio-Canada to communicate in French throughout Canada, both in Quebec and in all the provinces and territories of this great French and English bilingual nation.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned and curious about how the member responds to English-speaking Canadians, the many in my riding of Victoria but

also those across Canada, who value the CBC for its English-language content and Canadian content, especially given that defunding it would clear the way for flagrantly partisan news outlets like Rebel News and True North. It seems self-interested for the Conservatives to want to defund an organization combatting misinformation, especially given the election of Trump and the spread of disinformation across North America and around the world.

I am curious about how the member responds to the concerns of Canadians who do not want to see the CBC defunded.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, governing means being a responsible manager.

Let us look at the facts. North America has a pool of more than 350 million anglophones and some 10 million francophones. We have Radio-Canada and the CBC. Before going any further, I would like to remind my colleagues that Radio-Canada costs Canadian taxpayers more than \$1 billion. Radio-Canada gets approximately 30% to 40% of the audience. Unfortunately, the CBC gets only 3%. Those are the facts. Decisions need to be made.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny-L'Islet-Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to a topic that makes me very indignant. My indignation is shared by millions of Quebecers and Canadians. Let me explain.

Once again, CBC/Radio-Canada, an institution funded with taxpayer money, is betraying the values, culture and trust of the people who pay for it to exist, the people it is supposed to serve and represent. The CBC chose to record a podcast in a Paris studio in order to avoid the Quebec accent. Shame on the CBC. This is an affront to me and my fellow Quebecers. It is an affront to our culture, our contribution to Canada, and, lastly, our very existence, because the CBC's message is all too clear. The message is that the Quebec accent is offensive. That is unbelievable.

It is hurtful, but it is not the only thing here that hurts us. I cannot talk about the CBC without mentioning the waste of public resources. For one thing, why did it use a studio in a foreign country when Canada and Quebec have perfectly well-equipped facilities capable of meeting its media needs? Why did it waste public funds instead of supporting the local economy, encouraging local talent and respecting our linguistic and cultural identities? On the one hand, we have the CBC's blatant affront to Quebecers, but on the other, we have the CBC's CEO, Catherine Tait, demanding more and more money from taxpayers.

*Routine Proceedings*

Just yesterday, Ms. Tait told the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage that she was entitled to a bonus. I would remind my colleagues that, under Ms. Tait, the CBC's overall audience level plummeted by almost half and that she was forced to cut 800 jobs in December 2023 alone. These cuts left hundreds of Quebec families scrambling.

In her opening statement yesterday, Ms. Tait asked the government for even more taxpayer dollars. Does anyone know what she did the last time the government gave her taxpayer money? Of the \$42-million emergency top-up the Liberal government gave her, \$18.4 million went to executive bonuses. Another \$3.3 million went to 45 executives. If we divide \$3.3 million by 45, we get a bonus of about \$73,000 per executive. That is more than the annual income of the average Canadian worker, yet Ms. Tait wants a bonus.

What is the Bloc Québécois doing about all this? It is voting with the Liberals to protect CBC bonuses and support Ms. Tait. That is so appalling. Once again, the Bloc is showing that it will always put the Liberal Prime Minister's interests before those of Quebecers. I keep looking for a Bloc Québécois in the House, but day after day, all I can find is a "Liberal Bloc".

How can we tolerate or justify this kind of abuse of public funds when millions of Canadians are unable to make ends meet, when millions of Canadians are lining up every day at food banks and when the number of unhoused is skyrocketing across Canada? Meanwhile, the CBC is wasting millions of dollars in public funds in unjustified bonuses and recording podcasts in Paris because they do not like the Quebec accent. It is unbelievably ironic.

It is a question of respect. It is a question of respecting taxpayer money of course, but it is even more a question of respecting the taxpayers themselves. The CBC does not respect Canada's values and cultures. By choosing to avoid the Quebec accent, the CBC is telling us loud and clear that our regions' accents and identities are not good enough. That is what that means. How ironic on the part of an organization that purports to represent Canadian diversity. What is diversity if not the recognition and promotion of our differences rather than their contempt and rejection? The Quebec accent is an integral part of the Canadian identity, the Canadian francophone identity and our Canadian heritage. Rejecting the accent means rejecting part of Canada.

This contempt for Quebec and taxpayers did not appear out of thin air. It is fuelled by a Liberal government supported by the Bloc Québécois, which has lost all sense of priority. The Liberal government prefers paying the CBC millions of dollars and filling the pockets of its friend the president rather than thinking about Canadians' finances and addressing the real problems Canadians are facing after nine years of irresponsible governance.

On our side of the House, we refuse to tolerate such contempt. The common-sense Conservatives say no to this culture of contempt and privilege. Canadians and Quebecers deserve better. The common-sense Conservatives will defend taxpayers, workers and families. They will defend their interests and their paycheques rather than abuse them to fill the pockets of their friends and the CBC's corrupt and contemptuous senior executives.

• (1025)

I cannot keep quiet about that. My colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier and I have been members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages for many years. We are seeing mismanagement by this government, who appoints a Governor General who does not speak French, here in Ottawa no less. The same goes for the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick. Fortunately, she was just replaced by someone who is bilingual, in a bilingual province, but she was appointed by the Liberal government.

These are examples of this government's lack of accountability where French is never the top priority. We see it often at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It is unfortunate, but lucky thing the Conservative Party is there to stand up for the real interests of all francophones.

Therefore, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"the third report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, presented on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, with a view to amending the same so as to recommend that the government refuse to approve any bonus or performance pay for the CBC/Radio-Canada president and chief executive officer, who presided over the decision to award production contracts to foreign companies in order 'to avoid the Quebec accent', provided that, for the purposes of this study:

(a) the acting Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages be ordered to appear before the committee, for at least two hours, at a date and time fixed by the Chair of the committee, but no later than Tuesday, December 17, 2024; and

(b) it be an instruction to the committee that it present the amended report to the House no later than Monday, January 27, 2025."

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

• (1030)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canadians in all regions of the country are very much aware that the leader of the Conservative Party does not like the CBC, and I would suggest that is in all regions and includes Radio-Canada. However, we have had no clear indications about that from the Conservatives, other than their machete-holding leader wanting to cut wherever he sees fit, one of those cuts being to broadcasting.

On the one hand, the Conservatives are trying to say they are defenders of the French language, but on the other hand, the CBC, and in particular Radio-Canada in the province of Quebec, is going to be cut by the Conservatives. I am wondering how members of the Conservative Party can justify the type of discussions they want to have today, which are based on their genuine lack of respect for CBC Canada, period. Canadians know that; that is the Conservative agenda.

*Routine Proceedings*

Can the member expand on why the Conservatives do not feel that Radio-Canada has a role to play?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Madam Speaker, it is first and foremost a question of management of public funds. Obviously, we all agree about Canadian culture, be it anglophone or francophone, but when we look at how public funds are being managed within CBC/Radio-Canada, we see it makes no sense at all. If this were a private company, it would have gone bankrupt long ago.

Obviously, though, this is no public company. It is an organization that represents the country as a whole, its culture and so on, which is completely normal, except there is a way of handling things. Ms. Tait has appeared before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage a number of times, and each time she repeats the same thing. Management always wants more, but they are not getting results.

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, no one here will be surprised to learn that I am a sovereigntist. My colleagues in the Conservative Party purport to be defenders of francophone communities outside Quebec and of bilingualism, but at a time of increasing questioning of the French fact and bilingualism in this country, their buddies, including Conservatives like J.J. McCullough, are saying that there is no place for bilingualism and that we francophones are the spoiled brats of Confederation.

How will my colleague justify cutting off funding for the CBC with his compatriots in English Canada if his party keeps Radio-Canada? Has the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup thought of that?

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Madam Speaker, just a week ago, the leader of the Bloc Québécois wondered what he was doing here. I imagine my colleague is asking himself the same question. The reality is that the Bloc Québécois is in it just for Quebec and does not care in the slightest about the rest of Canada. Nevertheless, the Bloc is delighted to be here and to reap the benefits. This is clear in everything its members do. They fatten up the government and support the Liberals three-quarters of the time, if not 100% of the time, and then they want to lecture us. I think they would be better off heading to Quebec City.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Donald Trump has just announced that he is going to throw 25% tariffs on Canada's economy, throwing our industries into absolute chaos. How did the member who lives in the 19-room mansion in Stornoway respond? He comes in here and sends his troops in to fight about why CBC gave a contract to one company and not to another. The Conservatives are unfit to represent Canada at this time. What they are doing now is saying they will support radio stations in Quebec but shut them down in the rest of the country. This is about dividing people.

In my region in northern Ontario, CBC is the voice that keeps people together. However, the Conservatives think that they can divide Canadians, that they can say they will give Quebec everything it wants if they vote for the Conservatives. People in Quebec are not dumb enough to vote for that man, who will not have a plan—

• (1035)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to give the hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup a chance to answer.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Madam Speaker, my NDP colleague must be extremely confused these days. He has to vote with his leader to prop up a party the New Democrats cannot stand. They say so everyday here in the House of Commons, and now my colleague is trying to lecture us. This is truly nuts. The NDP members must be so confused.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this very important issue. I want to start by focusing on the issue first, and then I will go into some of the motivations for having this particular debate.

I for one am a very big fan of multiculturalism and the fact that Canada is a bilingual nation. With a name like Lamoureux, I can assure members that I have a very strong passion and belief in how important it is that Canada continues to promote and encourage being a bilingual nation. I thought I would give a bit of a reflection on what went wrong with my family in regard to the French language.

My ancestors have been in Canada for generations. Many years ago, they went from the province of Quebec to Manitoba and Saskatchewan. During the 1950s, the French language was not very well received in certain parts of the Prairies. In this case, my grandmother on my mom's side, with the last name of Lambert and Pasquis, discouraged my mother from learning French. In fact, she never spoke it at home; my mother was told never to speak French, only English. That was in rural Saskatchewan during the 1950s. My father, in contrast, was raised in a family in which they spoke French fluently.

Before living in Winnipeg, my family was in St-Pierre-Jolys in rural Manitoba, which is still a strong French community today, along with St. Boniface. However, because of the disconnect during the 1960s, one would say that women's rights were not as great as they are today, so my mom was the one who raised us. She never spoke French in the household. We never had the opportunity to learn French, which is unfortunate.

*Routine Proceedings*

I would argue that French is spoken in the Prairies today to the degree that it is because of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. He believed in Canada as a bilingual nation. Through that belief, we started to see programming in our school and educational systems that promoted and encouraged speaking French. I still remember, in my earlier childhood, when French was not well received, particularly on the Prairies, by a good majority of people. That has changed in such a positive and encouraging way. I would date it back to the 1970s, when we had a solid commitment from the national government, saying that it wanted French spoken across the country. We needed to recognize the uniqueness of the province of Quebec and its culture and heritage, as well as to ensure that French was also spoken outside Quebec.

Fast-forwarding to today, I can go into a number of schools in Winnipeg North and see people of Punjabi or Filipino heritage who can speak Punjabi, English and French.

• (1040)

It is the same thing when we hear of children who are nine or 10 years old speaking Tagalog, French and English, as well as how popular the French language is as a respected language after one or two generations. It has changed. Today, there are more people speaking French in Canada than ever, and I would suggest that the number will continue to grow. As I said, I will look to Pierre Elliott Trudeau and the policy decisions he made back then as the root of this. Policy decisions matter; they make a difference, and that is why I posed the question in regard to CBC and Radio-Canada. Radio-Canada is very unique in the sense of the French language and the promotion thereof, not to mention CBC on the national scene and the important role it has to play.

The leader of the Conservative Party, more than any other leader in the House of Commons, has a personal vendetta against CBC. Let us not kid ourselves. I have talked about the Tory, the Conservative-Reform hidden agenda, and we saw it in the question I had posed. We should not believe for a moment that the Conservatives look at Radio-Canada as something they would not make cuts to. When I posed the question previously, the member talked about whether we should be financing and so forth. He did not jump to the defence of Radio-Canada, let alone CBC.

Just yesterday, I quoted a CBC story to one of my colleagues. I quoted from a story being reported, and it happened to be CBC's story. It was a very serious quote that I gave to the member opposite. His response to it was that it was CBC, and he sat down. Conservatives do not have any respect for that national newscast. For the Canadians who might be following this debate, the Conservatives actually stopped participating in political panels in regard to CTV. I do not know if they are back at it, but I was attending both CBC and CTV political panels not that long ago, and the Conservatives were nowhere to be found. They look at these institutions with a genuine lack of respect. It is coming from the leader of the Conservative Party.

Why is that important? I will go to some quotes. A wonderful story came out in regard to what is happening within the Conservative caucus. Here is how the story started off. Is it any wonder that people should be concerned about the Conservative Party of Canada, particularly the leader, and its attitudes towards the CBC?

The story is all about Conservatives and Conservative MPs who are concerned about the leader of the Conservative Party. They are being quoted; they do not want to use their names. If they use their names, they will be punished. This is from a number of sources, not just one or two, but many sources in terms of the making up of this story.

**An hon. member:** Yes, it is made up.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, one member says it is made up. This reinforces the attitude we heard yesterday, that CBC has no credibility from the Conservative Party's perspective. Canadians would disagree, especially if we factor in that it is not only CBC.

CBC says:

After two years of [the leader of the Conservative Party] as their leader, many Conservative MPs say they are much less free now than they were before his arrival.

The man who promised during his leadership run to make Canada 'the freest country in the world' maintains tight control over the actions of his caucus members.

• (1045)

When we talk about Radio One and the French language, this is why the people of Quebec, and in fact the people of all of Canada, should be concerned. We should remember that this is a pet peeve of the leader of the Conservative Party. It is a personal, vindictive attitude that he has toward CBC, and he wants it defunded.

Here is what Conservatives are actually saying about their leader: "He's the one who decides everything. His main adviser is himself.... The people around him are only there to realize the leader's vision." This is not me saying it and it is not CBC; it is reliable, numerous sources that have been canvassed in regard to the Conservatives and Conservative members of Parliament.

That is why I say that public policy at the national level matters. The French language today is spoken more than it ever has been, and it is because of a national government. It was a government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau that had a vision of Canada, and we are realizing the results of that vision today.

This is why I wanted to be able to address it by using me as an example. If only the policy would have been in place during the 1950s and going into the 1960s, I suspect I would be addressing the House in French as opposed to in English right now. I would suggest that this is why we need to be aware of the fact of what is behind the motivation and the hidden agenda of the far-right Conservative Party today.

That is something I would like to encourage all Canadians to get an understanding of: who it is that the leader of the Conservative Party is. We often talk about the cuts, and those cuts can easily be substantiated in terms of the allegations that are coming from this side, and not only from Liberals. We also see them from members of the Bloc, as well as the Greens and the New Democrats, all of whom are expressing concerns about the types of cuts the Conservative Party of Canada is actually talking about.



*Routine Proceedings*

I said I wanted to speak a bit about the motivation, because that is a very important aspect of why we are actually using this particular concurrence report for debate today. Look at the report itself. It is not very complicated; it is pretty straightforward. This is what the Conservative Party wanted to debate today: “That the committee report to the House its deep condemnation of the CBC using a Paris-based audio studio to record a podcast, choosing it over a Quebecois-based recording studio to avoid the Quebec accent.”

I share the concern that is being expressed in the report. I would like to think that all members would share in that concern, but it begs the question of why the Conservative Party would move this particular motion today. There are literally hundreds of motions on the tabling of reports that could in fact be brought forward, yet the Conservatives singled it out as the one they wanted to debate today.

• (1050)

We should ask ourselves why it is doing that. I cannot recall the Conservative Party ever, in years, using an opposition day motion to talk about the French language. If it is such an important issue, why has it not done that? It has not once that I can recall; if I am wrong, members can please stand up and let me know. I suspect I am not. Maybe 10 or 12 years ago it might have; I do not know 100%.

I found out just 30 minutes ago that the Conservatives have decided to talk about this particular issue, so do not try to be misled, and I say this whether to the people of Quebec or Canadians as a whole who have a passion and care about French language and want to ensure its preservation, promotion and growth. These things are not going to come from the Conservative Party of Canada; they are going to come from a continuation of Pierre Elliott Trudeau and the type of policies that we have brought forward as a Liberal government.

I very much want to see the Conservative Party actually take a look at how they are playing such a destructive role here on the floor of the House of Commons. It is truly amazing. In fairness to the Conservative members, I can appreciate, based on the story, that they do not really have much of a choice. They have to follow what the leader tells them to do, and there are a number of quotes I can use.

Tomorrow is caucus day, so the Conservatives need to start holding their own leader to account. What are we at now? It is six weeks and counting of the Conservative filibuster. The Conservatives try to pass the blame. They say to do this and do that and then we will be able to do government business. That is just not true. The filibuster is a multi-million dollar game in order to support the self-interest of the Conservative leader.

That is what this is all about, and at the end of the day, I would suggest that we need to recognize that this is the very same leader who orchestrated Stephen Harper's being found in contempt of Parliament. The game we are witnessing day in and day out from the Conservative Party today is not only a massive waste of financial resources but it is also preventing substantive debates from being able to occur. The leader of the Conservative Party is putting his personal interests ahead of the interests of Canadians, and that needs to stop.

I would like to introduce an amendment. I move that the motion be subamended by deleting all the words after the words “so as to recommend that the government” and substituting the following: “expresses its deep concern for the Conservative Party of Canada's threat to cut all funding to CBC and Radio-Canada, which would leave millions of Canadians living in official language minority communities without reliable news coverage in their language of choice.”

It is a good amendment and I hope all members will be voting for it. We will be watching the Conservatives in particular.

• (1055)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The subamendment will be taken under advisement.

With questions and comments, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has the floor.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to say that I appreciate what the member said with respect to the increased use of French in western Canada. I grew up in approximately the same time frame as he did, and it bothers me that I so often have to say the following words.

[*Translation*]

I am sorry. I do not speak French. Please speak to me in English.

[*English*]

Today the language is much more used across our nation and in our schools. My children, in home-schooling, taught their kids French. However, I do not attribute that to Pierre Trudeau, a previous leader of this country. What I remember from him in the eighties, when there is talk about the level of recession we are facing not being the same since 40 years ago, is that I experienced what the west experienced when the previous prime minister Trudeau destroyed our economy.

What I want to ask the member about is something he did not directly respond to, which he should do because it is the crux of the conversation. Would he tell us about the rationale he is using to support and to defend the decision of the CBC to use a Parisian accent rather than our Canadian accent within its CBC content and to also reward such behaviour?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, that is why I read the very short motion that came out of it. It raises a great deal of concern. I am offended by the fact.

I want to go back to the article that I think has really upset a number of Conservatives, because what has now become public is the attitude taken by the leader of the Conservative Party on how he chooses to punish people. What is interesting is another quote, and hopefully I will get more opportunities, which states, “Some elected officials feel they come to caucus ‘to be told what to do and what to think’”.

I suspect they have been instructed what to think and say even on the CBC file.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the basis of today's motion is contempt, the denigration of Quebec French. We sometimes see it in the House when members who represent majority francophone ridings in Quebec speak mainly in English. There are some members I have never even heard speak French, despite the fact that they represent majority francophone ridings. This contempt and denigration can be heard in a lot of places.

The Liberals have an odd habit. Every time official languages are mentioned in their legislation, they are actually referring to protecting minorities. In Quebec, that means protecting the anglophone minority. This minority is extremely well treated in Quebec. As we know, my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île even wrote a report about it. The money that the Liberals send to Quebec is not intended to protect or promote the French language, but to help Quebec's minority.

When will the Liberals understand that, if they respect and really like Quebec, they should start protecting the French language and stop interfering in Quebec's business?

• (1100)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, first and foremost I believe that as a Liberal Party institution, the Liberal Party understands, appreciates and values the many contributions made in the different jurisdictions across Canada. However, I would emphasize that in the province of Quebec, protecting the French language and ensuring that there is a culture and a heritage that is truly unique in Quebec is not only supported but enhanced.

I have had the opportunity to witness many things the national government has done. With respect to the manner in which the member stands and speaks in the House, I truly wish I would have been raised with the language. I have attempted to learn it. For me it is a bit more of a challenge; I realize I am turning 63. I do know the odd word.

Having said that, it does not take away from how strongly and passionately I believe in the importance of the French language and the French culture and heritage factor that Quebec shares not only throughout our great nation but also, I would suggest, with the world. That is one of the reasons I call into question the issue of Paris.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member was as shocked as I was about CBC executives getting millions of dollars in bonuses while laying off workers. Conservatives want to cut and gut the CBC. They want to defund it, which serves their partisan interests, especially in a world of misinformation and disinformation, but why is the Liberal government giving them ammunition? The Privy Council approved those bonuses.

Our public broadcaster serves an invaluable purpose in Canada, but it is also accountable to Canadians. While Conservatives want to cut and gut the CBC, New Democrats want to invest in it. Would the member agree that we should stop handing out multi-million dollar bonuses and invest that in local journalism?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I believe in the CBC, both TV and radio, and how, more and more, the CBC is moving to the Internet. I see that as a very strong, positive thing. I believe the federal government needs to continue to support it.

At the very least, regarding board members, all individuals appointed to boards at the federal level need to reflect on the service they should be providing and act accordingly for any form of performance bonuses, end of story. It is as simple as that.

On funding our national media, I believe it is absolutely critical for CBC TV and radio.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand that you are deliberating whether the subamendment the member moved is in order.

I would note and suggest that the subamendment is far out of the scope of the Conservative amendment to the original motion regarding the specifics surrounding the bonuses that Ms. Catherine Tait, CEO of the CBC, received. The subamendment moved by the member departs significantly from the Conservative amendment, which asks a clear question as to whether we, as the House, reject her receiving those significant bonuses.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for submitting that point of order.

As advised, I agree that the subamendment is beyond the scope. I will quote the section in Bosc and Gagnon that refers to it. It states:

Most of what applies to amendments applies equally to subamendments. Each subamendment must be strictly relevant to, and not at variance with the sense of, the corresponding amendment and must seek to modify the amendment and not the original question.

• (1105)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, given the nature of the subamendment, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to allow it.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[Translation]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago we were all shocked when a Conservative member told a francophone minister that he should not speak French in the House. I found that shameful, but the member graciously apologized.

I am now shocked to hear a member of the Bloc Québécois say that, as an anglophone member from Quebec, I should not speak English in the House of Commons. I use both official languages in the House because I represent a riding that is made up of two communities.

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[English]

Does the member agree that English-speaking Quebecers, and all English-speaking people, should have the right to speak in English in the chamber, the same way that every French-speaking person should have the right to speak French?

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Drummond on a point of order.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, to make things perfectly clear, I would like to point out that my colleague from Terrebonne was talking about anglophone members in Quebec who represent majority francophone ridings—

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

[English]

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, one may be unilingual, bilingual or speak numerous languages, but for all intents and purposes, French and English are our two official languages. Members should be able to speak whichever one they choose to and not be discriminated against in any way whatsoever for doing so.

As I have indicated before, I truly wish that I was able to deliver some speeches in French, but it is a capability issue for me. I speak English because that is, quite frankly, my only option.

[Translation]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am proud that my country has two official languages. My first language is English, but I also speak French.

Today I will ask my question in English.

[English]

I always love listening to the member for Winnipeg North speak because I love hearing his western Canadian accent, and today he was expressing concern about the contempt that some people have for the CBC. However, my question is about the contempt that the CBC is showing to French Canadian speakers by preferring to go to Paris for some filming because it prefers the Parisian accent to the French Canadian accent.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I will always argue that we should have a special focus on Quebec French and its unique accent. It is one of the things that adds to the very character and heritage of the province of Quebec, and one of its many contributions.

When we think of the province of Quebec, we should not be limiting our thoughts to the French language because the province of Quebec contributes so much more to Canada's well-being, beyond the beautiful French Quebec language.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I must return to what I was trying to do a few minutes ago through a point of order concerning the speech by my colleague from Terrebonne. I think there is a connection there with today's debate.

I found that my colleague from Mount Royal took umbrage at my colleague's remarks. When she and I discussed it, we immediately agreed that this colleague was in no way targeted by the remark by my colleague from Terrebonne, who was talking more in terms of something widespread, unfortunately, that perhaps illustrated the lack of understanding there may be regarding the official language in Quebec, which is French. This is an entirely legitimate concern, and in no way does this mean that all members present in the House are not free to express themselves in the official language of their choice. We all agree on that.

To put things in their proper context, however, it is true that for us who are working tooth and nail to defend French, Quebec's only official and common language, it can be troubling at times that members representing majority-francophone ridings are unable to speak French. It kind of shows where things stand with French and underscores the need for us to continue the fight in Quebec.

That being said, I have long admired my colleague from Mount Royal, with whom I sat on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Despite our major differences, I have always managed to get along well with him to move forward on the bills we debated. This member does his work admirably in both official languages, and in that sense he does a good job of representing the constituents in his riding.

We are talking today about the Conservatives' umpteenth attempt to discredit our public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada. We are talking about the issue of having a Canadian production translated into French in a Paris studio. For me and all my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, and, I dare say, for all the Quebec members of the House and the Quebec cultural industry, this is so ridiculous that we actually thought it was fake news when it was first reported. At first we figured it was a mistake, that it was a podcast that had been produced abroad, translated in Paris and then broadcast on the CBC/Radio-Canada platforms. That was not at all the case. It is totally appalling.

In this supposedly bilingual country, where we are supposedly concerned about protecting both official languages and the one that is most threatened, specifically French, how can anyone claim to be concerned if they do not even have the presence of mind to have a podcast translated in Quebec? They had something good, a good podcast, something that could be exported around the world, but since Quebecers have a stupid accent, they would not have it translated in Quebec. Since Quebecers have a hick accent, listeners would not understand them. They therefore decided to send it to Paris. That is why there are going to be such expressions as “du coup”, “en revanche”, “putain” and “nom de Dieu”. That is international French. It is as if Quebecers can only have a regional accent.

That stems from a lack of understanding, not only of the reality of French in Quebec and Canada, but also of Quebec's cultural dubbing industry, which is one of the most professional, exacting and best in the world. Quebec's dubbing industry is exceptional. What is even more interesting and ludicrous, is that the CBC did not think it could have the production translated in Quebec.

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Quebec can produce works in international French, or in French with the accents of Paris, Lyon, Marseille and even Pas-de-Calais if it wants to. We can produce works in French with a Spanish accent or a British accent. We can do anything in Quebec. Does anyone know why? Because we have been developing our dubbing industry for decades, and we have artists and technicians who are so specialized that major American studios often have their productions translated in Montreal because that is where they can get the best quality. Our artisans are exceptional. One would expect the public broadcaster, which claims to be exacting and an essential vehicle for culture, to be the first to know that.

• (1110)

Moreover, when the podcast was sent to France for translation and then journalists, the Union des artistes and the postproduction and dubbing sector in French got wind of it, they asked the guy at the CBC who had the brilliant idea of sending it to Paris and why he did not consider Quebec. The guy did not even know that is something we do. Well, he did know that is something we do, but he figured that no one would be able to understand the Quebec accent. That is pure ignorance and a grave insult to the exceptional work and the exceptional reputation that Quebec's dubbing industry has built over the decades.

Nobody here remembers the production itself, which is called *Alone: A Love Story*. The title of the French version is *Seule: Une histoire d'amour*. It is an English Canadian production, made for a successful podcast platform. It would have been an extraordinary opportunity to show that we are capable of producing things here and doing them in English, in French and, eventually, in the indigenous languages. However, it was a missed opportunity, because people tied themselves in knots, thinking that it was made in English so it needed to be sent to France for the rest and then exported to the rest of the world without even considering our own reality here. It just goes to show how dysfunctional this country is.

It is already completely illogical for any part of a Canadian production paid for through government subsidies, tax credits or tax breaks to be created abroad. When a production receives government funding, financing or support of any kind through a provincial or federal program, there should be a requirement for every stage of production to be done right in that province, or at the very least in Canada. This should be an essential condition. If it had been, the genius who had the idea of sending this production to Paris for translation into French and Spanish would have known from the start that a Canadian production could not be sent overseas. It has to be done here.

A series of events occurred, which were discussed at length by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. When the current CEO, Catherine Tait, whose term is coming to a close, came to testify about this story, she offered her sincere apologies and said she was determined to ensure that such a thing never happened again. I know that the message went through. Ms. Tait listened to the concerns expressed by the committee and the House and clearly relayed them to all levels of the public broadcaster. I would be awfully surprised if we saw this type of situation crop up again in the foreseeable future. I would be very surprised.

People can criticize a lot of things about Ms. Tait's time as CEO. I would be the first to criticize many of the things she did. However, the Conservatives' relentless attack on her is getting a little out of control and a little unreasonable. She has become the Conservatives' scapegoat for all sorts of reasons and a pawn in their campaign to defund the CBC. That is exactly what this is about. This is yet another opportunity for them to talk about how they believe the CBC is a dysfunctional organization that does not deserve to exist and should be defunded. They are using this report from the Standing Committee on Official Languages, which rightly condemns the decision to have a podcast translated abroad, as a pretext for reiterating that the CBC does not deserve the trust of Canadians and Quebecers and deserves to have its funding cut.

• (1115)

I would also like to take this opportunity to talk about the importance of having a public broadcaster, especially considering the Conservatives' determination to spread disinformation and half-truths in an effort to discredit our public broadcaster. Contrary to their claims, the CBC delivers rigorous journalism, even though people may not always like it, as well as entertainment programming that is very important to Quebecers. I do not want to speak for the anglophone side of things and what the CBC produces, because everyone knows that what Radio-Canada and the Crown corporation's francophone services produce clearly appeals more to the public and is much more popular and successful. Still, I do not want to judge the quality of the CBC's English-language programming. I am sure they produce some excellent programming as well. That said, this is yet another opportunity for the Conservatives to discredit a service that we feel is becoming increasingly essential given the present circumstances.

This is a situation where we need journalists and newsrooms governed by a code of ethics and a code of conduct that require them to meet strict standards. We need a vehicle for francophone culture in Quebec and Canada. We need a company that produces high-quality, variety programming and that showcases our stories. That is the mandate of CBC/Radio-Canada. I am associating the two, but what makes it all the more offensive for francophone audiences is the fact that our stories are being translated by foreigners, based on a belief that their accent will be more acceptable to people elsewhere. This means that CBC/Radio-Canada is going to tell our stories using someone else's voice and someone else's accent. Otherwise, so they say, our stories will not be understood by others. My brief detour stops here.

Now, to return to the current, more general debate on the Conservatives' constant attacks on CBC/Radio-Canada, as they try to feed the beast, the monster they are trying to create in order to defund the CBC.

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There is a big hoax here, a major flaw in the story and in their reasoning. Even if one were to get university scholars and researchers together to try to explain the Conservatives' logic here, they would not be able to do it. Surveys show that 80% of people support maintaining and protecting a healthy public broadcaster. These surveys are carried out across Canada, not just on Montreal's south shore. Canadians across the country are being asked whether they want a quality public broadcaster and whether they like CBC/Radio-Canada, and 80% of them are saying yes. Some of those people must vote Conservative. I cannot believe otherwise.

Rather than realizing that they might not be on the right track, the Conservatives are assuming that most of that 80% of the people polled are from Quebec or are francophones who want to protect Radio-Canada, and so they are saying that they will make cuts to CBC's funding but save Radio-Canada. They are basically telling us they do not know anything without actually saying they do not know anything. That seems to be it, because CBC and Radio-Canada have been around for 90 years. They have been a two-headed body for 90 years. News production and editorial production are separate, but given the amount of resources that CBC and Radio-Canada share, the two have become inextricably linked. I do not know how many times that has been explained during the five committee meetings that Ms. Tait participated in just this year. The CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada appeared before the committee five times, and every time we asked her that question, she explained how and why Radio-Canada could not be separated from the CBC and how Radio-Canada would suffer enormously if funding cuts are made to the CBC. She explained that over and over in all those meetings. I do not know how many times I personally asked her that question, and every time, the answer was clear, straightforward, well-argued and complete. However, I do not think that anyone was listening. At least in this group, I do not think that anyone was listening because the Conservatives keep saying that we need to defund the CBC and that doing so will not hurt Radio-Canada.

• (1120)

Someone even said they would defund the CBC, but leave Radio-Canada alone. Clearly he was not listening and did not understand, because it had just been made clear that this was impossible to do. The witness just said that CBC and Radio-Canada share buildings just about everywhere in Canada. He said he wanted to cut funding for the CBC. This is one of the fine examples of populism promoted by the Leader of the Opposition, who says they are going to empty the CBC offices across Canada and turn them into social housing. How can they find a simple solution to a problem they do not even understand? That is the long and the short of it. What nonsense.

Again, this is just another reason today for them to go after Catherine Tait, claiming that they are going to go after the CBC and then leading people to believe that the CBC's funding has to be cut but this will have no impact on Radio-Canada. In Quebec, no one is buying it. If the Conservatives are trying to convince Quebecers, they can keep trying. In Quebec, everyone knows that any cuts made to the CBC's funding will be disastrous for Radio-Canada and therefore disastrous for the main vehicle of francophone culture in Canada and Quebec. This will have tremendous repercussions on the cultural industry, on authors, on artists, on actors, on producers,

on musicians, on singers, on everyone. No one in Quebec is buying this message, unless they failed grade two. I do not know many people who did, because we have an excellent education system in Quebec. We can discuss that another time.

Having said that, I find it rather absurd when the Conservatives take isolated incidents and blow them out of proportion to try to illustrate the complete failure of an organization that, on the contrary, should inspire pride—in most cases at least—because of its coverage, its presence and its efforts to reach Quebecers and Canadians in the most remote regions, despite the constraints involved. We do consider these isolated incidents, which are not trivial, I agree. The issue of bonuses is not trivial. We need to have a conversation about the \$18 million in executive bonuses. We can have that conversation. We have actually already had it, but the Conservatives were not listening because the message and the answers were not necessarily what they wanted to hear. Yes, we have had this conversation, and we must continue to have it. CBC/Radio-Canada's compensation model needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is acceptable and understood. Understanding it is another matter, but at the very least, it must be acceptable.

A new mandate is likely going to be proposed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage shortly. The proposed mandate would seek a review of certain parameters that guide the public broadcaster's management and operations. I look forward to seeing it. There will likely be tools in this proposal to review certain frustrating aspects of CBC/Radio-Canada. That would be good. It would not be a bad thing. We need to look at what is happening elsewhere.

People complain that the broadcaster is expensive and is funded by their taxes. It costs about \$1.4 billion, then there is approximately \$400 million in subscription and advertising revenues. That is what the public broadcaster costs. In reality, the cost per Canadian is about \$32 a year. Most people pay \$18 or \$20 for Netflix, and they probably have other subscriptions here and there. It costs \$32 a year for CBC, Radio-Canada and most of the online services they offer. To determine whether that is expensive, compare it to Germany, where its broadcaster costs \$140 a year per capita, or Australia, where it costs, I think, about \$47. That amount is not going to put many people on the street. Perhaps we would have a more transparent, easier-to-monitor service that is somewhat less susceptible to the populist criticism levelled by politicians like the current Conservatives.

I completely agree that we have to speak out against certain decisions, such as the decision to send a made-in-Canada production elsewhere for translation into French. It would be equally unacceptable for French-language productions made in Quebec or Canada to be translated abroad. We have the resources here. We have very good people here. We have to speak out against that, and that is what we did.

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That said, I think it is disingenuous to bring this debate back to the House after a report was released. Once again, this is just an opportunity for the Conservatives to beat up on CBC/Radio-Canada and promote their agenda to defund it, which the public does not support at all. I would remind the House that 80% of Canadians want a quality public broadcaster. They want to protect it. The numbers do not lie. The Conservatives are big on numbers, so maybe they should look at the numbers.

• (1125)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I agree with much of what the Bloc member has said. Like him, I am genuinely concerned about what the leader of the Conservative Party is attempting to do by bringing forward this motion.

As members are aware, I moved a subamendment. I wanted to get the Conservatives on the record. It states that the House “expresses its deep concern for the Conservative Party of Canada's threat to cut all funding to CBC and Radio-Canada, which would leave millions of Canadians living in official language minority communities without reliable news coverage in their language of choice.” We cannot help but notice that they were kind of edgy and that they really did not want to have a vote that would incorporate that sort of position.

Could my colleague provide his thoughts with respect to getting the Conservatives to, at the very least, acknowledge that CBC and Radio-Canada have such an important role in our communities?

• (1130)

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I am not going to get into a discussion about the wording of amendments and subamendments, because I already take great issue with the political manoeuvring that goes on when we address this issue. For example, yesterday, the member for Mégantic—L'Érable made a post on X in which he says, “The Bloc Québécois just voted with the Liberals to hand out bonuses, including one for the CBC president, who allowed a podcast to be dubbed in France because the CBC didn't like the Quebec accent! Once again, the BLOC is backing [the Prime Minister] and his friends, instead of Quebec.”

We voted against a motion that would have seen the House—and even worse, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage—interfere in the management of CBC/Radio-Canada. Meanwhile, these same Conservatives complain about the Liberals who, they claim, use CBC/Radio-Canada as a vehicle for their ideas. They are inconsistent there, too.

That said, I think my colleague from Winnipeg North clearly understood from my speech that I place great importance on CBC/Radio-Canada, and on Radio-Canada in particular, as a vehicle for francophone culture and as a driver of Quebec's cultural industry.

[English]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one really important thing in this debate is the role of the CBC and some of the programs it has with respect to investigative reporting. One concern I have is that with the loss of the CBC, it would take

away the investigative journalism that has exposed consumer products and cover-ups, which have helped Canadians not only with public safety issues but also consumer issues related to the pocket-book.

What type of effect will this have? We already have a diminished investigative reporting capacity from other media outlets, and I fear that this would also take away one of the last refuges for investigative reporting that helps so many Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, my colleague raises a really important point. Not many news outlets have the resources to do in-depth reporting, because it involves research teams and it often takes weeks and months of work to develop these stories. I am thinking of shows like *Enquête* in Quebec and *The Fifth Estate* on CBC. These are major programs that do in-depth research, which is expensive.

Defunding the CBC means potentially depriving ourselves of these high-quality programs, which are very popular with Quebecers and Canadians. Defunding would have a devastating effect. It would also have a devastating effect on democracy, because we need these news reports that dig deeper to clarify certain issues that are often far too complex to be explained simply in a newscast. On that point, I completely agree with my colleague.

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague is always eloquent when he talks about subjects he is particularly knowledgeable about. I would like to talk about a slightly broader aspect of Liberal policy regarding the protection of the official languages when it comes to protecting linguistic minorities. Elsewhere in Canada, that may mean francophones, and that is good. However, in Quebec, that means anglophones.

The Liberals use the money that ends up going to anglophones in Quebec to challenge the legislation passed by Quebec's majority government in court, and that is a serious problem. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I cannot think of a better critic for this type of debate than our colleague, the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île. He has been researching this for years now. He has documented the subject exceptionally well, demonstrating that, indeed, the vast majority of the funding allocated by the federal government to protect official languages is used to defend the anglophone minority in Quebec. Some organizations use these grants to challenge laws that are legitimately passed by the National Assembly.

That will always be a struggle for us. We will always oppose this situation as much as we can. In our view, it is unacceptable for the federal government to fund legal action taken against legislation passed by the National Assembly and efforts to challenge the fact that French must remain the only official language and the common language of Quebecers.

• (1135)

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his excellent speech.

His English is much better than my French, so I will ask my question in English.

[*English*]

The Conservatives have promised to cut entirely CBC's English-language programming across the country, but they will protect Radio-Canada because of its role in Quebec culture and its importance to Quebec communities. CBC's English-language radio is more popular than ever. It is gaining market share.

I have two questions. First, does the member trust that the Conservatives will indeed protect Radio-Canada throughout the province of Quebec? Second, does he not agree with me that rural communities in northern British Columbia deserve access to quality public broadcasting just as much as communities in his province?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, those are very interesting questions.

When my grandmother talked about her sometimes rowdy grandsons, she would say that we were all smart enough to start a fire, but not smart enough to put it out. When I hear the Conservative leader say that he is going to get rid of the CBC but protect Radio-Canada, it sounds a bit like what my grandmother used to say. It reminds me a little of that. It is impossible.

It is impossible, and just about everyone who has taken the trouble of looking into the matter can vouch for that. It is impossible to make cuts to the CBC without doing serious harm to Radio-Canada. Ultimately, the cost of avoiding any damage at all would be almost as high as maintaining Radio-Canada's services for Canada's entire population.

As for the second question, perhaps Radio-Canada's original productions and shows are more successful. Perhaps Radio-Canada is more of a mainstay among Quebec's news and culture consumers than the CBC is in the rest of Canada. However, the CBC does have a number of very successful platforms. The CBC's online platforms are strong performers. The television side may be struggling a little, but the radio side is putting out excellent programs.

Yes, it is still an essential service for Canadians living in remote regions, like the northern B.C. region my colleague represents. Everyone has the right to have access to this service, to quality service. As far as the Conservative leader's rhetoric on defunding CBC/Radio-Canada is concerned, I am afraid he will make good on his threats. However, it is going to blow up in his face because Canadians will never let something like that happen.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his excellent intervention.

I want to come back to something he covered in his intervention, namely dubbing. I have a friend whose father works in the dubbing industry. That industry is in crisis right now in Quebec.

My generation grew up on Quebec French. I am thinking of the translated versions of *Captain Hook* or *Richie Rich*, which are no longer available in Quebec French.

When CBC gets its shows translated in Paris, what message does that send to our creators, the dubbers in Quebec, people like Pierre Auger?

I would like my colleague to share his thoughts on this.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, my colleague is correct in saying that the dubbing industry is having a tough time. There is a whole host of challenges currently facing Quebec's dubbing industry, given the changes in technology and the rise of artificial intelligence. This is a real concern. The fact that officials here are not sending a strong signal of support is really disappointing, and this will only hurt the industry.

I completely agree with my colleague on that. I do not think the industry should be in that situation, and I do not think the CBC should have taken that approach with its podcast.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to this motion moved by the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I have never been a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, but I have served as a replacement at that committee at times. I always found that the committee operated well. Its members understand the importance of the official languages and the importance of advancing the cause of language equality. The committee's work is extremely important. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our representative on that committee, the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, who does tremendous work. She is bilingual and speaks several different languages. She is a staunch defender of the French language, both official languages and bilingualism in general. She wants people to speak minority languages. Regardless of what language we speak in Canada, she is always there to defend language rights. I would like to acknowledge her work and the work of the committee.

Now, the motion before us today has been amended and, at the end of my speech, I will move an amendment to the amendment. It is coming later. The committee's motion reads as follows:

That the committee report to the house its deep condemnation of the CBC using a Paris-based audio studio to record a podcast, choosing it over a Quebecois-based recording studio to avoid the Quebec accent.

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It is true that there are no more beautiful accents in the international Francophonie than the Québécois, Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, Franco-Columbian and western Canadian francophone accents, our local accents. Wherever I travel in the world, whether it be in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America or the Caribbean, these accents have a truly magnificent reach.

It does not make any sense that the CBC used this Paris-based recording studio. That was a big mistake. It is only right that the committee reminded the CBC that this never should have happened. That is important because we need to be proud of our francophone heritage and our French language in Canada. No matter what the accent, whether it be Acadian, Franco-Newfoundlander, Franco-Columbian or Québécois, it is important to be proud of one's language. It is therefore important to say that this was not a good decision.

Other CBC/Radio-Canada decisions are open to criticism, including the bonuses, as my colleague from Churchill—Keewatinook Aski has repeatedly pointed out. The idea of giving bonuses to senior CBC/Radio-Canada executives while cutting basic journalism and services across the country makes no sense. For the NDP, taking care of this journalism is what really matters across the country. That necessarily means investing in basic journalism. Communities need to talk to one another, whether it is in English or in French. We have witnessed the erosion of good journalism from one end of the country to the other because a growing number of big chains, sometimes foreign chains, are buying up assets in Canada and often shutting down newspapers, which is killing local radio and TV journalism.

Now more than ever, it is important to focus on investing at the local level, so that communities know what is going on in their own backyard. An NDP government will do just that. It will require CBC/Radio-Canada executives to invest locally in order to encourage local journalism so that, regardless of where they live in the largest democracy on the planet, people know what is going on in their community.

• (1140)

That is important. That is why we condemn the idea that executive performance bonuses should take precedence over local journalism. We believe it should be the other way around. That is what an NDP government will do.

Now, let us talk about Radio-Canada's qualities. Sometimes, a bad decision is made, and people are quick to say that it is not a good decision and that we need to talk about it. The fact is that Radio-Canada's journalism is something that people across the country are proud of. It has won hundreds of journalism awards not only domestically, but also internationally. Not once in my political career have I seen a single Conservative MP stand up to congratulate CBC/Radio-Canada for winning another award given out by independent judges. They have never done that.

What the Conservatives want is to destroy the public broadcaster. They have been very clear about that. The member for Carleton says it is possible to eliminate all the services in English and eliminate all of CBC's English-language journalism, which has won hundreds of awards, without touching Radio-Canada's French-language journalism. That is ridiculous, and it shows how little respect the

Conservatives have for the average Canadian. The Conservatives are saying something that is obviously false, thinking that everyone will simply accept this falsehood coming from the Conservatives.

Vancouver has services and several radio stations. Naturally, there is an online service that has millions of subscribers. People watch Radio-Canada news on their computers more often than on TV. The radio is also very popular.

The Conservatives are saying that they are going to do away with the whole English side and that even if all of the French-speaking journalists end up on the street, they will somehow magically keep working. That is ridiculous. Radio-Canada would be wiped out in western Canada, in Edmonton, Regina, Calgary and Winnipeg. Radio-Canada would be destroyed in Atlantic Canada, in Moncton, Halifax, Saint John and Charlottetown. Everything would be wiped out and destroyed in Ontario, in Sudbury, Toronto and Windsor. All of Radio-Canada's services would be cut in Ottawa and Quebec City. Services would be cut everywhere in Quebec, including Montreal, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, where I lived for many years, the Eastern Townships, Sherbrooke, the north shore, the Gaspé, the Lower St. Lawrence, Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, the Outaouais and Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

The Conservatives are claiming that they are somehow going to magically succeed in protecting Radio-Canada while they destroy the CBC, which is completely ridiculous. It is dishonest to say that. When we look at the Conservatives' track record for the years when they were in power, we can see that they have no respect for official languages. They made no progress whatsoever for official languages at either the provincial or the federal level. When the Conservatives are in power, they destroy all of the services that are offered.

For a francophone who believes in official languages, voting Conservative is voting to put an end to all possible services. According to the Conservatives, these people, these taxpayers, do not have the right to any services in their language. That is what history shows. I am not talking about the stance being taken by the Conservatives because, of course, the member for Carleton will always hide his real motives, which involve major cuts.

• (1145)

If we look to the past, we can see what the Conservatives will do for official languages and for Radio-Canada once they are in power. In the past, they gave extremely generous and irresponsible gifts to billionaires. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, they gave \$30 billion a year for tax havens, \$116 billion in liquidity supports for Canada's big banks, and billions upon billions of dollars for CEOs. What the Conservatives do is give to the rich. That is their reason for being. The Conservative Party is a party for the rich. As the member for Carleton criss-crosses the country to meet with rich people, he always asks those well-off people to donate the maximum amount in support of his pro-wealthy policies. He did so just this week.



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When we look at how the Conservatives operate, it is clear that they are very bad at managing money. They also make cuts to public services. We saw all the cuts they made. As far as pension plans are concerned, they told people that they would no longer be allowed to retire at 65, that they would be forced to work extra years. They also said they were going to cut services to veterans. They do not want these people to have access to services, even though they have sacrificed their lives and sometimes their health for our country. Of course, we also saw cuts to health care and social housing.

The member for Carleton brags about having built six affordable housing units in his entire career. Let us compare his career to that of the NDP leader. The member for Burnaby South did more over the past 20 weeks than the member for Carleton did in 20 years: dental care, pharmacare, affordable housing, anti-scab legislation, and the list goes on. In 20 weeks, the member for Burnaby South did far more to help people than the member for Carleton did in 20 years.

What the Conservatives did when they were in power was cut, cut, cut. They made cuts to all services so they could give money to billionaires. That is how the Conservatives operate. That is their reason for being. They are also going to make cuts to services provided in the official languages. French-speaking taxpayers will no longer be entitled to services that should exist. In a bilingual country where citizens pay taxes, people should have access to services in their own language, but no, that will not be the case with the Conservatives, because they make cuts to all services, and they will make cuts to this one too.

They are also going to destroy CBC/Radio-Canada. It is all based on Trumpism. It is no surprise that, in the United States, Trumpism targets good journalism and all of the award-winning journalists. This movement attacks public radio and public television so that news sources are once again concentrated in the hands of billionaires. That is the way they operate, giving everything to billionaires so that ordinary people do not have access to proper, professional news. CBC/Radio-Canada is not immune to criticism. I would not say that it is always 100% accurate, but it is possible to get an apology from the public broadcaster. Mistakes are sometimes made, but they are corrected. That is the difference. With billionaires who own newspapers and TV networks, no corrections are ever made, because the billionaires are the ones who decide on the message and on what people should hear.

• (1150)

I think it is harmful to our democracy that Conservative members want to make cuts to all independent sources of news and ensure that a single class of people, namely billionaires, gets to tell us what to do. Francophone members of the Conservative Party from Quebec are also defending these actions and say they are ready to see CBC/Radio-Canada collapse. If they were honest with their constituents, I am sure these people would tell them that they want nothing to do with the Conservative attack on CBC/Radio-Canada, that they want quality journalism, and that when Radio-Canada or the CBC makes a mistake, they want it corrected. These people want local journalism. They want to know what is happening in their community, in their region and in their country.

I wanted to raise this before reading my amendment to the amendment. It makes me sad to know that journalists are not appreciated. I want to point out today in the House that there are quality journalists at CBC/Radio-Canada. They work hard every day to keep Canadians informed. I thank them for their work.

Before reading my amendment to the amendment, I would like to say one last time to my Conservative colleagues that they need to be honest. Trump's victory in the U.S is not a sign that Canadians are going to be okay with the truth being kept from them. It does not mean that it is time to start peddling conspiracy theories and killing effective journalism to prevent Canadians from having access to the facts, the truth and information, which is so important. Canadians do not want that. They want the opposite. They want to have access to information that is based on science and facts.

• (1155)

If we want to overcome the challenges that Canada is facing, such as climate change, poverty, the lack of social housing, the fact that families are struggling while billionaires receive so many gifts from the current government, as they did from Harper, we need access to information. It is vital to support CBC/Radio-Canada's important broadcasting mandate.

I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding, after the words "to avoid the Quebec accent", the following: "and redirect any amount received as a bonus or performance pay to support CBC/Radio-Canada's important broadcasting mandate".

• (1200)

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The subamendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am wondering what the member thinks about how the Conservative Party has targeted not only the CBC, but at times and quite often CTV. One of the best illustrations I can think of off-hand is the Conservatives' lack of willingness to participate in political panels. The last time I participated in a CBC and CTV panel, there was a New Democratic representative, but the Conservatives do not feel they want to contribute. Rather, they discredit the mainstream media in favour of supporting social media, which is in essence spreading a great deal of misinformation through what many would suggest, including me, are further-right organizations that have a vested interest in propping up the Conservative Party or spreading misinformation.

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Could the member provide his thoughts on that? It is not a healthy situation for our democracy, especially when we think of defunding the CBC, which the leader of the Conservative Party is talking about doing.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, this is indeed what the Conservatives are trying to do. What they cannot control, they destroy. We have seen this from authoritarian governments around the world. There is no independent journalism practised in Russia. Hungary saw independent journalists being attacked. We are seeing now an attack on public radio and public television in the United States with the triumph of Trumpism. The reality is that they do not respect the kind of journalism that is a vital part of democracy.

When we stand up to do a scrum, as my colleague is well aware, we get tough questions sometimes, and Canadians expect us to answer those tough questions. For Conservatives to refuse to go on panels, for Conservatives to refuse to stand up for their positions and for the leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Carleton, to be thin-skinned whenever he is asked tough questions by legitimate journalists shows a singular disregard and disrespect for democracy that I think Canadians should heed.

The reality is that journalism, like the kind of journalism we are seeing from CBC/Radio-Canada, which has won hundreds of awards, is very much the foundation of democracy, and that the Conservatives do not respect it shows how much disrespect they have for our democratic system.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, when a public broadcaster like the CBC prefers to have its programs dubbed in France, what message is it sending to private international broadcasters like Disney+ and Netflix?

Does my hon. colleague have a proposal addressing that? Does he agree with the Bloc Québécois's motion to require that programs be dubbed in Quebec if they are going to be broadcast in Quebec?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. If a program is broadcast in Canada, it should be dubbed in Canada. There is no question about that.

Radio-Canada should be promoting the Quebec accent, the Acadian accent, the Franco-Colombian accent and the Franco-Ontarian accent. I think it sends a very negative message, as she said so well, to say that we are not going to respect the beauty of Canada's French accents. Yes, regional variations do exist. The Montreal accent is not quite the same as the accent in the place where I learned French, in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. The reality is that our French is beautiful and it deserves to be broadcast. Dubbing needs to be done here.

I think that Radio-Canada got the message. I certainly hope it will not happen again and that the broadcaster realizes the importance of respecting the beauty of our French language.

• (1205)

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, like the member, I was shocked to learn that CBC chose to hire a company from Paris to avoid the Quebec accent. Quebec has a world-class industry. It is ridiculous that this was not done in Quebec.

I was also shocked to learn that CBC executives received multi-million dollar bonuses while laying off workers. The Conservatives want to slash and gut the CBC and reduce funding for public broadcasting. This is the Conservatives' partisan objective.

That said, the Liberals continue to give ammunition to the Conservatives. The Liberal Privy Council approved these multi-million dollar bonuses. The Conservatives want to cut CBC funding. We, the New Democrats, want to invest and fix these problems.

Could the member speak about the need to stop paying multi-million dollar bonuses to executives and use that money to invest in local journalism?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Victoria for her question, which she asked in impeccable French. It just goes to show how important official languages are. We have two members from British Columbia speaking to each other in French in the House.

I do not think the Bloc Québécois will ever admit that the French language has a presence all across Canada. It is spoken in British Columbia, where the francophone population continues to grow. Members from the other side of the country, 5,000 kilometres from here, are speaking to each other in French in the House. This shows the importance of bilingualism. This shows the importance that New Democrats attach to the French language. That is why we want Radio-Canada and CBC to continue together.

The Conservatives want to cut everything. They want to run roughshod over Radio-Canada and the CBC and destroy them. Sometimes they do not like the CBC saying things that expose their contradictions. Sometimes, the CBC gives the Conservative Party's positions plenty of air time. It does the same thing for everyone. Sometimes our party is criticized. Sometimes we are appreciated. It is the role of journalism to criticize us sometimes. The Conservative leader, the member for Carleton, does not want to hear any criticism. He does not want to hear any questions that might be tough or difficult to answer. He just wants to do away with it. I find that unfortunate.

The fact that bonuses are being given out is just more ammunition. People say that it is important to support local journalism. The NDP has never shied away from the topic. We have always been very clear. We want Radio-Canada and CBC to invest at the local level, we want journalism to be encouraged. Unlike the Liberal government that allows these bonuses to continue and the Conservatives who want to destroy everything, the NDP proposes a role for Radio-Canada and CBC across the country. The NDP has respect for both official languages, which the other political parties are lacking. That is a speech for another day, but when we look at the NDP governments across the country, they have always respected the official languages. That is something that is important. We are proving again today that two MPs from British Columbia can debate each other in French.

• (1210)

[English]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

[Translation]

It was wonderful to hear the speech by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby and see that there are anglophone MPs from British Columbia who speak impeccable French in the House. Today we saw anglophone members from all parties who are able to manage in French in the House. This is part of Canada's richness. We have people who come from one community, learn each other's language and love each other's culture. We are trying to flourish together in a country that is much bigger than a single province.

As for the dubbing issue, it is absolutely shocking that CBC chose a Parisian studio to do the dubbing. There are very talented people all over Canada. There has been a lot of talk about the industry in Quebec, but there is also an industry in Acadia and other parts of Canada. There are skilled francophones throughout Canada. There has been a lot of talk about the Quebec accent, but there is not just one Quebec accent. There are many different accents in Quebec. There are also francophone accents from all over the country. I think it is completely contradictory that CBC/Radio-Canada says it wants to promote French and support Canada's various cultural institutions but chose not to use a Canadian firm for the dubbing work.

I, too, completely agree that CBC/Radio-Canada management has some explaining to do. I saw Ms. Tait's appearances before the committee. I would like to ask her a number of questions, not only on this matter, but on a number of other issues as well.

There are definitely some problems with CBC/Radio-Canada management, but this institution is still very important, not only for francophone communities but also for all anglophone communities in Canada.

[English]

The CBC is an institution that helps unite this country. We can go back to *La famille Plouffe* from the 1950s, a show broadcast in both French and English. That allowed Canadians from all across the country to understand what was going on across Canada, and it bridged linguistic gaps that sometimes seem insurmountable.

[Translation]

There are francophone populations in Canada. Most of them are in Quebec, but they do exist across the country. I have visited francophone communities in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, even Saskatchewan and, certainly, here in Ontario. Radio-Canada is so important in those communities. Unlike in Montreal, where we have TVA and other networks and programs, in some parts of Canada, Radio-Canada is the only station they have.

[English]

The same is true for English-speaking Quebecers who live outside the Montreal region. The Conservative Party's position to cut the English CBC means that English-speaking taxpayers across the

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country will be paying to have only the French service, not the English service. How long do we believe governments will sustain Radio-Canada when English-speaking taxpayers turn against having a network that only broadcasts in French as our national broadcaster?

More importantly, while Conservatives pretend they care about the English-speaking community of Quebec, this is just one example where they clearly are not thinking of English-speaking Quebecers. Whether it is Saguenay, Gaspé, Côte-Nord, Rouyn-Noranda or Quebec City, there are many parts of Quebec where the CBC is the primary vehicle for English-speaking Quebecers to get local news in English. They have no other local vehicle that does that.

If we were to cut all of the English services of the CBC, we would be depriving the English-speaking community of Quebec, 1.3 million people, all of those who live outside of Montreal, the chance of getting their news in English. How can any party support that position? Why should we pay taxes toward denying one language community a broadcast in their own language? Then there is the question of francophones outside of Quebec.

• (1215)

[Translation]

Outside Quebec, Radio-Canada and CBC share resources. People who produce French-language programs outside Quebec generally also do English-language work for CBC. It makes no sense to deprive all Radio-Canada offices outside Quebec of the vast majority of their resources. This policy should be changed. We should all be saying that Radio-Canada and CBC are important, not only for news broadcasting, but also for Canada's national unity.

[English]

I also want to deal with the question that the NDP brought up about bonuses. The question of whether to pay bonuses when employees are being cut is a very legitimate question. It is not wrong to ask those questions. It is not wrong to ask questions about whether Ms. Tait should get a bonus, given performance and all the issues about which we are talking. It is perfectly appropriate for the committee to have those discussions and to inform itself on that matter.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the manner in which the member expresses the future of Radio-Canada, that we should not be taking it for granted. If the Conservatives defund CBC, as they have said they would, that would follow. At the very least, Canadians need to be aware that this is a very serious issue, if we believe in public broadcasting and the independence of journalists. Doing investigative reporting and other reporting, something to counter social media, for example, is absolutely critical for our democracy.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on that.

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**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the country will long sustain Radio-Canada without the CBC. As I mentioned, Radio-Canada services outside Quebec, where the populations are the most vulnerable, are using CBC offices, CBC cameras, CBC equipment and CBC personnel to cover the news and to do shows in French. The idea that Radio-Canada would sustain itself outside of Quebec very easily without the CBC being there is a fallacy.

The second thing is that I do not believe English-speaking taxpayers will agree to pay for the service to be available only in French and not in English.

Finally, it would be drastically unfair to the English-speaking minority in Quebec, who would lose their only source of news in most parts of Quebec, if we took away their service in English. It is supposed to be a national broadcaster uniting us, not dividing us.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague raised a point that I wanted to address earlier when I questioned the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. He talked about national unity and the fact that anglophone taxpayers would not be okay with paying for a French-only service if the CBC were abolished. I am a separatist, obviously, and that does not bother me. However, I would like to know what the member for Mount Royal thinks about the need for Canada to retain both official languages if it wants to ensure its long-term survival. Former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau said it was a matter of realpolitik. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that argument.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to welcome my colleague to the House. This is the first time we have had the opportunity to share ideas. I agree, this is realpolitik. Canada is a bilingual country where both official languages are supposed to be present in every province, with national services available in both languages. I will always fight to ensure that all services available in English are also available in French. Sometimes they are not. Sometimes, things are not equal but they should be, always, 100% equal. I believe that CBC/Radio-Canada provides an important service to the entire country. We should ensure that it is available in both official languages.

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his valuable response.

If the Canadian government, led by the Leader of the Opposition, were to cut services to anglophones, including in the province, would my colleague not be convinced that Quebec needs to be independent? Does he not think that a Quebec republic could better protect the rights of anglophones in Quebec than the current constitutional framework? I would like to hear his thoughts on that.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, I am a proud Canadian. I love this country from coast to coast to coast.

Apparently, one need only look at the separatist governments that have taken power in Quebec to see that very few people in Quebec's anglophone community believe our rights would be better

protected in an independent Quebec than in Canada. That said, I would have a major quarrel with any government that cut the CBC or Radio-Canada.

I worked with the Bloc Québécois on a number of cultural issues at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We need to have the debate here and change any government that does that kind of thing.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the Conservative leader's tactics to divide Canadians and create conflict between francophone and anglophone communities. My riding has a very strong and proud Franco-Ontarian population. Many francophone communities are in rural areas. In my region, Radio-Canada is essential. In northern Ontario, it would be impossible to separate Radio-Canada from CBC because it is the same company.

Why are the Conservatives trying to use divisive politics to force a confrontation between francophones and anglophones across Canada?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. His comments give me the opportunity to share another obvious point. There is a member from northern Ontario here in the House who speaks perfect French. It is proof that Canada can work.

It is true that, in the hon. member's region, Radio-Canada's resources are mixed with the CBC's. Therefore, if the CBC is cut, all the equipment, all the trucks and all the people who work for Radio-Canada will be gone as well. It is very divisive.

I encourage my Conservative friends to change their policy, which is not good for anglophones, not good for francophones, not good for Quebec and not good for any other province.

• (1225)

[*English*]

**Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking members of the standing committee for their examination of the issue of the adaptation of CBC/Radio-Canada's audiovisual content for the international market. I would also like to thank the representatives of CBC/Radio-Canada, Ms. Catherine Tait, president and CEO, and Mr. Marco Dubé, chief transformation officer and executive vice-president for people and culture, for appearing before the committee as witnesses.

In its report, the committee reported to the House "its deep condemnation of the CBC using a Paris-based audio studio to record a podcast, choosing it over a Quebecois-based recording studio."

If we are to understand the situation, it is worth reviewing the facts of the matter. On October 11, 2023, the Journal de Montréal reported that CBC/Radio-Canada had selected a company based in France to create a French adaptation of its podcast, *Alone: A Love Story*, choosing it over a Quebec-based recording studio to avoid the recording being done in a Quebec accent.

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The podcast, released in 2017 and created by CBC/Radio-Canada employee Michelle Parise, has won multiple international awards and much acclaim from international press. The Paris-based studio Ochenta, in collaboration with Radio-Canada OHdio, was commissioned to adapt the Canadian podcast into French and Spanish. The decision was made in part because using a narrator with a Quebec accent would have less international potential.

Cecil Fernandes, an executive producer at CBC Podcasts, a subsidiary of CBC/Radio-Canada's English language network, was quoted as saying, "We didn't want a Quebec French, to foster international interest... We wanted to reach out to a larger audience to tell Michelle's story. The Ochenta studio made us a pitch to translate it into French and Spanish. We decided to work with them for their experience in adaptations and to reach out to international audiences."

The article naturally led to questions, particularly in Quebec, as to why CBC Podcasts chose to ignore Quebec's expertise in the field of dubbing, and to complaints from people in the province working in the arts and cultural industries.

For example, Tania Kontoyanni, president of the Union des artistes, stated, "For a podcast produced and broadcast in Quebec, the narration should be done by local artists. And especially in the context of a Canadian podcast translated into French." Similarly, voice actor Sébastien Dhavernas stated that the decision showed a "disrespect for our industry."

There are certainly Canadian studios that are able to adapt podcasts. The Journal de Montréal article mentions Quebec companies ContenuMultimedia.com and Toast Studio, for example. Indeed, CBC Podcasts has previously worked with Radio-Canada itself on the French adaptation of the podcast *Brainwashed*, which is hosted in standard French by Quebec journalist and columnist Sophie-Andrée Blondin.

That is the background to this issue. With that in mind, I can say that the government echoes the committee's review that CBC/Radio-Canada's use of a Paris-based recording studio for this work instead of a Quebec-based recording studio was a lapse in judgment.

It is true that the decision should be taken in context. To quote the head of CBC/Radio-Canada during her testimony to the standing committee:

I think it's important to know that the CBC/Radio-Canada teams produce hundreds of programs every month, thousands of hours of programming in both official languages and eight Indigenous languages. In this case, one mistake was made among the thousands of hours of programming.

Furthermore, it is also true that section 46(1)(d) of the Broadcasting Act gives the corporation the power to "make contracts with any person, within or outside Canada, in connection with the production or presentation of programs originated or secured by the Corporation." Nonetheless, it is clear that CBC/Radio-Canada should not have acquired the services of a foreign company for this work rather than look to domestic opportunities.

What is important to remember, however, is that this mistake does not represent how CBC/Radio-Canada generally operates. CBC/Radio-Canada is a thoroughly bilingual organization. Radio-

Canada is headquartered in Quebec and produces a myriad of French language programming.

As Mr. Dubé noted in his testimony to the standing committee, eight members of the corporation's senior management team are francophones. That represents the majority of members. The senior management team works in English and in French at all of its meetings and makes business management decisions exercising considerable concern for balance between English and French. Half of the corporation's workforce in the organization as a whole is francophone and the other half anglophone. As Ms. Tait said, "I would dare say that we are one of the most bilingual businesses in the federal family."

• (1230)

Even more importantly, CBC/Radio-Canada itself agrees that its original decision was a mistake. Almost immediately upon publication of the Journal de Montréal story on October 13, Catherine Tait, president and CEO, wrote to Tania Kontoyanni, president of the Union des artistes, acknowledging the error. In her letter, Catherine Tait stated clearly that "it was an error, period. We admit this unequivocally and we apologize for it... We are fortunate to have, here in Canada, an outstanding dubbing industry that works with very talented actors. We often use their services, and that is what we should have done in this case". She also admitted the corporation's initial response to media questions was lacking in sensitivity.

Furthermore, she promised CBC/Radio-Canada will review its practices to ensure this sort of mistake would not occur again.

At the same time, Mr. Marco Dubé, chief transformation officer and executive vice-president, contacted the association with the same message.

Ms. Tait also appeared as a witness before the standing committee on November 8, 2023. During her testimony, she again apologized, not only confirming that the failure to use Canadian dubbing expertise was an unfortunate incident and mistake, but also reaffirming that the corporation's initial attempts to justify it were deplorable, hurtful and unacceptable. Ms. Tait indicated the corporation would withdraw the French episodes for the time being and re-record them. The adaptation of the podcast will be made in this country and Radio-Canada will be responsible for it. Production is already under way and the new version will be online at the beginning of the summer.

Ms. Tait also reaffirmed during her appearance at the standing committee that steps are being taken to ensure there will be no repetition of this sort of error. At the same appearance, Mr. Dubé, head of transformation and senior vice-president, confirmed that the issue was discussed with the teams who made the decision and that they understand the scope of their error. More specifically, the corporation has introduced measures to ensure that when CBC teams are required to interpret or translate a podcast into French, they call upon Quebec firms.

It is equally important to note the reaction from the industry to this apology. "We accept the apology and pass it on to our members", said Ms. Kontoyanni in a press release on October 13.

*Routine Proceedings*

To sum up, this was an error. CBC/Radio-Canada has taken note of it, has acted to correct it and will ensure it does not reoccur. While regrettable, this incident does not reflect on CBC/Radio-Canada's fundamental values or the work it does.

I will conclude by simply quoting Ms. Tait once more:

We know how much people depend on us, particularly in minority language communities where we are one of the few media broadcasting in the French language. We take our commitment seriously, particularly our ability to support the health and vitality of the French language every day across the country.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in what universe would any single member of the Conservative Party care about public broadcasting? It is impossible. They live and feed in a swamp of disinformation. This is what elected Donald Trump.

The attack on the CBC is about attacking public journalism, just like the leader of the Conservatives attacked CTV, Global, the Toronto Star and The Canadian Press. Individual journalists have been targeted by the member who lives in Stornoway, who wants the world to live in a swamp of disinformation.

I am appalled that we are having to discuss contract choices made at what should be an arm's-length institution. There are many things I disagree with regarding the CBC. There are many times I rant as I listen to the radio driving in my car. However, I believe democracy requires an independent, credible media system.

The Conservatives sit there like numpties, laughing and ridiculing because they feed themselves on disinformation. They would not know truth if it came down naked, painted in purple, and danced all over their heads for two weeks. They have never seen truth because they live in a world of disinformation and are trying to reduce the rest of us to live in that fetid swamp.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that was a question, but I will thank the member anyway. If he is looking for an argument, he is not going to get one from me.

We all know why we are having this discussion in the House of Commons today. It is another opportunity for the Conservatives to attack the CBC, as they do day in and day out. As my friend rightly pointed out, their attack on media, public or private, is constant, outrageous and offensive.

The CBC serves a meaningful purpose. I represent the good people of Etobicoke—Lakeshore now, but I grew up in Thunder Bay. Without the CBC, I would not have had sports or news. I would not have had the information that all people in northwestern Ontario need to survive and get through the day. It is absolutely vital. This is nothing more than just another shameless attempt to attack the CBC to score some cheap political points.

● (1235)

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend across the way. In the midst of declining viewership and poor performance overall with the CBC, does he feel it was a prudent thing for the CBC to grant such massive executive bonuses, and why does he think his government would give the CBC the additional money to do that without putting in some checks and balances?

**Mr. James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member, as he knows. He is from Manitoba and I grew up in northwestern Ontario. We have a kindred relationship.

The answer is no, obviously. My reaction when I heard the news was, I am sure, identical to his own. At a time when employees are being laid off or having to take pay cuts, there is no place for bonuses and the type of behaviour that took place. However, let us deal with that in isolation. Let us not use that as just another weapon to attack the CBC.

I am happy to talk about that issue in itself and take measures to address it, but the CBC is an institution that is critical to Canada and Canadian culture.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague is this. A decision was made to ask a Parisian studio to dub the podcast instead of relying on the expertise of Quebecers or francophone minorities in Canada. What message did the CBC and, by extension, English Canada, send to Quebecers and francophones elsewhere in Canada by doing so? The message was that Quebec French and the French spoken in Canada is not presentable or exportable.

[*English*]

**Mr. James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, it sends the wrong message. Everybody I have heard speak today agrees with that. It was the wrong thing to do and the CBC agrees. It should not have done it. It apologized, the apology has been accepted and it is being rectified.

I can stand here and say I agree with the member, but I think she knows that already. The CBC said many times, in many appearances at committee and elsewhere, that it should not have been done. It was an oversight, a major error, and it is not going to happen again. It sends absolutely the wrong message.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Here we are again debating what the previous member just described as an isolated incident of poor judgment at the CBC. The problem with that argument is that, increasingly, it is not simply an isolated incident of poor judgment at the CBC. It is a continual string of mismanagement, scandal and decisions that run contrary to the best interests of Canadians.

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Today we are debating the CBC's decision not to support the strong bilingual nature of our country by using the homegrown talent we have, specifically in Quebec when it comes to the French language, by contracting local talent. A Canadian public broadcaster did not contract local talent because it did not want a Quebec accent on a podcast. How shameful is that? That continues a trend of mismanagement, scandal, waste and corruption that has defined the CBC in our country today.

We debate the amendment Conservatives have made. We do not concur in this report to send it back to be looked at further. What has become of the CBC is that it no longer represents the best interests of Canada. Over the last number of months, I have had the opportunity to be a part of the team leading the discussion on issues of heritage for the official opposition. We have seen it time and time again, as with the current CEO of CBC, Catherine Tait, and her refusals.

Just yesterday, in fact, I gave her an opportunity to make it crystal clear that she could show leadership to that organization by rejecting a bonus. She refused. She could show leadership by not accepting an exit or severance package as she departs the organization. She refused. In fact, it was revealed, I would suggest accidentally, because certainly it is not something to be proud of, that there is a 497K club at the CBC.

For those who might be curious about what a 497K club is, it was revealed there are more than seven executives at the CBC who make more than \$497,000 a year. On top of that, there is nothing to suggest it was not all of those executives who received bonuses. The average bonus was \$71,000 per executive. That is at a time when Canadians are hurting. Canadians are suffering, yet CBC executives are given bonuses higher than what the average Canadian makes in a year. That is absolutely unbelievable.

It is not just me who thinks this. It is not just Conservatives who think this. Increasingly, we are seeing how the waste, the scandal, the mismanagement and the bloat in organizations like that are simply inconsistent with what Canadians want. There was an editorial published in *The Globe and Mail*. I will quote the headline because I think it is worth putting on the record: "CBC president Catherine Tait's reign of error will not be soon forgotten".

As a new CEO comes in to lead the CBC in January, there will be very simple questions that need to be asked. At the top of the list is the need to ensure that this organization is not awarding big bonuses while cutting jobs, and that it is not seeing declining revenues, declining viewership and declining trust, yet lowering its own KPIs. For those watching, KPI is an acronym for "key performance indicator". That is what bonuses are paid out on. This is something that happens in government and the private sector. An organization will set targets known as KPIs. If those targets are met, there is a consideration of bonuses.

• (1240)

A number of years ago, CBC met, I believe it was, only three of 14 KPIs. That does not sound like a very good record. That does not sound like an organization that is being successful in its objectives. What happened the next year? All of a sudden, it met the majority of the KPIs. I believe it said that it met 11 of the 14.

If we were to take a quick glance at that, many would say that this is great, that it is doing fantastically. It went from three to 11 in a year. How did it do that? There must be some incredible things happening. That is until we start peeling back the layers, so to speak. One might ask what those layers are. Those layers are that the CBC, instead of improving its performance, simply lowered its targets. As a result, it was not simply that these were bar graphs in a chart, which were then published, that suggested that maybe it was doing better than it was. That is a very small part of what these KPIs are. Rather, what that means is that the organization then recommended big taxpayer-funded bonuses for its managers and executives.

We see this trend under the Liberals. They reward themselves for failure, yet refuse to take responsibility for what has become a series of incidences of mistakes, of mismanagement, of bloat, of paying out big dollars to those who support them and their agenda. This is all while Canadians suffer.

When it comes to defunding the CBC, I think, increasingly, Canadians are the ones who are singing this proverbial tune. They look at the bonuses and say that this is simply not worth the cost. They look at the programming, and they are not watching the programming. It is not like this is something that is being led by Conservatives. This is Canadians choosing to not watch CBC programming. It is clear and simple. The numbers prove it.

At committee yesterday, the CEO explained what connected TVs were and how they just recently discovered that Canadians were able to access content in diverse and different ways. What is very interesting about that is that Canadians are not surprised about the way that they can access content. Canadians have been accessing a diversity of content, which certainly does not line up with what the CBC offers, and increasing numbers of Canadians are looking for new and creative ways to see that content, yet here we have the CBC awarding itself big bonuses, and manipulating the information and the performance indicators. If we were to look at it at first glance, we would say that it is doing great. However, it is manipulating it to look good at a time when, by any objective measure, it can only be described as failing.

Here we are. We have an example of that. Despite the proud bilingual history of our country, what did CBC decide to do? It decided to outsource the dubbing of the French language of an English podcast to a company from Paris. It might have even been a similar to the CEO taking a taxpayer-funded, supposed break from her holiday in Paris to go to the Olympics because she had to be there. It could also be similar to the fact that the Liberals said yesterday at committee that being paid half a million dollars to be proud of Canada is certainly worth it when it comes to those at the CBC.

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We see how this record of failure and decline is what defines the Liberals. The message is simple: Is it worth the cost? To those French-language artists in Quebec, who could have gotten that contract, it seems like the CBC certainly did not prioritize them. We have now heard that the CBC is now, because of that mistake, reversing that decision and going back, at a cost to taxpayers.

The problem with failure is that it hurts everybody. When it comes to the future of the CBC, I think Canadians are making it clearer and clearer every day that it is not worth the cost. It is time to reject the bonuses. It is time to fire the Prime Minister. It is time to defund the CBC.

• (1245)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative members who speak should qualify their introductory remarks by indicating very clearly that the leader of the Conservative Party, for many years, has wanted to defund the CBC. Let us be very clear on that point.

We can take a look at a recent CBC news article, where Conservatives, referring to the leader of the Conservative Party, are saying, "He's the one who decides everything. His main adviser is himself ... The people around him are only there to realize the leader's vision." However, his vision is to get rid of the CBC. From my perspective, institutions such as the CBC, CTV and Global play a very important role in our democratic system.

Would the member not recognize that there is value in having a publicly supported CBC?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that that member would talk about control when the Liberals have to ask permission and have to apply to be able to go up to the microphone to speak in their caucus. It is unbelievable the level of control and manipulation that the Prime Minister and the Liberals have used to muzzle Parliament.

Here is the reality: The Prime Minister and the Liberals do not want an opposition that opposes the agenda. They do not want an opposition that highlights their corruption and incompetence. They want an audience. Well, I am sorry, but we were elected as the opposition, and when we run in the next carbon tax election, which hopefully comes soon, it will be Conservatives that present a vision for this country that will get this nation back on track.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to share on the issue of "not worth the cost". There is the member who lives in the 19-room mansion at Stornoway, which costs \$94,000 to operate and cost \$170,000 in repairs. When he moved from his swanky digs in Ottawa to his super swanky digs, he dinged us \$19,000 for—

• (1250)

**Mr. Ted Falk:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member's comments have absolutely nothing to do with the motion that is being debated.

**The Deputy Speaker:** As much as that may be off, it is questions and comments.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I know it hurts when the Conservatives have to look in the mirror.

However, there was a \$4,000 water bill for April and May, and a \$7,506 bill for the months of July and August. Here is the thing: The member also has a private chef. If the Conservatives are serious about this, how about they forego the chef? Now, I know that "forego" is a complex word, so maybe we can put it into a bumper sticker. It could be this: "F the chef and be accountable".

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, that member and the NDP party as a whole are flip-flopping on their flip-flop, which flopped and flipped. When it comes to the reality they have before them, they came out and said that they were not a part of this coalition arrangement to squeak out a by-election win in what used to be a safe seat for them. Then they flipped, so that an election would not be called because they looked at the polls. Then they flopped again because they are now trying to pretend that they care about accountability, yet just the other day, they said that they had come to this amazing agreement with the Liberals. Now they have said that it is no longer what they bargained for.

Well, when it comes to what is not worth the cost, it is that member and the leader of the fourth party in this place who need to look Canadians in the eye and justify why they keep the corrupt Prime Minister in power.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech contained some interesting information, but I still have one question.

My colleague spoke a few times about the fact that the Conservatives could soon come to power. If that were the case, would it not be a mistake to defund a network that produces reports and investigations that are very important to democracy? Should he not instead take a cautious approach to reducing CBC/Radio-Canada funding, especially considering its outstanding investigative reporting?

[English]

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, even the president and CEO of the CBC, Catherine Tait, and Liberal members acknowledged that Parliament brought the public broadcaster into existence, and Parliament can decide its future.

That is so important to highlight because we have an example where, in our system, Parliament is supreme, yet the Prime Minister and the Liberals are doing everything in their power to reject the role that this place has in preserving Canadian democracy. It is shameful, and anything other than a government needing to heed the will of this place is a constitutional crisis. The Prime Minister and the Liberals have normalized constitutional crises in this country, and it is time for better.



Conservatives would bring home better when we run in the next election and offer a common-sense plan to Canadians. We do not take for granted one single vote, but when it comes down to it, Conservatives would offer a plan to Canadians and Canadians get to choose.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank my colleague for his excellent speech, which set the stage about the extreme lack of sensitivity shown by CBC/Radio-Canada and its president, Catherine Tait. While Canadians are struggling to make ends meet, the cost of food has doubled, the cost of housing has doubled and young families have no hope of becoming homeowners in Canada, someone made a decision to give \$18 million in bonuses to CBC executives. At a time like this, that is unacceptable and completely disconnected from reality. However, it is not surprising that the CBC is so out of touch. There is something I want to bring up.

Yesterday, in committee, the president of the CBC made a point of reminding us that CBC/Radio-Canada was founded in 1936, that since then the broadcaster has served the Canadian public and that she was very proud of what CBC/Radio-Canada has accomplished.

I took the liberty of consulting the history books to find out what led to the creation of CBC/Radio-Canada. The member for Winnipeg North was probably around when the Report of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting was tabled in the House in 1929. I am sure he remembers it. The report was presented to the Hon. Pierre-Joseph-Arthur Cardin, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who was responsible for telecommunications in this country at the time. The report states that “[t]he Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting was appointed by the Government to inquire into the existing situation in Canada and to examine the different methods adopted in other countries.”

That commission was created because nothing existed. There was no control and no way of ensuring that Canadians had access to radio waves and content. There was nothing. In 1929, the government decided to launch a royal commission of inquiry and give Mr. Aird the mandate to determine how Canadians could be better served. I will quote an excerpt from the report and I will try to make a connection with what is happening in the media sector and with regard to Radio-Canada. These are comments that were heard by the royal commission. The report says the following:

At present the majority of programs heard are from sources outside of Canada. It has been emphasized to us that the continued reception of these has a tendency to mould the minds of the young people in the home to ideals and opinions that are not Canadian. In a country of the vast geographical dimensions of Canada, broadcasting will undoubtedly become a great force in fostering a national spirit and interpreting national citizenship.

That was in 1929. Consider how the arrival of social media and the Internet has altered the state of communications today. Is that not exactly the situation we find ourselves in? What has the CBC done to foster a national spirit and sense of citizenship? Unfortunately, the CBC completely missed the boat. Just look at the CBC audience. Anyone who takes two seconds to really hear what I am saying will understand that I am talking about the CBC. We need to separate the CBC's role from that of Radio-Canada, which has been able to protect francophone culture in Canada and is still an impor-

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tant player in protecting that culture. I think it is important to look at what was done in the past. Later on, I will comment on an outrageous statement made by the president of CBC/Radio-Canada yesterday at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

I will read two recommendations from the royal commission report at the time. It says “any broadcasting organization must be operated on a basis of public service” and that “stations providing a service of this kind should be owned and operated by one national company.” It also mentions that “[i]t is desirable...that provincial authorities should be in a position to exercise full control over the programs of the station or stations in their respective areas.” A little further it states that every province should appoint a “Provincial Radio Broadcasting Director...who will have full control of the programs broadcast by the station or stations located within the boundaries of the province for which he is responsible.”

● (1255)

Over the past few years, Radio-Canada has responded and adapted to the situation by ensuring a constant presence at the centre of Quebec culture. Unfortunately, the numbers prove it. The same numbers that Ms. Tait cited yesterday show that the CBC audience is practically in ruins. The CBC no longer plays the Crown corporation role envisaged by the Aird commission back in the day, or as the act that created the CBC/Radio-Canada said it would at the time, in the 1930s.

We are also here to talk about the outrageous way that president Catherine Tait has flatly refused to give up any severance pay or bonus pay at a time when the Crown corporation is no longer fully assuming its role. Unfortunately, on her watch, we witnessed different positions that showed contempt for Quebec and Quebecers. It all started with the CBC podcast that was translated into French in Paris. That was when the full scope of the situation became clear. Why did they do that? They did it, apparently, out of dislike for the Quebec accent on the Radio-Canada side.

Instead of doing business with our experts and people from our culture, someone at CBC/Radio-Canada chose to have the podcast translated in Paris, supposedly because the Quebec accent was not good enough for the CBC. It was probably someone who works at the CBC, not at Radio-Canada. That set off a whole saga. Eventually, the president and CEO came to testify before the committee, where she apologized and said that such a thing would never happen again. Who did she apologize to, and what were the consequences? There were obviously no consequences, because they paid themselves bonuses. The 1,100 people at CBC/Radio-Canada who are not governed by union agreements got both raises and bonuses. That is what we learned yesterday when Ms. Tait appeared before the committee.

The translation of this podcast is a brazen attack by the CBC, so how can executives be allowed to collect bonuses, which are supposed to compensate excellence, when Canadians are suffering and cannot make ends meet at the end of the month?

*Routine Proceedings*

Unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois voted with the Liberals yesterday to defend the president and CEO of the CBC, who allowed the French-language podcast to be dubbed in France because the CBC did not like the Quebec accent. The Bloc Québécois preferred to defend the Prime Minister and the CBC's CEO instead of standing up and punishing her for showing such contempt for Quebecers. The motion defeated by the Bloc Québécois read as follows:

That the committee report to the House that it calls on the Liberal government's Privy Council Office to not approve any bonuses, performance pay, or severance package for the outgoing President and CEO of the CBC, Catherine Tait.

I think the Bloc Québécois should have listened carefully to what Ms. Tait said yesterday. I asked her if she had confidence in the people at Radio-Canada to ensure continuity and take over going forward to protect Quebec and francophone culture and identity for the country. She replied as follows: As I have said many times, are we going to ask Canadians to support a federal national institution for 20% of the population? Personally, I think that is a bit much.

What she said was beyond the pale. It is perfectly normal for the federal government to invest in protecting francophone culture in this country. It is absolutely necessary for the federal government to ensure that the necessary funds are maintained so that Radio-Canada can continue to play its role for francophones, because it has proven, with figures to back it up, that it has done so in recent years, and it will continue to do so if it has the support. Unfortunately, Ms. Tait should understand before she leaves that it is time to put an end to this policy of rewarding poor results.

• (1300)

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, but what I would like to see from Conservative Party members, especially francophones, is more courage. There seems to be talk that there will be no impact on francophone communities if the CBC is dismantled. That is completely false. It is a misunderstanding of how Radio-Canada and CBC share resources.

When will my colleague have the courage to stand up to his leader and say that eliminating CBC will have a direct impact on francophone communities?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell was one of the 24 members calling for the Prime Minister's head recently. I do not know if he has the courage to publicly say that he was part of that group of members calling for the Prime Minister to leave. I do not know if he has the courage to say which MPs do not share this Prime Minister's opinion.

What I can say to the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is that Radio-Canada is currently doing excellent work for francophones across the country. In Quebec, the audience is dwindling, but not as quickly as the CBC's audience. I think that if we put the right resources in the right places, francophones across the country will be pleased that we putting more emphasis on Radio-Canada.

• (1305)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

[English]

If a member participating in person wishes that the subamendment be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

\* \* \*

[English]

## PETITIONS

### AIR SERVICE TO INDIA

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I present a petition in regard to international flights.

The petitioners are asking for the House of Commons and others, whether they be members of Parliament, private industry, different airlines or levels of government, to take a look at just how important it is to recognize the growth of our Indo-Canadian community and the increased demand for more direct traffic between Canada and India or, at least, Europe. In particular, this petition is with respect to Winnipeg North. The petitioners hope they will see direct flights going from Winnipeg to India.

### TAX BENEFITS FOR SINGLE SENIORS

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from residents of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, including Sandy Knowles of Kitimat and Karen Sage of Terrace, with whom I met a couple of weeks back.

The petitioners wish to draw attention to the inequitable treatment of single seniors under the Income Tax Act. They highlight that income splitting rules allow couples to split their pension income, claim double non-refundable tax credits, transfer certain unused credits to a spouse and, when one partner dies, transfer retirement savings to the living spouse. Single seniors have none of these options available to them, putting them at a significant financial disadvantage.

The petitioners urge the government to introduce several measures specifically for single seniors, including a new tax credit, an increase to the pension income amount, an increase to the OAS clawback thresholds and an amendment to the tax treatment of registered retirement plans upon death. The petitioners eagerly await the government's official response.

• (1310)

LEAD TESTING

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers have been exposed to lead while in the workplace. I rise today to present a petition pointing out that exposure to lead needs close monitoring and that standard practices in Canada involve collecting blood samples instead of bone samples.

The petitioners note that blood samples have been proven to be less effective and much more costly than testing one's exposure in a bone sample. They also note that bone measurements are collected through non-invasive scans and can show the long-term cumulative effects of lead exposure. Lead exposure can have extremely detrimental impacts on one's health and can even be fatal.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the government to test individuals for lead exposure with bone data instead of blood data to create a more effective and cost-efficient standard of practice.

\* \* \*

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Questions Nos. 3001 and 3002, originally tabled on November 19, could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 3001—**Mr. Clifford Small:**

With regard to federally-funded salmon hatcheries in British Columbia, the Maritimes and Newfoundland and Labrador: (a) how many federally-funded salmon hatcheries are currently in operation in (i) British Columbia, (ii) the Maritimes, (iii) Newfoundland and Labrador; (b) what has been the yearly amount of federal funding spent on hatcheries, broken down by each of the last five years, in (i) British Columbia, (ii) the Maritimes, (iii) Newfoundland and Labrador; (c) how many salmon smolts were released in total from these hatcheries, broken down by each of the last five years, in (i) British Columbia, (ii) the Maritimes, (iii) Newfoundland and Labrador; (d) for each of the next five years, how many additional hatcheries are planned for (i) British Columbia, (ii) the Maritimes, (iii) Newfoundland and Labrador; (e) for each of the next five years, how many additional salmon smolts will be released in (i) British Columbia, (ii) the Maritimes, (iii) Newfoundland and Labrador; and (f) for each of the next five years, how much additional spending will be required for the additional hatcheries, broken down by each of the regions in (d)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3002—**Mr. Clifford Small:**

With regard to information held by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on Northern cod, Greenland halibut and redfish: (a) for Northern cod, what is the average catch rate (i) per net per hour in a 5.5 inch mesh in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization's (NAFO) areas 2J, 3K and 3L in kilograms, (ii) per hook used in NAFO areas 2J, 3K and 3L in kilograms, broken down by area in each of the last five years, based on fish harvester logbook submissions; (b) for Greenland halibut, what (i) is the average catch rate per net per hour in NAFO areas 2J, 3K and 3L in gill nets broken down by area in each of the last five years, (ii) percentage of migratory area is within Canadian waters compared to NAFO waters outside Canada's 200 mile limit, (iii) percentage of the quota is issued to the Canadian fleet vs NAFO allocation, (iv) has the biomass been for each of the last five years for the stock inside and outside Canada's 200 mile limit; and (c) for redfish, what is the biomass in NAFO areas 2J and 3K in each of the last seven years, broken down by area and year?

S. O. 52

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

U.S. TARIFFS ON CANADIAN PRODUCTS

**The Speaker:** The Chair has notice of two requests for an emergency debate concerning the same subject. I will invite the hon. member for Windsor West and the hon. member for Carleton to make brief interventions.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise to address this very serious issue with regard to Donald J. Trump, the incoming president of the United States. He has issued a threat to Canada's economic security, as well as our border security. In particular, a 25% tariff on trade is being proposed to be put on Canada. This would affect an industry that I am familiar with in my area, the auto industry, and every industry across Canada. It would also affect our capabilities as a nation to provide subsistence and good jobs for our citizens.

I believe the Prime Minister has already indicated that he will have a meeting with the premiers, and we support that initiative. There needs to be consensus and a strong position provided. However, members in the House of Commons need to participate in this debate. In addition, going forward, there is potential for a trade war that could erupt with our number one trading partner. This is really important and very serious. Canadians are already struggling to get by right now. They have enough difficulties with shelter and food, and job insecurity should not also be brought to bear.

In summary, New Democrats are calling for this emergency debate because of the serious nature of this. In past practice, Donald Trump has moved against Canada's interests with regard to trade barriers and other issues we had to deal with. What is notable in his expression of interest about this subject matter with Canada is that he has also challenged our border service officers, which is—

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt the hon. member for Windsor West for a moment. There is a point of order being raised by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would like a clarification of the rules. When members want to get the attention of the Speaker, my understanding is that they are to stand in their place and the Speaker will acknowledge them.

### *Privilege*

The leader of the Conservative Party has been standing in his place for quite a while and has not been recognized. If he is standing on a point of order, in defence of the leader of the Conservative Party, he should be recognized.

• (1315)

**The Speaker:** Is the member for Carleton rising on a point of order? If not, then I will invite the hon. member to sit down until the hon. member for Windsor West has finished his intervention.

I would ask the hon. member for Windsor West to please continue his intervention.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, I will summarize and be brief so the member for Carleton can rise quickly on this as well. I just want to conclude by noting that Mr. Trump has also questioned the safety and security of our border. I want to remind the Canadian public that in 2014, we lost over 1,000 different CBSA officers who were laid off through cuts. Subsequently, during COVID, there were two ranches of CBSA officers who could not be trained.

Right now there is a shortage of 2,000 to 3,000 officers on the front lines that affects our capabilities as a nation, and this should be part of the general discussion because Mr. Trump has also identified it as a weakness for our nation.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are facing this economic threat at a time when Canada is very weak. Our economy is in free fall. Our GDP has shrunk faster than any other G7 country since the year before the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-five per cent of Canadians are living in poverty. The cost of housing has doubled. It has increased faster than in any other G7 country. Canadian families have more debt than in any other G7 country. This is all before President Trump's tariff threat.

We reject Mr. Trump's threats and propose an emergency debate to develop a plan that puts Canada first, a plan to protect our economy and our security. That is why we are calling for this debate. After nine years, Canadians are suffering. They can no longer cope with economic threats, especially after the damage caused by the current government here. Mr. Trump's tariffs, combined with the Prime Minister's taxes here in Canada, are untenable for Canadians. We need an action plan now.

[*English*]

Today's economic threat comes at a time of maximum economic and national security weakness. Our economy is collapsing, with the GDP per capita smaller than it was ten years ago, having dropped more than that of any other G7 country since the year before COVID. Our housing costs have doubled. Food bank use has doubled. Housing inflation has been the worst in the G7, as has household debt compared to income. Half a trillion dollars' worth of investment has poured out of our country into the U.S. Canadians already face a crippling quadrupling of the carbon tax, which by itself would send hundreds of thousands if not millions of jobs south of the border.

Now, sensing weakness, President-elect Trump threatens massive tariffs on our people and our economy. Canadians will not be able to eat, to heat their home and to house themselves if they face the

combination of NDP-Liberal tax hikes and American tariffs. That is why common-sense Conservatives are calling for an emergency debate to develop a plan to protect our economy and our security, a plan that puts Canada first.

We want a Canada first plan to defend our people. We as a Conservative team ask for the Speaker's approval to hold the debate as early as tonight. Let us put partisanship aside. Let us stand up for our people. Let us put our country first and foremost. Let us bring it home.

[*Translation*]

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank all hon. members for their interventions. I am now prepared to grant the request for an emergency debate concerning U.S. tariffs on Canadian products. This debate will take place later today at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1320)

[*English*]

### PRIVILEGE

#### REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak to the motion again today.

I would like to note with interest that the Leader of the Opposition just made an excellent request for an emergency debate. I am glad it was granted, and we look forward to talking more about the dual threats of both the Liberal economic plan, which is a disaster, and the proposed 25% tariffs that President-elect Trump has proposed. That dual threat really is something we need to be very concerned about, and I am glad we will continue to talk about it later tonight.

What the House is seized with now is a motion and a matter that have been before the House for quite some time. That is because the government refuses to obey a lawful order of the House to turn over documents regarding the very concerning scandal surrounding Sustainable Development Technology Canada's giving government contracts to Liberal insiders. The Auditor General found very troubling evidence that this was done

Millions of dollars were given to Liberal insiders, sometimes for zero work. Money was simply transferred from hard-working taxpayers to the government coffers and into the pockets of Liberal insiders. This is what we are here to talk about.

I want to go back to the original motion that started the whole thing in June. On June 10, the motion proposed by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and seconded by the member for South Shore—St. Margarets stated:

That the House order the government, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) and the Auditor General of Canada each to deposit with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, within 30 days of the adoption of this order, the following documents, created or dated since January 1, 2017, which are in its or her possession, custody or control:

- (a) all files, documents, briefing notes, memoranda, e-mails or any other correspondence exchanged among government officials regarding SDTC;
  - (b) contribution and funding agreements to which SDTC is a party;
  - (c) records detailing financial information of companies in which past or present directors or officers of SDTC had ownership, management or other financial interests;
  - (d) SDTC conflict of interest declarations;
  - (e) minutes of SDTC's Board of Directors and Project Review Committee;
  - (f) all briefing notes, memoranda, e-mails or any other correspondence exchanged between SDTC directors and SDTC management; and
  - (g) in the case of the Auditor General of Canada, any other document, not described in paragraphs (a) to (f), upon which she relied in preparing her Report 6—Sustainable Development Technology Canada, which was laid upon the table on Tuesday, June 4, 2024;
- provided that,
- (h) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly thereafter notify the Speaker whether each entity produced documents as ordered, and the Speaker, in turn, shall forthwith inform the House of the notice of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel but, if the House stands adjourned, the Speaker shall lay the notice upon the table pursuant to Standing Order 32(1); and
  - (i) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall provide forthwith any documents received by him, pursuant to this order, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The question was put on the main motion, as amended, and it was agreed to on the following division: yeas 174 and nays 148. The House voted on the motion and agreed on June 10 that we would request the documents, which the government, the Auditor General and SDTC have in their possession, and that those documents would be turned over to the RCMP. Therefore a lawful order for the production of papers was received.

The problem has become that the Liberal government believes it is above and can ignore that lawful order of the House of Commons. Even though the House has made it very clear what its intentions are and what it requires of the government, in a lawful order, the government has decided it is above it. Liberals have decided they can ignore the demand of the House of Commons because they believe their government, their Prime Minister's Office and their Privy Council Office know better than the House of Commons. That is not how it works.

• (1325)

The Speaker himself ruled that the government had violated the privileges of the House in refusing to acknowledge, accept and obey a lawful order of the House. The government is in breach of our privileges. It is a prima facie case that the government has breached the privileges of every member of Parliament and the House, because it is not up to the Prime Minister to determine which lawful motions he ignores or accepts. As the Speaker said very clearly in his ruling:

The procedural precedents and authorities are abundantly clear. The House has the undoubted right to order the production of any and all documents from any enti-

### *Privilege*

ty or individual it deems necessary to carry out its duties. Moreover, these powers are a settled matter, at least as far as the House is concerned.

He went on to quote Speaker Milliken, who said, “procedural authorities are categorical in repeatedly asserting the powers of the House in ordering the production of documents. No exceptions are made for any category of government documents”.

The government has tried to invent its own reasons and to create exceptions where there are none. The House is the only entity that can grant exceptions, yet for months now the government has refused to turn over the documents. I wonder why. We know it is because the government has been caught with its hand in the cookie jar once again; Liberal Party insiders have rewarded themselves with taxpayer money.

The Auditor General found that the government had turned Sustainable Development Technology Canada into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. A recording of a senior civil servant slammed the outright incompetence of the government, which gave 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately.

This is not made up by a member of the House or a media source; The Auditor General found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that, on occasions, could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or development of green technology. In other words, \$58 million went to 10 contracts that had nothing to do with SDTC and did not fulfill its mandates.

Board members held a conflict of interest in \$334 million over 186 cases. The Auditor General did not look at the whole program; she just took a sampling of it and found 186 cases in which the government had allowed board members who held a conflict of interest to get a total of \$334 million, of which \$58 million went to projects without ensuring that contribution agreement terms were met. The best part is that some of the projects were both ineligible and conflicted, so they had the double whammy.

The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for the scandal falls very clearly on the Prime Minister and his Minister of Industry, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts given to Liberal insiders.

The matter was brought up as soon as the House returned from the summer recess, because the government had failed during the summer recess to meet the requirements of the House. They were not suggestions, a good idea, a guideline or a time frame. The exact times, the deadlines, were outright ignored in some cases.

This is a refusal to acknowledge the supremacy of the House when it comes to demanding the production of papers. Sometimes the Liberals just said no. Other times, in their infinite wisdom, they said that we cannot see some of the information, and they blacked it all out so the relevant information was not included. At still other times they ignored the deadlines or were late, and those sorts of things.

*Privilege*

● (1330)

In other words, they showed contempt for the House and continue to show contempt for the House. We could go on to other matters today if the government released the documents, as ordered by the House. This is not a suggestion. This is not just from the official opposition. The majority of the members of the House of Commons, 174 members, have demanded this, as is our right as members of Parliament. It is very clearly laid out that we have individual privileges and rights as members, but the House has collective rights as well, and a key one is demanding the production of papers. The government might not like it. It might like to retroactively say that the motion was not in order, but it does not get to make that decision. The House alone decides. The House has decided, and the government continues to ignore the House.

We are now approaching December. We have the threat of a 25% tariff on our doorstep. We have plummeting standards of living for Canadians vis-à-vis our American neighbours. Food prices are up 35%, gas prices are up 50%, rent is up 33% and mortgage payments are up 73% after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government. There is a crisis out there, but the government refuses to comply with the demands of the Speaker, refuses to comply with the demands of the House and continues to hold up the House's business. It refuses to acknowledge, accept and comply with the House order. Until the Liberals does that, we will continue to debate this motion. We will continue to discuss and demand that the rights and privileges of the House are respected. The Prime Minister does not get to simply overrule the rights, privileges and will of the elected House of Commons.

It comes back to this: Who do we serve? We serve the people who sent us here. I serve the people of Chilliwack—Hope. I do not serve the member for Carleton, and members of Parliament opposite should not serve the Prime Minister. They should serve their constituents. They should remember that unless they sit in the first two rows, their job is to hold the government accountable, just as it is our job.

Many of the members who get up every day to defend this nonsense are not even members of the government; they are members of the caucus that holds government. They have a duty to hold the government to account, and they fail in that duty every day they defend a Prime Minister overruling the rights, privileges and lawful motions of the House of Commons.

This is not the first time they have done it. When the Winnipeg lab scandal came to the fore just before the last election, the government took the House of Commons and the predecessor to the Speaker to court. The Liberals refused to accept a motion. They refused to accept a Speaker's ruling, and they basically told the Speaker they would see him in court. They would not obey the House order and would not accept the vote of members of Parliament, who are sent here to represent their constituents.

That is how this is supposed to work. We represent our constituencies. We represent our constituents. There is no higher power in the land than the House of Commons, not the Prime Minister, not the PCO, not the bureaucracy. They do not get to decide when the House has already made a decision.

For months, the government has refused to accept a lawful motion of the House. That should be concerning to all members and all Canadians, because while in this case the Liberals might not like what the motion says, might quibble with what will happen with the documents and might try to hide behind the fig leaf of technicality, what they do when they undermine the supremacy of the House, the rights and privileges of the House, is they give license to a future prime minister to do it again.

● (1335)

If the Liberals say they will not accept the rights and privileges of the House of Commons and the motions it passes, a future prime minister will simply give the back of his hand to the House and decide that he or she alone knows better. We do not have that kind of system. The Prime Minister is supposed to be the servant of the House, not its master, and for too long the Prime Minister has believed that he is above members of Parliament on both his side and this side. We have seen the evidence of that, with dozens of his own members wishing he would take a walk in the snow. It snowed a bit today, so hope springs eternal, but we know what the Prime Minister thinks of his own caucus. Certainly, we know what he thinks of the motion that has been passed.

What are the Liberals protecting? Why have they gone to such lengths that for three months they have held up the work of the House by refusing to obey an order of the House? It must be pretty bad. Those documents must be worse than the \$58 million going to 10 projects for Liberal insiders and the \$334 million of questionable projects going to board of director members with conflicts of interest.

We know that the Minister of Environment has been implicated in this as well, having lobbied for a project while he was outside of cabinet and having received benefits while he was in cabinet. That is the record of the government. The Liberals are hiding the documents after saying that they would have the most open and transparent government in history. The only thing open is the cheque-books for Liberal insiders.

It is like an open bar if someone is a Liberal insider. They get access to government contracts. One member, one of whose names I could say because he has another name, has resigned from cabinet finally after fighting it. It is the member for Edmonton Centre. We saw what he was willing to do to get his hands on government money from his Liberal friends.

We are calling once again on the government to respect Parliament, to respect the vote that was held in Parliament in June, to respect the ruling of the Speaker that was issued in September and to respect the months of debate that have been happening in the House. It is clear that we will not go quietly into the night. We will not let this be shuffled off to some committee where the government can get its allies in the other parties to quietly bury it, as happens every day in the House when Conservatives bring forward motions. Behind closed doors at committee, they are quietly shuffled off and voted down or watered down.

This has to be decided here, because the vote happened here and the Speaker's ruling happened here. This can all go away if the government simply listens to the will of Parliament and respects its rights and privileges. We need to get back to the work that we have been called here to do. We believe that the government is imperiling our economy. We need to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the deficit, fix the budget and stop the crime. Those are our priorities, but our number one priority is ensuring that the House is respected, that the Speaker is respected, that Parliament is respected and that the government does the right thing and the lawful thing. It must turn over the documents today so we can get back to doing the people's business.

• (1340)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the motion asks to have the issue go before PROC. That is what the member should be talking about. What he chose to talk about instead is a motion in which the House says that it wants documents collected, unredacted, and sent directly to the RCMP. The Conservatives are upset because we are listening to what the RCMP is saying. We are listening to what the Auditor General of Canada is saying and other legal experts. The Conservatives have overreached here. That is the bottom line.

Let me quote a law expert, referring to the multi-million dollar game that the Conservatives are playing at great expense in many ways. Here is a quote from Steven Chaplin, former legal counsel:

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 to order producing documents....

Why should we listen to the self-serving leader of the Conservative Party over the RCMP, the Auditor General and other legal counsel?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind folks to keep questions and comments as succinct as possible.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the parliamentary secretary who he should listen to, and that is Parliament. One hundred and seventy-four members of Parliament voted yes to the motion, while 148 members, all Liberals, voted against it. I know the member might not like that, but 174 to 148 is all that matters.

Parliament has decided that these documents have been requested, and that is our right. As the Speaker and Speaker Milliken said, that right is uncontested as far as the House is concerned. If we want to put limitations on the types of documents we hand over to the RCMP, we will decide, as the House, what those limitations will be. What the parliamentary secretary is talking about is undermining the sovereignty of the House of Commons, and Conservatives will not stand for it.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I remember when Stephen Harper was found in contempt of Parliament, the only prime minister ever found in contempt. He was found in contempt over an issue very similar but much more serious, the Afghan detainee documents. Allegations had been made that Canada was involved in turning over what often turned out to be low-value suspects for torture and intimidation, in violation of

### *Privilege*

the Geneva Convention. Stephen Harper ignored Parliament, refused to turn over the documents and then prorogued Parliament and shut down the democratic process.

In this case, which is about turning over documents, the Speaker ruled that this matter should go to the PROC committee. I trust that members of the committee are going to make a decision about whether the Prime Minister is in contempt. However, to me, the real contempt of the House is that despite a ruling to send this to committee, the member who lives in the 19-room mansion Stornoway has shut down our work as parliamentarians, interfering with our rights and privileges. Meanwhile, the Trump agenda is rolling on, and we are sitting here as a broken democracy.

The role of Parliament is to ship this matter to committee. Members there can make a decision and return it to the House, and then we can decide whether the Prime Minister is in contempt. What is contempt is the refusal of the Conservatives to let us get to our work.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I see that the old habit of supporting the Liberal government at all costs and at all times is part of the member's DNA. It is part of what he wants to do.

He can talk to his own House leader about how the New Democrats use their time in the House. We have continued to talk about this matter. The member himself voted in favour of this motion, and he should be concerned that the government has ignored the result.

I was not elected at the time, but I remember that during a minority Parliament, Michael Ignatieff, Jack Layton and I forget who else pushed a motion forward and found the government in contempt. What happened after that? The 2011 election happened, and we had a strong, stable national Conservative majority government.

I would agree with the member. What we need is an election to really solve this. He is running away into retirement, but we will see everyone else on the hustings. I like our chances.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that gives me the perfect segue. We agree that Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, was badly mismanaged. The fund has been dismantled and everything is being transferred to the National Research Council of Canada, or NRC. If the Conservatives came to power, would they commit to maintaining funding for important sustainable development and green technology companies?

*Privilege**[English]*

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I believe it was a Conservative government that created this fund. Certainly, under the Conservative government, there was none of this insider trading, back-scratching and conflicts of interest, because we made it clear that this was an arm's-length entity. Navdeep Bains was warned that by politicizing the appointment of the chair, he risked ruining the entire fund, and that is exactly what happened, with \$58 million in contracts going to 10 Liberal insiders for no work done that we can determine and \$334 million for 186 conflicts of interest. That is the Liberal record.

We will continue to fund programs that deliver results for Canadians. We will not go down the road of the Liberals, which is about scratching their own backs, rewarding Liberal insiders, and then when caught, refusing to hand over documents to the RCMP.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the member for Chilliwack—Hope was giving an answer about the supremacy of Parliament in a democratic society, where the sanctity of votes in this chamber have to count for something as an expression of the democratic will of people, the parliamentary secretary was heckling the member and disagreeing that votes in Parliament were the final say in this matter, that Parliament was the voice of the people. I want to bring that to the attention of the member for Chilliwack—Hope, that he was being heckled by the member, who disagrees with him that the votes in Parliament are the final say in whom the Liberals should listen to when the government has had an order to release documents.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the Liberal member does not believe Parliament is supreme, that Parliament does not have the authority to make its own decisions and to have those decisions respected by the government. That is what the parliamentary secretary is saying. He is saying that the Government of Canada does not need to respect the votes and decisions that are made by the House of Commons, which means that the people whom we elect here do not have power in this place, and that is a very significant problem for the Liberal Party to wrestle with.

When the Liberals believe they have one master and it is the Prime Minister of Canada, that means they have disenfranchised all the voters in all our ridings. If they simply take orders from the Prime Minister and his department and are willing to do their bidding in contravention of a House order of a Speaker's ruling, that is truly contemptible.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, just so the member clearly understands, what I am saying is that 10 years from now, if we have a majority Conservative government and that majority government takes action that goes against the Charter of Rights or the Constitution, I will always oppose the abuse of power. That is what we see day in, day out already, and he is only the leader of the Conservative Party. We see the dictatorship-type mentality when he tells his Conservative caucus members that they are being monitored and followed, that reports are going back and that they get a gold star if they say what the Conservative Party wants them to say. Yes, I will call out a Conservative Party any time it abuses power.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, the member is currently and the Liberals are currently abusing the power of the government by ignoring a lawful motion of the House of Commons. Those were in-

teresting debate points that the member could have made before the motion was tabled.

If he believes the motion was out of order, the Liberals should have brought that to the attention of the Speaker, but they did not do that. The Liberals lost the vote and only after they lost the vote did they ignore the results of it and the demand to produce the papers. After the Speaker ruled that this had happened, then the Liberals came up with this charter rights argument.

The House alone determines which documents it requests. The House alone determines what limits are on those. We have made our voices heard. We have held a vote. We have seen the government treat that vote and the Speaker's ruling with contempt, and we will not stand for it.

• (1350)

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise again to speak to the subamendment. Every time I get up, I want to thank my constituents for sending me here. It is an honour and a privilege for all of us to be here, but we can never take it for granted. Every day we walk into the House, we are reminded of how amazing this place is.

I do not know if I will be up again before Christmas, so I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas, a happy new year, season's greetings and safe travels. I hope people get a chance to spend some great time with family.

Before I get started, I want to mention briefly how horrified I was to see what happened in Montreal this past weekend. I know our deputy leader spoke to it yesterday, and she did a very good job talking about it.

I am completely amazed at what I see happening in Canada. In fact, I have people reach out to me every day. They are telling me that Canada is not the country they remember it being. When I look at what has happened over the last nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, I see the reasons.

The question of privilege that we are talking about today is indicative of the things that the Liberals have done and the fact that they are not overly concerned about the rule of law and about dividing people. They have divided people in a number of different areas. When I look at what happened this weekend and if we asked anyone in the House or any guests in the gallery if they ever thought they would see this as part of their Canada, if anyone would have said they saw it coming, I do not think it was on the bingo card for 2024. It shows the government's lack of respect and how it does not treat these kinds of things seriously.



When we have a Prime Minister who is the great divider, who divides us on race and a whole bunch of issues, vaccine status being one of these things, who calls everyone a racist who does not agree with the government's policies or the concerns people have raised, it should be troubling. It should be troubling for Canadians to see such a lack of leadership. It is indicative of what is happening and what we are talking about today with respect to these documents. I know the last time I talked about these documents, I talked about the Winnipeg lab.

However, my colleague, the member for Chilliwack—Hope, said it best. We have an order of the House requesting that these documents be produced, and the government tells us not to worry about it, that it will give us some redacted documents that it thinks we need to see.

I am reminded of what happened with the Winnipeg lab in 2021. The government said that there was nothing to see there and not to worry about it at all because it was handling it. What did we see happen in Winnipeg? Dangerous vials were being sent by FedEx to China. If we want to talk about a government that is out of control, a government that has something to hide, it is the government on the other side and what it has done over the last nine years.

Let us review a bit of what has happened, and I know my colleagues have talked about this before. We are talking about the \$400 million and how that was handled. Members in the House have accusations against them. We have the two Randys story. We are not really sure where that is at moment. We have other ministers who have been involved possibly. The people in the gallery should think about this for one second. Their taxpayer dollars were sent to the government. They were then funnelled back to the Liberal Party of Canada. I wonder how that makes people feel? I know it does not make me feel very good.

Our job here is to represent our constituents. When I think about that, I think of the \$400 million now. I think of the sponsorship scandal. In fact, we have had so many scandals over the last nine years, I do not think I would have time in my 20 minutes to go through all them. When we are talking about one, another one drops off and we forget about the things that happened before. It is our job to remind voters of how incompetent the Prime Minister is at handling our economic affairs, not to mention our GDP per capita and the fact we are going to be at the bottom of the OECD countries over the next 20 to 30 years. We have a worse GDP than Mississippi.

All of these things are incredibly troubling when we think of all the great resources, abilities, people and talent we have in our country. We have the most educated citizens in the world, yet we have lost so much and made so many mistakes over the last nine years. It is troubling, but indicative.

• (1355)

When we look at what went on with the green slush fund, we find that a number of policies were not followed. Those policies were set in place so that people would not take advantage of the system. I know some of these numbers have been mentioned before, but we need to continue to talk about them. When we look at what one audit found, there were 10 ineligible projects for al-

### *Privilege*

most \$60 million, along with 96 cases where conflict-of-interest policies were not followed for \$75 million. The list goes on and on.

There were just under 200 conflicts of interest, where, once again, people with the inside track were able to take money from taxpayers and use it for their best interests. The Liberals say that we should not to worry about, that there is nothing to see. It is our job as parliamentarians to ask those questions and to get to the bottom of it. It is our job to request documents and not have them redacted, so we can see what went on.

The reason I say that is because we saw what went on before, such as with the Winnipeg lab. If we think about it, we had researchers in Canada who were working for the Chinese Communist Party. People who were trusted were working in a level 4 laboratory. When we requested documents, coincidentally just before the election, the Liberals basically said that we did not need them, that it was not our concern, that we did not need to worry about it. To me, that is very troubling.

If we look at what happened with the Winnipeg lab and if we look at what is going on with the SDTC, it gives us an indication of some of the challenges we are having with the economy. I am talking about where we are right now when it comes to GDP per capita.

The other challenge we have right now is that small businesses are hurting. Small businesses help create jobs in our country. I have a number articles in front of me. If we look at them, Canadian businesses are struggling big time. Business closures are up almost 5% over historical averages. Business openings are down 4.5%, below historic averages. The number of active businesses that are down are over 2,000. Business failures went up in 2023. Small businesses have had the highest numbers of insolvency in the last 36 years.

Small businesses have never recovered from the pandemic. They took on additional debt. Two or three small businesses took additional pandemic debt. They were promised a rebate, and we just learned this week it will possibly go out two or three years late. In fact, a number of businesses will probably not get that because they have already closed.

This shows us just how out of touch the government is when it comes to the economy, when it comes to how we create jobs, when it comes to what we do to help grow our economy and ensure people have food on their table. I have not even started to talk about what is going on with food bank usage. I have not even talked about the fact that people are skipping meals. There is not one part of the economy on which the government would get a passing grade. It is failing on almost every account.

When I come back after question period, I want to talk a bit more about some of the challenges we are facing.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

• (1400)

*[English]***CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM**

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, creating opportunities for young people is the reason I got into politics more than a decade ago.

*[Translation]*

It is why I appreciate the impact of the Canada summer jobs program back home.

*[English]*

Each year, Canada summer jobs provides wage subsidies to non-profits, faith groups, small businesses, universities and municipalities.

*[Translation]*

This lets them keep doing good and grow the economy.

*[English]*

The return we get from the program is enormous. It provides and creates work experiences for our youth; helps young Canadians enter the job market and succeed; and ensures we support our businesses and community organizations. Since 2021, I have been proud to secure over \$2.8 million in CSJ funding for youth and employers in Halifax West, creating well over 800 jobs.

From Maskwa and the Mount to our soccer clubs, day camps and francophone establishments, that support is making a huge difference. That is the value of a government and a member of Parliament that believe in investing in people and communities.

\* \* \*

**MESSAGE OF KINDNESS**

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, sadly, our Canadian society is divided. If we watch political discourse, turn on the news or follow social media, it appears that hatred, conflict and disagreement are the norm in this country. That is not how things should be. How do we change it?

May I suggest kindness? With growing fears, anxieties and unrest, kindness is something our country is desperate for. Kindness is a language we can all speak as it is not restricted by cultures, ideologies or borders. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:32 that we ought to “Be kind and compassionate to one another”. Instead of walls, kindness builds bridges.

Kindness is not always easy, as it takes courage to be kind in the face of hostility or indifference. We do not have to compromise our values or agree with everything and everyone in order to be kind. We need to just treat others with dignity and respect, even when, or especially when, we disagree.

It is always the right time to do the right thing. Let us seek to understand, listen without judgment, offer to help others and smile. Today and every day, let us choose kindness.

**AMBASSADOR OF ITALY TO CANADA**

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to His Excellency Andrea Ferrari, whose distinguished tenure as ambassador of Italy to Canada is soon coming to a close.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Ferrari for his invaluable contributions over the past several years. His unwavering support for the Italian Canadian community, of which I am a proud member, is rooted in deep appreciation of the rich cultural traditions we share and has been a cornerstone of fostering stronger bonds between our two nations.

His commitment to the success of the Italian Canadian business community has also played a crucial role in strengthening the economic ties between Canada and Italy. Ambassador Ferrari has also worked tirelessly in order to ensure that both countries capitalize on their shared strengths and has promoted our continued collaboration in upholding the global rule of law.

On behalf of all Canadians, I offer my warmest thanks and best wishes to His Excellency in his future endeavours.

To Andrea I say *tanti auguri di successo e grazie mille*.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***FISHERY FORUM IN CARAQUET**

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on November 14 and 15, the Bloc Québécois held its fourth fishery forum in Caraquet, New Brunswick.

Quebec and the Maritimes are not just linked by language, culture and a large part of our history. They are also linked by a big blue, the St. Lawrence River, the St. Lawrence Estuary and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as well as everything that lives in and around these waterways.

This process was a sincere attempt to hear from various stakeholders, fisheries experts, and to develop solutions for fishers, processors and organizations related to marine ecosystems. Our goal is, of course, to protect the resource and its biodiversity, but there is a critical species that is becoming extinct, and that is fishers.

I want to recognize the important contributions of scientist Lyne Morissette, seal expert Gilles Thériault, our host in Caraquet Jean Lanteigne, our moderator Gastien Godin, and of course, all of the shrimp, crab, pelagic, lobster and other fishers.

I thank them for their impeccable science in the interest of the survival of the Atlantic fishery.

• (1405)

### COMMUNITY OF ORLÉANS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 632 to support our veterans. I want to take this opportunity to thank the organizers, Serge Lavoie and Jim Grant, and all the volunteers for their efforts throughout the poppy campaign, which raised just over \$150,000. I want to thank the Orléans community for its continued generosity.

I also want to note that Jean-Pierre Saab, a teacher at the Garneau Catholic high school, received the Brian-Kilrea award at the 2024 Order of Ottawa award ceremony, which I attended. This award recognizes excellence in an amateur coach who embodies the best qualities of leadership and dedication. Congratulations to Mr. Saab on this tribute. He is an inspiration to our community and to all the young people in Orléans.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in all the years I have lived in the Hamilton area, I have never seen a crime crisis like this and I have never seen this level of concern for safety among residents in our community. In fact, the president of the Hamilton Police Association recently raised alarm bells about repeat offenders.

In the Hamilton area, 89% of crimes committed with a firearm are with guns smuggled into Canada from the United States. On top of that, vehicle thefts are up, break-ins are up and shootings are up. Shockingly, just 30 individuals in Hamilton are responsible for 196 charges. That is not just a statistic; it is a stinging indictment of the Liberal government's failed justice system. Its soft-on-crime approach is failing people in my community. Dangerous criminals are being released on bail only to reoffend. Canadians deserve to be able to sleep at night without worry.

Common-sense Conservatives will fix this. We will stop the crime; we will enforce jail, not bail; and we will restore safety to Canadian neighbourhoods.

\* \* \*

### IRAN

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I need to draw members' attention to the critical situation in Iran, particularly regarding its domestic repression.

Maryam Akbari is a woman languishing in jail despite finishing her 15-year prison term for seeking justice for her siblings, which is truly an alarming atrocity. Recently, Varisheh Moradi, a Kurdish woman, was sentenced to death in another sham trial in Tehran's revolutionary court. Women prisoners in Evin prison chanted protest slogans such as "Death to the dictator" and "Our lives may go, our heads may fall, but freedom will never be lost", demonstrating their resilience in the face of oppression. The number of executions in Iran since President Pezeshkian came to power in August has exceeded 500, setting a record even by this regime's norms.

### Statements by Members

I stand, and I believe we stand, in solidarity with female political prisoners urging the international community to demand an independent investigation and advocate for their release.

\* \* \*

### SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 30, 1874, one of the world's greatest statesmen, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, was born. He was an accomplished officer in the British army but caught the political bug, rising to become democracy's greatest defender in the 20th century. His leadership during World War II saved Britain and the world from Nazi tyranny and preserved the very foundations of the freedoms we enjoy today. Prime minister twice, he was a prolific writer and, in 1953, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his historical writings and speeches. While he faced many physical and mental health challenges, he did so with grace and dignity.

Many books have been written about Sir Winston Churchill, including James B. Conroy's 2023 *The Devils Will Get No Rest: FDR, Churchill, and the Plan That Won the War*. Churchill's quote "The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty" has inspired me time and again.

I thank Sir Winston and wish him a happy birthday.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal government, life has become unbearable for Canadians. Rents have doubled, mortgage payments and down payments are out of reach, and food banks are serving record numbers of people every month.

Who is enabling this catastrophic management of the economy? The Bloc Québécois. Instead of being there for Quebeckers, it is being there to serve the Liberal Prime Minister's interests. The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of 100% of the Liberals' spending, including \$500 billion in votes to grow the federal bureaucracy. Instead of voting for measures to reduce debt and taxes, the Bloc Québécois has been enabling all of the Liberal government's out-of-control spending.

This government is spending more than ever and making Canadians pay the price. Conservatives have a plan to fix the budget. We are going to shrink the public service and reinvest in families, because Canadians and Quebeckers deserve something better than the Liberal-Bloc coalition, which costs them too much and gives them too little.

*Statements by Members*

● (1410)  
[English]

**TAX RELIEF**

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we approach the holiday season, our government is making it easier for Canadians to celebrate by removing the GST and HST on a wide range of essential goods.

Starting December 14, Canadians can enjoy prepared food like vegetable trays, pre-made meals and sandwiches without worrying about added tax. Whether it is dining in or ordering takeout, restaurant meals are also exempt. Snacks like granola bars are also included because we know how important it is to have those treats during the holidays. For those raising young families, children's clothing, car seats, diapers and even toys like board games, as well as books, print newspapers and puzzles are also tax-free.

These are just a few of the many items that will make the holidays a little more affordable for Canadians. This is our government's way of ensuring the holidays are a time of joy and celebration for all.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Liberal government is not worth the crime or the chaos. Just this week, a Winnipeg police officer was stabbed in the neck during an arrest at a shopping mall. While I am relieved to hear that the officer is recovering, incidents like these are happening far too often under the Liberal government.

The 50% increase in violent crime since the Liberal government came to power is a direct result of the Prime Minister's soft-on-crime catch-and-release policies. The Liberals made life easier for violent criminals by repealing mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes with Bill C-5, made it easier to get bail with Bill C-75 and failed to stop the flow of illegal guns across the U.S. border.

Canadians deserve a common-sense Conservative government that will ensure repeat violent offenders remain behind bars while awaiting trial and will bring back mandatory jail time for serious violent crimes. A Conservative government will bring home safe streets.

\* \* \*

**LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberal policy failures, there is only one person keeping the Prime Minister in power and that is the leader of the NDP.

Do colleagues remember the NDP leader's big stunt when he told Canadians he had ripped up the coalition deal with the Liberals? It was a scam on voters of Elmwood—Transcona right before a by-election. Since that by-election, he has forgotten all those nasty words about the Liberals. He continues to support the carbon tax, sending Canadians to food banks in record numbers. This is a tax

that even the NDP Premier of B.C., David Eby, said he would scrap.

The NDP-Liberals' soft-on-crime policies have led to a 50% increase in violent crime, and their hard drug legalization that fuels crime, chaos, death and destruction in our communities is a failed social experiment. Every day the Prime Minister remains in power is because of the leader of the NDP. It is time for Canadians to have their say in a carbon tax election now.

\* \* \*

**TAX RELIEF**

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the holidays are a time for joy, for family and friends, and for giving back. For far too many Canadians, the rising cost of living adds stress to this special season.

We know the government cannot set prices at the checkout, but it can help put more money back into Canadians' pockets. That is why, starting December 14, we are lifting the GST and HST on many essential goods over the holiday season. This means no taxes on groceries, restaurant meals, children's clothing and toys. Even the family Christmas tree will have GST and HST taken off this holiday season. Grandpa will be buying a lot of presents for Arianna. By making many essential goods GST and HST free, we will be delivering meaningful savings for Canadians with real relief at the cash register.

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● (1415)

**CALL FOR JUSTICE IN POLICING**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, Inuit are strong. Inuit are still here. Inuit will thrive.

James Partridge, Felix Shappa Taqaugaq, Trey Angoshadluk and Solomon Uyarasuk are a few Nunavummiut who have either been hospitalized or died while at the hands of law enforcement. I thank their families for sharing some of their stories with me. I grieve with those who lost their loved ones. I share their demands for justice for their loved ones. We must keep their names alive until there is justice for them. Despite the efforts of colonial and genocidal policies, Inuit are strong. Inuit are still here. Inuit will thrive.

[Member spoke in Inuktitut]

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**COP29**

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, again this year, Canada ranks 62nd out of 67 in environmental performance. That is shameful. While Canada can only show failure after failure on the international stage, there is nothing but crickets from the Conservative side.

Is the COP29 failure symptomatic of Canada's failure in the fight against climate change? I would say so. Discussions in both Baku and here result in insufficient compromises and vague promises. There are no bold measures to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Why?

I have attended several COPs since the Paris Agreement, and I have noted the increasingly expected presence of oil producers, who seem to assume that their interests prevail over those of the planet. Their interference raises questions about the integrity and effectiveness of these global summits.

However, I remain confident, because not everyone is fooled by oil and gas companies while mesmerized by crickets.

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[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister said she wanted to “help Canadians get past that vibecession”.

I am not exactly sure what that means, but I do know that the Deputy Prime Minister has unleashed nine years of economic vandalism on Canadians. Canadians are poorer now than they were nine years ago. She might think that this is just bad vibes, but it is a fact from Statistics Canada. Half a trillion dollars have left Canada for the United States and have taken thousands of jobs with them. Does she think that those are just bad vibes? Does the Deputy Prime Minister think that, if Canadians are lined up at the food bank or cannot afford rent or their mortgage, it is their fault for having bad vibes?

Taxes are up, costs are up, the deficit is up and time is up. Canadians are desperate for change. They are ready for a common-sense Conservative government that would axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. I will leave the Deputy Prime Minister alone if she wants to talk about vibecessions.

\* \* \*

**TAX RELIEF**

**Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives pretend that they want to lower taxes, but when push comes to shove, they vote against it. Starting December 14, many items would be tax-free, and Canadians would be able to keep more of their money in their pockets, but not if the grinch in the Conservative bench has his way.

Today, with Christmas around the corner, many people are looking forward to the spirit of giving. We are hoping more families will have the opportunity to celebrate. I say to all members to not

be humbugs. Let us pass this tax cut and help everyone enjoy a very merry Christmas.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we need a plan for security and the economy that puts Canada first. The Prime Minister has known for months that Trump was threatening tariffs. The only plan he has at the moment is a Zoom call. There is no plan to reverse the drug liberalization policy that is of such concern to the Americans. There is no plan to fix the chaos the Prime Minister has caused at our borders. There is no plan to cancel the tax increases that are hurting our economy during this time of uncertainty.

Where is the plan to put Canada first?

● (1420)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had a good call with Donald Trump last night. I pointed out that we have been working together for years—for decades—to create prosperity on both sides of the border. By working together, we can solve the challenges we face together and create growth and prosperity for all.

We will always stand up for Canadian jobs and workers. We are going to do it with a team Canada approach that transcends partisanship, because we know that things work when we join forces. That is why I spoke with Premier Ford and Premier Legault last night, and we will keep working together to stand up for Canadians.

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**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, apparently the call did not work, because just a few minutes later, President Trump threatened Canada with tariffs. It is the same thing with softwood lumber and the Buy America program. After three presidents, in nine years, this Prime Minister has not made any gains for Canada.

Now, he has admitted that he broke the immigration system. We know that there are 700 international students in Canada who have to leave the country in about a year's time. They could illegally go south into the United States, which would pose a serious economic threat.

What is the Prime Minister's plan to fix the immigration system that he broke?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are international students who come from all over the world to study in Canada. They are here while they are going to school. Once they finish their studies, they return home. That is what happens in the vast majority of cases. We have measures in place to follow up, if people choose not to go home.

*Oral Questions*

We have an immigration system that responds to the challenges we are currently facing. That is why we slowed things down and reduced immigration to Canada to give our economy time to catch up. That is part of an immigration system that works and that responds to the needs of the time.

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[English]

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we need a plan for the economy and for security that puts Canada first, but, despite the fact the Prime Minister has known for years that Trump was threatening these tariffs, and for three weeks that Donald Trump had won the election, the only plan he has is a Zoom call. There is no plan to reverse his disastrous liberalization of the drugs that have killed people and now threaten our borders, no plan to fix the broken borders that he caused and no plan to cancel the tax increases that will drive billions of dollars and many jobs away.

Where is the plan to put Canada first?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, instead of panicking and falling back on slogans, like the Leader of the Opposition does, we rolled up our sleeves and are getting to work. We are working with all the premiers, pulling together in a team Canada approach, because that is how we defend Canadian jobs from coast to coast to coast.

I spoke with Donald Trump yesterday evening. We talked about how important it was for us to not only work together to solve some of the challenges we are facing as a continent and as countries, but also work to grow our economies and protect our workers on both sides of the border. This is the responsible, methodical approach we are taking as we move forward, while our opponent falls back on slogans and fear.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spoke with the incoming president and, moments later, Mr. Trump put out a tweet slapping a 25% tariff on Canada. That worked about as well as the Prime Minister's efforts on buy America and softwood lumber, which continue to be penalized even though the previous Conservative government got both of those things lifted.

Let us move over to drugs. The Prime Minister's disastrous legalization and liberalization of drugs has the Americans worried, in addition to costing 47,000 deaths in Canada. Where is the plan to stop the drugs and keep our border open to trade?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the Leader of the Opposition is just making stuff up. I clearly spoke with the President of the United States an hour and a half after he put out his suggestion on tariffs.

The reality is that we are going to continue to work constructively with the incoming administration to protect Canadian jobs, to protect Canadian growth and to take the responsible approach,

which is not steeped in partisanship, but that pulls together the team Canada approach that stands up for Canadians, instead of throwing our arms up and saying that all is broken, like the Leader of the Opposition does.

\* \* \*

● (1425)

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is even worse. The statement went out promising tariffs before they even had a chance to speak. It is kind of like the Prime Minister backing down on buy America and backing down on softwood lumber.

Now let us move to the tariffs the Prime Minister wants to impose on our economy. Quadrupling the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre would cripple our economy. New tax increases on work and energy would do likewise, sending hundreds of billions of dollars south of the border.

Now that Canadians are facing this economic crisis, will the Prime Minister at least cancel his plan to hike taxes so we can save jobs?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we see once again the Leader of the Opposition flailing and inventing stuff to try to fit his preferred attacks into his priorities. The reality is that we are going to continue to work constructively with the incoming administration to do what Canada and the U.S. have always done, which is to create prosperity together and protect jobs on both sides of the border as we grow the economy.

When it comes to drugs, we have taken serious steps on that, and we will continue to. If the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting he wants to recriminalize marijuana, let him just say that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SENIORS**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as the past few days and hours have shown, we are about to go through a time of major insecurity in Parliament over issues related to trade, protectionism and a rather aggressive diatribe of words. This should be a time to reassure and unite people and to project a sense of security, especially economic security. This effort should begin with the most fragile and vulnerable members of society.

Does the Prime Minister want to consider adjusting his plan to hand out cheques so as to give retirees a sense of security?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know how much Canadians are struggling. That is why we are going to give everyone a tax holiday in the coming months on groceries, children's clothing and many more items that people regularly buy.

We are also looking at ways to recognize the heavy burden that workers across the country have carried over the past few years by protecting the economy, investing in their future, and supporting their loved ones. We want to recognize the work and the challenges faced by hard-working Canadians.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, other workers came before today's workers. I am talking about people who worked their whole lives, who have paid taxes all their lives, who have nowhere else to turn. The government is handing out cheques to people who do not need them and denying cheques to those who need them most.

Does he not think that if he lowers the amount for the cheques he gives out, and gives that money to the pensioners who need it, everyone here would likely agree with this massive improvement to his plan?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all Canadians are struggling in different ways. That is why we are investing in more child care spaces and in a Canada child benefit that increases every year, for example. We are also helping seniors by providing a dental care program. In 2015, we increased the guaranteed income supplement by 10%, and we increased old age security for seniors aged 75 and over.

We also want to be there for other groups of Canadians, like those who work hard and yet are still struggling. That is why we are going ahead with this measure.

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[English]

#### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump's threats of tariffs could threaten hundreds of thousands of Canadian mortgage-paying jobs. The only thing a bully responds to is strength. Where is our plan to fight back? Where is the war room? Where is a concrete plan to bring our issue before CUSMA?

Why is the Prime Minister not fighting like hell for Canadian jobs?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, rather than panicking, we are engaging in constructive ways to protect Canadian jobs, as we have before. I do not think the idea of going to war with the United States is what anyone wants. What we will do is stand up for Canadian jobs, as we have before and as we will continue to do. We will stand up for the prosperity we create when we work together, stand up for the challenges we are facing and protecting Canadians from. There is work we can do together. That is the work we will do seriously and methodically, but without freaking out the way the leader of the NDP seems to be.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford for the government to ignore this problem.

#### Oral Questions

It needs to take it seriously because Canadians cannot afford another letdown.

[Translation]

Trump's attacks were no surprise. We knew they were coming. However, the Prime Minister chose to turn a blind eye and say that everything was fine. Thousands of jobs are at stake.

Why did he fail to react to Donald Trump's threats?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, seriously defending Canada's economy means not giving in to panic or fear. It means standing up for the principle that we in North America are most successful when we work together. We are going to work with the U.S. administration to address the challenges and differences we both face as nations. We are going to work together to create prosperity for our workers and defend our workers, as we have done in the past and as we will continue to do in the future. Now is not the time to panic. Now is the time to work hard, and that is exactly what we are doing.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we need a Canada first plan to fix what the Prime Minister has broken. The first time he went head-to-head with Trump, the Prime Minister was forced into accepting humiliating concessions on agriculture, steel tariffs and buy American. That was when Canada had a stronger position, thanks to a decade of low-tax, pro-job Conservative policies.

After nine years of economic vandalism, the Prime Minister has put Canada in an extremely vulnerable position. Per capita GDP is now lower than it was nine years ago; Canada has the most indebted households among our trading partners. We have the worst housing inflation, and food prices have risen 37% faster here than in the U.S. Now that he is negotiating from a position of weakness, why should Canadians expect any—

**The Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Export Promotion and International Trade.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear: We will always be there to protect Canadian workers and Canadian businesses. We have been there for Canadians before, when we renegotiated NAFTA. I remind the member opposite that it was the Conservatives who wanted us to capitulate during that time, but we stood strong. That is a testament to the facts: Canada-U.S. trade was at an all-time high last year of \$1.3 trillion. Canada places the highest priority on trade and the integrity of our shared border. We look forward to working with the incoming administration.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was forced to accept humiliating concession after concession. Now he has kneecapped Canada's economy: He has slapped on a massive carbon tax here, but the U.S. does not have one at all. He is raising taxes on investing in Canada while the U.S. is fighting to attract investment there. He has imposed a production cap on Canadian energy, meaning that Canada will produce less of what the U.S. needs to buy. He has under 60 days left to act.

It is time for the Prime Minister to put aside his partisanship, his ideology and his ego. Will he strengthen Canada's position by cancelling his carbon tax and all tax hikes on jobs and investments?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. Their strategy last time was to capitulate. On this side of the House, as the Prime Minister said, our plan is to be serious and methodical.

We have been engaging with our U.S. partner on three key things. First is security of the borders, the north and the Arctic. Second is a resilient supply chain when it comes to semiconductors, critical minerals and energy. Third is putting forward a growth plan for North America. On this side of the House, we will fight for Canadians, we will fight for industry and we will fight for our country.

• (1435)

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, everywhere we look, we find more evidence of economic carnage. Now we are up against the biggest economic and security superpower, and the government has no plan.

We need a Canada first plan to fix what the Prime Minister broke. When he took office, our GDP per capita was 81% of the U.S.'s. Now it has fallen to 73%. It is a made-in-Canada problem, and it is not about vibes. It is driven by higher taxes, higher spending, higher regulation and the government's economic vandalism.

Now that it is faced with the threat of tariffs, when is the government going to stop the vandalism and start fixing the crisis so that Canadians have a chance?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Conservative Party of Canada wanted us to back down during the last round of NAFTA negotiations, we stood up for Canada. We stood up for Canadian workers. We stood up for the steelworkers in Canada. We stood up for Canadian auto workers. We stood up for our farmers and agricultural workers.

The Conservatives want to know what the plan is; we plan to do it again and to get a win-win for Canada and the United States.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals themselves backed down last time, and Canada has become poorer than Alabama since then. That is not a record anybody should be proud of.

Our productivity gap with the U.S. costs every Canadian \$32,000 a year. Average returns on investment are 35% higher in the U.S. than in Canada. Our government's plan is to quadruple the carbon tax. They doubled housing prices. They increased taxes on work and investment.

With the threat of crippling tariffs, will the Prime Minister end all the tax increases so that Canadians stand a chance?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have an excellent relationship with the United States, a relationship that is mutually beneficial. We do enormous amounts of trade with the United States, and the United States depends on Canada for much of its energy supply.

The Conservatives want to know what the plan is. Our plan is to continue to work with the United States in order to protect Canadian jobs and to protect the Canadian economy, making it grow for everyone.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, we need a plan to put Canada first and to put an end to his economic vandalism.

The Prime Minister has broken the immigration system. He is incapable of protecting the border. He has ruined our economy with a huge debt, and, on top of that, our young people have lost all hope of ever buying a home.

What is the Prime Minister's plan to put Canada first and to protect the future of all young Canadians?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. The last time they proposed a strategy, they wanted us to capitulate to the Americans.

We on this side of the House plan to do things seriously and methodically. As the Prime Minister said, we have been speaking with our American counterparts for months now. We are talking about security-related issues, including border security, Arctic security and northern security. We are talking about the resilience of our supply chains for semiconductors, critical minerals and energy. We are putting forward a growth plan for North America.

We will always be there to defend Canadian workers, Canadian industry and, of course, Canada.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we know is that after nine years, this Prime Minister has failed spectacularly and often.

What is his plan to put Canada first? He failed at the border. He failed on softwood lumber. He created chaos in the immigration system. He wanted to erase the identity of our passports. He is responsible for the higher grocery prices, which increased 37% faster than in the United States.

What is the Prime Minister's plan to put Canadians first?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives do not want to talk about is the record investment Canada received in 2023.

Last year, Canada received nearly \$60 billion in investments. There were record investments in the automotive industry, for example. There were record investments in critical minerals. There were record investments in the energy sector. Canada is becoming the top strategic partner in industry decarbonization. Canada will be a leader in artificial intelligence. Canada will be a leader in nuclear energy.

Canada will be the country of the 21st century.

\* \* \*

• (1440)

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump wants to impose a 25% tariff on all Quebec and Canadian products. That would be a disaster for us and for Americans.

First, we appreciate the fact that the Prime Minister has agreed to meet with his Quebec and provincial counterparts tomorrow. However, he will have to present a clear plan. He needs to take immediate action to protect supply management with Bill C-282. Ottawa needs to show that it will not give in when it comes to our softwood lumber, aluminum and aerospace industries or the Quebec economy as a whole.

Does the Prime Minister have a plan to present to his counterparts?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question. As the Prime Minister indicated earlier, he will be meeting with the provincial premiers, including Premier Legault. Obviously, we will stand up for workers in our aerospace and aluminum industries, as well as for Quebec's emerging battery industry.

Obviously, now is not the time to panic. Now is the time to take a team Canada approach to promote our country's comparative advantages and ensure that we defend all of our industries and all of our workers.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Trump's tariffs are meant to force Canada to tighten its borders against illegal immigration and drug trafficking. Quebec has been calling on Ottawa for years to fix the border, which is like a sieve. It has even deployed members of the Quebec provincial police force to patrol the border.

The Bloc Québécois has been hounding Ottawa to do something about smugglers and organized crime for years. Even before Trump was elected, we were already calling for more resources at the border. Despite all of these warnings, Ottawa did nothing. Now, our economy is being threatened by Trump's tariffs.

Do the Liberals now understand that they need to take action at the border?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we do understand the importance of supporting our police forces, the RCMP and border services, but we did not just realize it now. We have been doing exactly that for the past nine years.

We have exactly the same interests as the Americans, namely, to strengthen the integrity of our border and to enable Canadians to choose who enters Canada.

It is the same thing for the United States. We have a history of co-operating with the U.S. on a day-to-day basis. That is exactly what we will continue to do.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to announce that he is finally taking responsibility at the borders. He needs to announce how he is going to plug the holes in the border by January.

That is the bare minimum that he needs to do after shirking his responsibilities, despite repeated warnings from Quebecers. Smugglers and organized crime bosses have been running the show at the border for years. Today, the consequence of the Prime Minister's inaction is the 25% tariffs that threaten Quebec's economy.

Will the Prime Minister finally announce that he is deploying sufficient resources to the border?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, we have always allocated sufficient resources to support the extraordinary work that the RCMP and CBSA do with their law enforcement partners, whether it is the Sûreté du Québec or their American partners.

The good news is that we are going to continue to make sure they have the technology and the people they need. We are going to further support these technologies and personnel to ensure that they can continue to do the job they are already doing exceptionally well.

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[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we need a Canada first plan to fix what the Prime Minister broke on the addiction crisis and illegal drugs. About 47,000 Canadians have died under the Prime Minister's watch. That is more than we lost in the Second World War. We need to fully reverse the liberalization of drugs, which is killing our people and threatening our borders. We need to secure our borders against the importation of chemical precursors that are used to make fentanyl and other deadly drugs. Criminals are taking advantage of our drug policies and cooking fentanyl ready for export.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit his policies have failed and end his insane drug policies?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every life lost due to the illicit toxic drug supply in this country is a tragedy for families and for communities. On this side of the House, we have invested over a billion dollars in treatment, prevention and harm reduction to save lives. We have worked with our U.S. counterparts on precursors, and we will continue to do the work to save lives based on evidence, based on health care and based on protecting those who need help the most. We will not look away. We are here to protect those who need our help.

• (1445)

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not a plan. We need a Canada first plan to fix what the Prime Minister broke on the addiction crisis and illegal drugs. There has been a 200% annual increase in drug deaths under his watch. We need to fully reverse his liberalization of drugs. We need to ban the drugs, prosecute every trafficker, and secure our borders against drugs and chemical precursors that are used to make fentanyl and other deadly drugs. We need treatment and recovery so we can bring our loved ones home drug-free.

Will the Prime Minister finally act in the interest of Canadians and fully reverse course on his radical liberalization of drugs?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we will lead with compassion, we will lead with health care and we will lead with evidence. Since 2015 we have been investing in the treatments and the pathway that mean the most to the people whose lives we need to save.

On that side of the House, the Conservatives cut the drug treatment fund by two-thirds when they were in government. They cut the CBSA and they cut the drug checking laboratories. They do not protect Canadians, they do not address the illicit drug supply and they do not understand that people need health care and help and that they need our compassion. Shame on them.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's economic report card is in: Canadians have the highest consumer debt in the G7. House prices have doubled. Per capita income is lower today than it was 10 years ago, and the average Canadian makes \$30,000 less than their American counterpart.

All of this is as a result of the Prime Minister's economic vandalism. In the face of economic uncertainty and global trade imbalances, the Prime Minister's plan is to increase taxes on job creators, entrepreneurs and farmers.

Will the Prime Minister enact a Canada first plan and stop the tax increases to keep our jobs and investment at home?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe the Conservative member missed the memo. We are actually taking federal taxes off. We are taking the GST off everyday goods in order to help Canadians.

We are wondering on this side of the House how the Conservatives could be against a tax break for Canadians. It will put more money back in their pockets right around the holidays, when they need it most.

The policy is good for Canadians and it is good for the economy. It is just bad for Conservatives.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the government does not want to listen to Conservatives, maybe it will listen to economists at National Bank, who found that real GDP has contracted 4% since 2022. This is unprecedented outside a recession. It is a made-in-Canada, per person GDP recession caused by the economic vandalism of the policies of the Prime Minister, whose only plan is to increase taxes on everybody: farmers, physicians, entrepreneurs and all people who want to invest in Canada.

*Oral Questions*

When will the Prime Minister enact a Canada first plan to keep jobs and investment in Canada and our Canadians at home?

**Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what my honourable colleague does not quite understand is that we do have a Canada first policy. That is why we have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. That is why we have a AAA credit rating. That is why we have inflation that has decreased not once, not twice, but three times, to 1.6% in September.

At the same time, we have supports for Canadians. For example, there is the tax holiday and there is support for 18 million workers come the spring. On this side of the House we have the balance right and we have a Canada first policy for Canadians.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again the Liberals have failed Canadians who need help the most. People living with disabilities, students and seniors have been abandoned by the Liberals' rebate program. My constituents are rightly furious. I can tell members that the students, the seniors and the people living with disabilities in Edmonton Strathcona are not feeling the vibe right now. They are really, really struggling. Of course the Conservatives would do nothing but cut programs for Canadians.

Will the minister fix the program and get help for the people who need it the most?

• (1450)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the GST holiday will apply to everybody; all Canadians will benefit from the tax break.

One of the things I really take issue with is the insinuation that people with disabilities are not working. Sixty-two per cent of people in Canada with disabilities are working and will benefit from the cheque. There are one million seniors in Canada who are working and will benefit from the cheque. Canadians are working hard and they deserve a break.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is not all Canadians. Seniors and students in Courtenay—Alberni are being left high and dry with the high cost of living. They are living on tight budgets and deserve a helping hand. Instead of helping, the Liberals decided to exclude seniors and students from their \$250 rebate. They are letting people down again. Conservatives want tax breaks only for their rich CEO donors and big corporations that gouge Canadians at the grocery till.

Will the Liberals fix their mistake and ensure that seniors, persons with disabilities and students get the rebate?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take issue with the insinuation that persons with disabilities in this country do not work. Sixty-two per cent of persons with disabilities will benefit from the rebate because they are working hard. Over one million seniors right across Canada are working and will benefit from the rebate. All Canadians without exception are going to benefit from the tax holiday we just announced.

We are there for Canadians and we will always be there to have their back.

**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives spend their time amplifying anger and fanning the flames of division without offering specific solutions. In contrast, last week our government announced measures to support Canadians during the holiday season and into the new year.

Could the President of the Treasury Board provide more details about our plan to help Canadians save money this holiday season and beyond?

**Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, whether it is \$10-a-day child care, increases to GIS and OAS, or the Canada child benefit, on this side of the House we are always there to support Canadians, for example with last week's announcement of a tax holiday on essential goods, clothing, diapers and food, as well as cash back for 18 million workers.

While the Conservatives play partisan games, what we have to say is that we have no idea whether its party members actually would support the measure, because they are not allowed to let us know.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, we need a Canada first plan to fix what the Prime Minister has broken. Our standard of living has plummeted compared to that of the United States. The last thing Canada needs is a capital gains tax hike on our farmers, doctors, home builders and small businesses, but that is exactly what the Prime Minister is proposing. His tax hikes will drive investment, jobs, doctors and food production out of this country at a time when we can least afford it.

With the threat of U.S. tariffs on the horizon, why will the Prime Minister not stop making things worse and cancel his reckless tax increases on Canadian jobs and investment?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was the current Liberal government that reduced taxes on the middle class not once but twice, and the Conservatives opposed the measure on both occasions. Now we are coming with a tax break for the holidays. That is going to mean more money in the pockets of Canadians, and yet again the Conservatives are opposing the measure.

Do the Conservatives really believe the talking points they are saying? If they did, they would vote in favour of a tax break for Canadians. That is what we have put on the table.

### Oral Questions

How are the Conservatives going to vote?

• (1455)

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, taxing farmers drives up food costs. Taxing doctors means it is harder to find one. Taxing home builders means fewer homes. Taxing small businesses means fewer paycheques. Raising capital taxes means less investment in the tools we need to halt the decline in our standard of living. Jobs and livelihoods are on the line.

With the threat of U.S. tariffs coming down the tracks, will the Prime Minister give Canadian workers a fighting chance by cancelling his destructive tax increases on jobs and investment?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I like the member very much, but let me inform him about a couple of things.

When it comes to jobs and investment, Canada received the largest investment in Honda's history, \$19 billion. That has been its largest investment in 75 years. Canada also received the largest investment in Dow Chemical's history over 127 years, an investment of \$10 billion in Alberta. We received the largest investment from BHP in 139 years in Saskatchewan, \$22 billion.

Canada is the envy of the world. Let us talk up Canada and stop saying things—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Oxford has the floor.

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### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have learned from the government's own immigration documents that nearly five million people will have their temporary visa expire next year. The Minister of Immigration was asked for his plan in committee yesterday, but he had no plan.

Can the Prime Minister correct his minister and tell us his plan to enforce and ensure that nearly five million people will leave Canada when their visa expires next year?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us examine the latest round of hysteria from the Leader of the Opposition. We are talking about 4.9 million documents, sometimes many that apply to one person. They are tourists. The vast majority of the people leave the country, including artists who come to this country, such as Bruce Springsteen and others.

When someone's visa expires, they are expected to leave. If they do not, they will be removed. At the same time, the Leader of the Opposition is walking around with the member for Edmonton Mill Woods promising not to deport people.

**Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, there is no plan from the minister. After nine years of breaking our immigration system, his plan is to ask people nicely to leave. We are now staring at 25% tariffs on all Canadian goods, which will crush our Canadian workers and cripple our economy.

We need a Canada first plan that fixes the immigration system and ensures that the five million people will leave when their visa expires next year. When will we see the plan?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, we see the Conservatives' "roll over first" program. They are talking about people who are here who do routinely leave the country. They come in as tourists. It includes a vast array of people. He is answering an OPQ question that the Conservatives posed to us. We were very precise in the answers we gave. Sometimes it is not five million people; it is a number of documents attached to the same person.

Let us park the hysteria. Let us talk about real things. Let us talk about the managed, planned immigration that is actually doing very well in this country according to Canadians.

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[Translation]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today is a good time to tackle organized crime in our cities and at our borders. We need to hit criminals where it hurts: their wallets.

This morning, the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-420 to create a registry of criminal organizations. Most importantly, we propose reversing the burden of proof when it comes to the proceeds of crime. We propose letting law enforcement freeze or seize gang members' property unless they can prove that that property was not obtained through crime.

Will the government support us? What does it think about that?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are always ready to support good ideas that aim to assist our law enforcement agencies in their fight against organized crime. Provisions already exist in the Criminal Code that allow law enforcement and the courts to seize property and bank accounts that are the proceeds of crime. However, if my colleague has other suggestions, we would gladly look into what we can do to constantly support the important work done by police forces.

• (1500)

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy, we just have to reverse the burden of proof. Let me reiterate today that the federal government has every interest in demonstrating that it takes the problem of organized crime seriously. The Americans are watching us.

Our Bill C-420 makes it easier to lay charges against criminal gang members. It provides new tools to police officers for seizing the proceeds of crime before they disappear. Bill C-420 makes crime more dangerous and less profitable. It sends a strong message to organized crime, both on our streets and at the border.

Will the government support us?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my colleague for underscoring the fact that it is important to support law enforcement and prosecutors and ensure that no one profits from crime, especially organized crime. We recognize the important work that the RCMP does with its partners such as the Sûreté du Québec, the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police forces. Provisions in the Criminal Code already exist.

The Attorney General and I will always consider good ideas for making improvements and supporting police forces across the country.

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[English]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we need a Canada first plan to fix what the Prime Minister has broken in the Canadian Armed Forces. Under the Prime Minister, our warships are rusting out, our fighter jets are worn out, our army has been hollowed out and our military is so short of soldiers, sailors and aircrew that our troops are burnt out. We are short 15,000 troops. Even his own defence minister has described the state of our military as being in a “death spiral”. Defence procurement has gotten so bad under the Liberals that they cannot even supply the ammo and munitions that Canada and our friends need.

Why has the Prime Minister turned Canada into an unreliable ally?

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all of us remember the last time the Conservatives talked about a Canada first defence policy, and we also remember what they did. They gutted the defence budget, reducing defence spending to less than 1% of our GDP for the first and only time in Canada's long history. In the last nine years, as we have doubled defence spending, the Conservatives have voted against every single dollar, just as they voted against support for Ukraine. Standing up for the Canadian Armed Forces may require the Conservatives to stand up to their leader.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** We know, Mr. Speaker, that the minister loves to fudge the numbers. In reality, the former Conservative government bought five C-17 Globemasters, 17 new Hercules, 15 Chinook helicopters and 100 Leopard tanks; modernized the Auroras and Halifax-class frigates; and fought alongside our American allies against ISIS and the Taliban.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his \$2.7-billion cut to our armed forces, finally invest in our troops and put Canada's interests first?

#### Oral Questions

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we also remember that when the conflict in Afghanistan ended, the Conservatives gutted the defence budget, taking \$2.5 billion away from it, and reduced it, for the only time in our history, to less than 1%.

I have had many conversations with members of the Canadian Armed Forces and they have never told me that what they need is another vacuous slogan. What they say is they need real investment in ships, in planes, in infrastructure and, most importantly, in our people. Every time we have come before the House and asked for money for those investments and those people, Conservatives have voted against it.

• (1505)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister destroyed our armed forces by making bad decisions and constantly wasting procurement resources.

One thing that he could do today is announce that he is cancelling the \$1 billion in cuts to the Department of National Defence's budget and present a real plan to reallocate that money to priorities that would help rebuild the Canadian Armed Forces and strengthen North America's military security.

After nine years of waste and extremely poor decisions for our national defence, does the Prime Minister have a Canada first plan?

[English]

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence very clearly outlined our plan to support the Canadian Armed Forces and our plan for investment.

We know that when it comes time to stand up for our allies and for what we care about in the world, the Conservative members of Parliament stand down. When it came to supporting Ukraine last year with the Canadian free trade agreement with Ukraine, what did they do? They voted against it. They delayed it in the House of Commons too.

On this side of the House, we stand for the values we care about and stand up for the people we care about. We do not just sit down and stand down because our leader told us to.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is fast approaching. As we know, this is often a very expensive time of year for Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

Although our government's measures have kept our economy in an enviable position relative to other G7 countries and have succeeded in lowering inflation and interest rates, many households are still struggling to make ends meet. At least, that what we are hearing in our constituencies.

Could the minister tell us why the Conservative leader should allow his caucus members to speak for their constituents and vote in favour of our plan to put more money back in Canadians' pockets?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my friend and colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche. Unlike the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, who is always thinking about cuts and austerity, on our side of the House, we want to support Canadians from coast to coast to coast. That is why we announced the GST break.

We want to make sure that Canadians get the chance to really save money. This tax break will help them buy diapers, prepared foods, Christmas trees, toys, books, even restaurant meals. We will always be there to support Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[English]

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the desperate Liberal-NDP government is bribing Canadians with a pricey gimmick. This temporary two-month tax trick takes pennies off potato chips yet adds more than \$6 billion on top of the Prime Minister's inflationary deficit. Even the Prime Minister admits that every extra dollar he puts into these handouts fuels inflation further.

Instead of pennies off Pringles, could he call a carbon tax election now so that common-sense Conservatives can axe the tax for good?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government reduced taxes on the middle class on two occasions and the Conservatives voted against it. Now we are giving a tax break, a tax holiday, to all Canadians at a time when they need it most, and the Conservatives are calling it a gimmick. The Conservative leader is trying to play the grinch who stole Christmas.

We know that this is good policy. It is good for Canadians. It is good for the economy. It is good for our small businesses. It is just bad for the Conservatives.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while scurvy makes a comeback, the member is bragging about taking taxes off of candy and booze. While two million Canadians are visiting a food bank in a single month and one in four Canadians is skipping meals because of the Prime Minister's carbon tax scam, which is making Canadians poorer, the finance minister says they are just having a "vibecession" and that she can fix it by taking pennies off of cheese puffs.

If the Liberals really want to feel the vibe of Canadians, they can call a carbon tax election so we can axe the tax for good instead of taking chump change off of chips.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian mothers and fathers want to understand why the Conservatives want to take away their \$10-a-day child care. Young Canadians who want to buy a first home want to understand why the Conservatives want to take away investments that will build 750,000 new homes. All Canadians want to understand why the Conservatives oppose a tax break, a tax holiday, for all Canadians that will leave more money in their pockets.

It is time the Conservatives come clean. They are against policies that help Canadians. They are against policies that will help our economy. They are just in it for themselves.

• (1510)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government's latest tax gimmick is not fooling anyone. People everywhere are upset by the Liberal approach.

Here is what one Montrealer had to say: "These two measures offer nothing of substance. There is no long-term vision. It is likely to have a minimal impact on a relatively small number of people, and it will cost a whopping \$6.3 billion.... I wonder how that decision was made." Can anyone guess who said that? It was the member for Honoré-Mercier, the former transport minister and political lieutenant for Quebec.

Does the current political lieutenant for Quebec agree with his predecessor, who is showing common sense?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these Conservatives always put partisanship first and Canadians last.

Once again, the Conservatives are against helping Canadians. We know the tax break will leave more money in Canadians' pockets. Conservatives do not want that. They did not want us to cut taxes for the middle class, and now, they do not want us to take the tax off everyday items. It does not make sense.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week is National Addictions Awareness Week. It is a time for all of us to raise awareness and challenge stereotypes toward addiction. On this side of the House, we know addiction is a health condition and deserves to be treated like one in order to save lives.

Can the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions share some of the ways our government is helping those in need?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since 2017, our government has committed over \$1 billion to support the work with provinces and territories to save lives and address those who struggle with addiction. We know that doing this work with community organizations, local health care providers and communities, whether they are municipalities or indigenous communities, is the way that we make it through to save lives and meet people at their hardest moments.

We know we need more harm reduction and prevention. We know we need treatment services, recovery and after care. We are there for Canadians. We need to open the door to those who struggle with addiction so they are not alone.

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**TAXATION**

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, everyday Canadians are scraping by, while CEOs get richer. The Liberals are letting Canadians down. They put an expiry date on their GST cut. On the rebate, the Liberals' message to seniors, students and people with disabilities is that they do not get a break. It is shameful.

As for the Conservatives, they only want tax breaks for billionaires, not parents who are just trying to keep up with their bills and grocery costs.

Why will the government not make billionaires pay their fair share so that seniors and people on disability get a break?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite knows very well that our government has done the most in order to ensure tax fairness throughout the country. We have acted in order to ensure that the very wealthy pay their fair share. We are helping vulnerable Canadians who need our support, as well as working Canadians. Working Canadians are going to receive a cheque in the spring, and I certainly hope that the NDP will support it.

\* \* \*

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Asia Pulp & Paper and the Wijaya family have a notorious track record. All of the alarm bells should have been sounding when their front company, Paper Excellence, showed up to get control of Canadian operations. Instead, the government laid out the red carpet. Now Asia Pulp & Paper controls vast sections of Canada's forests.

The Minister of Innovation brags that he has never taken any lessons. Obviously, he got played like a rube at the county fair. Why did the government abandon our workers and sell out our forests, and what is it going to do to protect our mills and our forestry communities?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member, but he should get his facts straight. In fact, we stood up for our workers and for our industry. In fact, we had a national security review. In fact, they are bound by undertakings for years to come to protect the industry and to protect our workers.

When it comes to national security, we will always be on the side of Canadians, and we always make sure that we protect our national interests and our economic interests.

\* \* \*

● (1515)

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of a friend of this Parliament and our country, His Excellency Ruslan Stefanchuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, the Parliament of Ukraine.

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

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:16 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Call in the members.

● (1530)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 891)

## YEAS

## Members

Aboultaif  
Albas  
Ali  
Anandasangaree  
Arnold  
Arya  
Atwin  
Badawey  
Baker

Aitchison  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Angus  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Bachrach  
Bains  
Baldinelli

*Routine Proceedings*

Barlow	Barrett	Lake	Lalonde
Barron	Barsalou-Duval	Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Battiste	Beaulieu	Lantsman	Lapointe
Beech	Bendayan	Larouche	Lattanzio
Bergeron	Berthold	Lauzon	Lawrence
Bérubé	Bezan	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Bibeau	Bittle	Lehoux	Lemire
Blair	Blanchet	Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Block	Blois	Lightbound	Lloyd
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Lobb	Long
Bradford	Bragdon	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Brassard	Brrière	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Calkins	Cannings	Maguire	Majumdar
Caputo	Carr	Maloney	Martel
Carrie	Casey	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Chabot	Chagger	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Chahal	Chambers	May (Saaneh—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Champagne	Champoux	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
Chatel	Chen	McGuinty	McKay
Chiang	Chong	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	McLeod	McPherson
Cooper	Cormier	Melillo	Mendès
Coteau	Dabrusin	Mendicino	Miao
Dalton	Damoff	Michaud	Miller
Dance	Dancho	Moore	Morantz
Davidson	Davies	Morrice	Morrison
DeBellefeuille	Deltell	Morrissey	Motz
d'Entremont	Desbiens	Murray	Muys
Desilets	Desjarlais	Naqvi	Nater
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Ng	Noormohamed
Diab	Doherty	Normandin	O'Connell
Dong	Dowdall	Oliphant	O'Regan
Dreeshen	Drouin	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Dubourg	Duclos	Paupé	Perkins
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Poilievre	Powlowski
El-Khoury	Ellis	Qualtrough	Rayes
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Redekopp	Reid
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Rempel Garner	Richards
Fast	Ferreri	Roberts	Robillard
Fisher	Fonseca	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fortier	Fortin	Romanado	Rood
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Rota	Ruff
Freeland	Fry	Sahota	Sajjan
Gaheer	Gainey	Saks	Samson
Gallant	Garrison	Sarai	Sauvé
Gaudreau	Gazan	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Généreux	Genuis	Scheer	Schiefke
Gerretsen	Gill	Schmale	Seeback
Gladu	Godin	Serré	Sgro
Goodridge	Gould	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gourde	Gray	Shields	Shipley
Green	Guilbeault	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Hajdu	Hallan	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Hanley	Hardie	Singh	Small
Hepfner	Hoback	Sorbara	Soroka
Holland	Housefather	Sousa	Steinley
Hughes	Hussen	Ste-Marie	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Hutchings	Iacono	Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)	St-Onge
Idlout	Ien	Strahl	Stubbs
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Sudds	Tassi
Jivani	Johns	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Jones	Jowhari	Therrien	Thomas
Julian	Kayabaga	Thompson	Tochor
Kelloway	Kelly	Tolmie	Trudeau
Khalid	Khanna	Trudel	Turnbull
Khera	Kitchen	Uppal	Valdez
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Van Popta	Vandal
Kurek	Kusie	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Vidal	Vien



*Routine Proceedings*

Viersen  
 Villemure  
 Vis  
 Wagantall  
 Waugh  
 Weiler  
 Williams  
 Yip  
 Zarrillo  
 Zuberi— 329

Vignola  
 Virani  
 Vuong  
 Warkentin  
 Webber  
 Wilkinson  
 Williamson  
 Zahid  
 Zimmer

May (Saainich—Gulf Islands)  
 Morrice  
 Zarrillo— 27

McPherson  
 Singh

## NAYS

## Members

Aitchison  
 Alghabra  
 Allison  
 Arnold  
 Arya  
 Badawey  
 Baker  
 Barlow  
 Barsalou-Duval  
 Beaulieu  
 Bendayan  
 Berthold  
 Bezan  
 Bittle  
 Blanchet  
 Block  
 Boissonnault  
 Bragdon  
 Brière  
 Brunelle-Duceppe  
 Caputo  
 Carrie  
 Chabot  
 Chahal  
 Champagne  
 Chatel  
 Chiang  
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
 Cormier  
 Dabrusin  
 Damoff  
 Davidson  
 Deltell  
 Desbiens  
 Dhaliwal  
 Diab  
 Dowdall  
 Drouin  
 Duclos  
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
 Ehsassi  
 Ellis  
 Erskine-Smith  
 Falk (Provencher)  
 Ferreri  
 Fonseca  
 Fortin  
 Fraser  
 Fry  
 Gainey  
 Gaudreau  
 Genuis  
 Gill  
 Godin  
 Gould  
 Gray  
 Hajdu  
 Hanley  
 Hepfner  
 Holland  
 Hussen  
 Iacono  
 Jaczek  
 Jivani  
 Jowhari  
 Kelloway

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

## Members

Joly

Plamondon— 2

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

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

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

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the amendment of the member for New Westminster—Burnaby to the motion for concurrence in the third report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting no.

[*English*]

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote, with Conservatives voting against.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and votes no.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats agree to apply the vote, and we will be voting yes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party also agrees to apply the vote and is voting in favour.

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 892*)

## YEAS

## Members

Angus  
 Bachrach  
 Blaney  
 Cannings  
 Dance  
 Desjarlais  
 Gazan  
 Hughes  
 Johns  
 Kwan  
 Masse

Ashton  
 Barron  
 Boulterice  
 Collins (Victoria)  
 Davies  
 Garrison  
 Green  
 Idlout  
 Julian  
 MacGregor  
 Mathysen

Aboultatif  
 Albas  
 Ali  
 Anandasangaree  
 Arseneault  
 Atwin  
 Bains  
 Baldinelli  
 Barrett  
 Battiste  
 Beech  
 Bergeron  
 Bérubé  
 Bibeau  
 Blair  
 Blanchette-Joncas  
 Blois  
 Bradford  
 Brassard  
 Brock  
 Calkins  
 Carr  
 Casey  
 Chagger  
 Chambers  
 Champoux  
 Chen  
 Chong  
 Cooper  
 Coteau  
 Dalton  
 Dancho  
 DeBellefeuille  
 d'Entremont  
 Desilets  
 Dhillon  
 Doherty  
 Dreeshen  
 Dubourg  
 Duguid  
 Dzerowicz  
 El-Khoury  
 Epp  
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
 Fast  
 Fisher  
 Fortier  
 Fragiskatos  
 Freeland  
 Gaheer  
 Gallant  
 Généreux  
 Gerretsen  
 Gladu  
 Goodridge  
 Gourde  
 Guilbeault  
 Hallan  
 Hardie  
 Hoback  
 Housefather  
 Hutchings  
 Ien  
 Jeneroux  
 Jones  
 Kayabaga

*Routine Proceedings*

Kelly  
Khanna  
Kitchen  
Koutrakis  
Kramp-Neuman  
Kusie  
Lake  
Lambropoulos  
Lantsman  
Larouche  
Lauzon  
LeBlanc  
Lehoux  
Leslie  
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Lightbound  
Lobb  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Majumdar  
Martel  
May (Cambridge)  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McLeod  
Mendès  
Miao  
Miller  
Morantz  
Morrisey  
Murray  
Naqvi  
Ng  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Patzner  
Pauzé  
Perron  
Poilievre  
Qualtrough  
Reid  
Richards  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Rota  
Sahota  
Saks  
Sarai  
Savard-Tremblay  
Scheer  
Schmale  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Shields  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Small  
Soroka  
Steinley  
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)  
St-Onge  
Stubbs  
Tassi  
Thériault  
Thomas  
Tochor  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
Valdez  
van Koeverden  
Vandal

Khalid  
Khera  
Kmiec  
Kram  
Kurek  
Kusmierczyk  
Lalonde  
Lamoureux  
Lapointe  
Lattanzio  
Lawrence  
Lebouthillier  
Lemire  
Lewis (Essex)  
Liepert  
Lloyd  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacDonald (Malpeque)  
Maguire  
Maloney  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mazier  
McDonald (Avalon)  
McKay  
McLean  
Melillo  
Mendicino  
Michaud  
Moore  
Morrison  
Motz  
Muys  
Nater  
Noormohamed  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Paul-Hus  
Perkins  
Petipas Taylor  
Powlowski  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Roberts  
Rogers  
Rood  
Ruff  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sauvé  
Scarpaleggia  
Schieffe  
Seeback  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Shipley  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Sinclair-Desgagné  
Sorbara  
Sousa  
Ste-Marie  
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)  
Strahl  
Sudds  
Taylor Roy  
Therrien  
Thompson  
Tolmie  
Trudel  
Uppal  
Van Bynen  
Van Popta  
Vandenbeld

Vecchio  
Vien  
Vignola  
Virani  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Weiler  
Williams  
Yip  
Zimmer

Vidal  
Viersen  
Villemure  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wilkinson  
Williamson  
Zahid  
Zuberi — 298

## PAIRED

Members

Joly

Plamondon — 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on the amendment.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that, if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting against.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply the vote, with Conservatives voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and votes no.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party agrees to apply the vote, and we will be voting yea.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party also agrees to apply the vote and votes no.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 893)

## YEAS

Members

Abouttaif  
Albas  
Angus  
Ashton  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Berthold  
Blaney  
Boulerice  
Brassard  
Calkins  
Caputo  
Chambers  
Collins (Victoria)  
Dalton  
Dancho  
Davies  
d'Entremont  
Doherty  
Dreeshen  
Ellis  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Gallant

Aitchison  
Allison  
Arnold  
Bachrach  
Barlow  
Barron  
Bezan  
Block  
Bragdon  
Brock  
Cannings  
Carrie  
Chong  
Cooper  
Dance  
Davidson  
Deltell  
Desjarlais  
Dowdall  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Epp  
Falk (Provencher)  
Ferrerri  
Garrison

*Routine Proceedings*

Gazan  
 Genuis  
 Godin  
 Gourde  
 Green  
 Hoback  
 Idlout  
 Jivani  
 Julian  
 Khanna  
 Kmicic  
 Kramp-Neuman  
 Kusie  
 Lake  
 Lawrence  
 Leslie  
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
 Lloyd  
 MacGregor  
 Majumdar  
 Masse  
 Mazier  
 McLean  
 Melillo  
 Morantz  
 Motz  
 Nater  
 Paul-Hus  
 Poilievre  
 Reid  
 Richards  
 Rood  
 Scheer  
 Seeback  
 Shipley  
 Small  
 Steinley  
 Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)  
 Stubbs  
 Tochor  
 Uppal  
 Vecchio  
 Vien  
 Vis  
 Warkentin  
 Webber  
 Williamson  
 Zimmer— 143

Généreux  
 Gladu  
 Goodridge  
 Gray  
 Hallan  
 Hughes  
 Jeneroux  
 Johns  
 Kelly  
 Kitchen  
 Kram  
 Kurek  
 Kwan  
 Lantsman  
 Lehoux  
 Lewis (Essex)  
 Liepert  
 Lobb  
 Maguire  
 Martel  
 Mathysen  
 McCauley (Edmonton West)  
 McPherson  
 Moore  
 Morrison  
 Muys  
 Patzer  
 Perkins  
 Redekopp  
 Rempel Garner  
 Roberts  
 Ruff  
 Schmale  
 Shields  
 Singh  
 Soroka  
 Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)  
 Strahl  
 Thomas  
 Tolmie  
 Van Popta  
 Vidal  
 Viersen  
 Wagantall  
 Waugh  
 Williams  
 Zarrillo

**NAYS**

## Members

Alghabra  
 Anandasangaree  
 Arya  
 Badawey  
 Baker  
 Battiste  
 Beech  
 Bergeron  
 Bibeau  
 Blair  
 Blanchette-Joncas  
 Boissonnault  
 Brière  
 Carr  
 Chabot  
 Chahal  
 Champoux  
 Chen  
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
 Coteau  
 Damoff

Ali  
 Arseneault  
 Atwin  
 Bains  
 Barsalou-Duval  
 Beaulieu  
 Bendayan  
 Bérubé  
 Bittle  
 Blanchet  
 Blois  
 Bradford  
 Brunelle-Duceppe  
 Casey  
 Chagger  
 Champagne  
 Chatel  
 Chiang  
 Cormier  
 Dabrusin  
 DeBellefeuille

Desbiens  
 Dhaliwal  
 Diab  
 Dubourg  
 Duguid  
 Ehsassi  
 Erskine-Smith  
 Fonseca  
 Fortin  
 Fraser  
 Fry  
 Gainey  
 Gerretsen  
 Gould  
 Hajdu  
 Hardie  
 Holland  
 Hussen  
 Iacono  
 Jaczek  
 Jowhari  
 Kelloway  
 Khera  
 Kusmierczyk  
 Lambropoulos  
 Lapointe  
 Lattanzio  
 LeBlanc  
 Lemire  
 Long  
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
 MacDonald (Malpeque)  
 Maloney  
 May (Cambridge)  
 McDonald (Avalon)  
 McKay  
 McLeod  
 Mendicino  
 Michaud  
 Morrice  
 Murray  
 Ng  
 Normandin  
 Oliphant  
 Paupé  
 Petitpas Taylor  
 Qualtrough  
 Rogers  
 Rota  
 Sajjan  
 Samson  
 Sauvé  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Serré  
 Shanahan  
 Sidhu (Brampton East)  
 Simard  
 Sorbara  
 Ste-Marie  
 Suds  
 Taylor Roy  
 Therrien  
 Trudeau  
 Turnbull  
 Van Bynen  
 Vandal  
 Vignola  
 Virani  
 Wilkinson  
 Zahid

Desilets  
 Dhilon  
 Drouin  
 Duclos  
 Dzerowicz  
 El-Khoury  
 Fisher  
 Fortier  
 Fragiskatos  
 Freeland  
 Gaheer  
 Gaudreau  
 Gill  
 Guilbeault  
 Hanley  
 Hepfner  
 Housefather  
 Hutchings  
 Ien  
 Jones  
 Kayabaga  
 Khalid  
 Koutrakis  
 Lalonde  
 Lamoureux  
 Larouche  
 Lauzon  
 Lebouthillier  
 Lightbound  
 Longfield  
 MacAulay (Cardigan)  
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
 Martinez Ferrada  
 May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)  
 McGuinty  
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
 Mendès  
 Miao  
 Miller  
 Morrissey  
 Naqvi  
 Noormohamed  
 O'Connell  
 O'Regan  
 Perron  
 Powlowski  
 Robillard  
 Romanado  
 Sahota  
 Saks  
 Sarai  
 Savard-Tremblay  
 Schiefke  
 Sgro  
 Sheehan  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
 Sinclair-Desgagné  
 Sousa  
 St-Onge  
 Tassi  
 Thériault  
 Thompson  
 Trudel  
 Valdez  
 van Koeverden  
 Vandenbeld  
 Villemure  
 Weiler  
 Yip  
 Zuberi— 182

*Routine Proceedings*

## PAIRED

## Members

Joly

Plamondon— 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on the main motion.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

• (1535)

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote, with Conservatives voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the result of the vote and will vote in favour.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party agrees to apply the vote, and we will be voting in favour.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote and will also be voting for.

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 894)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier

Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dance	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferrieri	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Gallant
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genius	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gould	Gourde
Gray	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hallan	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Jivani
Johns	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Kelly	Khalid
Khanna	Khera
Kitchen	Kmiec
Koutrakis	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lantsman
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lightbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Majumdar	Maloney
Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saainich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod
McPherson	Melillo
Mendès	Mendicino

Miao  
Miller  
Morantz  
Morrison  
Motz  
Muys  
Nater  
Noormohamed  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Paul-Hus  
Perkins  
Petitpas Taylor  
Powlowski  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Roberts  
Rogers  
Rood  
Ruff  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sauvé  
Scarpaleggia  
Schiefke  
Seeback  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
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Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Sinclair-Desgagné  
Small  
Soroka  
Steinley  
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)  
St-Onge  
Stubbs  
Tassi  
Thériault  
Thomas  
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Poilievre  
Qualtrough  
Reid  
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Robillard  
Romanado  
Rota  
Sahota  
Saks  
Sarai  
Savard-Tremblay  
Scheer  
Schmale  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Shields  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Singh  
Sorbara  
Sousa  
Ste-Marie  
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)  
Strahl  
Sudds  
Taylor Roy  
Therrien  
Thompson  
Tolmie  
Trudel  
Uppal  
Van Bynen  
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Warkentin  
Webber  
Wilkinson  
Williamson  
Zahid  
Zimmer

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

Members

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Plamondon— 2

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

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 17 minutes.

## Privilege

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, I want to take a moment today in front of all colleagues to raise the point of order that it is your birthday. We want to wish you a very happy birthday.

[Members sang *Happy Birthday*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Although it is not a point of order, I appreciate it.

## 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 as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I just want to recap where I was on this question of privilege a bit, and then I will make some additional points.

We are all very grateful to have people send us here. I want to wish all the people of Niagara West a merry Christmas, a happy new year and safe travels.

I talked a little about what happened this past weekend in Montreal, which should never have happened. It is almost as though we do not recognize this Canada that we have anymore. I believe this is a direct result of the policies of the Liberal government and how its leader has been dividing people. Quite frankly, it is very troubling to see what happened on the weekend and the amount of destruction. The government had no problem freezing peaceful protesters' bank accounts before. I wonder when the frozen bank accounts are going to come from these guys across the way.

I was talking a bit about the Winnipeg labs. I will get back to that. Once again, there is nothing to see here, folks. That was back in 2021. They said there was nothing to see here but wanted to go to an election to make sure that the people of Canada did not actually have all the facts and did not understand what was going on.

I want to spend a little time talking about small business. We all understand that small businesses are the ones that help create jobs and wealth. They actually help drive the economy in our country. Quite frankly, with the challenges we have had with small businesses, they are struggling.

It is interesting: We talk about doing a number of things. We talk about axing the tax. I have a survey from the CFIB, and I want to take some time to read from this newspaper story. It is entitled "85% of small businesses reject federal carbon tax, survey shows". It says, "A recent survey by a small business advocacy group has revealed growing discontent among small businesses towards the federal carbon tax."

There is no surprise there. We are hearing that at the door all the time. My colleagues have talked to individuals and small business people, and they are hearing that.

### *Privilege*

#### The story continues:

Data by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) shows that 85% of businesses now oppose the federal carbon tax and want it removed, a significant increase from the 52% opposition recorded just a year ago. The majority of small firms find the tax unfair, especially in light of the federal government's recent decision to exempt only one heating fuel, heating oil, from the tax.

"Small businesses have been raising their concerns with the carbon tax for years," said CFIB president Dan Kelly.

"They pay about 40% of the costs of the carbon tax, but the federal government has promised to return only 10% to small businesses."

We had another announcement this week, saying that the government is going to return some money. I think all small businesses are waiting with bated breath to see when that is actually going to come. I hope it will come in time for Christmas.

Once again, when we talk about the numbers, this is not revenue-neutral in any way, shape or form, which is what the Liberal government is constantly saying it is. They say it is revenue-neutral. People should not worry about it. They are going to get their money back.

#### The story continues:

Another rising concern is that many small firms will be ineligible for the Federal Fuel Charge Proceeds Return Program if the federal government ever gets around to creating it, explained Kelly. This program promised to deliver the \$2.5 billion collected from taxpayers since 2019 to small businesses and Indigenous groups.

The recent decision by the government to exempt certain Canadians from the carbon tax for heating costs has further exacerbated the issue....

"The entire federal carbon tax structure is beginning to look like a shell game," said Kelly.

That is something we have been saying on this side of the House for quite some time.

The article refers to "rising costs on everything from supplies to fuel to taxes and the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan repayment". The loan repayments were very difficult. As I mentioned previously, almost two out of three small businesses needed to take on additional debt because of what happened during COVID. They are still struggling under that.

The article continues, "Halting future carbon tax increases, including the planned hike [in 2025] should also be on the table". We have a tax trick going on right now. The government is saying that it is going to give Canadians a break on the GST for a couple of months, but there is no mention of the carbon tax that is going to go up next April. That is a very sad trick on people.

They talk about a number of things, basically saying that, in any way, shape or form, they do not support that.

Now, another thing we have said we want to do is stop the crime. We have this revolving door; it was talked about during opening statements, in terms of what is going on there and what is happening in a number of places.

● (1540)

Another article, "Half of Canadian businesses experienced crime and safety issues: survey", states:

Almost one in two small businesses reported crime or safety-related issues in 2024, marking a sharp increase from the previous year.

A report from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reveals that 45% of small businesses faced incidents like vandalism, theft, and drug parapherna-

lia which affected not only their operations but also the mental well-being of their employees and workers.

The CFIB reported that the incidents are impacting business finances and safety, with owners incurring a median cost of over \$5,000 over the past three years for repairs and crime prevention.

However, 68% of business owners avoid filing insurance claims, fearing hikes in already steep premiums.

I think most of us will understand why our car premiums have gone up this year. It is because of the number of stolen cars in this country. Insurance companies, God bless them, pass those costs on to us individuals. At the end of the day, we end up—

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am listening to my colleague from the Conservative Party and wondering if he is truly addressing the subject of the privilege motion that his party moved. He is talking about the cost of car insurance. That is not really a question of parliamentary privilege.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Obviously, there is some leeway during speeches, but members certainly do have to keep their comments relevant to the subject of the privilege motion being debated in the House. I expect the hon. member to ensure that his speech comes back to the question of privilege.

I will give him a bit of time to do so.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Niagara West.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, the member can hold tight. I will bring it back around, and the member will see how it all fits together.

We have a government that has wasted \$400 million when small businesses are suffering and crime is out of control. The government is doing anything but leading in this country. This is affecting how small businesses can prosper and whether they are going to survive.

I am going to share a couple of quotes that are talking about security. The first says, "Some security measures, while helpful and necessary, may come at a steep price, deter customer foot traffic and, as a result, lead to lower revenues". The second reads, "Many businesses are already operating on thin profit margins, so just one crime incident could be make-or-break-for a small business owner."

Small businesses are watching as the Liberals are paying out of this \$400 million slush fund to enrich themselves versus actually doing something for small businesses, such as setting policies or dealing with crime issues that would help businesses do a better job and be more prosperous. The CFIB report notes that businesses have adopted their operations in response to crime. About 50% have implemented safety measures that alter customer access, like locking doors or requiring appointments, and 67% resorted to spending money on more security. However, these measures have also made it more challenging for customers to access stores, potentially reducing foot traffic and revenue. I could talk more about that.

I talked about how difficult it is for small businesses. Once again, the Liberals have money for all their pet projects without setting proper policies in place that would ensure investment comes to Canada. We could attract investment and make sure that we are doing it. We can look at what is going on with our small businesses. I talked about how closings are up, openings are down and the number of businesses shutting down have grown.

This quote comes from an article that came out recently:

Canada saw the highest business closure rate since the first summer of the COVID-19 pandemic in June, with one in 20 businesses closing that month, according to Statistics Canada.

Canada's economy saw 46,354 businesses close in June, making it the largest wave in exactly 4 years.

It's the highest closure rate since lockdown, a time when businesses were physically restricted from opening up to do business.

The data comes at a time when the unemployment rate also continues its upward trend and is seen highest among young adults.

In addition to the high rate of closures, the agency reported that the business opening rate also dropped by 0.4 percentage points, bringing it to 4.2%.

This drop marks the largest decline since August 2021.

"That statistics are worrisome," [said the] director of economics with the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses...

[They also] noted that while business closures mentioned will be seasonal, therefore they're not closing permanently, new businesses opening is a sign of a healthy, growing economy.

"You want to see that you have new businesses on the market trending upward and you want the closing rate dropping"....

One of the things we find challenging right now, as we look at what is happening, is that there is not much hope for small businesses and for Canadians in general. I will leave members with these statistics: "Canada has the housing prices of New York...the wages of Mississippi...the economy of Alabama...and taxes higher than all 50 US states."

We have to deal with a new administration, and these policies are not working.

● (1550)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to recognize my daughter's birthday today. I wish a happy birthday to Cameo.

The member spoke about local business. Local businesses and small business are very important to my community of Port Moody—Coquitlam and in Belcarra. We are coming up to what the Americans call Black Friday, but I would like to talk about Small Business Saturday.

### *Privilege*

With CETA, there is an inability for local governments, which buy a lot of goods and services locally, to use local suppliers. They cannot procure, in their procurement policies, through local suppliers. Does the member think that is a good idea?

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, one of the bigger challenges we have is that we are really at a competitive disadvantage. I know our leader has talked about this, and I think we need to continue to do that. When we look at what we are spending on carbon taxes versus the rest of the world, including the U.S., we can see that we are putting ourselves at an unnecessary disadvantage. The U.S. is one of our neighbours that we do a lot of trade with.

This is one of the reasons why we need to axe the carbon tax. When we think about how we charge the tax on the people who grow the food or produce something, if we charge the tax on the people who transport it and then the consumer who pays it, we will always be at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis every other country that does not have a carbon tax.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, when I have asked other Conservative members why they want to continue this debate, on the exact same motion, for month after month, after it was approved by the House back in June, and Greens, along with others, continue to call for this to go to committee to be studied to ensure that we get accountability on the mismanagement of funds, I am told by Conservatives that they need to investigate with more of these speeches. However, in the speech we just heard, we heard mostly about carbon taxes, small businesses and car insurance and very little about SDTC.

Why is it that Conservatives feel that they need to continue this filibuster if their own members are not going to speak to the motion at hand?

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, I spoke about it in the first half of my speech. Maybe he was not present, which is fine. I talked about the challenges with the whole point about redacting documents and not providing documents. I used the example of the Winnipeg lab, right before an election, when we asked for documents. The Liberals decided they would rather take the former Speaker to court than actually produce those documents. There is a very easy, very simple solution, which is to provide the unredacted documents. We would then be more than happy to continue.

What we want to know is why the Liberals and the NDP are spending so much time avoiding showing us what the documents are. Why will they not just show us what we are asking for?

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I was wondering if my colleague from Niagara West could elaborate a little bit more about our asking for these documents.

*Privilege*

My constituents are really worried about censorship. It seems the government, no matter what, wants to cover things up. It puts in bills disguised as hate speech bills that are actually just to shut down debate. This has been an extremely troubling trend with the government, and its apologists, in the House. The apologists are supporting the government through this entire makeover of Canadians who believe in freedom of speech.

Could the member talk a little bit more about censorship and why it is important that we have these documents because Parliament is supreme, not the government?

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, I had wanted to talk about censorship as part of what I was doing, but there were just so many things that I needed to talk about that I was not able to get to it.

The Liberal government has talked about how it was going to be the most transparent government of all time, that it would show us that sunshine was the best disinfectant and so on. The reality has been that the amount of legislation that the Liberals have put forward while trying to censor, to restrict and to have government control is very worrisome.

That is why, when we ask for documents, when Parliament asks for documents, we want to see what we are asking for because we are worried about censorship from the government.

• (1555)

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, part of the reason we are having this debate is that we are continuing to see, over and over, the government get caught in scandal after scandal. Maybe the member could elaborate on why he thinks the government continues to get caught in scandal after scandal, leading the House to being engaged in this privilege debate, which has been going on for a while now.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, as governments continue on, particularly Liberal governments, there is a sense of entitlement that starts to creep in. We are seeing that the Liberals really believe that they should reward their friends. They really believe that there are “rules for thee but not for me”.

If we think about that, one of the ways we can see that is when the high-flying, hypocritical Prime Minister has no problem burning literally hundreds of thousands of carbon emissions as he flies around the world. An individual with a family member in their car may use about three tonnes a year versus the hundred thousand or so that he will burn through on just one trip. I think the challenge is that people are seeing a trend here. They are seeing that it is more about “do as I say, not as I do”.

People have been very concerned, and they want to make sure that there is accountability. That is our job as the official opposition, to hold the government to account.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I look forward to 10 years from now when we might see a Conservative prime minister travelling the country in a horse and buggy. I am sure members can appreciate that, for the Prime Minister, and for any prime minister, there is an obligation to board airplanes.

How much longer can we anticipate that the Conservative Party will continue to play this self-serving political game, at a substantial cost, because of the self-serving leader of the Conservative Party? How many more days are we going to see this abuse of authority?

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members on both sides of the House, as some have been trying to answer questions while others are trying to ask them, to please wait until the appropriate time, if they happen to be recognized.

The hon. member for Niagara West.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, it is because of the carbon policies, the policies of the government. It is so hypocritical to tell people that they need to choose between heating and eating, yet fly all around the world as if that is not an issue.

As a matter of fact, coming back from COP the other day, I think the environment minister was talking about how we could put some carbon taxes on the marine industry. Talk about another cost. We receive all of our goods from around the world through shipping. The government has never found any avenue that it would not like to try to tax.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I was wondering if my colleague could talk about the Liberal Party members thumbing their noses at democracy. As he knows, we are the elected officials in the House, and we did have a vote. We voted that the government produce the documents.

As the member said, quite rightly, the government has a history. He talked about the Winnipeg lab. We went to an election so the Liberals would not have to share information with elected members of Parliament.

Could the member talk about how important it is to our democracy that we make sure these documents are produced? Right now, we have a government that just thumbs its nose at the elected representatives of Canadians.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Speaker, this is the whole reason we ask questions. This is the whole reason we hold people accountable. At the end of the day, we never had the chance to have a debate about the Winnipeg lab. We never had the chance to have any of that information. Maybe the outcome of the last election would have been different. We do not know because we did not get that information.

The government promised to be so transparent. The government has been anything but transparent.

\* \* \*

• (1600)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

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



That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order, or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 later this day, no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

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

[*Translation*]

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### PRIVILEGE

#### REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to stand here on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Before I begin, I would like to remind the House why privilege is important. Privilege goes to the very core of how we as elected officials do our job and hold the government to account. It encompasses both the rights and the immunities that every member of the House requires to fulfill our duties as parliamentarians.

In a democracy, it is the people, not the Prime Minister and not his increasingly insular office, who must prevail. If powerful unelected individuals can prevent us from doing our job, the people become powerless. Let us never forget that in Canadian democracy, it is Canadians who elected their representatives to be their voice in this place.

The current debate has become lengthy, but I can summarize it effectively. The Prime Minister's Office claims, "There is nothing to see here." The Liberals accuse the opposition of holding Parliament hostage, and they blame us entirely.

Let us recap the facts. The Liberal government appointed the people who ran the SDTC program. They had full control and knowledge of what was happening, and yet it was whistle-blowers, not the government, who exposed the truth.

The Auditor General has since confirmed the disturbing extent of fiscal corruption. Consider the audacity of being entrusted with scarce public dollars and then funnelling them into their own company. What kind of culture enabled such corruption? To every member on the government side, I say that if they believe this conduct is acceptable, then they should think again.

Consider the audacity of being entrusted with scarce dollars funnelling into their own companies. I just want to impress upon members that we would never allow this in a private corporation or a

### *Privilege*

not-for-profit organization that we were part of. Why would we allow it in a case like this? As Lord Acton famously observed, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men".

Once exposed, the Liberal government ended the program, and now it wants to sweep everything under the rug. "Nothing to see here", it says; "trust us." Well, Canadians remember when the Prime Minister looked them in the eye and declared that the allegations in the Globe and Mail story that morning were false. Later those allegations proved to be true and accurate. The only accountability in that sort of affair was the punishment of former minister Jody Wilson-Raybould for refusing to believe in the Prime Minister's Office and its corruption.

So many times when a scandal erupts, we hear the usual excuses from the Prime Minister's Office and from ministers. First comes denial, then comes leaked truth, and then the ministers did not know, because ministers, particularly Liberal ministers, never seem to know, do they? When powerful Prime Minister's Office insiders or ministers appear at committee hearings, their standard response to tough questions is "I do not recall." It is not a denial, but it is convenient should the truth emerge. Is this fulfilling the public trust?

Let us return to the privilege motion frankly. The Prime Minister's Office controls which documents are released and redacted, and yet it has the audacity to say, "Trust us." Why would anyone trust the Prime Minister or his PMO, given their track record of deception? How do we break the impasse? Fortunately, we have parliamentary privilege or a production order, a tool that allows us to demand all documents, unredacted.

If there is truly nothing to hide, an innocent government should welcome the opportunity to prove it. Who would not, unless there is something to hide, something the Prime Minister's Office does not want Canadians to know? Would the PMO openly admit it is hiding something? No, of course it would not. It needs an excuse, which is precisely why it has invented the creative fiction of hiding behind the charter.

The Prime Minister and his office have lived in their bubble for so long, isolated in an echo chamber, that they have lost touch with reality. To many Canadians, the charter argument suggests that powerful Liberal insiders have a constitutionally protected right to misuse taxpayer money. Why else would the Liberals continue stonewalling?

● (1605)

Before the government benches raise their predictable objections, let us ask this question: Is there a better way? As the Prime Minister once said, "better is always possible". Let us discuss how the process could work better.

Some of my colleagues were here during the issue of former senator Mike Duffy. The opposition then, as now, wanted facts and accountability. That is after all one of our core duties, except for the NDP opposition, which seems to blindly support the Liberal government at every turn.

### *Privilege*

Regarding Senator Duffy, former prime minister Harper faced two choices. He could have hidden behind privacy laws, solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence, exactly as today's Prime Minister's Office does, to withhold unredacted documents. Instead, having nothing to hide, he did what an honourable prime minister would do; he waived all privileges and instructed his office to share every document. That is what an accountable, transparent and honest government looks like.

Interestingly enough, while the current Prime Minister has mentioned his predecessor's name nearly 300 times in the House, he has never once mentioned this example of integrity. To my friends on all sides of the chamber, this shows that better is always possible and shows how the Liberal government could improve. It should choose transparency and accountability, but we know that the Prime Minister and his PMO will not take that path. They will not even consider it. Why is that?

Imagine that, if by some miracle, the Prime Minister releases all documents unredacted, as the order states, and gives them to the law clerk, who transfers them to the RCMP. If there is truly nothing to hide, we resume business. However, if there is something hidden, someone might face accountability somewhere. In the dark world of Liberal back rooms, who that someone might be makes all the difference. I do not believe, and I doubt many government members truly believe, these things happen by accident with nobody's knowledge. Someone knew, and that someone is being protected.

Meanwhile, Parliament's work stalls, and one of our most important tools, the production order, is being trampled on. This is not the first time the government has tried to usurp a production order. Remember how it attempted to take the Winnipeg lab production order to the courts, in a case that became moot when the Prime Minister used his COVID-era powers in summer 2021 to dissolve Parliament, all in the pursuit of a majority.

What we have here is that instead of resorting to the courts as it did in 2021, the government has chosen to stonewall the House. Is protecting potentially guilty parties worth defying and ultimately sacrificing an honoured ancient tool of Parliament? Some on the government side apparently think so, or we would not be here today.

Consider this. If we in the opposition did as the Liberal government asks, simply trust it and move on, nobody would face accountability. Taxpayer dollars would vanish, wealthy insiders would have profited without any consequence, and the people responsible would escape judgment. That is exactly what the government proposes in order to avoid exposing its program mismanagement.

Does anyone believe this represents good governance? Did the people on the Liberals' side seek office to protect the people who abuse public trust and profit from taxpayers? I would like to believe that none of them did. Certainly no one on this side did.

As we approach what the Liberal government calls the holiday tax break, or what the Toronto Star calls the "shameless giveaway plan" that is "incoherent, unnecessary, and frankly embarrassing," my inbox fills with concerns from small businesses about lack of

consultation and information. Like so many Liberal government initiatives, it emerged seemingly from nowhere. The messaging is almost comical. Are expensive gaming consoles really essentials? Promoting more consoles means parents face pressure for costlier Wi-Fi plans. This is great for Canada's wireless cartel, but terrible for struggling families.

I have one final thought. In my riding, constituents accidentally overpaid the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB, and had every dollar clawed back by the CRA. Others deemed ineligible faced the same, yet what about the people who received SDTC funding through conflicts of interest or whose projects were totally ineligible to receive the money in the first place? Will these people who obtained millions of dollars face similar clawbacks, or do the Liberals believe that these individuals and their companies deserve impunity?

• (1610)

Why does the Prime Minister maintain double standards? Why do his expectations for others not apply to him and to other Liberal insiders? Consider his message: millions of dollars in tax dollars for friends who wrongly benefit, while the average Canadian gets \$250 of their own money back. That is an attempt to distract from what has happened.

Canadians deserve accountability and transparency. Whatever happened to the idea that sunlight is the best disinfectant, or, as I said earlier, to "better is always possible"? Those were supposed to be core principles; "open by default", he said. Instead we get scandals, corruption, stonewalling and efforts to hide truth from Canadians. This is wrong. Deep down, every member knows it is wrong. We must send the Prime Minister and his PMO a clear message: enough. The people responsible for the SDTC program's failures must face accountability, full stop.

I call on all members to stand united against corruption and concealment of the truth from Canadians. We should protect our privilege, in this case the tool of a production order. The government should square up to the fact that, whether Liberals likes it or not, a vote was held, a division was made, a decision was cast by each member here, and the majority demanded an ancient right, something that the government cannot ignore.

A government is not separate from its people. A government is not somehow above the fray of Parliament. In our Westminster system, the government is fused with the legislative assembly. Those people are here and are meant to be accountable to us, those of us who do not sit in cabinet.

*Privilege*

The rest of the members in this place have a duty and an obligation to hold the government to account. I do not care whether members do so in the open, like I am doing right now. I do not care whether it is done at a caucus meeting with other people inside the same party. However, my goodness, we owe this country and this institution better than what they are getting right now.

It is easy I guess for me to get on my high horse and say that all of us should be like white knights coming to the rescue. However, if we do not, who will? If the government does not learn the lesson that it is chained to this place, that when a production order is made it must respect it. If we do not defend that as members of Parliament if the government does not agree with it, then the solution is to either hold the line or vote the government out. When I talk about a carbon tax election, many of my constituents have said that to me, and some of them were former Liberal supporters. They get the sense that nothing can be changed in this place unless we change the government.

Therefore the government has a tough question to answer its own members of the Liberal caucus: Do they respect the institution and bring forward the production order in its entirety, whether or not they agree with it, or do they simply say no and let their names in their communities get dragged through such that people believe that they are not there to do what they asked?

I am not asking everyone to agree with me all the time. I am just saying that on this one we have to have a line in the sand that we and others who have come before us have drawn, and not allow the issue to go any further. I ask all hon. members to hold the line with me and with other members to make this place a place that governments respect, or they will find that this place will be diminished, and it will be because of their inaction. Again, this is about something bigger than us.

● (1615)

Members may suggest we are wasting money by talking about what has made this institution great, but we can never put a price tag on democracy. They say we are wasting money by talking something that does not matter, but it does matter. This place has a foundation. If a person sees the foundation of their home start to crumble and they do nothing, that is an act of omission. If they do as the government is doing and bring a sledgehammer to that foundation, that is an act of commission. Both are wrong because eventually the house falls and everyone suffers.

I am more than happy to be accountable to my constituents. I am happy to answer questions on why I made these statements. I believe my constituents are firmly behind me on this one, as I have asked them multiple times if we should continue to hold the line. I will warn members in the governing party that people are starting to say the only way this ends is by an election and a new government.

The members can get to their microphones tomorrow, talk to the Prime Minister and tell him to stop this sledgehammering of an institution we all care about.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the majority of members of Parliament want this issue to

go to PROC. That is the motion we are debating today. The member knows that. However, he wants to talk about a report and a specific motion that was dealt with six months ago or so. That report says we are to give all the documents we have collected directly to the RCMP. The RCMP has said no, it does not want them. It would potentially be against charter rights, something we should be concerned about.

Why should the government listen to a Conservative leader who is more interested in his personal self-interest, in advancing the Conservative Party, than in what the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and other legal experts are saying? At times, I would suggest, the leader of the Conservative Party is in borderline contempt of Parliament.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, the oracle from Winnipeg talks about an idea that somehow a majority believes this should go to PROC—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it certainly is not appropriate to be calling people names in the House, even if the member is going to suggest he was trying to be kind. The reality is that he meant it in a sarcastic way and I would encourage the Speaker to encourage him to withdraw that.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha does not have the floor. If the member has anything to add, she should wait until the appropriate time.

The rules of the House are that we refer to other members in the House by their title or riding. I hope all members will take note of that. It is something that everybody fully knows.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has the floor.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I will refer to the member as the member for Winnipeg North in future discussions, but I will point out the continued belief that members cannot use sarcasm or satire. How do we know we live in a free country? It is when we can criticize those in power openly and freely. If the Liberals have better ideas than mine, they should use them. The answer to free speech that one disagrees with is free speech that one agrees with.

Getting back to the point I was making, the member said a majority of people in this place want this to go to PROC. If that were the case, we would not be here. There would have been a vote and then the—

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** If you would stop talking, then there would be a vote.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** No, Madam Speaker—

● (1620)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** That is debate. The hon. parliamentary secretary had an opportunity to ask a question and I am sure there will be another opportunity.

I will ask the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola to wrap up because other individuals would like to ask questions.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, again, the member seems to think everyone shares his reality. I would point out that is not the case. We have different points of view. I enjoy his interventions, but if members on the other side are unhappy with what I have to say, they should respond at the appropriate time with their own counter-arguments.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, and especially for the answer he just gave.

I just realized that he was actually being sarcastic. The satire, the sarcasm, was his own speech, coming from a party that was found in contempt of Parliament and that used closure motions and omnibus bills over and over and over again. They are lecturing us about respect for the institution, which is rather ironic. To use his own word, it is sarcasm.

If, by some misfortune, his party returns to power after the next election—which I do not want, because I want the NDP to win the election—will it commit to respecting the institution and parliamentarians, and will it commit to not using closure and omnibus bills?

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I would have hoped the NDP member from Quebec, who I believe came in 2011 as the official opposition, would respect that I made specific reference to the duties of the loyal opposition, something his former leader Thomas Mulcair did when he had the opportunity to hold Prime Minister Harper to account. As I said, Prime Minister Harper actually waived client-solicitor privilege when the RCMP had specific questions about the Mike Duffy affair. I would have thought the member would appreciate that kind of open result.

The member talks about how we were in government. Let us talk about how they were in opposition with Thomas Mulcair holding the government to account. Now, under the member of Parliament for Burnaby South, the New Democrats say at every turn that they do not support the current Prime Minister, yet they vote to keep him in power. That is contemptible.

That is the problem, because what happens in this chamber here and now is what we should be most concerned with. I would ask the member to reflect upon that.

**Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Madam Speaker, given that the Auditor General only reviewed a minority of the contracts, in the member's view, as an experienced member of Parliament, how much worse could this actually be? We are talking about \$400 million of misappropriated funds. In his estimation, how much worse could the rot actually be?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, this is the proverbial challenge. The Auditor General, particularly under the current Prime Minister, has publicly asked for more funding to keep in line with the amount of spending that has happened. This is the same Prime Minister who has 40% more public servants and has seen a 200% increase in the use of consultants. For the program spending we have seen, some may think it was okay. Some may have some concerns about what was spent during the COVID period, where we

went from an average budget under Mr. Harper of around \$250 billion to, in some cases, topping \$700 billion in a single-year budget.

The Auditor General has not had the resources to do exactly what the member said, which is to really go through that file 100%. She has said publicly the Prime Minister and his cabinet will not support her allocation so she can do the job commensurate with the amount government has grown under the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I really believe the member is somewhat confused. The motion we are debating, if the Conservatives actually stopped talking, is to have the issue they want to talk about go to the procedure and House affairs committee. Instead of allowing that vote to take place, the leader of the Conservative Party insists we play this multi-million dollar self-serving game at great expense to Canadians so we cannot debate other issues that are critically important to Canadians.

Does the member not agree we should follow the Conservative motion, allow it to come to a vote and have the issue go to PROC? That was the ruling of the Speaker.

● (1625)

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, as I have said before, there are some deeply held principles at stake here, and I for one, as a member, want to force the government to admit it was wrong and that it has to follow up with what Parliament has asked of it.

As long as members want to get up and continue debate, I support that. This member can talk about the trade-offs, but that is something he should be talking about with the Prime Minister and cabinet, who have not given the law clerk what Parliament ordered them to. That is the fastest way to end this. We would have this go to PROC right away. Unfortunately, this is the only mechanism we seem to have.

I hope other Liberal members of Parliament will be at the caucus meeting tomorrow with that member and the Prime Minister and knock some sense into them, figuratively, by communicating that they need to stop this stonewalling of Parliament.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Madam Speaker, happy birthday.

My colleague has really hit the nail on the head in terms of the deep-seated issue. If there is nothing to hide, why does the government not just give all of the unredacted documents to the room? Why not? Why are the Liberals refusing to do this?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I will say happy birthday as well.

The question is completely fair. Canadians sent us here to be their voice and hold the government to account. Anyone who is not in cabinet has a role to play in holding the government to account. That is what we are doing here. I think it is time for members on the Liberal side to do the same. I made a reference to the foundation. If members are sitting back and allowing that foundation to crumble or to be sledgehammered by the Prime Minister, that is an act of omission.

The reason the government is covering this up is that, obviously, someone somewhere did something very bad. Instead of opening up and being transparent with Canadians, as the open-by-default Prime Minister said sunshine was the best disinfectant, they are protecting the powerful.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place and represent my constituents of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Today, I am adding my voice regarding the subamendment to the privilege motion relating to the Auditor General's findings. These revelations indicate that Liberal insiders at Sustainable Development Technology Canada allocated nearly \$400 million in taxpayer money to their businesses, resulting in over 186 conflicts of interest. I am frustrated that, at a time when many Canadians are struggling to afford necessities like food, heating and housing, we are forced to repeatedly confront ongoing corruption within the Liberal government.

SDTC was a federal foundation that was supposed to support small and medium-sized businesses in the clean-technology sector by funding projects that work to develop technology that benefits the environment. The Liberals would ask was SDTC not started by the Conservatives. It absolutely was. In 2017, it received a clean bill of health from the Auditor General when that audit was done. What went so wrong between 2017 and 2023? The Liberal government appointed Liberal insiders to the board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada who violated conflict of interest laws and turned SDTC into a slush fund for Liberal elites. Everything the Liberals seem to touch becomes embroiled in corruption and scandal.

In light of the alarming discoveries about the mishandling of these funds, the Auditor General launched an investigation into the green slush fund and the awarding of contracts since 2017. What she found is that Liberal insiders were funnelling taxpayer money into their own companies to the tune of \$400 million. Let us keep in mind that is just what she audited. She did not audit the entire workings of this fund, so who knows how many other millions of dollars have been misappropriated by these insiders?

What makes things worse is the fact that Cycle Capital, a company the Liberal Minister of Environment and Climate Change was a lobbyist for, was given \$10 million from the green slush fund. This funding was approved by a board member who also had shares in this company and is a close friend of that minister. Not only that, she has admitted to the committee that several of her other companies received millions of dollars from the green slush fund while she sat on the board.

In addition to the \$400 million lost and the 186 conflicts of interest, the Auditor General's report contains findings that paint a picture of Liberal incompetence, disregard for the law and a lack of respect for public funds. The Auditor General's report found that the Liberal-appointed directors of the green slush fund "did not ensure that the foundation complied with its enabling legislation." In other words, the Liberal-appointed board of directors did nothing to make sure they followed the law when awarding millions of taxpayer dollars to companies.

### *Privilege*

What is even more outrageous is that the report specifically states that the Liberal Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry did not sufficiently monitor the contracts and failed to fulfill his obligations to assess any conflicts of interest with respect to the green slush fund. I really wonder how on earth the minister failed to monitor contracts containing 186 conflicts of interest. He did not just not monitor one contract, but failed to do it 186 times.

In addition, the assistant deputy minister from that minister's department called the green slush fund "free money", saying, "there's a lot of sloppiness and laziness, and there's some outright incompetence, and the situation is...untenable at this point". What a glowing review after nine years of the NDP-Liberals.

It is simply outrageous that, for a fund dedicated to supporting the development of new sustainable technology, \$59 million of this green slush fund went to 10 ineligible projects. To quote the Auditor General, these projects, "did not support the development or demonstration of a new technology, or the projected environmental benefits were unreasonable."

● (1630)

Not only was taxpayer money misappropriated by Liberal insiders, but it was also given to projects not even relevant to the goals of the fund. Even worse, the Auditor General estimated that during the time the audit was taking place, one in 10 new projects approved were also ineligible for funding. It is unfathomable that Liberal insiders continued to misappropriate funds, despite being under active investigation by the Auditor General for that very crime. Ultimately, it is clear these findings by the Auditor General are very serious, and Conservatives believe Canadians deserve to know the full extent of this Liberal corruption. That is why, on June 10, Conservatives put forward a motion calling for all documents related to the green slush fund to be tabled within 30 days and then turned over to the RCMP. This motion passed in the House, despite the Liberals' desperate attempts to vote it down.

It is worth noting that the motion that was passed by the House is binding. It is not just a mere suggestion, and it is certainly not optional. The Liberals responded to this motion on July 17, August 21 and September 16, but tabled only partial disclosures, owing either to redactions or to the withholding of documents. In other instances, the House order was met with a complete refusal. According to the Speaker's own ruling, the law clerk reported that the Liberals had not complied with the House order by the stipulated deadline of 30 days following the adoption of the motion. In response to the Liberals' refusal to disclose the documents, the House leader of the official opposition raised the question of privilege, arguing the House's powers to order the production of documents should be absolute and the government cannot disregard this binding order.

### *Privilege*

As parliamentarians, we have a right to ask for any documents to be produced that are necessary for us to fulfill our duties to Canadians. Therefore, on September 26, the Speaker ruled that the Liberals' failure to produce documents relating to the green slush fund scandal constituted a *prima facie* breach of privilege and as such, all debates are suspended until this matter is resolved. We are sitting here five months after and are continuing to debate this because the conditions of the opposition motion passed by the House in June have not been met.

Today, we are debating the subamendment put forward by my colleague, the MP for Calgary Rocky Ridge. The subamendment states that once this motion has passed through the House, the committee studying this question of privilege must report back to the House within 30 sitting days, unless the government tables all of the documents fully unredacted before that time. This Conservative subamendment ensures Canadians can get the answers they deserve in a timely manner. I want to be clear: we are not the ones who decided that Parliament had to debate this privilege motion, paralyzing other business in the House. It is the Speaker who ruled that the government violated the privilege of the House. It was the Liberal government that decided not to abide by the motion passed by the House and to ignore the Speaker's subsequent ruling. This is why we are continuing to debate this motion. It was not the Conservative Party's decision. It was the decision of the Liberal government.

There is a troubling pattern with these Liberals. Repeatedly, vital information is withheld from Canadians and the official opposition. The government obstructs Conservatives from accessing information regarding fiscal mismanagement and scandals. Canadians have a right to know precisely how their money is being spent. According to the Speaker's own ruling, "The House has the undoubted right to order the production of any...documents from any entity or individual it deems necessary to carry out its duties." He continues, "The House has clearly ordered the production of certain documents, and that order has clearly not been fully complied with."

If the Liberals have nothing to do with this \$400-million scandal, they should be as concerned as the rest of us about this gross waste of taxpayer money, and fight to hold those responsible accountable for their actions. Instead, they have violated parliamentary privilege, preventing us from fulfilling our duties to Canadians.

• (1635)

Parliamentary privilege is the individual and collective right that we as members of the House of Commons have, which allows us to effectively carry out our principal functions to legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account. In Canada, parliamentary privilege is part of our Constitution, as it is essential for maintaining the power and authority of the House and allowing members of Parliament to represent their constituents fully.

The House of Commons is an institution that represents the voice of the people. We cannot legislate, speak or make decisions on behalf of the Canadian people if we do not have a full picture of any given situation or do not have the freedom to speak freely about any given topic. This is why parliamentary privilege is so important. It provides parliamentarians with the rights and freedoms necessary to do our jobs. When parliamentary privilege is breached, it means that the government has disregarded and broken the consti-

tutionally guaranteed right of parliamentarians. This question of privilege goes beyond Liberal corruption. It is about preserving the integrity of the institution of Parliament. Nobody in this country is above the law.

On October 4, RCMP Commissioner Duheme confirmed that there is an ongoing investigation into the green slush fund. It is shameful. The Liberals think they can obstruct an RCMP investigation by withholding these documents, using a flimsy argument that such a motion calls for the documents to be turned over to the RCMP, thereby making the motion inadmissible. In the Speaker's ruling, he agreed that "It is indeed unusual, novel and unprecedented for the House to order documents not for its own purposes but for a third party." However, the Speaker also added, "I believe the best way for this to be achieved would be to follow the usual course for a *prima facie* question of privilege..."

It is both unusual and unprecedented for the RCMP to have to investigate a government regarding such a significant number of conflicts of interest and misappropriation of funds. It is perplexing for a government that asserts it is not accountable for this scandal, and to take such extensive measures to conceal the truth rather than advocating for Canadians to uncover what really happened.

By failing to comply with the production order, the message to the Canadian public is clear. The Liberals are complicit in this wrongdoing and corruption and have something to hide. That is how it would appear to the public. The RCMP must have access to the full, unredacted documents ordered by the House so that they can investigate the corruption that has been all too common under the Liberal government.

The Liberals are raising concerns that the Speaker's order could infringe on the charter right specifically regarding police investigations and privacy but let us be clear. It is the Liberals who are abusing their power by refusing to comply with an order of the House. They claim that we are the ones violating, or potentially violating, section 8 of the charter, which safeguards privacy against unreasonable search and seizure.

However, the reality is that there is minimal, if any, expectation of privacy regarding these documents. They were generated by public servants, using taxpayer funds, and are therefore the property of the public. Contrary to claims made by the Liberals, advocating for transparency does not undermine privacy or due process. Instead, there is a demand for accountability.

The House order does not force the RCMP to take any specific action on the documents. Having served in law enforcement for 35 years, let me explain the way these investigations could work. A complainant generally turns over the documents to the police to investigate. The government is not acting like a complainant in this matter. It is acting more like an accused. The government has a responsibility to turn over evidence to law enforcement and let the evidence dictate the best course of action by law enforcement and the justice system.

However, for some reason, the Liberals have completely refused to provide Canadians with the answers they rightfully deserve, actively obstructing a criminal investigation into the misappropriation of funds. Are they worried about what the RCMP might find? It certainly appears that way. Do they actually believe Canadians will not see right through that?

• (1640)

They say they had nothing to do with the missing \$400 million, yet they are doing nothing to figure out what actually happened. Taxpayer money is the property of the Canadian people. It should be allocated for the benefit of Canadians and not as a spending account for the Liberals and their well-off friends, especially at a time when so many Canadians are struggling to keep their head above water.

Nobody has a choice as to whether they pay taxes. I should not have to tell the members opposite that, at a bare minimum, taxpayer money should go toward what the government says it is supposed to go to and not to line the pockets of well-connected Liberals and friends of the Liberal Party.

In the Prime Minister's 2015 campaign, he promised to create the most open and transparent government ever. However, talk is cheap. Why will he not follow through with his promise and provide the unredacted documents to the RCMP, ensuring transparency for Canadians? Is it simply another broken promise he can add to his long list after nine years? I really wonder whether the Liberals have done anything right in the last nine years?

Canadians are sick of the rising cost of living and the crime, chaos and corruption caused by the ineffective policies of the current government. For the past nine years, the Prime Minister has led the most ethically compromised government in Canadian history.

Our nation is ready for change and for a government that will ensure common-sense leadership. Canadians deserve a government that is committed to accountability and transparency, one that does not use Canadians' hard-earned money to line the pockets of its own insider friends. If the Liberals cannot commit to turning over these documents to the RCMP, they should call an election and let Canadians decide what sort of leadership they really want.

• (1645)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member opposite actually used the RCMP as a source to reference in making his speech. Members might allow me to do the same. Regarding the documents that the Conservative Party wants us to give directly to the RCMP, the RCMP commissioner responded, "There is significant risk that the Motion could be inter-

### *Privilege*

preted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections." That is coming from the RCMP. We also have the Auditor General and other legal experts.

Let us realize what the Conservatives are asking the government to do. They are saying to disregard what the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and the other legal experts are saying and, by the way, listen to the all-hailed leader of the Conservative Party, who has a self-interest in this issue. They want us to believe the Conservatives. I refuse to do so. I will listen to the RCMP, the Auditor General and other legal experts.

Why will the member not do likewise and reinforce that those are the institutions that we should at least be listening to regarding the motion?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, when I rose in the House some weeks ago and spoke to the other subamendment, the government House leader or whip or whatever their title is asked a similar question from the RCMP. What is interesting is that, as I understand how this should work for the RCMP to investigate the government, my concern is this: If the Liberals have nothing to hide, whose charter rights are they concerned about breaching? If the Liberals are saying that Liberal insiders, ministers and those in government have nothing to do with what is going on in this corruption, then they should have no issue with turning over unredacted documents to the RCMP. They should do that on their own. The other thing is this: If the Liberals are protecting someone who is inside, they should absolutely be concerned. However, and this is a very important point, the government should act as a complainant in this particular matter, which it is as caretaker for the taxpayer money.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** If I may finish, Madam Speaker, I am just about done.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member can add to it in the answer to the next question.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, speaking of the use of public funds, we recently learned that the leader of the Conservative Party wants to do away with a housing construction fund. We know that 17 Conservative members applied to that program for funding for their communities.

The Conservative leader decided to muzzle those members and prevent them from doing their job by requesting funding that is there to help alleviate the housing crisis. To top it all off, we learned from The Hill Times that Carleton, the municipality that the Conservative leader represents, received \$44 million under that program.

I would like to know whether my Conservative colleague thinks that his leader did his job or failed to do his job by defending the City of Carleton for using a fund that he wants to abolish.

*Privilege**[English]*

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure of the connection that my NDP friend is trying to make to SDTC and the fraud that was going on there, other than to maybe suggest that there may also be some concerns with the building fund that the Liberals are touting, which has not seen anything built yet. Is there or is there not corruption there? I do not know.

I want to talk about why we are here on this privilege motion. On only what she was able to study, the Auditor General found that \$400 million was misappropriated. I am concerned that there may be millions or hundreds of millions more dollars from this green slush fund over the course of six years that this continued on, since the Liberals changed the leadership of this group, the board. There may be millions more in misappropriated funds that we do not even know about yet.

That is what we need to focus on as Canadians. It is taxpayer money, not the government's money.

• (1650)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate what the member had to say about this issue. I actually question the motivation on the other side. I am a little harsher on this than perhaps he is, mostly because of what I hear from my constituents.

I want to mention that, very early on in the government's existence, it brought forward a bill around an environmental framework. The Liberals just brought it to the House to be debated. On the first day of debate, it was very clear that they were bringing in things that were not normal, such as a freshly sweeping power to the minister and accountability to an advisory board, rather than to the House.

I questioned the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country about what this board would look like. There were all kinds of questions around it. What would their mandate be? How long would they be there?

The member could not wait to stand up and say that the board had already been chosen. That was at the beginning of the government's mandate. Now we have these things happening.

What, in this circumstance, would tell us that the government values taxpayers' money or the rights and responsibilities of this place?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, over the nine years we have had the current government, it has become quite clear that the government has absolute, complete contempt for the taxpayers in this country.

We can go through dozens of examples in which it has taken advantage of and completely wasted hard-earned taxpayer money. SDTC is an example of that. It had a board already pre-selected early on; surprise, it was full of Liberal insiders. If that does not raise alarm bells, then people are asleep over there. Obviously, they have been, as indicated by the 186 conflicts of interest that the minister did not even recognize with their own board members and their own companies that did not belong to any sustainable fund,

fund priorities or goals of this fund. This reeks and smells of criminality to me.

I would hope that the government, as much as it is trying to protect itself from this and from the embarrassment, will see that the Canadian public thinks it is complicit in this because of the fact that it is stonewalling the release of documents. If the government is actually not complicit, then it should turn over the unredacted documents and try to restore some of the Canadian public's faith in the government. That is going to be tough to do.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague gave a great speech. I think about all the scandals that have plagued the Liberal government over the years, such as the WE Charity, the recent other Randy fiasco and all these things that have happened. Could the member just take a minute to recount some of the ways we cannot trust the Liberal government to do anything?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, there are so many scandals that come to mind that I may forget a couple if I start trying to recite them all. My constituents ask me how the current government has lasted so long and tell me it is time to get rid of it and that it has shown nothing but contempt for taxpayers. I tell them that one of the experiences I found most troubling when I arrived in Ottawa was the attitude of entitlement and arrogance I found in government. I found that troubling, and my constituents feel exactly the same way. Scandal after scandal shows the absolute and utter disregard for the Canadian public. We should have a government that is for the people. The Liberal government has turned out to be a government of the people, and there is a significant difference.

• (1655)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about our oh-so-beloved Liberal government and, more specifically, about the problem that we have been discussing for several weeks now, namely the infamous \$400 million that was diverted to Liberal cronies.

Those funds came from a program that worked flawlessly from 2001 to 2016 or 2017. What happened at that point? There was a change of government. All of a sudden, the Liberal government did what it usually does and started rewarding its cronies. That is why we have a major issue with the \$400 million that has gone missing. The money that disappeared into the pockets of Liberal friends is our money. What does that tell us? It tells us how little interest the Prime Minister has in financial matters, although we have known that for quite a while now.

It also tells us that he has little interest in security matters. Last week, we saw a telling example of how the Prime Minister handles situations that people in Canada are experiencing. On Friday, things got intense in Montreal. Protesters started smashing things in front of the convention centre, where a NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting was taking place, attended by members of the association I belong to. Meanwhile, what was the Prime Minister up to? The Prime Minister was dancing in front of Taylor Swift.



He was playing with his little bracelets while Montreal was burning. This is a powerful symbol that proves the Prime Minister does not act like an adult, let alone like a prime minister. Violent, destructive riots have been going on in Canadian communities for months now. Instead of taking action, the Prime Minister did not even take a few minutes' break from dancing the night away to issue the following statement:

What we saw on the streets of Montreal last night was appalling. Acts of anti-semitism, intimidation, and violence must be condemned wherever we see them. The RCMP are in communication with local police. There must be consequences, and rioters held accountable.

That nice tweet was posted on his page. He probably did not even see the message before his staff posted it. That brief message was posted on X, so he figured his work was done and he could keep dancing and having fun. Everyone saw the pictures. It was really something.

Some will say that the Prime Minister has the right to go and see a concert with his daughter. Of course, but the Prime Minister has a fundamental responsibility. When a major incident happens in the country, he has a duty to stop having fun himself and tell his daughter to keep going with her friends. He should then go and see what is happening and deal with the situation. That is not what happened. We know the Prime Minister has the resources. He has his security team by his side. He has a command post. He can visit in person to see what is going on and decide what needs to be done. Instead, he simply carried on having fun, as though nothing had happened. For the past nine years, the Prime Minister of Canada has been perceived as someone who is not serious.

Terry Glavin from the National Post said the same thing in October. Referring to groups that are causing problems in Canada, he wrote, and I quote, "Such hateful rhetoric is unacceptable. This has no place in Canada. All options must be considered. This is not who we are. We are treating this with the utmost urgency."

As Mr. Glavin writes, "For more than four years, this is what we have been hearing from the Liberal government about the bloodcurdling incitements that are the stock in trade of the Vancouver-headquartered Samidoun Network, the overseas agitation and propaganda wing of the terrorist-listed Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine."

According to a newspaper article, in August, the Minister of Public Safety stated that federal departments are currently examining how two men suspected of having ties to a foreign terrorist group were allowed to enter Canada and, worse still, to obtain Canadian citizenship. Ahmed Fouad Mostafa Eldidi, 62, and his son Mostafa Eldidi, 26, were arrested in Richmond Hill, Ontario. They face nine separate terrorism charges, including conspiracy to commit murder on behalf of the Islamic State, a terrorist group. The RCMP announced the charges and said the two men were in the advanced stages of planning a serious, violent attack in Toronto.

What I just read out is an example of the government's incompetence. Videos clearly show this man committing barbaric acts with the armed group Islamic State. He came to Canada and became a Canadian citizen.

### *Privilege*

● (1700)

How can the United States trust Canada when Canada gets into situations like these? That is just one example among many. The Americans are very nervous, and rightly so. Just think: Canada let in a member of the Islamic State who then became a Canadian citizen. There is even video evidence to support it. No one can wrap their heads around it.

In July, the National Post reported that U.S. senator Marco Rubio and his colleagues had sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, urging him to beef up precautions along the Canada-U.S. border. Why? It was because Canada had recently increased the number of refugees allowed to enter the country on temporary resident visas from Palestinian territories, including Gaza and the West Bank. The letter cited concerns that this would allow Gazans with possible ties to terrorists to enter the U.S. via Canada. With so few reliable records or background checks available, Canada's decision will turn the northern border into a much bigger national security issue.

All of the Liberal government's decisions bring us back to this debate. Since 2015, the Prime Minister has made it so that nothing works. I am thinking, for example, of the \$400 million from the green slush fund that was given to friends, rather than being used to help companies develop green technologies. That is corruption. I am also thinking about how our public safety is threatened because of the decisions made by various jurisdictions. That is not working at all. No wonder our American neighbours are nervous. There is no shortage of examples. This is not necessarily coming from President Trump. It is coming from his administration, from people who work on border security and national defence. These people are meeting with us and asking us what is happening in Canada because things are no longer working. They are very nervous. They are worried about what is happening here and what could come their way.

I cannot say it better than my leader, who addressed the Prime Minister directly on Friday. Here is the message that the Leader of the Opposition posted following the riots in Montreal. He said, and I quote:

You act surprised. We are reaping what you sowed.

This is what happens when a Prime Minister spends 9 years pushing toxic woke identity politics, dividing and subdividing people by race, gender, vaccine status, religion, region, age, wealth, etc.

On top of driving people apart, you systematically break what used to bring us together, saying Canada is a "post-national state" with "no core identity."

You erased our veterans and military, the Famous Five and even Terry Fox from our passport to replace them with meaningless squirrels, snowflakes and a drawing of yourself swimming as a boy.

You opened the borders to terrorists and lawbreakers and called anyone who questioned it racist.

You send out your MPs to say one thing in a mosque and the opposite in a synagogue, one thing in a mandir and the opposite in a gurdwara.

You have made Canada a playground for foreign interference. You allowed Iran's IRGC terrorists to legally operate here for four years after they murdered 55 of our citizens in a major unprovoked attack.

You passed laws that release rampant offenders from prison within hours of their 80th arrest.

*Privilege*

And what is the result? Assassinations on Canadian soil, firebombings of synagogues, extremist violence against mandirs and gurdwaras, over 100 churches burned or vandalized (with barely any condemnation from you), all for a total 251% more hate crime.

And, while you were dancing, Montreal was burning.

Every corner of the country has seen a huge increase in violence and crime. This increase has affected women in particular. This self-proclaimed feminist government seems to be heading in the wrong direction. Since 2015, since the arrival of this woke Prime Minister, violent crime has increased by 50%.

Statistics from Statistics Canada on Canadian women, children and the most vulnerable show that the total number of sexual assaults at all three levels has increased by 74.83%. The total number of sexual offences against children has increased by 118%. Forcible confinement and kidnapping has increased by 11%. Indecent and harassing communications have increased by 86%.

• (1705)

Non-consensual distribution of intimate images is up 801%. Trafficking in persons is up 84%. Of all sexual assault cases, 90% of victims are women.

The Prime Minister always talks a good game about his desire to protect Canadians, but it is all nonsense. He talks the talk, but never walks the walk, unless it is initiatives that make life easier for criminals. Take Bill C-83, for example. I did an interview about this today actually, because in my region, Quebec City, there has been a lot of talk lately about what is happening in prisons, about how the situation is out of control, about how incarcerated criminals are no longer monitored as they used to be because of the legislation stemming from Bill C-83, which came into force in 2019. Correctional officers are afraid for their lives. It is total chaos inside the walls. That is a whole other issue, but this just got me thinking about the long list of problems related to how criminals are dealt with in Canada.

In the Prime Minister's world, who gets arrested? Journalists get arrested. Journalists were arrested last week while certain violent criminals, following the passage of Bill C-5, have been allowed to serve their sentences at home, watching Netflix, even if they committed aggravated sexual assault. It is unbelievable.

No man on the Liberal side had the courage to stand up and say what needed to be said, to tell the Prime Minister that he was heading in the wrong direction. Some women had that courage. What happened to them? The Liberals gave three of them the boot.

As far as the Bloc Québécois and the NDP are concerned, my main criticism of them with respect to criminal justice concerns their support for Bill C-5, the infamous bill that lets offenders be sentenced to house arrest, and Bill C-75, which lets them get bail. A person can be arrested four or five times in one day and released every time. Criminals all across Canada and Quebec are rolling on the ground laughing, especially in the Montreal area. No one is afraid of the justice system anymore because of laws put in place by the Liberals and supported, unfortunately, by my colleagues from the other parties.

This incompetent government is being kept in power by the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. The Bloc Québécois has made it clear that

it no longer has confidence, but we do not get the impression that its members are all prepared to vote in favour of a non-confidence motion. The NDP made a big show of tearing up the agreement and even produced a little video about it. To make sure they did not mess things up, the NDP made a video. In the end, now it is clear that it was pointless. They are still supporting the Liberals. We hope that they will show some courage, scrape together enough money to run a campaign, get a conscience, put Canadians first and put their money where their mouths are by saying they are finally done with this government and voting non-confidence so we can have an election.

Canadians will vote for whomever they want. If a Conservative government is fortunate enough to be voted in, we will be there to get Canada back on the right track.

[*English*]

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague represents his constituents well, and I am curious what he is hearing at the doors and on the phone from his constituents about the Liberals' failure to hand over the unredacted documents to show transparency about the corrupt green slush fund.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague who is very engaged in helping protect women and works to ensure that we have stronger laws for protecting women from violence.

To answer her question, I talk to people every weekend when I am in my riding. The first question they ask me is when will there be an election so that we can get a new prime minister.

Then, the current corruption problems involving documents from the SDTC green fund is something that people find hard to understand. Many have told me that it is worse than the sponsorship scandal. The sponsorship scandal, in 2005, involved \$40 million. Here we are talking about \$400 million. They say it is 10 times more and it is their money. They wonder if they will ever be able to recover that money. They wonder why the Liberals do not want to hand over the documents to the RCMP. That is what people are wondering and asking about.

Unfortunately, we have no answer for them except to say that we will continue to debate the issues here.

[*English*]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is often noted by political commentators that Canadians are losing confidence in our democratic institutions, such as our courts and electoral system, and now Parliament. I wonder if my colleague could comment on what happens to this confidence, or lack thereof, when the governing party refuses to comply with an order of this Parliament, which is definitely within its power to be able to order.

*Privilege*

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, we do have an order of Parliament here. We have been debating this issue for eight weeks now. Basically, we are waiting for documents to be produced.

People are wondering why the government refuses to comply. They cannot understand why the Prime Minister's power is above Parliament. Parliament belongs to the people. We are here to represent 41 million Canadians. People are saying that this is supposed to be a democracy. Parliament should be stronger than everything else, but that is not what is happening right now.

This is creating a trust problem. Every day, the government adds another layer to this trust problem. At some point, people will begin to think that no one can be trusted. If the Parliament of Canada cannot be trusted, who can we trust in this country? That is what happens in situations like this.

[English]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in my colleague's last response, he talked about something that is very important, which is trust. Can Canadians trust the government? The current government alone is responsible for over a third of all scandals across the Canadian Parliament from the very beginning. When we see one government responsible for that much scandal, how can Canadians trust it?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, trust is the foundation. Trust should be the basis of everything in politics. We are here to represent the people. When we get elected, people put their trust in us and tell themselves that we are going to represent them in the House of Commons. When a government is elected, regardless of its political stripe, people say that we should trust the government that is in power. However, that is not what has been happening since 2015.

People have realized that they can no longer trust this government. When we look at the polls, even though we never talk about polls in politics, the fact remains that we are not crazy. For the past year and a half, we have clearly seen that Canadians are fed up with this government and this Prime Minister and that they no longer have any confidence in them. That is unfortunate for democracy and for the country, but the good news is that we will soon be taking the government's place.

[English]

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague said that in the last year and a half people have come to the realization that they cannot trust the government. I would bring to mind a bill that came before this House on the environment in the current government's first year. That bill talked about giving more power to the minister and giving power to an outside governing body. When I asked the member speaking about it what that outside governing body would look like, he said that the government already had it in place. That was at the beginning of the government. What does the member have to say about the level of frustration that has built from the beginning of this government until now?

• (1715)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, the current trademark of the Liberal government is to set up structures and systems that are completely independent of Parliament or the government, while hiring 109,000 new public servants and creating a megastructure of employees to manage government business. There are two things happening. On the one hand, there are external structures and external companies that are paid \$20 billion a year to manage government affairs. They like to call it strategic advice. On the other hand, the civil service is being increased by 40%. There is a lack of coherence there.

What does that tell us about this government? It tells us that it has no confidence in the institution and its government team. At the same time, it is expanding it dramatically, while still shipping business to outside companies. No one really knows how this works, and no one really knows what is going on. This lack of transparency means that, once again, trust is broken.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague from Quebec, who made a good speech here in the House of Commons. I always enjoy his speeches.

My question is this. How much money will we find in the documents that the Liberals must hand over to Parliament as soon as possible?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question.

How much money is going to be found? We know that \$400 million was misappropriated. That \$400 million disappeared and we know that it went to friends. Now, we need to know precisely who received the money and how. We know that at least \$400 million can be found. Often, when we have access to the documents, when we can see the information, we notice that even more money was given, without us realizing it.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will continue in the same vein.

We know that the Auditor General looked at a portion of the documents. She stopped because it was a repetition of the amounts that had been allocated to people who were in conflict of interest.

I have the following question for my colleague. I think that the Auditor General felt that she had evaluated nearly 40% or 60% of all the data. Inevitably, that means that the \$400-million amount could actually be much higher. Is my colleague aware of that?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, obviously, we are still talking about \$400 million because that is the known quantity. However, the Auditor General said that she found this amount of \$400 million by checking 40% to 60% of the data, which means that we could actually be talking about an amount of up to \$1 billion. That is even more scandalous. This \$400 million is already a huge amount.

*Privilege*

Today, we are talking about billions of dollars. The government gives out billions of dollars like it is candy. However, \$400 million is a lot of money. It is 10 times more than the sponsorship scandal. Let us not forget that. This may be just the first step. Millions of dollars more could be added to this. That is why we need all of the information.

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am rising today to speak about the green slush fund scandal, which we have been debating here for some time. Particularly, I am speaking to the subamendment, which would change the amendment by adding “except that the order for the committee to report back to the House within 30 sitting days shall be discharged if the Speaker has sooner laid upon the table a notice from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel confirming that all government institutions have fully complied with the order adopted on June 10, 2024, by depositing all of their responsive records in an unredacted form”. I stress “unredacted”, because we have to stop this cover-up.

This order was originally given by the Speaker back on June 10, and here we are discussing the question of privilege on the green slush fund that the Liberals had set up to allow Liberal insiders to enrich themselves and to spend almost \$400 million from taxpayers on themselves and on other Liberal friends, and they violated rules that were identified by the Auditor General. There was \$58 million that the Liberal-appointed board on the green slush fund shovelled out on projects that could not demonstrate any environmental development benefit or green technology.

As a former chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I know that the Sustainable Development Technology Canada organization had been, up until the Liberals under the industry minister and going back to Navdeep Bains when he was industry minister, functioning perfectly in helping small green-tech funds get angel investments and direct government support to bring new products into the market to reduce our carbon footprint and to ensure that we were having clean land, clean air and clean water. However, trust this Liberal government with its history of always enriching Liberal insiders and friends, and the corruption, which goes back to when I first got elected, when we were still dealing with the ad scam, then the SNC-Lavalin scandal and the WE Foundation, which all look pretty minuscule compared to this \$400 million.

There was \$58 million given to projects that did not even qualify under the rules of SDTC, and another \$334 million. Over 186 times, projects were awarded to board members themselves, who were in a conflict of interest. They were sitting on the board, appointed by the then Liberal minister of industry, Navdeep Bains, who originally appointed most of these people, and they were failing to observe the rules laid out. When the Auditor General looked at how dollars were being spent by SDTC, she found that 186 times these Liberal insiders, these board members, failed to recuse themselves when they were giving money to themselves, to each other and to others who were connected to the board members.

Finally, there was another \$58 million that was handed out without even putting in place proper contribution agreements, which

were meant to ensure that dollars were being spent properly. There was no follow-up, no follow-through; it was money taken and stuffed in their pockets. Luckily, the Auditor General found out because of some brave whistle-blowers.

We have been talking about how the current industry minister was blamed by the Auditor General for failing to do sufficient monitoring of SDTC and failing to look at all the alerts and red flags that were going up. He decided to turn a blind eye. We know that Cycle Capital, one of the companies that received dollars, went to the direct benefit of the Minister of Environment, who had shares in Cycle Capital, and we have seen those shares now increase exponentially because of the supposed benefit of these government dollars, these hard-earned dollars from taxpayers, that funded SDTC, which they then turned into a green slush fund to allow them to continue to benefit.

● (1720)

We have seen the Liberals get up in this place over the past few weeks to argue that we should not be debating this here, even though it is our right and responsibility as parliamentarians to stand up against any questions of contempt of Parliament and violations of privilege, which the Speaker found there was. The Speaker is asking for Parliament to pronounce itself, and we believe that these records, since it clearly looks like there was criminality involved, need to be investigated not just by the public accounts committee and Parliament, but by the RCMP and other police agencies.

A whistle-blower clearly stated:

The true failure of the situation stands at the feet of our current government, whose decision to protect wrongdoers and cover up their findings over the last 12 months is a serious indictment of how our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference.

He thinks:

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

He also said:

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

I stress the “criminal activities” of this organization and those who were participating.

Liberals have said we would be violating charter rights, but the reality is that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was set up to protect individuals from the government, not protect the government from Parliament. The Liberals can no longer hide behind this veil, falsely using the charter as the reason these documents should not be turned over to Parliament and the RCMP. We need to get to the bottom of this.

*Privilege*

The Liberals can put an end to this once and for all. As the sub-amendment says, the order to report back to the House is not required if the government hands over the documents. That way, first, we can fulfill our fiduciary duty to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used legally in this case, never mind wisely. Second, the RCMP can take these documents and start an in-depth investigation of the scandal at hand.

Over the years, we have witnessed Liberals continually violating the basis of our democratic institutions and abusing taxpayer dollars. All we need to look at is how they misspent money during the pandemic and how dollars were handed out during the arrive scam. It turns out that we had to call one of the creators of the arrive scam app to the bar because he refused to testify. We know that hundreds of millions of dollars were never accounted for. We were told that the arrive scam app could have been easily produced for under half a million dollars, but instead it cost hundreds of millions of dollars. The lack of proper governance and the lack of putting in the proper checks and balances allowed the arrive scam to happen.

That is what has happened with the green slush fund. The Liberals did not carry out their responsibility as a government to ensure taxpayers' dollars were being used for what they were meant for in the various programs and operations of the government. The Liberals allowed SDTC to take those monies to benefit themselves, benefit a minister and benefit close friends and allies of the Liberal Party. We have to continue to raise this issue and ask questions. We will continue to push for it until the Liberals turn over the money.

● (1725)

However, are we surprised? We know the Prime Minister put pressure on the first indigenous justice minister and attorney general of the country, Jody Wilson-Raybould, to provide a “get out of jail free” card for SNC-Lavalin. Instead of taking the advice of his then attorney general, who was fulfilling her responsibilities, he first demoted her to Veterans Affairs and then fired her. That shows the lengths the Prime Minister will go to ensure that his friends in large elite corporations, the Laurentian elites, are always taken care of before ethics, rules and the law are followed by the Liberal government.

All too often, we see the Liberals abuse our democracy, and it is starting to play out among Canadians in the issues being polled. Not only have they lost confidence in the Prime Minister, who now has the lowest level of support and lowest approval ratings of any prime minister in the past 30 years, but they have lost confidence in the democratic process of Parliament and government. It is because of the erosion caused by the ongoing mismanagement and corruption of the Liberals and the way they have divided Canadians every step of the way.

The Prime Minister of Canada has three primary responsibilities. One is to keep Canada safe. However, we have seen how the government has turned its back on police officers. A police officer was stabbed in the neck in Winnipeg over the weekend in a confrontation. It is the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies that have made our streets less safe. The Liberals have also hollowed out our military. We are short over 15,000 troops because of the woke policies the Prime Minister has brought forward. People are leaving in droves and we are having trouble getting enough back to replace them. Our

ships are rusting out, our fighter jets are worn out, our army has been hollowed out and everybody who works in the Canadian Armed Forces is burnt out. He has failed to protect Canadians.

The Prime Minister's second responsibility is to manage the relationship with the United States. We are seeing how that is going right now because of the Prime Minister's mass immigration and the problems that has created at our southern border, the U.S.'s northern border, with people going across the border illegally. In some cases, as reported, people who have crossed into the U.S. from Canada have been charged for wanting to commit terrorism in the United States. That is because of uncontrolled immigration, and it does not bode well with the Americans. We also have the out-of-control fentanyl crisis, which the Liberals have failed to address. As we continue to see these types of issues, how do we protect Canada when we are not properly managing our relationship with the United States?

The third responsibility of the Prime Minister of Canada is to keep Canada united. However, the Liberal government has consistently and always divided Canadians by race, religion, ethnicity, east against west, and urban against rural. With every policy the Liberals bring forward, they calculate that those divisions play well into their political future.

● (1730)

When we look at why the Liberals do what they do and why they always have corruption scandals, like the one we are dealing with here, it is all due to the reality that the Prime Minister and his cabinet have not stepped up to the plate for the right reasons. Instead of protecting Canada, the Liberals have decided to hollow out our military and disrespect the police officers across this country. They have constantly underfunded what is needed to properly keep us safe. They are taking those dollars to invest in themselves, and the green slush fund is a prime example of that.

When we finally have a carbon tax election and Canadians have a chance to vote for change, we will be able to see how the hard-earned dollars Canadians pay in taxes every year were misappropriated, having gone to helping out friends like those who work at Sustainable Development Technology Canada. We remain concerned about the overall state of the country that the Liberals, under the Prime Minister, are leaving us with. It is going to be a lot of work, and we know that, but we are prepared to do that work as Conservatives with our great leader. We have a fantastic leader in the official opposition.

*Privilege*

As members know, the green slush fund, SDTC, was a federally funded non-profit that received roughly \$100 million a year. Over the last four years, the \$400 million we are talking about has been used to the benefit of Liberal insiders and friends and has even been used to the financial benefit of the Minister of Environment. We know all those people were put in place by former industry minister Navdeep Bains, who fired the previous board because its members would not do what he wanted.

The Auditor General has done her work and found wrongdoing. She found that board directors refused to recuse themselves from conflicts of interest and awarded themselves 186 different times in the amount of \$334 million, which was to their own personal benefit. We know these problems persisted and that the Minister of Industry turned a blind eye. We know this through the Auditor General's investigation and audit, and the whistle-blower believes there was criminality.

We are confident, as the official opposition, that the RCMP will be able to conduct its investigation if it receives unredacted documents. That is why the motion, amendment and subamendment press the government to do the right thing and provide the documents. It can put an end to this debate on the privilege motion.

It is parliamentarians who are at the biggest risk of losing the support of Canadians when we fail to act upon things that are not just unethical but criminal in nature. We need to drill down on things that rebuild the confidence and trust between us members, who have been elected, and the people who put us here.

Canadians expect more and they expect better. Every time we stand up in this place, we will talk about corruption and the misuse and misappropriation of the taxpayer dollars that Canadians work so hard for in these difficult times. When the cost of living is out of control because of the carbon tax, housing is getting more and more difficult for so many people, huge deficits and the printing of money are running up inflation and making life more difficult, and crime on our streets is out of control, it is time for change, and the Conservatives are prepared to make that change.

• (1735)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it was very refreshing to hear a Conservative speak off the cuff and not read out an AI-generated speech. I appreciate that.

I notice that the member spoke, very importantly, and I would agree with him, about supporting our military. I am wondering whether he can reflect on the fact that the only time in modern history when our military spending dropped below 1% of our GDP was while he was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of defence. It is very rich for him to come in here and say that we have to spend more on our military, when he was directly responsible for allowing spending to get below 1%.

However, let us not talk about the past; I am willing to focus on the future. The current government has shown how we are going to get to approximately 1.8% and how we will go beyond that to achieve our NATO target of 2%. While the member and I were on the defence committee together, we both agreed it should be at 2%. Can he stand up today and say that if elected to form government,

the Conservatives will actually commit to increasing to 2% of GDP, yes or no?

• (1740)

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, first I would like to set the record straight. We know from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who just did some recalculations, that the Liberals' projections of increasing spending up to even 1.7% is a falsehood because they did not base it on the same GDP numbers the Department of Finance uses.

I would also like to point out that the Library of Parliament discovered that when we actually compare apples to apples, when we were looking at actual national defence numbers, when we were in a time of peace in 2014 and there was no invasion in Ukraine happening yet—

**An hon. member:** No, there was not.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, no, there was not. We wrapped up our war efforts in Afghanistan and were downsizing our military efforts in Iraq and Syria. Sure, we rolled down those operations, so defence spending dropped. When the Library of Parliament looked at the numbers, actual national defence expenditures in the department right now by the Liberals is 0.95%.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** No.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, for the member for Winnipeg North, who does not know the numbers, I will explain that the only way the Liberals got their numbers up is that in 2017 they asked permission from NATO to add in, and there is an order paper question that just proved it, \$6.5 billion from veterans' pensions, defence employees' pensions, and Coast Guard, which is not a paramilitary organization.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to say, as we go into six weeks of filibuster, that we believe that the motion should come to a vote. We support the motion and want to get to the bottom of the SDTC scandal. When it came to the SNC-Lavalin scandal and the WE Charity scandal, it was NDP MPs who actually got to the bottom of them, because we believe Canadians need to get answers.

I always appreciate my colleague; he has a long history in the House and I have a lot of respect for him. I do not have any respect at all for the record of the Harper regime, because it was the most corrupt and dishonest government in Canadian history. I want to cite some of the scandals. The ATS scandal was \$400 million. The G8 scandal, remember the gazebos, was a billion dollars. The Phoenix pay scandal was \$2.2 billion. There was \$3.1 billion lost in the anti-terrorism funding. There were the Senate scandals. I could go on and on.

*Privilege*

No Conservatives would permit us to get answers to any of those scandals. Does my colleague regret the Harper government's shut-down and refusal to give answers and transparency in every single one of them? Does he regret what the Harper regime did to Canadians?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby gives a very interesting revisionist history. The NDP has been the party that has kept the Liberals in power; the Liberals are here because of the ongoing support of the NDP. Going into the by-elections this fall, the leader of the NDP said that he had torn up the agreement, which was so they could win their seat back in Elmwood—Transcona. There was a very thin margin in that by-election, and they were losing up until that point. When I was knocking on doors in Elmwood—Transcona, every constituent was sick and tired of the NDP's supporting the Prime Minister and the Liberals.

The NDP's coalition with the Liberals has allowed us to get to this point. It was the NDP that helped shut down the debate and turn over the documents we needed in the past, and they are now allowing the debate to go on. However, if they at all support a closure motion brought forward by the Liberal government, it again will prove that the NDP “have their six”, have the Liberals' back, and that the coalition is alive and well.

• (1745)

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the speech by my friend and colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, was a thoughtful one on the Liberals' latest scandal, the green slush fund. I was happy to hear him make reference to the specious arguments based on the charter that the Liberals are now advancing late in the day to justify their non-compliance with a perfectly legitimate order of Parliament.

The member left us with no doubt about what he thinks of the arguments, but my question is more about timing and procedure. The time to have raised the arguments would have been in advance of the order's having been made in June, as referenced by the Speaker in his ruling.

What can my colleague say about the timing of the procedures and about how the Liberals are now using a specious argument to hide behind?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his hard work in making sure we always stand up against corruption, we stand up for democracy and we stand up for the proper governance of the House of Commons and of cabinet.

Meanwhile, we are witnessing the Liberals' refusing to co-operate with the Speaker. They are refusing to hand over the documents so the RCMP can do its work. We have been waiting for the documents for over five months, coming up on six months next week. The Auditor General found that there was a violation of the rules. The board members refused to recuse themselves; they were enriching themselves instead of leaving the room.

What would have been even better is if the Liberal appointees had never even made an application or taken the dollars in the first place. They were there to make sure that the green-tech companies

across this country were getting the money they need, and instead they enriched themselves, which is all wrong.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to try to correct the history that the member spoke about. I know he said that history would repeat itself, or whatever, but I want to talk about when Stephen Harper was prime minister.

The first statement Stephen Harper made about Atlantic Canadians was that they had a defeatist attitude. They wanted to survive on EI and not get out and find jobs. We can talk about protecting people, but Stephen Harper shut down the search and rescue facility of Coast Guard in St. John's. It was opened again by the current government when we came to power.

Of course the Conservatives did not care about Newfoundland. Premier Williams, at the time, felt so dismayed by the Stephen Harper government that he flew the Canadian flag upside down at the Confederation building. It is disgusting.

Can the member comment on these things from a previous government?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, the member actually talked publicly about signing the letter to remove the Prime Minister as leader of the Liberal Party. The bigger question is why has he not continued that fight to do the right thing for Canada and remove the one individual here who continues to make us less safe, continues to squander the dollars and continues to ensure that we can make investments in things like the Coast Guard, the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP?

The Liberals would rather take the dollars for building back our Canadian Armed Forces and have the money misappropriated by the Liberal insiders who were sitting on the green slush fund board. This is the question we need answered: Why not get rid of the Prime Minister?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country. It is disappointing that I have to rise to speak to the motion before us again because of the government's failure to fulfill the wish of the House. We are now at a subamendment stage, and this means that the Liberals are still ignoring the will of Parliament—

• (1750)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** There is a point of order from the hon. government House leader.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 midnight, pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28, the minister's request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

*Privilege*

[English]

**PRIVILEGE**

## REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canadians want us debating issues that are important to them in this place, like rising taxes, rising homelessness, rising crime and rising debt. They want us to talk about the growing line-ups at food banks that are increasingly including the working class, seniors and children, or about how retirees are having to go back to work either because they cannot afford to pay for basic necessities or because they need to help their adult children. However, because of the Liberal government—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I apologize. I have to interrupt the hon. member.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Madam Speaker, I apologize to my colleague from Kelowna Lake—Country for interrupting her speech, but the Standing Orders of the House of Commons insist that more than one party House leader sign an order to extend a House sitting. I am certain that the Conservative House leader has signed no such order, and I just wanted to confirm that the request for an extension is in order.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for raising the point. The motion adopted on February 28 simply states that a minister must have the agreement of another House leader. It does not require that the parties to the agreement communicate to the House. In making the request, the minister implicitly acknowledges that there is an agreement. There is a long-standing principle that we take a member at their word. There is therefore no reason to doubt the existence of an agreement at this time.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country has the floor.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, we are here because of the Liberal government's refusal to release documents, which is the will of this Parliament.

It really makes us question what the Liberals are trying so desperately to hide. The government should have obeyed the request of the House of Commons. The House of Commons is the voice of Canadians, and the government cannot ignore this request. It is not just a request; this is an order of the House. This is exactly what the Liberal government has done.

Our motion could not have been clearer. It demanded that all documents related to Sustainable Development Technology Canada, now widely known as the Liberal billion-dollar green slush fund, be tabled with the law clerk of the House of Commons and transferred to the RCMP for investigation. The government had 30 days to comply, but it did not do so.

As a result, the opposition House leader raised a question of privilege with the Speaker. The Speaker agreed that the members' privi-

leges of the House had been breached and that the government had ignored an order of the House. However, the Liberal government continues to ignore it. I know Liberal colleagues across the aisle will say they have tabled 29,000 pages of documents. What they do not say is that many of those documents were heavily redacted, against the instructions of this Parliament. It does not matter whether they table two pages or two million pages; if the documents are redacted and blacked out, we cannot see the information on those pages.

If the Liberals chose to hide the relevant information that the House requested to protect Liberal insiders, then those documents are not worth the paper or the ink that was used. Ultimately, the Liberal government is hiding the information from the RCMP. We have to question why this has gone on for weeks and weeks. What are the Liberals trying to hide?

Just to go back and give a little history for anyone listening who is not familiar with this ethical scandal at Sustainable Development Technology Canada, before the current Liberal government, this program was not controversial. Through past governments of other parties and all parties, SDTC provided funding to Canadian innovators seeking to develop clean new technologies. However, under the current Liberal government, SDTC became widely known as the green slush fund because it was known as a hotbed of corruption for use by Liberal insiders.

We know this because the Auditor General of Canada, the Ethics Commissioner and whistle-blowers uncovered clear and widespread corruption in favour of Liberal insiders. The issues began in 2018 when the Liberal industry minister at the time, Navdeep Bains, chose to appoint a new chair to the SDTC, an entrepreneur who was already receiving funding through one of her companies. The Liberals were warned internally of the risks associated with appointing a conflicted chair.

We had heard this and this has come to light. The Liberals were told that up to that point, the fund had never had a chair with interests in companies receiving funding, yet they chose to appoint her anyway. The new chair went on to create an environment where conflicts of interest were tolerated or managed by board members, as described by the Auditor General. Board members went on, through SDTC, to grant funding to companies that they held stock or positions in. It was a direct conflict of interest.

Bains, the Liberal minister at the time, went on to appoint two other controversial board members who engaged in unethical behaviour, in obvious conflicts of interest, acting by approving funding to companies in which they held ownership stakes. Department officials from the government sat in on board meetings. They were witness to 186 conflicts of interest at the board, but they did not intervene.



*Privilege*

● (1755)

Then, in November 2022, whistle-blowers raised internal concerns with the Auditor General about unethical practices at SDTC. In September 2023, the whistle-blowers took the allegations public, forcing the Liberal industry minister to suspend SDTC funding.

In November 2023, the Auditor General started to conduct an audit. This audit found many approved projects that were ineligible for funding, a conflict of interest or both. There was \$58 million that went to 10 ineligible projects that, on all occasions, could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or development of green technology, the actual purpose of the fund. The Liberal-appointed SDTC board approved \$334 million, over 186 cases, for projects in which the board members held a conflict of interest. These numbers are absolutely staggering. The Auditor General found that the Liberal minister “did not sufficiently monitor” the contracts that were given to the Liberal insiders.

This is a culture of corruption that was Liberal-made. We know this because the Auditor General gave SDTC a clean bill of health back in 2017. It was only after the hand-picked Liberal board members were appointed that this fund began voting itself really absurd amounts of taxpayer dollars.

The Liberals will say this agency was at arm's length, but there were government officials sitting in on board meetings, so it was not at arm's length. The Liberal minister recommended board appointments, and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada had senior department officials sitting in on every board meeting, monitoring the activities of the board. It is unbelievable that senior department officials said nothing during this time.

As well, we know the Auditor General did not analyze all of the projects and contracts. In fact, it was only approximately half that the Auditor General analyzed. Therefore, these 186 instances could potentially be considerably higher, maybe even double that. This is shocking. It is why this Parliament has been seized with this.

It really bodes the question: Why are the Liberals fighting so hard to not bring the documents forth and to not shine a light on what has occurred? If there were all of these conflicts of interest, why would they not want to shine sunlight on the situation and bring all of this to light so it can be analyzed, and if there is criminal activity, that could potentially be pursued? It is unbelievable that this is all being pushed under the rug because the government does not want it to come to light.

It is disappointing we are here discussing this matter of privilege rather than discussing issues that are important to residents in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country and, in fact, all Canadians. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, there is really no shortage of issues to be discussing.

One issue I would like to talk about, and hear more on, is crime and how members of my community are worried over the rise in violent crime that has happened under the watch of the NDP-Liberals. The statistics are shocking compared to 2015. Homicides are up 28%, sexual assaults are up 75%, gang murders have nearly doubled, auto thefts are up 46% and extortion is up 357%. These are serious, violent crimes. British Columbia has seen the total number

of violent Criminal Code violations increase by over 50% since 2015.

The situation of crime really is out of control. Instead of debating how to better keep our communities safe, we are debating this matter of privilege regarding this apparent Liberal cover-up. The legislative changes made by the Liberal government, supported by the NDP, serve to put the welfare of perpetrators, often violent ones, over the welfare of victims.

● (1800)

Law enforcement and policy experts are calling for reform. Liberal Bill C-75 directed judges to act with restraint when imposing bail conditions, even with violent repeat offenders. It has been a driving force behind the catch-and-release nature of Canada's bail system. Liberal Bill C-5 removed mandatory minimum sentences for 14 Criminal Code sections, including serious crimes related to firearms and drugs. It is unbelievable.

Liberal Bill C-83 changed the correctional system in part to ensure those convicted and sentenced to penitentiaries are provided with the least restrictive environment for that person. Many believe it is this legislation that allowed serial killers like Paul Bernardo to move to a medium-security prison environment despite committing heinous crimes.

Across Canada, law enforcement experts and associations have made it clear they are fed up with the Liberal government's legislative agenda that increased crime and chaos in many of our neighbourhoods. For example, recently, the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and the Toronto Police Association issued a joint statement following an intense shootout in Toronto that led to 23 arrests and 16 firearms being seized. It states, “Our members are increasingly frustrated and angered as they continue risking their lives to apprehend repeat violent offenders.” It went on to say the incident “should serve as a call to action for the federal government to fix our bail system so repeat and violent offenders can’t continue to harm our communities while out on bail.”

*Privilege*

The Vancouver Police Union, close to where I am in British Columbia, stated how Liberal justice reforms are “doing little to address actual crime and violence.” It also said the Prime Minister is “not aware of the ongoing gang war here in B.C. which is putting both our members and public at risk on a daily basis.” The Surrey Police Union, also in British Columbia, described its pressing current issue as “the surge of illegal firearms coming across our borders and ending up in the hands of violent criminals”.

Conservatives will stop the crime by first scrapping Liberal Bill C-75, Bill C-5 and Bill C-83. Conservatives have also put forth many common-sense bills to address public safety. My own private member's bill, the end the revolving door act, Bill C-283, would have expanded justice system sentencing to people suffering from addiction through treatment and recovery in federal penitentiaries. Unfortunately, this was voted down by most NDP and Liberal MPs.

Again, instead of discussing these common-sense solutions to stop the crime in our communities, we are discussing this matter of privilege. Many of our Conservative colleagues, too many to mention in the time I have here today, have also put forth really great private members' bills that would address the issue of crime, everything from looking at crime that is happening in hospitals to extortion, car thefts and many more. I could do a whole speech just on that. We are putting forth common-sense solutions.

● (1805)

There is another issue that I would like to be discussing more, instead of a matter of privilege. Although that is important, we are only discussing it because the Liberals are holding us in this place, because the Liberals are not abiding by the will of the House. Another issue that I would like to be discussing is fixing the budget and restoring affordability.

Inflationary spending and the lack of good economic policies have seen the Canadian economy deteriorate, and Canadians are worse off because of it. We know why. The Prime Minister has said that he does not think about monetary policy and that budgets balance themselves. His latest comment was, “I'll let the bankers worry about the economy.” How completely out of touch is this with what the role of government is and what his role is? The Parliamentary Budget Officer has reported that “rising inflation and tighter monetary policy have eroded purchasing power, particularly among lower-income households.” Most Canadians spend the bulk of their income on basic necessities like food, shelter and transportation. When their purchasing power suffers, it makes just getting by that much harder.

This reality has been realized when it comes to food bank use in Canada. The cost of food has increased by over 22% since 2020 alone, forcing many to go to a food bank. The committee that I am on, the human resources committee, has had a lot of testimony on this from food banks and from not-for-profits, who have talked about the fact that they had volunteers before who have now become clients, that seniors who would maybe volunteer now have to go back to work, that people are not volunteering because they literally cannot afford the transportation to come and volunteer, that donations are down. This is what is happening in Canada. This is the Canada that we are in right now, and this is after nine years of

the NDP-Liberal government. We know, for example, that over two million Canadians have visited a food bank in one month alone.

Something that is especially upsetting is the rise of child poverty. According to the 2024 report card on child and family poverty in Canada, 1.4 million children live in poverty in Canada now. We need to discuss how economic policies and inflationary spending have really gotten us to this point. Instead, we are discussing this matter of privilege. There are really serious and broad economic concerns that are happening in Canada. It just really illustrates the results of the disastrous Liberal government and how it has affected people's lives and Canadians' prosperity.

I will say as well that the Liberals have not given a fiscal update so that we would know where the debt is this year. They continue to have spending. We have no idea what the status of our debt is. Canada's federal debt will rise to \$1.2 trillion this year. That is based on previous numbers. The interest we will pay in servicing the debt will increase to \$54 billion. Again, this is based on previous numbers. Just to put that into perspective, that is more than the revenue that has been raised in the past from GST. It is unbelievable how much we will be spending on servicing our debt and how much our children and grandchildren will be spending.

As well, Canada's GDP per capita continues to decline, meaning that there is less money to go around for more people. This is really troubling, given that while Canada's GDP per capita fell by 3% in the last four years, the GDP per capita of the United States increased by 7% in that same time period. It is total economic mismanagement on the account of the NDP-Liberal government.

The government is continuing to not comply with the will of Parliament and refusing to bring forth the documents that are the will of Parliament. There are a lot of important issues that we need to be discussing here. I will just end with the carbon tax.

● (1810)

We have all of these tax increases that will be coming down the line early next year. We have the carbon tax, which will be increasing on April 1. We have the excise tax, which will be increasing on April 1. Especially with the carbon tax, this just makes the price of everything go up, everything that is grown, produced and transported, yet the government is bent on increasing these taxes. It is putting us really at an economic disadvantage. We are hearing testimony at a lot of committees about how tax increases are forcing people to leave Canada and forcing businesses to leave. These are the things we need to be talking about.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Just before my colleague's intervention, a point of order was raised. Indeed, extending the hours requires the support of another party, an opposition party.

I simply want to inform the House that it was not the Bloc Québécois that supported the government.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for that information.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think it is important to say that when the member starts to give a false narrative that somehow the Conservatives are not to blame for this filibuster, I think it is really unfortunate and definitely misleading.

Let us be real here. We have had close to 200 speeches delivered by the Conservatives and numerous concurrence reports brought in by the Conservatives, all in an attempt to filibuster the House. The motion we are debating says that the issue needs to be advanced to the procedure and House affairs committee. That is the Speaker's ruling, and that is the motion that was introduced by the Conservatives.

The Conservative Party of Canada, in the self-interest of the leader of the Conservative Party, is playing this irresponsible multi-million dollar game. To try to give an impression, in any fashion whatsoever, that it is not the Conservative Party that is to pay for this particular irresponsible behaviour is wrong, outright wrong.

Would the member not agree, at least, that it is a Conservative motion that we are actually debating, and that it is the Conservatives who put up speaker after speaker after speaker? It is a false argument to try to express anything otherwise.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, that member there is the member who speaks the most in this place, other than the Speakers. For him to criticize people in this place for wanting to stand up and speak on behalf of their communities is pretty nonsensical and pretty unbelievable. What is the government trying to hide? The Liberal government could end this tonight. All it has to do is release the documents. What is it trying to hide?

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am with my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country. I just wish that the member for Winnipeg North would quit filibustering in here and actually do his job and turn over the documents so that we can get to the bottom of this. We just heard from the Bloc that the extension of hours next week was not the Bloc. We know it was not the Liberals who were extending hours. It was the NDP. We just had in here the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, the House leader for the NDP, saying that they are always here to stand up against corruption, but they are now in with the Liberals once again.

My question for my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country is this: Does she believe that the NDP got out the scotch tape and pasted back together its agreement? Is the breakup over?

*Privilege*

• (1815)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, what we have seen play out is that the NDP leader did this very dramatic speech and talked about the agreement no longer existing with the government, and yet over and over again New Democrats continue to side with the government, vote with it and basically do the will of the government, so it is nonsense.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Quebecers and Canadians know they can count on us for help when they are struggling to pay their rent and their bills.

I really liked it when my colleague said she was getting a little tired of repeating the same speech in the House all the time. I have a suggestion for her. She can simply stop repeating the same speech over and over in the House. That might help. I urge them to vote on their own privilege motion. The Liberals must also hand over the unredacted documents.

What does my colleague think of that solution?

On the one hand, they can stop playing childish games and we can vote. On the other hand, the government can commit to being transparent and handing over the unredacted documents.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I will stand up for my community on how crime is increasing and how people cannot afford to feed themselves. Maybe it does sound repetitive sometimes, but those are the issues that are important to people in my community and to Canadians.

As I mentioned in my intervention, crime is up. Yes, we say all the time that food bank use is up, but guess what? Reports just came out again over the last week or so that as we go into Christmas, food banks are expecting increases again. Yes, these are things we talk about all the time, but they are issues that are important to members of my community, and things are not getting better. The results of this government, of this NDP government, keep leading to costs going up. If things are getting better, then why does food bank use keep going up?

Here we have a government that is looking to increase taxes again on April 1. The carbon tax is going up 19%, which is going to make the cost of everything go up again, and yet the Liberals continue going down this path. Yes, we keep talking about some of the same issues, but it is about the failures of this government, which keeps on the same path. The government has not changed its policies and keeps going in the same direction, which is crushing Canadians' bank accounts.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the many comments that the Liberal spokesperson, the member for Winnipeg North, made today was referring to the Conservatives as the “far right”. I do not know if he and the Liberals have been looking at the polls over the past year, but it seems like the “far right” is approaching half the Canadian population, and they just seem to be totally disconnected.

*Privilege*

The member for Kelowna—Lake Country spoke about food banks and the lineups. I have seen that in my own community, with the demand increasing and the ability to provide decreasing.

I wonder if the member has some comments about what she thinks has happened to the Liberal Party.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, the Liberals have been in government now for nine years, and it is in fact the NDP-Liberal government. We are seeing the results of its policies and legislation play out. It does not matter whether we are looking at crime, whether we are looking at economic policies or whether we are looking at housing; we are seeing the direct results of its policies.

When we step back and look, we are saying that we are going to address these different issues, whether it is crime, which I talked about quite a bit during my intervention, or whether it is on the economic side. We want to go back to look for the causes and the solutions, as opposed to putting band-aids on a lot of the issues. The government is on a path of being soft on crime. It has gone down a path of inflationary deficit spending and does not seem to be taking its foot off the gas with that.

We are seeing the results of the Liberals' governance. We have seen the mismanagement with the massive conflicts of interest and lack of transparency in the green slush fund, or SDTC, which is what we are talking about here today. After we have had a government in place for nine years or more now, we see the results of its actions play out, which is exactly what we are dealing with now.

• (1820)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member made reference to the fact that there has been a filibuster taking place. What she did not talk about is that there are 180 Conservatives who have taken the opportunity to speak. There are maybe three or four Liberals who have actually spoken on the issue. The Conservative Party wants us to believe, listen to and follow the leader of the Conservative Party. The government wants to be able to recognize and follow the advice from the RCMP, the Auditor General and legal experts.

The question I have for the member is this: Why should we listen to the Conservatives and their AI-produced speeches, more often than not, unfortunately, along with the propaganda that they are giving, versus the RCMP, the Auditor General and other legal experts?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, it is really interesting, considering that member could be called the filibuster king. It would be interesting to see how many times he has risen and spoken in interventions with respect to this exact issue. I would presume that he is probably at the very top of that list; I would be surprised if he were not. It is really a nonsensical question coming from that member, considering that he is the one who continually talks in this House on this topic and, frankly, almost any other topic. He is the king of filibustering and he is the Liberals' spokesperson most of the time.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a true pleasure and honour to rise in the House of Commons and speak on behalf of the incredible people of Peterborough—Kawartha.

It is another day, another scandal. It really feels like everything is on fire. It really is heavy right now for a lot of people in Canada. When they watch this House, it is so frustrating for people at home. I assure them it is also frustrating to sit in here and listen to the repeat, the *Groundhog Day* that it is in here, every day with the same thing over and over again.

Canadians really want one thing. They want an election. It is the only way out of this disaster. This is a disaster. This would be the most consequential election in my lifetime and in many people's lifetimes because, without a doubt, people's lives depend on it. That is not dramatic. That is not being a rage farmer. That is the fact of what is happening on the streets of Canada.

I do not know how the Liberals and New Democrats go home after a week here and go to a grocery store or go out in their community and not hear this from every member in their community. There is no trust. There is nothing in place anymore and all hope feels lost and that is a terrible feeling.

The finance minister calls it a vibe; it is a bad vibe. It is a bad vibe, according to the finance minister, that over two million people are accessing a food bank in a month. It is a bad vibe that one in five kids are experiencing poverty. It is a bad vibe that the number of kids in homeless shelters has tripled in Toronto in the last eight years. It is a bad vibe when we walk down ByWard Market on a Tuesday at seven o'clock and a man has overdosed, dead on the street, and paramedics roll up to revive him, which they tell me they have already done multiple times that week. It is a bad vibe. That is who is in charge of our country right now, so we can bet people are mad. We can bet people are hurt and hopeless. We have a Prime Minister who is vibing to Taylor Swift, exchanging friendship bracelets while the city of Montreal burns. It is a bad vibe. This all comes down to a level of corruption that has to be addressed in this House.

The green slush fund is a fund created by the Liberals that the Auditor General has done an audit on and we are still waiting, pushing and pressuring the Liberals to hand over the unredacted documents from the green slush fund. A whistle-blower came to committee and said they could not take this anymore; could not lay their head on the pillow knowing what is going on in the government and keep showing up to work, because they wanted a moral compass. Therefore, the whistle-blower came and testified at committee and said that this is corruption at its core; this is a billion-dollar fund.

The Auditor General proceeded to do an audit. There were 90 decisions in which the fund had violated its own conflict of interest policies. One out of six projects funded by SDTC, which was \$59 million, were not eligible and in some cases did not even support the development of a new green technology.

• (1825)

It is scam and corruption. Over a dozen government departments and agencies either provided redacted documents or simply refused to comply with the order and withheld some or all of their records.

*Privilege*

Right now in the House as I am speaking, there is talk everywhere. Nobody is even listening anymore because corruption is normal under the Prime Minister. This is nothing to the Liberals. They are talking and it does not matter because the Conservatives keep speaking and saying the same thing. We will keep saying the same thing because we will fight for Canadians. We are the only ones in this House calling out this corruption. It is absurd and insane, and everyone at home knows this.

This is the most consequential time in the history of politics. One in five kids are hungry and there are 1,400 homeless encampments. The YWCA shelter in Halifax says women cannot leave the shelters because there is no housing. What happens when women cannot leave a shelter or get into a shelter? Intimate partner violence on the street goes up. Women are dying. A woman was murdered in broad daylight just weeks ago in Ottawa while she was with her two children. The man got out of the car, slit her throat and she bled out. Do I have the Liberals' and NDP's attention now? I hope I do, because this is so consequential.

We may be sitting in here in our green comfy chairs, but people at home are starving. These are not made-up statistics. This is real life. If we talk to people and maybe visit some of the homeless encampments, we will know what is happening. Food banks are running out of food. The people who used to volunteer at a food bank are now using a food bank. The 2024 hunger report from Food Banks Canada show the shocking statistics of over two million users in one month, 30% of whom are children, but those numbers are low.

I thought about Fleming College that runs a food bank. It would not be registered with Food Banks Canada. I thought about Street Level Advocacy, where Scott Couper gives hot meals to people every single day. He is not registered with Food Banks Canada. Ladies make sandwiches and drive downtown to deliver them. They are not taken into account for that. Those numbers are not even real. They are higher than that.

There is not one area in this country that is functioning. Not one area is doing okay or thriving. It is so sickening to sit on this side of the House and hear the Prime Minister, with the leader of the NDP holding him in power, say it is not the Liberals' fault. No, they are a victim. The Minister of Justice had the audacity to stand in this House yesterday, when he was called out on his atrocious justice laws in this country, and say they delivered bail reform. Yes, they delivered bail reform all right. How about they check the incidence of femicides in this country, of women being murdered in broad daylight, or the 16-year-old girl in northern Ontario who had her arm slashed off by her abusive boyfriend, who, guess what everyone, was out on bail? However, the justice minister delivered bail reform. When we destroy trust, we destroy society. The Prime Minister has no respect, he has no trust and there is chaos on the streets.

● (1830)

People need hope. People need to know that there will be laws put in place to prevent this level of corruption that we have never seen in history. It has become normal. It is so common, it is normal. We have a former minister of employment who misinformed the House of his indigenous heritage, and who took money from the

government, much like this green slush fund. He is gone. He is no longer the minister. It is just, let us move on to the next thing.

How many ministers are gone from that side of the House? There is the former minister of public safety who said it was not his fault that Paul Bernardo got transferred to medium security in the dead of night and the families of victims were not notified. He said it was not his fault. It is never their fault. They say that they did not get the email, or they did not read the documents. They drop like flies.

I feel so bad for the MPs over there who actually care about their constituents, because I know there are some. I see their body language in here when the Prime Minister stands up, and they are sick, just like the rest of us, because he gaslights Canadians.

That is the hope I want to tell people at home they need to have, because it is here. The change is coming. Two, three years ago, even when I first got elected, people were still afraid to speak the truth, because they would get cancelled. They were called a racist or a misogynist. If they did not have vaccine status, they were called a leper, divided and shamed and put down. They would be cancelled.

No more. People started to say, "I am not any of those things. I am a good person who wants to just let people live their life without hurting others." That is all people want in this country, and now they are standing up and they are fighting back against the insane government, the wacko government that has legalized drugs and become a drug dealer.

All people have to do is go outside, two blocks from here, and just walk down the street. People who used to come to Ottawa would know ByWard Market was like the most amazing place. Tell me a tiny town in this country that feels safe anymore. There are not too many. We have headlines of stabbings and shootings on a regular basis in a community like Peterborough, where a man who murdered an indigenous woman might get four years.

People are so stressed. I want to read you some stats, because I think the stats tell the human consequences of bad policy and bad leadership. It is really important to know these numbers, because on the other end of these numbers are real people, real humans and real families.

*Privilege*

Children have the highest rate of food insecurity among all age groups in Canada, 24% in 2022. That is 1.8 million children. One third of kids in Canada do not enjoy a safe and healthy childhood. In what country, like Canada, do we not take care of our kids where they feel safe? Two-thirds of Canadians report experiencing abuse before the age of 15. Nearly one in five kids live in poverty. Suicide is a leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 14 in Canada.

Over the past decade, Canada has fallen sharply from 10th to 30th place amongst OECD countries for the well-being of children. Twenty per cent of children and youth in Canada, approximately 1.2 million young people, are affected by a mental health disorder. If they have the courage to ask for help, there is none on the other side of that. Also in this country, under the Prime Minister, health care has been decimated. There are doctors ready to practice in this country, but they cannot.

● (1835)

We are spending more on servicing the debt in this country than we are on transfers to health care. The economy is the foundation of this whole problem, and that is why we are in this discussion right now. The government forgot, or maybe it knew the whole time, that it does not have any money. It has taxpayer money. It has Canadians' money.

The Liberals take that money; they do not have any accountability, and they waste it. They give it to their friends and their family, or they try to buy votes with a \$250 cheque that only some people get. No, they cannot give it to the people with disabilities or the people who really need it.

This is a quote from the Prime Minister:

One of the fundamental challenges around affordability is they would love to say, 'Well, you know what? We just need more money. Can you send us...an extra thousand dollars a month?' As soon as you do that, inflation goes up by exactly that amount.

Those are the Prime Minister's words, yet we have an inflationary crisis. We have an affordability crisis. I wonder why. Does he believe that budgets balance themselves, that he can buy Canadians' votes and that he can just spend, spend, spend and print more money as though he is playing a game of Monopoly?

The Prime Minister will just increase the carbon tax to try to make up for that revenue and that money he is spending, hoping it will be fine. What does the carbon tax do? It puts a tax on every single thing Canadians use and drives up the cost of living even more.

I want to come back to the finance minister's saying that Canadians are just not in the right vibe. They are just not in the right vibe when they go to the food bank or when one in five kids is living in poverty. It is just not a good vibe. There is nothing serious about the government. I actually implore people not to give up hope.

I watched *Gladiator* with my parents and my kids on Friday night. It felt so relevant; people rioted out on the streets, and they had these emperors who were destructive and narcissistic and did not care about the people. There was a man fighting for the people, and there were people fighting with that man fighting for the people. People should not give up hope. We are holding this line.

Pressure builds diamonds, and I know it feels like *Groundhog Day*. I am living it too. However, there is a Canadian gladiator here to bring it home, to make life affordable and to restore the hope of the Canadian dream. I promise it is coming. We will get an election, hold the Liberal-NDP government to account and restore the hope of Canada.

● (1840)

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently. I will be honest with you. I wanted to stand up and just ask relevance as to this artificial indignation of a speech that this individual, this hon. member, just delivered. We are on a sub-amendment to a question of privilege related to SDTC. We did not hear any of that come from the hon. member, yet they say they have respect for the chamber.

She refers to kids starving, yet the Conservative Party of Canada refuses to support a tax-free, means-tested Canada child benefit that is lifting hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty. They voted against a national food program that the chamber advanced. Can we guess what? Premier Ford, the Conservative Premier of Ontario, just signed on; his province is the third to do so. He said he can get behind this. The only people who cannot get behind Canadians seem to be those in the Conservative Party of Canada.

Therefore, when she refers to not one area of this country functioning, I will just say quickly that I will always fight for constituents in Waterloo. That member and the member who spoke before her have been told that they cannot actually support their municipalities and fight for housing, and that is why there are parts of this country that are dysfunctional. In Waterloo, I will fight for constituents, both those who agree with me and those who do not.

Today, we are referring to this question of privilege. The Speaker's ruling states, referring to the paragraph before, "I believe the best way for this to be achieved would be to follow the usual course for a prima facie question of privilege, that is, a referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs."

Does the member agree with and support the Speaker's ruling?

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** Mr. Speaker, what is so bizarre to me when they make this argument, saying that we voted against this and we voted against that, is that we are not the government. We are the opposition. Every single policy that Liberals have passed has failed. Thank God we voted against it, because it does not work. Some of the things they say are just bananas.

I love reading the comments from people who are watching live online. Sheri Erickson actually had a question for the member there too, asking “why the Liberals think they are above the law”. Tom Good asked, “[W]hat is [the Prime Minister] afraid of?” Josh Holland asked, “Why should we take CRA seriously when our leaders keep abusing us like this?”

We will keep holding the line. We will hold the member, the Prime Minister and the opposition leader to account until they restore affordability, reduce the corruption and account for the missing \$400 million.

• (1845)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP supports the motion. We want to get to the bottom of the SDTC issue, as when NDP MPs were instrumental in getting to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal and the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

Of course, we remember all the Conservative scandals, in which Conservative MPs simply refused any transparency at all. The ETS scandal was \$400 million; the G8 scandal was a billion dollars. As for the Phoenix pay scandal, we are still paying for it today, \$2.2 billion. Anti-terrorism funding was \$3.1 billion. In addition, of course, there were the Senate scandals. I could go on and on.

The Conservatives have been filibustering their own motion. However, there is an important issue around Trump tariffs that the Conservatives did not even want to bring forward tonight. The member for Windsor West and the NDP provoked the emergency debate on the Trump tariffs.

Where are the Conservatives? Why is the NDP doing all the heavy lifting, forcing this emergency debate tonight that the member for Windsor West will be speaking to and, immediately after, the member for Edmonton Griesbach?

Why is the NDP the one that is actually standing up for Canadian workers in the House?

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** Madam Speaker, I know the Speaker wants me to give only a brief answer, but I actually have about 20 pages of scandals and corruption here from the last nine years under the Prime Minister, who has been propped up by the opposition leader.

There is no respect for Canadians from the opposition leader, that party, as they continue to prop up the government. I say shame on them; this is the same government that says it was what made sure it got a \$250 cheque to Canadians, except for people who are on disability and seniors. It is always winners and losers with the government, but we should not worry. They will tear up their marriage agreement, but only for a minute. They are going to get back together right after that.

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## EMERGENCY DEBATE

[*Translation*]

### U.S. TARIFFS ON CANADIAN PRODUCTS

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the U.S. tariffs on Canadian products.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP)** moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, I would like to start by saying I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton Griesbach. I thank him for seconding this motion; we are very glad the Speaker recognized the issue as an emergency for Canada. The motion relates specifically to the incoming president of the United States, who has threatened a 25% tariff on Canadian workers and businesses. That would create significant economic chaos when it comes to our capabilities to provide well-paying jobs for Canadians.

I will start by noting that this type of bullying tactic has been used in the past before. At different times, Canada has had to respond appropriately to these measures. With regard to this particular tariff that is noted, it also puts us in the same position as Mexico; the Mexican government has indicated that it would respond even more forcefully than what we have seen from our Prime Minister and some of our premiers right now. Specifically, the Mexican government has talked going line by line back against the United States.

Here we are, having to compete as a North American region against the world. We have one partner with which we have engaged in a free trade agreement, both traditionally and continually, with our latest agreement still being on the paperwork and being worked on right now. This will undermine not only our domestic jobs and workers but also those in the U.S. and Mexico, because we all work toward trading and prospering together. It will further undermine our capabilities to compete with other parts of the world, where we have seen some of these practices cost jobs.

Right now, Canadians are feeling the pinch. They are certainly feeling very stressed as we go into this winter. Paycheques are getting smaller, when it comes to the inflation that has taken place. There is uncertainty with regard to pensions and benefits with the rising costs, and that is one of the reasons the New Democrats have pushed hard in the current Parliament and have been proud to get programs such as dental care and pharmacare. These are backstops that are huge and controllables that should have been done before to make us more prosperous and, more importantly, healthier and more capable of productivity in the workforce.

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That is one of the big differences, as we have seen successive Conservative and Liberal governments do massive corporate tax reductions that did not see the economic prosperity that we would like to see. We saw all that wealth disappear, much of it even going to the United States, where they tax on worldwide profits. We have actually done massive subsidization of our industries and other foreign industries. That has cost us significantly, whereas dental care and health care are actually reasons to invest in Canada, and they make the controllable expense go right to the individual worker. Therefore, the workers and their families get the benefit of better health, better training and, more importantly, more contribution to society.

As we know, in regard to our relationship with the United States, we are actually in a trade surplus. They are one of the few nations that we actually have a trade surplus with, and that goes back to historic trade agreements that actually were negotiated. In brief, we had an auto pact. It was a significantly improved-upon situation in which we were the leaders in automotive manufacturing in the world, often placing first or second at different times. When we lost that capability, because we entered into our first free trade agreement, we saw the Liberal government not challenge a WTO challenge from Japan at that time, which broke that up. We have since disappeared back into eighth or ninth place with regard to automotive manufacturing and assembly.

That was not even a trade concern of the U.S. at that time, but it was of our other partners. We saw the Liberal government basically stand down on Canadians for that. Now, those eventual repercussions have come to the point at which we are doing significant incentives for automotive manufacturers, similar to what they are doing in the United States, Mexico and other places. We have an integrated market, which is certainly going to be affected by a 25% tariff, or even a 5% tariff if it comes to that.

I would also like to note that we have seen the Conservatives, in the past, not do their due diligence in protecting Canadians. In particular, with the softwood lumber industry, we actually won a WTO challenge against the United States, and we were rewarded with billions of dollars in money. We then had the Stephen Harper government abandon collecting it, with the actual effect it had on our economy.

- (1850)

With regard to this particular threat from Donald J. Trump, historically, we also saw tariffs and other types of issues brought on Canadians during his first term in office, so we need to take this very seriously. I give the premiers and the Prime Minister credit for at least getting together right away, and I do want to acknowledge that.

As New Democrats, we believe we are going to have to exercise our full strength on this, but that group meeting right now is insufficient to deal with the process and the crisis in front of us. We want to see labour unions, civil society and others included later on. There needs to be a war room and an actual strategy with measurables, which would involve more than just the leaders of the provinces and the Prime Minister, or a small cabal of the Liberal cabinet undertaking some of those issues the government believes

are important, to deal with this. Sometimes the government has not supported the right elements to actually deal with these situations.

When I asked for the emergency debate today, only the NDP raised the issue that Trump had specifically identified the border as not being adequately resourced, or at the very least that the U.S. was having problems coming from Canada and Mexico. There is no way we would ever want to assent to the argument that the Mexican border and the Canadian border are similar, but there has been a history, which has been going on for a number of years, with the U.S. politicizing the border.

On the Canadian side, we saw the Harper administration cut over 1,100 CBSA workers, which it fired. It even fired the ones who were doing some of the work that stops gun and drug smuggling, along with a number of different things. We have not replaced those officers. In fact, we are short 2,000 to 3,000 workers right now, and they would need to be trained. We have been pushing for that.

We want to see a number of different things get done. We want to start identifying the tariffs we can actually push back on. The Harper administration actually put tariffs on Canadian companies because it did not know what it was doing. A good example is Dainty in my riding, which mills rice. It was going to get an extra tariff from the Harper administration, which would have cost it more jobs, to retaliate against the U.S. We need to start inventorying all these businesses and organizations on which there will be effects to figure out how we would do a retaliatory tariff. We need to be very sharp regarding that, and we want to prepare our challenge right now, before the president-elect takes office, because we only have a matter of months to get our situation in order.

The New Democrats are calling for a comprehensive approach that would not just be determined by government figureheads, but would involve union representation of the workers whose jobs would be threatened. It is very important to have an approach that is inclusive because workers will also be able to give us the best evidence on how we unravel some of the investments in the threats.

We also want to make sure, and this is something we have been saying for a number of years, that we stop other countries from using the environment and labour as a subsidy in our trade relationships. We finally did get this into the new agreement, but the government has not been forceful enough, and we have seen China, Mexico and other places use a practice of undercutting and depressing Canadian worker wages, making sure we do not see the successes we should when we compete in a fair way. We need to be more responsible with that.



We need to also diversify our interprovincial trade. For goodness' sake, we are still seeing problems with that. It happens all the time. Second to that is getting into other markets because, as I noted at the beginning of my speech, Canada is pretty much at the end of almost all the trade agreements. We have deficits and not surpluses, so we need to have a better strategy there.

As I conclude, I want to again call for the practical things we can control, that we can actually engage in, and doing a full strategy—

• (1855)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member is quite over time.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, this is a fundamentally important debate on the Trump tariffs, which could have a devastating impact on Canadians. Why is there only one Conservative MP in the House?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member knows he cannot make references to the presence or absence of members in the House, so I would like for him to avoid doing so.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé:** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order.

The member for New Westminster—Burnaby is the House leader for his party. He should know that.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I appreciate the comment.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[English]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I admire the member for Windsor West enormously. Of course, his riding is ultimately on the border, on the front line of tariffs and disputes about getting goods across our border.

I would be very interested to know if he has any comments on this: Donald Trump has framed this as Canada being weak, saying we do not guard our border against the floods of immigrants and fentanyl going into the United States. I wonder if the hon. member for Windsor West has any observations on the failures of the U.S. border letting guns and drugs into our country.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Madam Speaker, there have absolutely been a series of political advancements that have been used against Canadian trading elements for a long period of time, with no real significant push-back from the Canadian government. As I mentioned in my remarks, the former Conservative government cut 1,100 officers and also got rid of some of the teams that worked specifically on gun and drug smuggling, so that affected the border in two ways. On top of that, there is an order in council that would allow our border officers to help the RCMP. The government has been sitting on that since 1932 without acting on it.

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When I was in Parliament before, during another House session, we worked to get our officers armed, equivalent to those in the United States in many respects. We wanted to avoid practices that could be used against us as a weapon in saying that were weak on our border.

Lastly, we still have deficient marine resources in the Great Lakes. We have deficient supports, as we need 2,000 to 3,000 officers. That is the bottom line. Having those would deflect some of this unfair criticism.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as a general rule, the Conservatives are often found missing in action when it comes to dealing with the issue of trade. Let me give some examples. Today, they had to follow the NDP lead in getting an emergency debate on the issue. Getting down to the nuts and bolts of the issue of trade with the United States, the first thing the Conservatives did the last time, when things got a little bit difficult, was to capitulate. In essence, they said we should give the Americans whatever it took to get an agreement.

As a government, we have done this before with President-elect Trump. We will be able to do it again by using a team of experts, who I would suggest are the best trade negotiators in the world, from within our civil service. I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts about the quality of the individuals that Canada has to offer in negotiating good trade agreements for Canadians.

• (1900)

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Madam Speaker, it is correct that we do have some experts along with good officials. There is a whole repertoire of people and relationships. I will be working, and others will be working at their national and subnational levels on the effect that this would have on Americans because the tariffs will be paid by Americans at the end of the day. The government will collect the sums of money.

However, I think it is important to point out that the government needs to stop itself from hurting itself further. A good example of that is the reduction of border hours. The government had an agreement with the previous administration where it closed ports of entry in Canada and moved staff outside of those areas. It did not agree to open up a training facility in Windsor to add the more than 2,000 to 3,000 workers we need on our border. It also did not expand CBSA officers' powers to deal with some of the issues of gun control and so forth.

I am hoping that the government changes itself from waiting and seeing what is going to happen to actually taking some tactical advantage of what we can control to alleviate some of the problems that are being pushed on us.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we just witnessed some very partisan comments from the member for Winnipeg North of the Liberal caucus on this very serious issue, which would impact Canada and all Canadians. This is a time that we need to put partisanship aside.

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Would my colleague from the NDP agree to put partisanship aside to work together in the best interests of protecting Canadian jobs, protecting Canadian salaries and protecting our industries here at this point in time?

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Madam Speaker, I absolutely would. The reason I brought up the Conservative cuts to the CBSA was not to attack, but to point out the mere fact that we have structurally reduced our empowerment at the border and we have to make those jobs up. If we can find solutions to unite us on this, we need to do that. First of all, we have to stop hurting ourselves and our capability to fight back against unfair allegations from Donald Trump.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Windsor West for starting us off this evening and for his incredibly difficult and hard work in achieving today's debate.

New Democrats are deeply concerned and troubled by the fact that, just south of us, American conservatives are yet again attacking Canadian industry. This person, Mr. Donald Trump, is someone who Canadians know all too well. He is like a scary movie. We have seen this scary movie before. He was president once already. In any good scary film that one watches a second time, one knows just when the scary scenes are and when to close one's eyes.

We have known for a long time who Mr. Trump is. We have known for a long time exactly what his intentions are and what he thinks about Canadians. He takes us for granted and kicks us when it is convenient.

Unfortunately, the Liberals and the Conservatives always bow down to him. That is the problem we are facing today. Consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have always been at the whim of America and its demands. We need the kind of Canada that demonstrates to our workers and our industries that we care about them and value their tremendous support, so much so that we would invest in them.

The member for Windsor West made it clear that the very serious issues at the border are man-made. They were made by the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Conservatives cut over a thousand CBSA workers, which was shameful, and today they are coming to this place saying that we need to be non-partisan now, after they already messed it up and broke the system. The Liberals inherited that system and found it convenient to just keep many of those aspects.

Canada, as a matter of fact, does not have an immense trade deficit with the United States. It is just not going to the right people. It is going to billionaires on Bay Street and Wall Street, and Canadians are always left behind.

We have some of the best labour and skills across the globe. My home province of Alberta has the best labour right across this country. They are skilled labourers who are doing the hard work every single day. They know, when they are drilling in our oil and energy sector, for example, that it is a tough job. They send all of that product over to the United States, and then we import the developed product, gasoline, and pay more for it because of it.

For a long time, Albertans have asked me, when I knock on doors, why we cannot produce these goods right here in Canada.

They ask me why we cannot produce the things that make Canada great right here at home. New Democrats are the only ones who stand by our tremendous labourers here in Canada. We know their value. We are going to support them in their jobs. We are going to make sure that Mr. Trump knows exactly who he is messing with.

Canada accounts for a tremendous amount of trade with the United States, so much so that it relies on us. That means Americans are going to have to start paying a lot more for the goods that we make here in Canada, things like the products that go into building homes. Can members guess what that would mean for the American family that wants to buy a home? Donald Trump is prepared to increase the cost of their home. He is ready to increase the cost of groceries and gasoline too. For every single good, Donald Trump is prepared to make Americans pay more.

Canada has an opportunity here. We are an immensely courageous country, but also one that belongs to a globe that needs us. We know that. Canadian goods, services, jobs and products can go elsewhere. We need to show the United States, show Donald Trump, that our industries are not only the best industries that produce the best quality, but are also desired elsewhere. They are desired in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. They are desired right across the globe. Canadian-made products are the best products in the world. We need to diversify our trade. We have trade partners that so desperately want to see a Canadian trade agreement to bring our goods and services right to their doorstep.

• (1905)

However, we have been through the fight once already. We have been through what Trump tried in the past, and we have seen the record of the Liberals. We have seen them try over and over again to defend sectors, even against the Democrats, and we have seen it play out with softwood lumber and the very real and serious impacts related to that.

Canada can use tariffs, but we should not be using tariffs to instigate a trade war just to race to the bottom and make everybody pay. We should institute trade policies and tariffs that are very precise, that have a very important objective and that are used as part and parcel of a larger trade policy that looks at, for example, benefits to indigenous people, to our environment and to the care economy.

People need to know that when we use our economic might, we are using our economic strength to help regular, everyday people. That is why we have an economy. It is not to make more billionaires like Donald Trump even richer. It is not to serve Bay Street here in Canada just so it can continue to exploit labour elsewhere. No, Canadians put their hard-earned time and their blood, sweat and tears into the great products we make because they know that it is for their family and for our country, and for us to be able to share our tremendous wealth with all people who need it.

We have an ability in this country to end poverty, which is something New Democrats have always been consistent about. We know that if we use the tremendous power and wealth of our country, we can in fact eliminate child poverty. We can eliminate waiting lines at hospitals. We can build a social safety net such that no matter when someone falls down, and I say “when”, not “if”, they will get back up. That is the kind of Canada New Democrats believe in, and it starts with sound and strong trade policies.

When a country like the United States does not want to play fair with us, does not want fair trade, then we have to have the courage and the ability to make certain we are prepared as a country to defend our industries, defend our labour and look to the very beautiful and Canadian-made solutions we can develop right here at home. We can do that, and as a matter of fact we have done it in the past.

There was a time of hyperinstability at the end of World War II, and global free trade was at its limit, barely happening. However, Canada did not resign itself to being unable to support the war effort, unable to generate revenue and unable to generate good jobs. No, we did the exact opposite; we looked to our fellow neighbours at that time and we asked ourselves what we could do for each other. We sent a million men and women overseas to fight Nazi terrorism in Europe.

Here at home, everybody else went to work. We organized over 100 crown corporations. We organized our labour to produce some of the best steel the world had ever seen. We used our tremendous might as an industrial country to make things that had never been made before. Canada was an innovator. Canada achieved immense respect for our tremendous support for our industries.

The subsequent decades, especially the 1980s, would see the Liberals and Conservatives selling off as many public goods as possible, leaving us with nothing today. They sold everything. They speak about a balanced budget, but they do not know how to balance a budget. Do members know what they know how to do? They know how to sell Canadian assets.

I will give a good example: oil, right in my province of Alberta, right where the former prime minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, came from, a member of the Conservative Party who often says how great and powerful Alberta's energy sector is, and I agree. We have the best skilled labour and the best workers possible, but what Harper will not tell us is that he gambled our future in 2008. He sold Nexen to CNOOC, a Chinese-controlled corporation, in order to balance the budget. He still lost the election, but this is part and parcel of the kind of history we have to restore.

We need to set the record straight that New Democrats are the ones who protect labour, New Democrats are the ones who protect

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jobs and New Democrats will be the ones who stop Donald Trump and his ridiculous ploy to make Americans and Canadians pay. The world needs more Canada. The world needs more Canadian products. The world is ready for it, and New Democrats are ready too. We will find trade partners, diversify our trade and make sure that our jobs are protected.

● (1910)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I believe that diversification of trade is critically important to all Canadians, which is one of the reasons we were very anxious, along with Ukraine, to actually have a Canada-Ukraine trade agreement. It was something that was widely respected and applauded, with the exception of the Conservatives of course, both in Canada and in Ukraine, as both countries benefited.

However, there is more potential out there. For example, I would like to see more trade relations with Canada and the Philippines, an area in which, in early December, we are going to be spending more time on.

I am wondering whether the member can pick up on the importance of diversity, and Canada's diversifying its trading opportunities, because we are very much a trading nation.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, Canada's economy is one that has been organized over the last 150 years largely as a raw extract exporter. What that means is that we take raw material, like a log, a rail or oil, and we export it. We do not have any value-added mechanism for Canadian products. We need to have that here. That is the first step.

We need not only to make sure our products are more competitive and more innovative across the globe but also to then work, as the member suggests, in making certain that those products have a home to go to. Ukraine needs Canadian products. The Philippines needs Canadian products.

The market around the globe right now is so desperate for Canadian innovation and our Canadian products that it baffles me that we would be so concerned right now with the fact that the United States is implementing a tariff. This is why I am so confident, for those who are scared about this issue, that we will fight back and will protect our industries while also diversifying our economy.

● (1915)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Edmonton Griesbach for pointing out that our economic planning in Canada has been to ignore Canadian jobs in order to have a rip-and-strip economy where raw resources are pulled out and shipped overseas without additional value added and without providing jobs for Canadian workers, such as with raw logs, raw bitumen and so on.

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I want to ask my hon. colleague whether he has looked at the literature. Canada is always plagued by falling behind in productivity. Productivity as a measurement improves whenever the ratio of goods that have received value added, manufactured goods, grows in relation to the export of raw, unprocessed goods. Would he agree with me that it is time Canada actually paid attention to jobs for Canadian workers and not ship out more trees, more fish, more bitumen without the processing that brings growth and productivity to our economy?

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her wisdom and her history. She often shares in this place unique history that all of us as members could benefit from. One of the history points she is mentioning is the fact that we have an economy that has largely been a rip-and-extract economy that just exports raw product elsewhere.

We need to have an industrial strategy. It is the 21st century. Dinosaur parties in here keep thinking they are the Hudson's Bay Company and that they can just keep extracting whatever they want and keep selling whatever they want to anybody, with no value added. That does not help workers. They have the skills and the access to the immense technology we have; we should be developing everything from A to Z right here in Canada, and we can produce those products and export them too.

We need to have an economy that truly matches the industrial and innovative strength we have in this country. We have so much more to offer the world, and the Conservatives and the Liberals are letting us down.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one of the things the member mentioned briefly was about free trade versus fair trade. I would really love for him to expand on that, why the Democrats believe in fair trade and how we would negotiate trade deals differently so they actually do benefit the workers he was talking about.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, fair trade is the principle and core of any decent and good relationship we should have with any country and for workers right around the world. Workers are united in our ability to not just contribute to our countries also to be dignified in our work. That does not mean just workers here in Canada; that means workers right around the world. We need our countries, like Canada, to put in place within our trade agreements protections for labour, protections for indigenous people and protections for our environment. It is the only reasonable and responsible way to trade in the 21st century.

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, before I begin, will say that I would like to split my time with the member for Brampton East.

I am really pleased to rise and to speak to tonight's very important debate. Canada and the United States have one of the strongest and closest relationships in the world, particularly when it comes to trade and to our shared border and border security. Canada places the highest priority on border security and on the integrity of our shared border.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday evening, the Prime Minister spoke with President-elect Donald Trump. He had the opportunity to point out that the eco-

nomical relationship between Canada and the United States is balanced and mutually beneficial, particularly for American workers. The fact is that we need them and they also need us.

[*English*]

Canada is the largest export market for the United States in the world. It is larger than China, Japan, the United Kingdom and France combined. It is also the case that the things we sell to the United States are the things it really needs. We sell the United States oil, electricity and critical minerals and metals.

Canada is essential to the United States' domestic energy supply. Last year, 60% of U.S. crude oil imports originated in Canada, and the energy the United States imports from Canada is more important today than ever, at a time when we see how hungry AI is for energy and how important AI is in the economic vision of the new U.S. administration. Canada's critical minerals and metals are absolutely essential as well, as we in North America seek to develop supply chains which are resilient and secure, and critically, supply chains that do not make us dependent on China.

Our government is committed to a team Canada approach. Tomorrow the Prime Minister will be meeting with the first ministers of provinces and territories. We have been working and will continue to work with business and labour leaders from coast to coast to coast.

Specifically, in the days since the U.S. election, I have met with labour leaders, leaders from the steel industry, leaders from the car sector, leaders of Canada's major pension funds, leaders from the oil and gas sector, leaders from the nuclear sector, leaders from the aluminum sector, leaders from the electricity sector, leaders of our major banks, Canada's AI leaders, and Canada's leading innovators. This is team Canada.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, we held the fourth meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Canada-U.S. relations, which I chair. Much of our work has focused and continues to focus on the border and trade relations between our two countries.

[*English*]

When it comes to the border, let me be clear both to Canadians and to our American neighbours: Law enforcement agencies from our two countries, the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, work together every single day to disrupt the scourge of fentanyl coming from China and other countries. In addition, the CBSA is continuously strengthening its ability to detect opioids through enhanced inspections at ports of entry, with detector dogs and emerging technologies.

Canada and Canadians have the right and the need to have total control over who enters our country. Our American neighbours likewise have the right and the need to totally control who enters their country. Canada is absolutely committed to working with our American neighbours to ensure that their northern border is fully secure, even as we work to ensure that our southern border is fully secure.

[*Translation*]

Of course, we are going to continue to discuss these issues with the new administration.

[*English*]

This is a moment when Canada needs to be united. We need to be strong. We need to be smart. We all know that we face significant challenges. We also know that there are real opportunities. We know that by working together, by playing as a united team Canada, Canada can and will be successful.

• (1925)

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, strange things happened last time we went around to negotiate CUSMA. The biggest problem was when Canada went to deal with the Trump administration and found it was unmatched. Months prior to the actual agreement being signed, Canada was left on the sidelines. Mexico came to the table and what happened was really phenomenal: Mexico became the U.S.'s number one trading partner in only four years after signing, while Canada has dropped to third.

Why does the finance minister think, if she could not sign a deal that made and kept Canada number one, that we will have anything different this time?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland:** Madam Speaker, I know what happened at the negotiating table for the new NAFTA because I was there.

Let me say that the outcome Canada achieved by playing as a united team Canada was exceptional. It was very strong and it is the foundation of Canada's economic security and of our relationship with the United States today. We achieved a new NAFTA, supported by the incoming Trump administration, which has guaranteed the trade between our two countries and fair labour standards for Canadian and U.S. workers, which is bringing jobs back to Canada and is at the heart of the renaissance of Canada's auto sector.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we are of course concerned about trade relations, as everyone in the House is, but we believe we must not let ourselves be influenced.

Historically, we have always drawn closer to Europe whenever we had issues with our neighbours to the south. I was at the NATO reception last Friday. I spoke with members of the Bundestag, and there seems to be a real openness to a closer relationship between Canada, the European Union and Germany.

Are the Minister of Finance and her government considering deepening ties between Canada and the European Union to counter-balance the influence of the U.S. president-elect?

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**Hon. Chrystia Freeland:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question.

We agree that our European allies and partners are very important to us. We are proud that our government was the one to sign a free trade agreement with the European Union. It is important for diversifying our international trade. We are very closely allied with our partners in the European Union. Of course, we have always worked with our European partners and we will continue to do so.

About team Canada, I would like to point out that, yesterday, the Prime Minister had a very good conversation with Premier Legault of Quebec.

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is an important time for us to unite toward a very important opponent that is on the precipice of a trade war with us. I need to ask a very important question on behalf of labour.

Labour has been asking this question for over a decade, since the 2008 economic crisis, COVID-19 and, of course, the climate crisis we are in. It has not seemed to be enough to convince the government to take a sectoral industrial strategy seriously. We have workers who need to know where the puck is going.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister now prepared to finally adopt an industrial strategy for some of our most hardest-hit sectors?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Edmonton Griesbach for his hard work and his commitment to his community and to working people.

I was very glad today to have a meeting with Bea Bruske, the head of the CLC. We talked about how important our union leaders will be, playing as part of team Canada, in the work we will be doing with our U.S. neighbours. I really want to thank her and labour leaders across Canada for the work they did playing for team Canada with the previous Trump administration. I know Canada can count on them because we recognize that trade and industry are central to the jobs of Canadian workers.

I want to say to Canadian workers that we will stand up for you.

• (1930)

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an immense privilege to stand before you today and speak to one of the most critical relations our nation has ever known, the enduring and dynamic partnership between Canada and the United States of America.

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Today, as we gather here in this great country, we are not just reflecting on the past. We are setting our sights firmly on a future where the Canada-U.S. relationship not only endures but thrives, and where it grows stronger, more prosperous and more resilient than ever before.

Let me start by stating this clearly: The Canada-U.S. relationship is one of the most important, powerful and mutually beneficial partnerships in the world, and it is a partnership that remains our top priority in the years ahead. We share a border that spans close to 9,000 kilometres, stretching across cities, towns and regions where people live, work and dream on both sides of that line and across the nation. Every single day, 3.3 billion dollars' worth of goods and services cross our border, enriching both of our countries, supporting millions of jobs and ensuring our economies remain strong, competitive and interconnected.

Let us be clear about one thing: Canada is not just a neighbour to the United States; we are closely linked through friendship, geography and economic ties. Over 30 U.S. states count Canada as their top trading partner. We are the number one export destination for American goods. When the United States looks to grow, to innovate and to advance, they look north to Canada and we should take immense pride in that.

We are not just about trade. We are about the strength of shared values, of common interest and of a deep and enduring commitment to each other's prosperity, security and well-being. We share the same values of democracy, human rights, freedom and the rule of law. We stand side by side as allies, friends and partners.

Let us take a moment to talk about the undeniable power of our economic relationship. In 2022, the total trade between our two nations surpassed a staggering \$1.3 trillion. Yes, that is right: \$1.3 trillion. This is a trade partnership that drives our economies, creates jobs, fosters innovation and provides opportunities for millions of families on both sides of the border.

I know some may say, "Sure, that trade is impressive, but what about the challenges? What about the risks?" To that I say challenges and risks exist in any relationship, but the true test of a partnership lies not in avoiding these challenges but in how we face them together. There is no stronger partnership on the planet than the one between Canada and the United States. We face challenges, but together we tackle them, together we find solutions and together we weather the storm, secure our borders, promote sustainable growth and create the conditions for the next generations to thrive.

That is why we have committed ourselves to working even harder to deepen this relationship through many initiatives like the team Canada-U.S. engagement strategy. Cabinet colleagues, MPs and officials have travelled across the United States, engaged in over 33 states, held over 300 meetings, and engaged with hundreds of businesses and elected officials on both sides of the aisle. This has been no small effort. It has been a direct, sustained and unwavering commitment to ensuring that Canada's voice is heard loud and clear in Washington and beyond.

This effort is not simply about diplomacy; it is about action. It is about ensuring that Canada remains not just a participant but a leader in the global economy. It is about creating new opportunities

for Canadians and Americans alike, whether in trade, investment or innovation. It is about making sure every sector, whether it is agriculture, technology, manufacturing or energy, continues to thrive, to grow and to create jobs for people.

Now let me talk about our people for a moment. This relationship is not just about governments and corporations. It is about individuals, families, communities and businesses that rely on our shared connection every single day. One in six jobs in Canada is directly tied to exports, nearly three million jobs in total. Over six million jobs in the United States depend on the success of our shared economic and trade relationship. This is not just a statistic; it is a lifeline and a testament to the tangible, real-world impact of the partnership between our two nations.

What is next? What can we do to ensure this partnership continues to thrive?

● (1935)

The answer is clear: We keep engaging, we keep working together, we keep listening to each other, we remain vigilant and we continue to make strategic investments in the partnerships between our countries. We are not standing still. We are not resting on our laurels. We have a proven track record in working with multiple American administrations. We have worked with a Trump administration before.

We have put in place a new cabinet committee on Canada-U.S. relations led by the Deputy Prime Minister, who is tirelessly engaging with sectors across the country to ensure Canada's interests are protected and advanced. We will continue to engage at every level, across every sector and in every community. Our efforts are not just reactive; they are proactive. We are anticipating the needs of our businesses, our workers and our communities, and we are preparing for the challenges ahead, whether securing our borders, advancing economic opportunities, addressing the challenges of a changing climate or ensuring the supply chains that connect our two countries remain resilient and strong. We are committed by staying ahead of the curve.

Let me make one thing absolutely clear: The future of Canada-U.S. relations is not just about governments; it is about people. It is about the small businesses on either side of the border we represent, the industries we work in and the communities we live in. The Canada-U.S. relationship is our relationship. It is about ensuring that the opportunities we create are accessible to everyone, that the benefits of this partnership are shared by all and that we remain united in our effort to build a better future for our children and grandchildren.

In this rapidly changing world, we are presented with incredible opportunities. Yes, there will be challenges, but I am confident that together, Canada and the United States will rise to meet them. We will not shy away from the tough conversations. We will not turn our backs when challenges arise. Instead, we will lean in, engage and collaborate.

Let me conclude with this: We are not just talking about a trade agreement. We are talking about a relationship that has stood the test of time and has grown stronger with every passing year, and this will continue to be the cornerstone of our future. It is a relationship that has weathered storms, faced adversity and come out on the other side stronger. We will continue to defend it. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure Canada and the United States remain the closest, most trusted partners in the world, because the Canada-U.S. relationship is non-negotiable. It is foundational. It is vital to the prosperity, security and well-being of both our countries, and it is worth every effort to protect, strengthen and deepen.

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the current government, and after we signed CUSMA the last round, something phenomenal happened. Mexico became the U.S.'s number one trading partner. Canada was not even second. Canada at this point is actually number three.

When we watched what happened last time, who was the prime minister who actually sunk the relationship? CUSMA almost did not get signed. Actually, at the end of the G7 summit, when it was supposed to be signed, it was White House staffer Peter Navarro who said to a reporter that there was a “special place in hell” for the Prime Minister. That is how bad relationships were.

At the end of the day, after this time, we have had an increase in the carbon tax. We have had an increase in capital gains tax. We have no leverage. My question to the member is this: Is it not time for a prime minister who will stand up for Canada and make a deal for Canadians?

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu:** Mr. Speaker, it was our government that renegotiated NAFTA in 2018. It was our government that stood up when the Conservative Party of Canada said to capitulate, give in and give everything they want. We stood strong. We got the agreement, and last year, there was \$1.3 trillion of trade between our two countries. It is the Liberal government that signed close to 15 free trade agreements that gave access to 61% of global GDP, and we will continue to negotiate trade for our industries and our workers so we continue to remain strong as a trading nation.

● (1940)

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the tariffs announced by our southern neighbour bring into sharp focus the very serious situation when it comes to softwood lumber, and what we have seen from this government is a real lack of focus and attention to a critical trade situation amid the closure of hundreds of mills in Canada.

As such, my question to the member is this: On the 19th, the new minister of forests in British Columbia wrote a letter to the member's colleague, the Minister of International Trade, asking the government for a concerted approach. I cannot help but think, as a British Columbian, that if the softwood lumber dispute involved an-

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other sector in central Canada, the government's approach to that issue would be far more concerted.

What, specifically, is the government going to do to address the softwood lumber situation that we face, which is costing us jobs, costing us mills and costing our country and our industries millions and millions of dollars?

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu:** Mr. Speaker, the lumber industry is a very important industry to Canada. It provides support to thousands of families in B.C., Quebec, eastern Canada and all across our country. It is important that we continue to talk to industry, to consult with industry as we work through this, because we know that we want to continue to be there for industry, especially the softwood lumber industry, as its members continue to innovate and invest. We know it is very important and that it is vital that we continue to support those jobs across our country.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, this question would be more appropriately put to the Minister of Finance, but unfortunately I did not get the question in then. I am hoping that he will feel he can speak on behalf of the government on this point.

As we go into this war of nationalist populism with the U.S. government and hope to come out on the other side, as we did last time, with our economy intact, I am particularly concerned that we not cut loose our other trading partner, Mexico. Mexico suffered grievously through NAFTA and lost 1.3 million farm jobs. Its agricultural sector suffered. In the maquiladoras, labour rights were abused and the environment damaged. It would be easy for us now to say, “So much for Mexico. We have our own fight with Trump.”

I wonder if the Canadian government is prepared to hold fast and allow trading partners from the original NAFTA, now CUSMA, to stick together against a U.S. president who wants to flex tariff muscles.

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu:** Mr. Speaker, the U.S. and Mexico are very important trading partners to Canada. Our supply chains are intertwined. We need to continue to build up that resiliency, whether it is for our workers, our supply chains or our products. Of course, we will continue working with both parties, the U.S. and Mexico. However, as we have heard from the Prime Minister, there are concerns about Mexico being a backdoor entry for Chinese goods entering our North American supply chains.

Like I said in my speech, there are always going to be challenges that we need to work through but we will continue working with our partners to the south, with the U.S. and Mexico.

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[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today to speak out against President-elect Trump's threat of imposing tariffs on Canada, to propose a real action plan to respond to that threat and to put Canada first.

[English]

We have a president south of the border who has made it clear he wants to put American workers and American security first. That is his right, but he and everyone else should know that when I am prime minister, we will have a head of government who puts Canada's workers and Canada's security first. That includes maintaining the most successful trade relationship the world has ever seen.

This is the world's longest-ever defended border. Two billion dollars of goods go across that border every day. Just to put that into perspective, more goods go between Canada and the U.S. in a few days than between the U.S. and Japan in an entire month. The Canada-U.S. border is 5,525 miles long if we include Alaska. It has 120 border crossings that facilitate 350,000 daily crossings; that is in addition to the merchandise that goes each way. The sheer volume of this relationship requires intricate planning and precision to get these goods moving back and forth. An automobile will cross the border seven times before it is completed and sent off to market.

By the way, the Americans should understand that we are pretty important to them too. The reality is that Canada purchases more goods from the United States than does the entire European Union, despite Canada's population being one-fifteenth that of Europe. Canada is the top export destination for 31 U.S. states. The two countries have a thoroughly interconnected manufacturing supply chain and we are completely reliant on each other for energy. Energy infrastructure between our two countries is so interconnected that we have 35 major electrical transmission lines and 70 oil and gas pipelines across the border. Canada provides 40% of U.S. crude imports, making it America's largest foreign energy supplier. This is something that President Trump should care about if he intends to keep his promise to cut gas prices in half; he is going to need our oil and our energy in order to do that. We are going to need continued access to the American economy if we are to succeed. We trade twice as much with the United States as we do with the rest of the world combined.

• (1945)

[Translation]

Some people dream of simply replacing the United States with other countries. These are dreams that have been talked about since the first Trudeau, who promised that we would do business with many other countries elsewhere in the world. That never happened. In fact, the weight of the American economy has increased. The share of global GDP controlled by the United States is increasing. All of the predictions that China would overtake the United States have not come true. The gap between China and the United States is widening because China has decided to return to socialist, centralized, government-planned policies. That has slowed growth in China, while American capitalism has continued to generate wealth.

That is the reality. Even if some oppose it for ideological reasons, no economic force in the world is more powerful than American capitalism. That is the reality. However, this capitalism does not work without international trade, especially with allied countries like Canada, and Canada is the United States' best ally in the world. That is why we need to protect this relationship. We need a plan for our economy and our security.

[English]

Let us be honest. We enter this crisis in a state of weakness. We have a weakened economy, a weakened military and, most of all, a weakened Prime Minister. That weakness may have been one of the reasons President Trump believed that he could make these threats and trample all over the Prime Minister again.

The sad reality is our GDP per capita is smaller than it was 10 years ago, even while the American economy per capita has grown by 18%. Our per capita GDP fell more than any other G7 country since the year before COVID. We are one of the only countries that has not recovered its economy since before COVID happened. In reality, our housing costs, our national debt and food bank use have all doubled in the last four years, all of this before the threat of these tariffs.

Before the threat of these tariffs, food prices had increased 37% faster in Canada than in the United States of America. Before the threat of these tariffs, our national debt had grown by over 100% in a decade. Before the threat of these tariffs, half a trillion dollars U.S. more in Canadian investment went south than came back. That is Canadian investment dollars building American mines, factories and pipelines paying American, not Canadian, wages.

On top of that, the threats that we heard last night should have come as no surprise, yet, for some reason, they did surprise the Prime Minister and the finance minister. It was only 20 days ago that the finance minister said Canada will be fine, there is nothing to worry about. They should have seen this coming a mile away. President Trump had been saying he would do this. He was elected three weeks ago. We would think the Prime Minister would have been furiously planning and preparing, meeting with the premiers and talking about a counter-plan during that time.

Now we learn that since the threat happened, he has come up with exactly one response. He is going to hold a Zoom call tomorrow. The media is absolutely captivated by this development that there is going to be a Zoom call between 11 or 12 politicians and that this is somehow going to solve the problem. We need a real plan and real action that will defend our economy and our security and, most of all, put Canada first.



• (1950)

[*Translation*]

We need a real Canada first plan for the economy and security.

[*English*]

First, the debate is over. There can be no tax increases. The tax increases the Prime Minister proposed on work, investment and energy were irresponsible and destructive all along, but now they are economic suicide.

Let us think about the impact that a 61¢-a-litre carbon tax would have when the tax is zero south of the border. President Trump has made it clear that he wants our jobs and businesses. We can only imagine his economic development teams calling trucking companies, factories and forestry enterprises telling them they are facing a 61¢-a-litre carbon tax north of the border, but that if they drive 50 kilometres south, there is no carbon tax. By the way, business and personal taxes are already much lower in the U.S. and will drop further. There will be a powerful sucking sound of jobs, businesses and money leaving our country to enrich the United States.

This is like a tariff imposed by our own government on our own economy. Compounded with a rail tariff from the United States of America, this would cripple our economy. Therefore, we are calling for the Prime Minister to announce today that he will cancel all tax increases on energy, on work and on businesses. Let us give our people a fighting chance to save their jobs.

Second, Canadian energy is not the enemy. Our energy sector is our number one net export, yet the Prime Minister has made it explicit that he wants to phase out that sector. He has blocked two pipelines. He blocked the Teck Frontier mine and has prevented us from building even a single, solitary LNG liquefaction plant, which by the way would have allowed us to ship our natural gas to countries other than the United States. Right now, because the Prime Minister has blocked LNG liquefaction on both coasts, we are stuck giving every single cubic foot of LNG we export to the Americans, on their terms, so they can liquefy it, upgrade it and turn it into a profit, something to which presumably the 25% tariff would apply.

We need to end this madness. First of all, we must announce, here and now, the cancellation of the production cut for the Canadian oil and gas sector.

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

We need to announce today that we are going to fast-track the approval of LNG liquefaction plants for export overseas, not just to the United States, in order to displace coal, reduce global emissions, and sidestep the U.S.'s monopoly control over our natural gas.

[*English*]

If we approve LNG liquefaction plants, we can take advantage of the shipping distances to both Asia and Europe, which are half as long compared to those of the Americans. We should go around the Americans and send out our gas to displace dirty dictator energy, reduce coal-fire burning and use our clean Canadian hydro to liquefy it. We can send it off to Europe to break the European depen-

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dence on Putin and turn dollars for dictators into paycheques for the people in this country.

[*Translation*]

We have to rebuild our military. The link between defence and the economy is now clear. Our allies, especially the Americans, expect us to be able to defend the continent alongside them and to confront the real threats to our security.

[*English*]

Looking at the state of our military, it is severely weakened after nine years of the Prime Minister. In 2023, Canada spent more money on consultants and professional services than we did on our army, navy and air force combined. The army spent \$34 million on new sleeping bags that are not even suitable for Canadian winters. Half of military vehicles are not fit to deploy. We have run out of ammunition, 155-millimetre artillery shells, with no plans to reload. The Prime Minister spends millions on Liberal-linked green companies, but he is not able to provide the necessary shells and ammo to fire on a potential future enemy. The Liberal government has now announced that it will cut a further billion dollars from the budget.

Canadian troops in Latvia had to buy their own helmets, rain gear and vests. Canadian troops in Poland are not being reimbursed for their meals. DND is hiking rents on soldiers, even as it struggles to retain and recruit members. The military is short 16,500 servicemen and servicewomen, but only recruited a total of 4,000 in all of last year.

Weird, woke and wasteful obsessions undermine our military and drive down recruitment. The reason the Canadian military cannot recruit is that young men and women do not want anything to do with the divisive identity politics that are being imposed on the forces by the Liberal government. However, rather than fixing this problem, the minister in question is more worried about banning a navy marching song that is not politically correct.

[*Translation*]

The woke political agenda is dividing us and distracting us from our work. Young men and women want nothing to do with the woke agenda. They want to fight for our country. They want to be proud of the Canadian flag.

We are going to get rid of the woke political agenda and recruit proud young Canadians to support our armed forces.

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[English]

We will have a warrior culture, not a woke culture.

We know this is all going to cost money, and that will be difficult because we will inherit a dumpster fire of a budget. We know that Canadian families are the most indebted in the G7. The national debt has doubled in size, and the Prime Minister's spending is still out of control. He has added more debt than the 22 prior prime ministers combined and keeps piling it on. By the way, his big priority now is to take GST off potato chips. Imagine that being the economic priority in the environment we are in today.

The Conservatives have a real plan, a plan that we will build out between now and the next election. It is a common-sense plan that will cut back on foreign aid to dictators, terrorists and global bureaucracies. It will eliminate useless back office bureaucracies and procurement boondoggles, and redirect the billions in savings to rebuilding our forces.

This is how we will do it. We will expand our presence in the north to keep Beijing and the Russians out. We will secure the continent against attacks and threats with the world's best cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and optical and drone technology. We will expand the reserves and make sure they are trained for both the military and civilian economy so they are ready to be called on, God forbid, in the event of war. We will get more bang for our buck, as we proved we could do under the previous Conservative government.

Yes, we had a lean, mean fighting machine. Yes, we were efficient. However, under the previous Conservative government, with that efficient spending, we were able to buy five Globemasters, a massive strategic aircraft; 17 Hercules aircraft; Chinook helicopters; and Leopard 2 tanks, and we refurbished our refuelling vessels. The list goes on. By the way, we were able to help our American friends destroy ISIS and al Qaeda. At that time, they had no concerns about us carrying our weight because we were punching above our weight, which protected our security and our economy.

Then there is the border. We need to resecure our border as part of this plan. CBS reported:

...the Department of Justice charged Muhammad Shahzeb Khan, a 20-year-old Pakistani citizen living in Canada, with plotting to conduct an ISIS inspired attack on a New York Jewish Center.... Khan was arrested in Ormstown in Quebec, Canada, just 12 miles from the U.S....

This is on top of another ISIS fighter who came into Canada and got citizenship after allegedly being videotaped cutting up a human body on a crucifix in the Middle East.

We have to screen people coming into our country. We have to identify threats and interrupt them before they harm us or our allies. There are 4.9 million permits and visas for people in Canada today who are not citizens or permanent residents that will run out in December of next year. Many of them are great people, but when their permits run out and they are not renewed, they must leave.

We need a plan from the government on how it is going to get these millions of people to go back to their home countries and not be tempted by a stronger U.S. economy to cross into the U.S., thus threatening the security of the border and turning the Americans

against us. We must also crack down on drugs, scan shipping containers and get our people into treatment and recovery to bring them home drug-free, not to please Donald Trump but to prevent more tragic deaths of our people.

• (2000)

All of this is to say that we need to put our country and our people first. In the words of Laurier, the great motto must be "Canada first, Canada last, Canada always".

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one could easily talk about how the defence spending of the leader of the Conservative Party, while a member of cabinet, was the lowest as a percentage GDP. That is a relatively minor but significant point that I would say to the leader of the Conservative Party.

The Deputy Prime Minister, in 10 minutes, talked about a team Canada approach and talked about stakeholders. Let me remind individuals following the debate that the Donald Trump issue is very serious for Canada. We have the experience. We have demonstrated that.

When negotiations got tough in the last go-around, the Conservative Party, with its current leader, capitulated and said to just make a deal. We said we were going to make a deal that is in the best interests of Canadians. Now he wants to flip-flop. Why should Canadians have any trust in the Conservative leader regarding trade negotiations with the United States given their importance?

• (2005)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I note that the Prime Minister was not courageous enough to debate me here directly on this today. He should be here in the House debating the future of protecting our trade. Secondly—

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are no points of order this evening; we are on autopilot.

Just as a reminder to the leader, we cannot say whether someone is here or not.

*S. O. 52*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, in the last round of negotiations, we remember what happened: The Prime Minister capitulated. He did not get us an exemption to buy America, as the earlier prime minister Stephen Harper had successfully done. Not only is buy America still in place, but it now applies to all levels of U.S. government procurement, which it never did before.

The Prime Minister did not get us out of the softwood lumber tariffs the way the earlier leader Stephen Harper had. Harper secured a reimbursement of the softwood lumber tariffs and put an end to the tariffs for 10 years. They were reimposed under the Prime Minister and have been doubled by President Biden.

The Prime Minister had nine years and three presidents, and he was not able to fix what former prime minister Harper did in about three months. Then the Americans and Mexicans signed the USMCA, walked it over to the Prime Minister and said to take it or leave it, and guess what. He took it and now we are all taking it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think a country can be run like an ad agency. I do not think that serious problems can be resolved by chanting incantations. Repeating “Canada first”, “triple, triple, triple” and “axe the tax” has never fixed anything. For 20 minutes, all I heard from the official opposition leader was empty slogans. I think he can reassure Canadians, and I will give him a chance: Can he tell us what his famous plan looks like?

I would also like his idiot MP to shut up and stop heckling me.

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

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I apologize for saying we cannot have points of order. We can.

[*Translation*]

I did not hear what happened, but the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Dominique Vien:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Jonquière called one our colleagues an idiot. That is unacceptable and we will not tolerate it. It is zero tolerance here.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, I was being heckled while I was asking my question. I will withdraw the word I used to describe my colleague, but I recommend that all the Conservative members put what the member herself just said into practice.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, at least the Bloc member is speaking up for once. The Liberal government has been threatening his region with an order against the forestry sector for months now, but we have not heard a word from that member. The two Bloc members who live in that region are doing nothing. Some Bloc members have even supported the federal government’s power to impose a radical order that will kill jobs in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

Fortunately, the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord is the voice defending all workers in Quebec’s regions. I will reverse the order, and I will also fight for softwood lumber workers to protect their

jobs, because it is clear that the Bloc Québécois has never done anything.

• (2010)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one thing that is critical to this discussion tonight, which we highlighted in the request to have this debate, is that Donald Trump questioned the Canadian border in particular. In fact, his 25% tariff is tied directly to the argument he makes that crime and drugs are coming across the northern border, similar to the southern border. That is the reason for the tariff.

As New Democrats, we have proposed to continue to train more officers under the CBSA, as it is short 2,000 to 3,000 officers at this moment, and expand its powers, which could have been done since 1932, to allow it do more of the type of work that is consistent with the RCMP. We also want to make sure the training of officers can be done back in their regions to enhance the application process.

I want to ask a specific question, because this is important. In this last part—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will let the hon. member finish up his question.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Manicouagan on a point of order.

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but you can see why it is sometimes difficult for francophones in the House. I think everyone would agree. We try to listen to the interpretation even when there is heckling or someone is singing *Y.M.C.A.* in the House. It is just that there is a lot of noise. It has been a bit difficult for us since the beginning of the sitting.

Out of respect for the interpreters too, I would appreciate it if the Speaker could issue a reminder.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I certainly appreciate the comment.

[*English*]

I will ask the hon. members to keep the noise down so we can get through the questions and comments section of this.

I will allow the hon. member for Windsor West to finish up his question.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, another practical element is opening up new training facilities for our CBSA officers. Going directly to a matter that is very important in terms of this Parliament, the Conservatives voted against a supplementary budget of \$26 million to our CBSA officers.

On top of that, the member for Carleton was part of a cabinet that cut \$120 million from CBSA, laid off 1,100 officers and also reduced the capabilities for them to work with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies in the United States on their border patrols, directly resulting from the cuts.

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Does the member for Carleton now wish to apologize for axing those workers and axing the officers who defend our border, which is now putting the situation of our trade in jeopardy with Donald J. Trump?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, no, because in fact we increased the number of frontline CBSA officers, and we actually armed them. Furthermore, what we spent less money on was back-office bureaucracy and consultants. This member is busy bragging that he voted for a more expensive CBSA. Yes; it went to consultants. The money did not go to boots on the ground. Tens of millions of dollars went to back-office bureaucrats and high-priced consultants, which increased the burden on taxpayers without increasing the security at the border. That is the fundamental difference.

We delivered more border security at a lower price. The fact that it costed less for us to secure the border is actually a plus. The NDP does not understand. When we deliver a better result at a lower price to taxpayers, that is a good thing, and they will get more of it when I am prime minister.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to underline that I did hear a lot of comments in the background. We just ask for people to be quiet, but I did hear the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby trying to comment all along. If he wants to ask questions, I am sure he can stand and ask questions.

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, something else incredible happened after the failed negotiations of CUSMA. Canada was the U.S.A.'s number one trading partner for goods. It is now number three. Mexico is number one. It is amazing. It happened because Canada was kicked to the sidelines during those negotiations. We all know the rest of the story. The average American worker now makes \$22,000 more than the average Canadian. Half a trillion dollars has been sucked down to the U.S.

My question for the future prime minister of Canada is, can he tell the House how he will stand up for Canadian workers, their paycheques and our security?

• (2015)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, we need a bring-it-home tax cut. The reality is that rising taxes and increasing delays to approve massive projects have driven half a trillion dollars of investment south of the border. In 10 years, we have gone from The New York Times printing a headline that says, “[Welcome to] Canada, Home of the World’s Most Affluent Middle Class”, an article in which it stated that Canada’s median income was equal to that of the United States, to the present state where the American per capita income is \$22,000 higher than ours. This is the worst gap in a century.

This is directly a result of high taxes and heavy burdens on our economy. We will reform and cut taxes with the goal of bringing home production and paycheques to our workers. In other words, let us put Canada first.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker—

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

M. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, could we please have silence?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will take the floor for a minute to make sure everyone is keeping their comments to themselves.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the respect shown by my Conservative colleagues, for whom I have a great deal of affection.

I was somewhat blown away by the Conservative leader's intervention. This evening, we are tasked with coming up with solutions and trying to comfort and reassure business people and workers. The Conservative leader did not do that at all. Later I will turn my attention to the state of the government, but what we heard this evening are the same meaningless slogans. The new slogan of the day is “Canada first”. That is going to be the new mantra of the Conservative leader, who thinks that complex problems can be resolved with incantations. It is rather shocking.

That makes me think of a video I saw this summer. I was watching a video with my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean, who is mischievous and playful. There was a cowboy dressed all in white, and my colleague wondered if it was the cowboy from the Village People. Unfortunately, it was not him. It was the leader of the official opposition. He was not singing *Y.M.C.A.*, though. He was describing his Canadian dream. In his Canadian dream, there are the Rockies, which are the mountains of Utah. We cannot make this stuff up. There is a sky, which is in Venezuela. Then there is a father driving a car in North Dakota. That is the official opposition leader's Canadian dream. We see a herd of cattle in California. To top it all off, we then see what are supposed to be Canadian fighter jets, but which are actually Russian jets.

It is just like the speech we heard from the leader of the official opposition just now. He was talking about real plans and real measures, but he did not come here to talk about American tariffs. Rather, he came to talk about his usual bugbears, namely the tax on carbon and fossil fuels, which is probably the most important thing to him after, say, sliced bread. On top of that, he also said that he would go back on liquefied natural gas development, end the government's woke agenda and return to a warrior culture. We are supposed to be talking about tariffs, and the leader of the official opposition is telling us that he is going to return to a warrior culture. I have never been more ashamed to be a Canadian parliamentarian than when I heard that and saw his MPs yelling, as though they were thrilled and excited and on the edge of their seats. My leader recently said the only sensible thing one could say in this Parliament: We need to leave and build our own country, right now. This is completely discouraging.

*S. O. 52*

That being said, let us move on to something other than these empty slogans. Today, I heard the Prime Minister talk about team Canada. The Liberals are talking about team Canada, while the Conservatives' new pitch is "Canada first". That does not speak to me because, if I look at history, Quebec has often been used as a bargaining chip in trade agreements. The Canadian economy is based on two pillars: the energy sector, with the fossil fuel industries, and the automotive sector. Every time there have been tough negotiations with the United States, Canada has prioritized these two sectors.

Today, I am going to ask my fellow members from Quebec, whether they are members of the Conservative Party or the Liberal Party, to put everything in place and to make a reasonable effort to advance Quebec's interests. That is what I want for them. I am saying that because, when I look at the forestry industry, I have to say that it is always treated worse than any of Canada's other economic sectors. What is more, we are dealing with the threat of American tariffs, tariffs that the forestry industry is already grappling with, by the way. Even though Quebec has changed the way it calculates cubic metres of wood to bring it into line with the United States' demands, there are still tariffs. The forestry industry is experiencing a perfect storm.

• (2020)

Right now, \$2 billion in tariffs is being held captive in U.S. accounts, where the forest industry cannot get at it. This is money we could be using to upgrade the forestry sector's facilities.

While I am on the topic of the forestry industry, I want to circle back to what the Leader of the Opposition said when he answered a question earlier. He said that, supposedly, we are not rising to support the forestry industry. Of course, he was referring to the conflict over the caribou order. I want to clarify a few things. The Minister of Environment paused his order at the request of the Bloc Québécois, which asked him to negotiate with the Government of Quebec, something he is apparently doing now. We said that it was possible to balance the need to protect caribou with the needs of the forestry industry.

I find it rather strange that the leader of the official opposition mentioned the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord when he was talking about the forestry industry. The member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord came with us to visit a sawmill in Lac-Saint-Jean this summer. He came out and said that the forestry sector needed more support and that everyone was hoping there would be no order.

When we spoke with people in the industry, they told us that the tariffs were one of their biggest problems. From what they told us, they would really like the federal government to implement a liquidity program to support the forestry industry. That way, sawmills that are struggling could ask the government to advance them the money that they have paid in tariffs. They could then reimburse it when they got it back. This would enable them to invest in their equipment. Unfortunately, the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord was not prepared to do that with us. He thought it was complicated and difficult. I find it rather odd that now I am being accused of having abandoned the forestry industry, when we are trying to come up with solutions.

As I was saying, the forest industry is at a crossroads, and not just because of tariffs. It has reached a crossroads because of a serious lack of financial support from the federal government, because the pulp and paper industry is in transition, because of the infamous caribou issue, and because of the forest fires.

What does the forestry industry need in order to overcome the tariff crisis? For one thing, there is the liquidity program I was talking about. The reason we need a liquidity program is that, if we want to fight tariffs, we need to make ourselves less dependent on the U.S. economy. We need to do more processing. Tariffs apply only on commodity products like two-by-fours, but there are no tariffs on processed goods. To expand our processing capabilities, we need financial support to help the forestry sector upgrade. Right now, that is impossible because tariffs are eating up too much of the forest sector's profits.

Ottawa provides basically no financial support for the forestry industry. The Bloc Québécois commissioned a study that shows that the government provides a scant \$317 million a year to support the forestry industry across Canada. What is more, 75% of that \$317 million for all of Canada is in the form of loans. This is not commensurate with what is given to the oil and gas sector.

For example, in Quebec, the federal government provides a mere \$71 million in financial support. If we consider the fact that 75% of that amount is in the form of loans, that means that only \$17 million is in the form of direct subsidies. The government is giving \$17 million to one of Quebec's most important industries. It is easy to see that the federal government is providing minimal support. My region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean alone generates more in economic spinoffs for the federal government than the federal government provides in total support to Quebec.

• (2025)

We are going to have to support the forestry sector more if we want to fight effectively against the American tariffs that are coming. We need an investment strategy. Above all, we are going to need the federal government to understand that we can no longer be prisoners to commodity products, that we can no longer be prisoners to U.S. markets, and that we need to process products here.

When we, the members of the 2019 cohort, arrived here, we lived through the CUSMA negotiations on aluminum. I would remind members that the federal government had forgotten to protect aluminum and that aluminum was coming in through China. Once again, we were the ones who fought this battle, with the support of major unions and aluminum plants, to reach an agreement with the government that closed this loophole for aluminum entering through Mexico.

*S. O. 52*

I still remember that, and I am talking about it because I see my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord sitting there. He started that battle with us, but unfortunately had to withdraw because his party did not agree with what we were asking for. His party did not agree that we should push for aluminum to be protected under CUSMA. I just want to say that the comment made by the Leader of the Opposition earlier, to the effect that my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean and I are leaving our region out in the cold, left a very bitter taste in my mouth.

I was talking about the aluminum industry. The federal government is offering support, but only for primary aluminum. Again, if we do not want to be prisoners to U.S. tariffs, then we need to do more processing. I do not know if my colleagues remember, but during the first round of tariffs on aluminum in 2018, \$120 million was paid in retaliatory tariffs that should have gone to the aluminum sector. That \$120 million was never redistributed, according to a report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

We made a proposal that would benefit the entire sector. Why not take that \$120 million and put it in a fund for the aluminum processing sector? Why not make it a recurring fund that would allow us to process more of our grey metal here at home? Then we could reduce our dependency on the United States and create a lot more added value at home. That is the case for aluminum. There needs to be more processing. That is also the case for the forestry industry. We should be doing more processing.

Where we could take action, where everyone could take action if we want to protect ourselves from American tariffs, is on the much-talked-about supply management bill, Bill C-282. It is currently in the Senate, so it simply needs to be sent back to the House. Perhaps my Conservative colleagues could put an end to their filibustering. We could have that debate and pass a bill that would protect our supply management system from American attacks, perhaps forever. I encourage my Conservative friends to end their filibustering.

Finally, as for the infamous issue that Mr. Trump raised about the border, we must admit that border management is a disaster. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government even lost track of certain travelers entering the country. It also lost track of irregular migrants. Who asked questions about this, day after day? It was the Bloc Québécois.

The Conservative Party is allowed 125 questions a week. I never heard them talk about border protection. I never heard them call for the closure of Roxham Road. I have never seen them do that. Today, they are acting holier-than-thou. The Conservative leader got up to make a speech about how we will have a warrior culture, not a woke culture. That is beyond belief.

If my Conservative colleagues had meaningful proposals to make, or even if the Liberal Party had meaningful proposals to make, what would we be talking about this evening? We would be talking about enhancing our bargaining relationship. If we want to enhance our bargaining relationship, we need to realize that 80% of everything we sell to the United States is primary materials.

These primary materials essentially serve the U.S. economy. What did the government do right when the tariffs were applied to aluminum? It applied retaliatory tariffs by selecting very specific

products that put pressure on U.S. senators who could then have access to the government.

There has been no talk of that so far. I have not heard anyone say one word about that. The only thing we have heard is the vitriol of the Conservative leader, who is still trying to stoke public discontent and who is not capable of behaving like a head of government. I find that disappointing from the person who could be the next prime minister.

• (2030)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing I noticed, and the member might also have noticed it, was the contrast between the speeches delivered by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Conservative leader. The Deputy Prime Minister's speech was more of a discussion and an explanation of a team Canada approach for dealing with the trade negotiations.

It is in the best interest of all Canadians that our approach considers all the different sectors, including supply management. I agree with the member opposite; I would have loved to see the filibustering stop. In particular, one issue is that supply management in the Senate is being filibustered by Conservative senators.

The Conservative leader seemed to say in his speech, “Not to worry, it is all about me.” He says he will resolve it all, yet he was so quick to capitulate the last time around and did not place Canada first. Could the hon. member provide his thoughts on this contrast?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, there is probably a contrast in tone, but I started my speech by saying that, whether we are talking about “team Canada” or “Canada first”, the end result is always the same with either the Conservatives or the Liberals: Quebec takes a back seat. I have never seen a political party defend the forestry industry.

The Conservatives have bragged about the 2006 agreement, but they reduced our exports in 2006. Mr. Harper got into bed with Mr. Bush. They reduced our exports and made us lose \$5 billion. They made the Quebec forestry industry lose \$1 billion. I do not call that a great success. As for the Liberal government, it never wanted to fight for the softwood lumber industry. It is just that simple.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague from Jonquière said that the Conservatives never talked about closing borders after the problems we had with illegal immigrants.

*S. O. 52*

My colleague was elected in 2019, if I am not mistaken. Since 2017, from day one, when the Prime Minister posted his infamous tweet inviting the whole world to come to Canada, I have been here and I have been asking questions. I even went to Roxham Road three times through the United States, and I took the leader of the Conservative Party at the time there, too. I have done interviews and spoken about it many times in the House. I would like my colleague to withdraw his remarks because my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill and I have held press conferences and issued press releases. We have been there ourselves, many times. What he said is false.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party gets 125 questions a week. As I said earlier, since January 1, the Conservatives have asked 15 questions on immigration. I encourage my colleague to check the record. None of their opposition days have dealt with this or the border issue, but they have dedicated 18 opposition days to the carbon tax. Every day, I hear the Conservatives say they want an election on the carbon tax, which does not apply in Quebec. The answer is quite simple. My colleague is a Conservative, like all the others, who will defend Canada before defending Quebec.

• (2035)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague, who represents a region with a strong forestry industry. I, too, represent a region in this Parliament where there is a forestry industry.

We have seen the Harper regime's approach. As the member rightly said, the Conservatives at the time gave \$1 billion to the Americans. After winning in all the courts, we were nearly at the victory line, but the Conservatives gave it all away. Not only that, we also lost 100,000 jobs and 200 lumber mills across the country. It was a total disaster. The leader of the official opposition says it was a victory. It was not a victory at all.

I wanted to get my colleague's opinion on this. Does he agree that it was a real disaster that we lost 100,000 jobs, 200 softwood lumber mills and \$1 billion?

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. It was not a disaster, it was a catastrophe.

From 2005 to 2011, Quebec's forestry sector shrank by 30%, yet the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party did nothing. As I was saying earlier on, Canada relies on two economic pillars: oil and gas. As we saw, the leader of the official opposition used a quarter of his speaking time to crow about energy and new LNG projects. At a time when American surtaxes are all the talk, this seems rather surprising. If I heard him talk about softwood lumber, it was in answer to a question I had asked him.

My colleague is absolutely right. The forestry sector in Quebec has been completely demolished, and the federal government has washed its hands of it.

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as members know, the Bloc Québécois is here to defend the interests of Quebec, not the interests of Alberta.

I would like my hon. colleague from Jonquière to tell us about the Bloc Québécois's trade negotiation priorities for the coming

months. What are we going to hammer home and how are we going to defend Quebec's interests?

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, and as we have been saying for a long time, if we want to protect ourselves from American tariffs, more processing at home is the answer.

Unfortunately, the forestry sector receives no federal government support. Sawmills that ask the federal government for financial support are referred to Global Affairs Canada, where they are automatically turned down. Rather surprisingly, sawmills are unable to apply for support from Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

We want the federal government to better support the forestry industry and follow the example that Quebec set in its latest budget by implementing a liquidity program. I would like to hear from the Conservatives on that.

Concerning the \$2 billion belonging to forestry companies that are sitting idle in the United States, how can we return it to the people who unfairly paid it? How can we do that? Instead of telling us that they are in a fighting mood and are going to produce more liquefied natural gas, I would like the Conservatives to talk to us about our industries at home. That would be interesting.

We also need more processing in the aluminum sector. We cannot just support primary aluminum. We also need to support processors. There are many initiatives that could be put in place to do that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the aluminum sector is very important to the Quebec economy. Many years ago, I visited what, at the time, was called the Alma smelter in the Lac Saint-Jean region of Quebec. I was there for a few days, working for a rating agency at the time.

Can the member tell us how important the aluminum sector is to the province of Quebec and to the rest of Canada, including British Columbia, where there are smelters in Trail and Kitimat, in terms of creating jobs? How important is that product for the U.S. economy?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, I know that Mr. Trump is an irrational political player, but personally, I do not believe that the Americans should be imposing tariffs on aluminum, because they do not produce primary aluminum. If I remember correctly, there is only one aluminum smelter operating in the United States. We are the biggest producers of primary aluminum in North America. It is Quebec, particularly my region and the north shore, that produces all of the aluminum. It would be rather odd to add tariffs for the Americans who process it.

*S. O. 52*

However, we have seen in the past that Mr. Trump can sometimes act irrationally. If we want to guard against that, I still think that we should increase aluminum processing here at home. To make that happen, the federal government could invest reasonable amounts. We were simply asking the government to take \$120 million from the 2018 counter-tariffs and put it into a permanent fund. That is not too much to ask of the federal government, but it never agreed to do so. At the same time, however, it is prepared to put \$34 billion into a pipeline. That is almost \$83 billion that the government is going to invest in the pipe dream of clean oil by 2035. What a double standard.

● (2040)

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, two things we have been talking about tonight, of course, are trade deals and a renegotiated CUSMA.

I was certainly concerned about the loss of 10% of the supply-managed sector, such as dairy farmers here in Canada, egg producers, chicken farmers and so on, that was negotiated by the Liberal government. If there is a future negotiation in terms of, clearly, what Trump has been talking about, which is to reopen CUSMA, I am concerned about what that might mean.

What are the hon. member's concerns about that for those supply-managed sectors?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, certainly the fear is that if CUSMA is renegotiated, new cracks will appear in supply management. Ideally, Bill C-282 will be passed quickly. Unfortunately, we are paralyzed here. The Liberal government seems to be a doormat, I have to say, for two senators who have decided to act like kings. It is rather disappointing. There is a bill on the table, our bill, and the Liberals and the NDP voted in favour of it. Even some Conservatives voted in favour of it. I do not see why we would not implement it and protect all of our farmers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this House and see many of my colleagues here this evening speaking to an important topic. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member, good friend and always smiling colleague, the member for Surrey—Newton.

As we speak tonight about the relationship between Canada and the United States, I speak with the perspective of having worked and lived in New York City for several years. It was many years ago, but I had the real privilege and honour of working in the United States of America and being there for a number of years, at a very interesting time politically with elections and also during the events of September 11 and then returning back to Canada. We have many family members and friends all over the United States with whom we keep in contact.

I would say about U.S. exceptionalism that the relationship that we have with the United States is a long-standing one. We are more than friends. We have this expression: We are fraternal, we are brothers, we are sisters. Many of us go back and forth. I was in the United States just several weeks ago taking my daughter to a soccer

tournament in Akron, Ohio at the Pro Football Hall of Fame area. It was great to be there in Ohio and play against many teams from the northeast.

Let us be frank here. This debate is very important because it is about our economy, the U.S. economy and the North American economy. For the last 12 months, Canada has exported \$173.4 billion of energy exports to the United States; \$78.3 billion in auto and auto parts exports to the United States; \$63.2 billion in consumer goods; \$50 billion in metal and non-metallic mineral products; and \$38.8 billion in forestry. The United States needs us and we need them due to the interdependency, the supply chains, the linkages, the people-to-people ties and the fact that \$3.5 billion of trade goes across that border every day unhindered and unimpeded, creating wealth and creating jobs. There are millions of jobs in the United States of America that are tied to Canada, and vice versa. The U.S. is our largest export market and we are their largest export market. Larger than China and larger than Mexico, our trading relationship has grown and continues to grow and our people-to-people relationship continues to grow. We need to emphasize that point over and over again.

Our government has dealt with the 45th president, the first Trump presidency. We will again have a mature, responsible dialogue with this incoming administration on how we can secure our borders and our energy. Three million barrels of oil is shipped every day from Canada to the United States. There are no alternatives. Our auto companies are interdependent. Parts go back and forth every day across the border in Detroit and in Windsor. This relationship is a special one and we must always act with maturity, with calm and with poise, always defending Canadian workers and always defending Canadian businesses. That is our job.

I would like to just digress for one minute because there is something very important I need to point out from my riding. My riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge has over 368 restaurants, employing 5,000 employees and with almost \$500 million of revenue. We have put forward a plan to give Canadians a break and to help out these restaurants over the two-month period over the Christmas holidays, into the new year and past Valentine's Day. Let us do the right thing. To all my hon. colleagues, let us get this passed for the restaurants like Via Mercanti and Castello, Gelato Gelato, That's Italian, Zafferano, Spizzico and all those beautiful restaurants like Desserts Plus and L'antipasto that I visit on occasion. Their customers can go there and get a break. I have always been taught, in my values, that every little bit helps and it is imperative that we do that.



*S. O. 52*

• (2045)

I will go back to the very important trade relationship we have with the United States and any potential tariffs they may place on either Canadian or Mexican products. I am convinced that with the unique relationship we have, forged by geography, values, common interests, strong personal connections and powerful, multi-layered economic ties, their economy only succeeds when we work together. We know that. Any potential tariffs that the Trump administration potentially places on any country will only raise inflation in the United States, prevent interest rates from falling in the United States and hurt U.S. consumers. I understand that as an economist, and I believe we all understand that.

As Canadian parliamentarians, our first priority is our residents and businesses, and ensuring a bright future for all Canadians. I am here to ensure that the Canadian economy succeeds. I ran, in the first place, because the economic growth rates and direction we were seeing under the Harper government were abysmal. We delivered, and we will continue to deliver on the relationship with our U.S. friends and cousins. I have cousins in New Jersey. I will give them a quick shout-out. They have been there for decades. Just to give a small fact, my great-grandfather passed through Ellis Island in 1909. We have the ship manifest when he signed in at Ellis Island. He returned to southern Italy just a few years later, but those are the kinds of ties that Canadians have to the United States. Some of my employees have family in the United States, in Washington, D.C., if I remember correctly.

This economic partnership between our countries supports millions of jobs through direct foreign investment and cross-border trade. These are integrated economies. Canada imports more from the U.S. than any other country by a wide margin. In fact, Canada buys over two times more goods from the U.S. than China. The United States needs us and we need them to succeed economically, to ensure the security of North America and to work together on so many mutual interests.

Canadian consumers and Canadian businesses purchase more goods from the United States than China, Japan and Germany combined. Nearly half of the goods the U.S. buys from Canada are raw materials used by American manufacturers, contributing to jobs in the U.S. and North American competitiveness. Canadian companies buy from U.S. sources to make Canadian products. In short, the U.S. trade relationship is built on long-standing binational supply chains, where roughly 70% of Canadian exports to the United States are incorporated into U.S. supply chains.

There is no better example of this than the auto sector. It is a sector I covered in the private sector for many years and I chair the Liberal auto caucus here in Ottawa. Martinrea, Magna and Linamar on the auto parts supplier side, along with Toyota, Honda, Stellantis, Ford, General Motors and Volkswagen all depend on an integrated supply chain that links us with the United States. It is so important that continues.

In my last minute, I want to highlight a few things that I think are making a difference in the lives of the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge, which is the logistics hub for many U.S. companies. Home Depot, FedEx, UPS and Costco are all located in the city of Vaughan, in my riding. CPKC's intermodal facility is in my riding;

it is the busiest intermodal facility in the country. The CN MacMillan Yard is located in Vaughan; it is the largest CN facility in the country. The area I represent is a hub. Tens of thousands of jobs in my riding and in my city are connected to trade and investment in the United States.

We must all be part of team Canada. We all must represent Canadian workers from coast to coast to coast. That is our number one job, and we will do that by working with all members of Parliament to ensure a bright future for all citizens and residents.

• (2050)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this debate we are having tonight, which was put forward by my colleague from Windsor West, is a really good reminder of how important it is that we are doing the work to support workers and Canadian products. In my home province alone, British Columbia has exported more than \$5.7 billion in wood products to the U.S., more than \$3.5 billion in agriculture products and over \$8.2 billion in energy products, including \$4.8 billion in natural gas just last year.

Why have we not seen the government take the industrial strategies my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach spoke so well about tonight in his speech to see value-added products, like the B.C. softwood products, for example, to see workers supported, to see Canadian products developed and to see our local Canadian economy supported? Why have we not seen the government do that to prepare us for a situation like we are in right now?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the B.C. resource sector. Actually, I worked at a pulp mill growing up in northern British Columbia, in Prince Rupert, my hometown, where I was born and raised until I moved away. The LNG facility being constructed will export LNG to Asia. Also, the western Canadian sedimentary basin in northeast B.C. obviously exports a ton of natural gas to the United States. I would say that the proud resource sector of British Columbia has existed for decades. I remember the MacMillan Bloedel days, as my hon. colleagues would know, and it is something we should be proud of and support. Again, it goes back to my theme that the U.S. economy, the U.S. citizens, our friends and neighbours down in the south need us as much as we need them. We will have responsible leadership, like we did in the first Trump administration, to make sure we get a good deal with the United States that represents the interests of our workers and their workers.

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• (2055)

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the speech of the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge. I have had many opportunities to speak with the member, as have many of my colleagues, over the last number of years. He has had impassioned conversations with many of us about how his government has failed his constituents. As a matter of fact, on many occasions, the hon. member broached the subject of crossing the floor to the Conservative Party, believing that he would better serve his constituents by becoming a member of this caucus, which would defend his constituents. I wonder if he still believes, and if he will openly share his belief, that his constituents would be best represented by a Conservative member of Parliament.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, when I was 14 years old, I joined the Liberal Party of Canada, and I have been a member ever since. I will always be a member of the Liberal Party of Canada. I will ensure that to my residents. I ran as a Liberal, and I will run again as a Liberal. I will ensure that for a fact.

I am a very passionate person, and I speak my mind, and I am fine with that. To the hon. colleague, shame on him for asking that type of question. That, to me, is totally unnecessary.

I look forward to the next election, when I am talking about the Canada dental care plan, the Canada child benefit and what I have delivered for the city of Vaughan—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** —and to all its residents.

To the member for Dufferin—Caledon, keep chirping.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity to review the CUSMA, which is the current trade agreement that was signed by the United States, Canada and Mexico on July 1, 2020. It says that CUSMA will expire in 2036 unless it is extended before that, and the parties agreed to review the treaty every six years. This means the first review of this treaty would come up in 2026, meaning that what the President-elect of the United States has really done is threaten to abrogate and to tear up a trade agreement that was signed in good faith by all three parties.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague has any thoughts on that and what it does for a country like the United States, which claims to believe in an international rules-based order, in the World Trade Organization and in orderly managed trade. What does it say to him when the President-elect of the United States says that he would rip up an agreement signed in good faith, in violation of the terms of that agreement?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, to my hon. colleague from British Columbia, with whom I work closely on the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, of which I am the chair, I will say that we need to always emphasize and re-emphasize rules-based trade. We always need to emphasize our multilateral institutions. Canada is a founding partner of many of those institutions, from NATO to the WTO.

We must work together. We must point out to the United States, always, to any administration, that we are more than their friends; we are neighbours, we are family. Its success is dependent on us, our success is dependent on it, and that is what is most important. I look forward to working with the incoming administration and all the officials, as a member of the Canada-U.S. parliamentary association and as one of the vice-chairs.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I want to thank the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for sharing his time. With his background in economics and finance, he always does amazing work when it comes to issues like the one before us.

I rise today to address a critical issue that may have a significant impact on our economy, our workers and our relationship with our largest trading partner. On the heels of President-elect Trump's announcement that the United States will potentially impose a 25% tariff on Canadian imports, it is essential that we as elected representatives respond with clarity and a commitment to protect the interests of Canadians.

Canada and the United States share one of the most successful and interdependent trading relationships in the world. Our economies are deeply connected, with billions of dollars in trade crossing our borders annually, supporting millions of jobs in both our countries.

We are not just trade partners; we are also neighbours and allies. From the steel used in American manufacturing to the agricultural products that sustain both of our populations, Canada has been a reliable supplier and a trusted partner. Any disruption to this relationship jeopardizes the prosperity of both nations.

The announcement of a 25% tariff has the potential to shift our entire economic landscape, which will have massive consequences for Canadian businesses, workers and their families. Our industries, particularly in manufacturing, agriculture and energy, will face higher costs, reduced competitiveness and the potential loss of vital export markets.

When we consider the automobile sector, in which the United States imports over 80% of the vehicles manufactured in Canada, a 25% tariff would increase costs for automakers and consumers alike, strain supply chains and put thousands of Canadian jobs at risk. Similarly, agriculture producers will struggle to compete in a U.S. market, potentially leading to reduced income and financial instability for farming communities throughout our country.

The effects will extend beyond individual sectors. Small businesses reliant on trade with the U.S. will face uncertainty and potential closure. Consumers will bear the burden of rising prices for goods. The economic ties that have long been the foundation of our relationship with the United States will be tested in exceptional ways.

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Canada has navigated past challenges in its trading relationship with the United States. The negotiations of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement is a testament to our ability to stand firm and secure outcomes that protect Canadian interests. During those negotiations, we faced pressure from the U.S. administration, including threats of steep tariffs on key Canadian exports like steel and aluminum.

However, Canada did not falter. Under the leadership of a skilled and determined negotiating team, we advanced our priorities and also safeguarded our key industries. We achieved crucial wins, including maintaining dispute resolution mechanisms, preserving cultural exemptions and securing access to critical markets for our farmers and manufacturers.

The CUSMA negotiations demonstrated Canada's strength and resilience and our commitment to protecting the livelihood of our workers while ensuring fairness in trade. We proved that, even in the face of a challenging partner, we could achieve outcomes that benefit both nations. Those experiences will provide valuable lessons as we confront this latest challenge.

● (2100)

We must also address the principle at the heart of the issue: fair and mutual trade. Canada has always advocated for a trade system based on mutual benefit, fairness and the rule of law. One-sided tariffs undermine these principles, creating a landscape of uncertainty rather than co-operation.

President-elect Trump's decision appears to be driven by a protectionist agenda, yet it fails to consider the implications for economic stability across North America. Protectionism can often lead to retaliation and trade wars, which leaves all parties worse off. It is important that Canada stand firm in opposing this approach by remaining committed to constructive dialogue.

In the face of this challenge, we must prioritize the protection of Canadian industries and workers. This means providing targeted support to sectors most affected by the tariffs, whether through financial assistance, tax relief or measures to diversify export markets. Our goal should be to ensure that no Canadian loses their job because of another country's trade policies.

Canada must work with international partners to uphold the rules-based global trading system. The World Trade Organization provides mechanisms for addressing trade issues, and Canada must use every tool possible to challenge the legality of the tariffs.

We must also engage in strategic and measured diplomacy with the United States. It is crucial to convey the message that the tariffs harm both nations and undermine decades of economic partnership. Canada must be clear that while we are open to negotiations, we will not be bullied into agreements that compromise our economic sovereignty.

Finally, this is an opportunity to invest in our economic resilience. By enhancing trade relationships with other global partners and fostering innovation at home, Canada can reduce its reliance on the U.S. market and ensure long-term economic stability.

As parliamentarians, it is our duty to rise above partisanship and present a united front in the face of this challenge. We must take a

team Canada approach. The stakes are too high for division. Our response must reflect the strength and determination of Canadians. This is not about tariffs; it is about defending our values, our economy and our future. It is about showing the world that Canada will not stand down when faced with difficulties.

I call on Parliament to stand with Canadian workers and businesses to defend our trade interests and to reaffirm our commitment to a fair and prosperous global economy. Let us take this challenge as an opportunity to strengthen our nation.

● (2105)

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the member talk about the challenge we have with the potential of 25% tariffs being imposed on Canada, because it is kind of like Groundhog Day. The member might not know this, but in 2018, the United States slapped section 232 tariffs on Canada: 25% for steel and 10% for aluminum.

Some people may be wondering why I would bring this up. What does it have to do with 25% tariffs today? The real problem then was the border. Just as President-elect Trump has said, the problem now is the border. In 2018, Chinese steel was coming into Canada, going down into the United States and taking out American steel. It became such a problem that the then president of the United States imposed a 25% tariff. We are now going to have it on everything because of the complete mismanagement of the border yet again.

Why should Canadians trust the Liberals to get anything right when they have gotten everything wrong in this relationship?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, our government has a proven track record of standing up for Canadians when it comes to our relationship with the U.S. That is very clear. When the U.S. imposed tariffs on aluminum and steel, we put in dollar-for-dollar tariffs and the U.S. backed off.

Let us talk about the Conservatives. The Conservative record is very different. During USMCA negotiations, it was the Conservative Party's position that we needed to capitulate to the U.S. That is not what we did. We stood firm and protected steel workers, auto workers, agriculture workers and dairy farmers. We came out with a win-win right across the board.

Our government will always do whatever it takes to protect our workers and our national interest.

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• (2110)

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague talk about the “team Canada” approach. The only thing he discussed in his speech was the automotive industry in Ontario.

What is his government going to do for the aerospace industry in Montreal? What is his government going to do for the artificial intelligence industry in Montreal, for culture, for the forestry and the aluminum sectors? What is his government going to do?

He had better have a good answer or we in the Bloc Québécois will remind him of that.

[English]

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, it is not just about Ontario and British Columbia, where I am from. It is from coast to coast to coast, all 10 provinces and three territories. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with workers and businesses in every Canadian province and territory to make sure we have a win-win situation. I would like to see the Bloc, the Conservatives, the NDP, the Greens and independents come together as team Canada so we can achieve this for each and every Canadian, irrespective of where they live and work.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, Canada and the United States have a long, mutually beneficial and important relationship, but it is very important to note that President-elect Trump has the right to make economic policy in the United States; he does not have the right to make economic policy in Canada. If he is going to pursue unfair policies like slapping a 25% tariff on probably his closest and most loyal ally and friend, Canada needs to respond accordingly.

All members will recall that during COVID, this country could not produce a domestic vaccine and had to rely on imports from China to supply health care workers with masks and gowns. We have become dangerously reliant on other countries, and this tariff situation provides an opportunity for Canada to become more self-reliant. Canada should offer incentives to Canadian businesses that create and repatriate jobs here, just as the Americans are doing in the United States, so we can build a strong, resilient Canadian economy.

Does my friend agree that this might be an opportunity for us to become stronger by creating global champions, Canadian champions, in Canada and by diversifying our trade to Europe and Asia? I ask because it is dangerous to rely on only one customer, as every business person ought to know.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my speech that we must prioritize the protection of Canadian industries and workers. This means providing targeted support to sectors most affected by these tariffs, whether through financial assistance, tax relief or measures to diversify export markets. Our goal should be to ensure that no Canadian loses their job because of another country's trade policies. I 100% agree with the hon. member there.

Over the last few years, this government has signed trade deals with more countries than any other government, and that is the way we should continue to achieve what the hon. member asked.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before moving to the next speaker, because it might be the last time I get to speak this evening, I want to offer my great congratulations to Premier-elect Tim Houston for a phenomenal win in Nova Scotia. It was an interesting election night there.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to split my time with the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

I will start by saying that the threats by U.S. president-elect Donald Trump come as a serious threat to Canada and to our prosperity. That is exactly why we are here tonight, but while this announcement is somewhat unprecedented and obviously worrying, it is not for a moment unexpected. Donald Trump did not appear out of nowhere. He was effectively running for president for four years, most of that time as a front-runner. He made tariffs and trade restrictions a central part of his platform and a central part of his campaign as a whole. The president-elect literally said, “Tariffs are the greatest thing ever invented.” Those were his words, but last night's announcement revealed that the Prime Minister does not have a plan. He certainly does not have a Canada first plan for our economy or for our security.

However, let us look at how the government worked against Canada. It continued with its radical economic vandalism and its job-killing agenda. The Prime Minister continued to hike the carbon tax and raise capital gains taxes, adding piles of red tape on top of an already struggling business sector. He pushed forward with an agenda that doubled home prices. He doubled the national debt. Crime has doubled in this country. Our GDP per capita is smaller now than when the Prime Minister took office. In fact, it dropped more than any other G7 country since COVID.

We have the most indebted households and the worst housing inflation, and food prices have risen 37% faster here than in the U.S., while record numbers of Canadians now visit food banks. That is the Liberals' record. The Canadian economy now stands at record weakness, and we are already at a disadvantage. Businesses were already thinking about leaving, and now it is going to get even worse.

It is hard to see how anybody might think that we are starting from a negotiating position of strength, and speaking of negotiations, has anybody on that side of the House, anybody in the Prime Minister's office or anybody anywhere else thought to continue the relationships with the president-elect's team since 2020? Has anybody thought to build relationships with members of the U.S. House or the U.S. Senate, or with anybody of importance in Washington? We know that the Liberals say it, but it is quite clear that saying it does not make it reality, and could anybody read the writing on the wall to see what was coming?

I think we know the answers to all those questions, although the Liberals certainly act as though that is not the case, and it is clearer than ever that the Prime Minister has no plan. That is what we are demanding. He had no plan to anticipate the re-election of Donald Trump. He sat around for weeks until these tariffs were announced, and his big idea is a call tomorrow, a bunch of politicians sitting around a table for a photo op.

We need a Canada first plan. That is what the Leader of the Opposition reiterated. We needed it yesterday on the economy, on security, on the border and on so much else, but for good measure, let us start with the economy.

The Prime Minister has to now cancel the plan to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre. It was a bad idea then. It is certainly a bad idea now that is going to tax everyone, so we are going to axe the tax on everyone, on everything, forever, and that is going to ensure our prosperity, or at least a stronger negotiating position with the U.S. These tax rises cost more for everything, including food, gas and energy, and combined with those tariffs from Donald Trump, or the threat of those tariffs, they will put our economy six feet under.

Additionally, the Prime Minister must revoke his plan to place the energy cap on natural resources industries, which would see our country produce 35% less. Natural resources are our biggest job creator and our biggest export. The U.S. wants what we have. Donald Trump says he wants to cut energy prices in half, and he can do that by importing clean Canadian energy.

Finally, the Prime Minister must cancel all of the tax increases on work, on investment and on making things here in Canada. They were a bad idea then, and they are certainly a bad idea now. His capital gains increases are going to drive businesses south. They are going to take thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars with them to the U.S.

These common-sense economic policies of axing the tax and scrapping the cap would not only save Canadian jobs; they would also help us in a negotiating position with the United States. They would help reverse the economic vandalism that we have seen after nine years of this Prime Minister, this Liberal-NDP government and the carnage they have caused in the Canadian economy.

● (2115)

It goes way past the economy. On immigration, the Prime Minister had already admitted he had broken a generational consensus on immigration, on the system. Every Canadian will tell us that too now. There are 4.9 million temporary visas and permits that have been issued, and they are to expire in December 2025, but yesterday, the immigration minister practically revealed that there is no plan to ensure that those who overstay their welcome actually go home.

The government let in two ISIS terrorists, a father and son duo, plotting an attack about 10 minutes from the riding that I represent. Another one was arrested near Montreal for planning an attack on a Jewish community in New York. The government utterly failed to properly screen the people coming in here. We need a Canada first approach to protect our security and our sovereignty, and to control those who are living in and those who are leaving our country. We need to protect Canadians, to keep our own country safe.

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On top of that, a Canada first plan would put a stop to the out-of-control illegal drugs in this country. There are 47,000 Canadians who have died due to drug overdoses. This is higher than the number of people Canada lost in the Second World War. This number is staggering. There is a 200% increase in overdose deaths after just nine years of the Prime Minister, and it is thanks to his radical legalization of drugs and his policies that put continued addiction over hope and recovery. We have talked about it in the House so many times, and it is time for the Prime Minister to finally act on it.

Today, the police chief in the city of London, in Ontario, confirmed what we have been saying for years: The hard drugs of the Liberal-NDP unsafe supply programs are being diverted into our streets. Last year, the force seized 30,000 hydromorphone pills, most of them sourced directly from these programs. They are flooding into our streets, and they are also flooding across the border into the U.S. We know that. All we have to do is look outside.

We must put a stop to our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters, our aunts and uncles falling victim to the poisonous plan the Prime Minister and the Liberal-NDP government are pushing. We must end the vast black market transnational trade of dangerous drugs that the Prime Minister has created. The Prime Minister can do that today by immediately announcing he will end his failed, radical, unsafe supply experiment to bring our loved ones home drug-free with detox treatment and wraparound services, and stop funding the drug smugglers and the transnational trade.

● (2120)

Everyone sees that the Prime Minister cannot negotiate. Everyone sees that the Prime Minister cannot keep his promises. Everyone sees that the Prime Minister has lost control, not only of his own caucus, of his own party, but of the entire country. The president-elect has opened the door to not implementing these tariffs: As long as we implement the ideas we spoke about tonight, then he implies that the tariffs will not be levied.

From there, we find a silver lining. It is because we can fix these issues. The Prime Minister can do that. He can stand up and tell Canadians. He can show up in this debate and tell Canadians he will axe the tax and finally lay out a plan to make sure those who overstay their welcome with their permits live up to their agreements and actually leave this country. He can tell Canadians he will immediately end his unsafe consumption, free drug bonanza. He can do all of those things. The only thing missing in all of this is the Prime Minister and his leadership. He has been here for nine years. He has had three presidents, and he has failed.

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If we read Robert Lighthizer's book, which I am sure many of my colleagues will quote tonight, we will know that the Prime Minister's first approach with Donald Trump failed, and we cannot afford a second one. He can continue to stick his head in the sand and pretend nothing is wrong. He can continue pushing jobs and money out of this country. The Prime Minister has a choice to make tonight. We as Canadians only hope he makes the right choice, to put Canada first. I know he will not do that, and that is why this country desperately needs an election.

• (2125)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the last nine years we have seen many trade agreements signed off on. In fact, no government in the history of Canada has signed off on as many trade agreements with other countries as this government. We have even had a trade agreement signed off with president-elect Trump previously. During the negotiations for that particular agreement, when it really came down and started to get difficult, we had the now leader of the Conservative Party say to capitulate, to just sign it, to get an agreement, because he was panicking.

At the time, we said, no, we are going to continue to get the best deal for Canadians. We continued the negotiations. Why should Canadians have any confidence in the leader of the Conservative Party when, the moment he started to panic, he was prepared to capitulate and give whatever it took to the United States?

Why should they have any trust or confidence in that leader?

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite has a revisionist version of history. It was actually they who capitulated. In fact, does he know why Canadians would have confidence in Conservatives? Canadians would have confidence in Conservatives because 80 days after former prime minister Harper was elected, he got a deal on softwood lumber.

Does he know how much money is still sitting in Washington from illegally collected tariffs? It is \$9 billion. That is the Prime Minister's record. We still have buy America. That member was not at the table, and thank goodness for Canada that he was not, but if we read the book of the chief negotiator, he will tell us everything that happened and why Canada got a bad deal. It will not happen again under the next prime minister of Canada, the member of Parliament for Carleton.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the member for Thornhill's remarks.

Both her speech and that of her leader featured rather strident but justified criticisms of the Liberal government on several fronts.

I would like to know how a Conservative government would do better than a Liberal government in trade talks with the United States.

[English]

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, the member very well could have listened to the speech. We are going to have a Canada first approach that puts Canadians first and fixes everything that the

Prime Minister has broken over the last nine years: the drugs flowing over the borders; the punishing taxes on Canadians, Canadian workers and Canadian investment; and the fact that our military is desperately underfunded when it has asked for a 2% commitment. That is what a Conservative government would do differently. Perhaps the member opposite has not been listening for the last number of months, but we have laid out a plan for the next Conservative majority government in this country, and Canadians cannot wait.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it has been clear from Donald Trump's intervention on this, in terms of the tariff, that it was drugs and crime coming from the Canadian border. The member for Carleton was part of the Harper administration and sat at the cabinet table. Even when I asked him earlier this evening, he still had no regrets about cutting 1,100 members loose who were doing intelligence office work, which was actually on the front lines and going to work with the United States law enforcement agencies.

There were sniffer dog teams that were cut under the Harper administration, with the member for Carleton at the cabinet table, and there were also frontline workers. This is not my opinion. This is the opinion of the workers from there, who have done that.

Why was axing the officers a good plan by the Conservative Party? What are they willing to do now to make those numbers up? They recently voted against the CBSA stocking back up on officers again.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, the member is right that we voted against stocking up the CBSA with more bureaucracy. There were actually more frontline officers under the Harper government than the member has told the House. If he wants to traffic in falsehoods and misinformation, that is his prerogative, but it has no place here. It probably has a place with his friends in the Liberal Party.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have no doubt that many Canadians are watching tonight's debate with a great deal of anxiety for the threat that is facing our country and our economy. Jobs, workers' paycheques and the ability for people to pay their mortgage depend on trade. Canada is a nation that depends on being able to sell what we grow and what we produce here to other countries around the world. We simply do not have the population to consume what we can produce. That is because we are so good at producing things. We are so good at extracting our natural resources at the highest environmental and ethical standards. Our skilled trades, machinists and factory workers are so good at what they do that we can produce far more than we need for ourselves.

Having an extremely long and undefended border, the longest undefended border in the world, being neighbours with a like-minded democracy that was built on the rule of law, human rights and, most importantly, free market capitalism where the voluntary exchange of goods and services, not just between individuals but between our countries, has dramatically increased the quality of life both here and in the United States to such a degree that people from around the world of all different faiths, races, ethnicities and cultures have come to Canada. They do not come to Canada for the weather. They come to Canada because of the opportunity and the basis of our society that we have built.

The reason why people are so anxious right now is because they have seen the track record of the Prime Minister in dealing with President-elect Trump. The first time the Prime Minister had to go toe to toe, head to head with President-elect Trump, he was forced to capitulate and accept concession after concession after concession; forced to accept concessions on agricultural products; forced to accept a deal that did not protect Canadian steelworkers from tariffs from the United States; forced to accept a deal that was silent, that did not offer any protection to forestry workers with a softwood lumber deal as part of it; and forced to accept the humiliating concession that the Prime Minister was unable to get an exemption from the buy American provisions.

After such a terrible track record the first time Canada faced tariffs from the U.S. administration, there is good reason to be worried right now. That is just on trade. One of the things that a country can do to protect itself in a potential trade conflict is to make our own economy strong. When investors and business owners are fighting with each other to get into Canadian markets, it is less likely that their home country would want to get in the way of that trade. What the Prime Minister has done is to put Canada in such an incredibly weak position. Our economy was weak yesterday before these potential tariffs were even announced, and now the Prime Minister is heading into a negotiation period in a position of extreme vulnerability.

Let us just take a look at some of the facts.

In Canada, the GDP per capita is now smaller than it was before the Prime Minister took office. That means the only thing that is even remotely keeping our GDP numbers in a positive trend is the fact that our population is growing, but each individual Canadian is poorer today and produces less value today because of the Prime Minister's terrible economic vandalism. Just look at some of the things that he has done. He has imposed a devastating carbon tax on the Canadian economy. The United States does not have a carbon tax. As he quadruples that carbon tax, the difference between our economy and the U.S. economy will be even larger. Why would an investor say they would like to build something in Windsor and pay 61¢ a litre when they can build that factory in Detroit and pay zero cents a litre for a carbon tax?

• (2130)

That is why it is so puzzling that the NDP member for Windsor West, who pretends to be worried about this issue, consistently supports the Liberal plan to hike, to quadruple, the carbon tax. How many more businesses and jobs, how much more money, will flow south of the border as that carbon tax gets higher?

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Food prices have grown 37% faster in Canada than in the United States. That is because the Prime Minister devalued the Canadian dollar by forcing the Bank of Canada to print hundreds of billions of dollars to cover his deficits and wasteful spending. What happens when we print money out of thin air? We have more dollars chasing fewer goods and prices go up. Inflation has hit food prices here in Canada far worse than in the United States.

Our national debt has grown by over 100% in a decade. That means the government has to go out into markets to borrow money. That is an important fact as well, because when the government borrows money it competes with the private sector. When business owners, factory owners and entrepreneurs go out and borrow some money to start up a business, scale up a business, expand to a second location or add another product line, they have to go out and compete with the government to borrow that money. When the government gobbles up a lot of the available funds, it drives up the borrowing costs for everybody else, including individuals.

It is not just large business owners who have to pay higher borrowing costs when the government goes out and scoops up all the available cash for itself. Our mortgage payment is going to be higher because of all that government borrowing. If somebody has a dollar to lend, to lend it to an individual is a greater risk than to lend it to a government entity, which is viewed as having a much more secure backing, so they have to pay a premium to borrow that dollar too. The government's deficits directly have an impact on Canadian borrowers, which include business owners and individuals with mortgages.

Where I am going with all of this is that by weakening the Canadian economy, there are fewer people around the globe fighting to get into Canada. We only need to develop this thought exercise: Would Canada ever slap these kinds of tariffs unilaterally on the United States? Of course not, because it would risk our markets to sell our products into. Canada has a weaker economy, our people are poorer, and there are fewer opportunities here and fewer investments that can turn a profit, add to growth and create jobs, which means there are fewer people in the United States fighting to protect access to our markets. The Prime Minister's devastating and humiliating failure the first time he had to face President Trump is a big reason people are concerned today.

A couple of issues aside from economics have been the subject of debate. What I have heard many Canadians asking in the last 24 hours is this: Why did it take the president-elect of the United States to call out the government's inaction on dealing with the fentanyl and opioid crisis? The Prime Minister should want to get fentanyl off our streets for Canadians, out of concern for the grieving mothers, fathers, husbands and wives who have lost people to this horrible addiction.

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We have presented comprehensive plans to help stem the tide of illegal drugs coming into Canada, with more inspections and better tools for law enforcement. The government not only ignores it but doubles down on its failed approach to make bail easier for those criminals. It even went so far as to use the tax dollars of Canadians to fund government-paid-for opioids, which the police say now show up in our communities all the time, all across the country.

At the border, we have had, in the last few months, under the Prime Minister, terrorists associated with al Qaeda and ISIS coming into Canada. It should not take a president of the United States to call attention to that. A Canadian prime minister should want to solve that problem on their own.

All that is to say it is quite clear that what this episode in the last few days has shown us is that we need a Prime Minister with the brains and the backbone to put Canada first. As the Leader of the Opposition said earlier this evening, Canada first, Canada always and Canada forever.

• (2135)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member was here when his leader spoke on this issue, and he talked about military spending. He was very critical of the government today for not hitting the 2% mark. Yet, the member who just spoke was a part of the Harper government. The leader of the Conservative Party was in the Harper government cabinet.

The lowest we have had in the last decade was, in fact, when the leader of the Conservative Party was in cabinet, in terms of percentage of the GDP. It actually fell below 1%. That amplifies one of the reasons we just cannot believe what the leader of the Conservative Party is telling Canadians. Listen to what he said in the House and contrast that to what he actually did. How can one believe him?

• (2140)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Madam Speaker, let us look at what we did. We got heavy lift aircraft delivered. We started the process on F-35s, something the Prime Minister then cancelled. He had to admit he had made a terrible mistake and restart the process. We just lost hundreds of millions of dollars and many years.

Nobody was questioning Canada's commitment to our allies and to NATO under the previous Conservative government. That all started when the Prime Minister started demeaning our military, cancelling procurement projects and basically telling the world that Canada was not going to do its fair share.

Conservatives have gotten big projects, big procurement items done. We had higher levels of recruitment and regular force service levels, something that has fallen under the Liberal government, as the Prime Minister tells our military their job is to fight for woke and divisive ideals instead of our proud history and our proud traditions.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

The Conservative solution to the foreign trade problem seems to be “Canada first”, in imitation of the “America first” slogan. They

say we do not need the president-elect of the United States to tell us what to do about drugs. That suggests to me that Canada will have to do what the president-elect of the United States tells us to do. That suggests to me that we will have to sell our oil to the United States.

Is the Conservative Party's solution to the foreign trade problem to ape American policy and bow down to the United States? I really get the sense that that is what the Conservatives are suggesting.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, that is not the case at all. It is normal for a government to put its own country's interests first. Canadian taxpayers pay for all the programs and all the ministers' salaries. Clearly, any country's government is going to put the interests of its citizens before anything else.

I think my colleague misunderstood what I said about the drugs and borders issue. I was not saying that we have to solve the problem because the American president-elect had pointed it out. I said that the Prime Minister himself should have an interest in fixing the problem relating to drugs and borders. That is the point I was making.

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Mr. Trump is apparently justifying this ridiculous assertion that Canada deserves 25% tariffs by talking about the border and also talking about Canada not hitting its defence targets. Last I checked, Canada determines, here in this chamber, and in this country, what our military spending is. It is not dictated by a foreign government.

I have a twofold question. The other thing I will mention first is that it is up to the Americans to control their border. If something is coming from Canada into the United States, that is a failure of the Americans to protect their border, not Canada.

My question for my hon. colleague is this: If we were to increase our military spending to 2% or even 3%, as certain Canadian business groups are calling for, how would he pay for it? How many billions of dollars would that mean to the Canadian budget? How would we pay for it? Does he not agree with me that it is up to the American government to protect its own borders? That is not our responsibility.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Madam Speaker, first and foremost let me say that the Conservative Party has been unequivocal that these tariffs are unjustified.



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My point on the border, on military spending and on the fentanyl crisis is that, regardless of what is going on with the United States, regardless of what President-elect Trump might be threatening Canada with, a Canadian prime minister should care about the lives of people lost to addiction, should care about the fact that we have people coming into our country without proper background checks and security vettings, and should care about the Canadian people wanting to see a plan to deal with 400 temporary residents in Canada whose visas are set to expire in the next year.

Regardless of what American politicians might want us to do, the Canadian people expect their government to put their interests and their safety first, and to protect their jobs. They expect their livelihoods and their security to be put ahead of all else.

● (2145)

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my good friend, the member for Vancouver Granville.

There should be no doubt that the Government of Canada places the highest priority on strengthening our trading relations with the United States. For a place like Surrey Centre, this is in no way undiminished, as we are a border city and a port city. Trade is of vital importance. These are indeed unique relations that are tremendously and mutually beneficial to both our nations. Our partnership is not just forged by our shared geography. It is also shared by our similar values, common interests and strong personal connections, which include family connections.

Perhaps most relevant to the subject of our debate today is that our relations are based on deep and powerful economic ties. Millions of jobs depend upon trade and investment between Canada and the United States. We are each other's largest trading partners, with nearly 3.6 billion dollars' worth of goods and services crossing the border each day in 2023.

Our government has worked tirelessly to strengthen and secure the relationship by supporting and helping to ensure the safe flow of goods and people across the border. That is vital to both our countries' economic competitiveness and prosperity, which were key parts of our efforts in securing the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, CUSMA, which went into force in July 2020. This agreement is the anchor for our strong, balanced trading relationship with the United States and the foundation for this relationship is built on the resilience and effective supply chains that carry across all key sectors of the economy. As a result, today, we are each other's largest trade partners with, as I said, nearly 3.6 billion dollars' worth of goods and services crossing the borders each day.

Canada is particularly significant as a secure supplier of energy to the United States' domestic market. Last year, for example, 60% of U.S. crude oil imports originated from Canada. Canada and the U.S. also have a significant investment relationship. The U.S. is the single greatest investor into Canada. These trade and investment relationships support millions of jobs here in Canada. They also support millions of jobs in America. That is because today Canada buys more from the United States than China, Japan and Germany combined. Maintaining and expanding this flow of goods, of in-

vestment and of people across the border is absolutely vital for both our countries' economic prosperity.

By the same token, undermining the effectiveness of this relationship by imposing tariffs on Canadian exports to the United States would take us in the opposite direction. There should be no doubt that imposing a 25% tariff on all Canadian products would be harmful to U.S. consumers, U.S. workers and the U.S. economy as a whole. In fact, roughly 70% of Canadian goods exported to the United States are used in the production of other goods or, as they say, advanced manufacturing by U.S. manufacturers. This means that imports from Canada are effectively feeding the U.S. economy and U.S. industry with vital inputs, making it stronger and more competitive. It also means that putting a 25% tariff on these Canadian imports would impose a massive increase in the input costs on U.S. manufacturers.

The harm to American manufacturers would not stop there. That is because American tariffs on Canadian goods would open the door to retaliatory tariffs, and that is something we do not want to do. I have been across several states in the United States over the last nine years as a part of my parliamentary duties, especially during the renegotiations of CUSMA, working with the National Governors Association and the Western Governors' Association. I can assure members that 36 U.S. states currently still rely on Canada as their number one export market and over 40 states export more than 1 billion dollars' worth of goods per year into Canada.

Raising the costs of those goods would not just be bad for Canadian consumers. It would be really bad for American manufacturers and their consumers who depend on those sales. Our government does not want to go down that road. We know that efficient trade is the way to secure strong economies on both sides of the border. We know that because, since 1989, the North American free trade agreements have generated economic growth and rising standards of living for the people of all three member countries.

● (2150)

The entry into force of NAFTA in 1994 created the largest free trade region in the world, and by strengthening the rules and procedures governing trade investment in North America, the agreement has proven to be a solid foundation for building Canada's prosperity and has set a valuable example of the benefits of trade liberalization for the rest of the world. What did it mean for Canada? It meant that our total merchandise exports to the United States in 2018 reached \$438 billion, representing a fourfold increase from the \$101 billion in 1989 before this agreement. Such a dramatic expansion of Canadian exports to a single country is unprecedented, and NAFTA's most recent successor has made us even stronger.

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We can see, in clear and unequivocal terms, how free and fair trade between Canada and the United States benefits both countries. We are communicating these points and signalling to the incoming administration our readiness to work together to advance our shared economic prosperity and security. In doing so, we will remain open to the perspectives of our American partners. In fact, we share many of those perspectives. We share U.S. concerns regarding unfair competition and global market distortions, including overcapacity caused by non-market policies and practices that harm our workers and businesses.

We can assure our American partners that Canada will not be a transshipment risk or a vector for trade practices that would harm our collective economic security. To take just one example, Canada imposed a 100% surtax in October on electric vehicles and a 25% surtax on steel and aluminum products from China. Canada is considering additional surtaxes on imports of batteries and battery parts, semiconductors, solar products and critical minerals from China.

We will always defend Canada's interests and do what is best for Canadians and the Canadian economy. We will always do so with the understanding that Canada and the U.S. have a unique relationship and partnership. This partnership works best, creating jobs, economic growth and shared prosperity on both sides of the border, when we work together in common purpose and understanding.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is important that we all stand together and make sure that we push back against the Trump tariffs.

The member comes from British Columbia, as I do. I believe he will recall the biggest failure in trade history in Canada, the infamous Harper softwood lumber sellout that took place 20 years ago. This was after a series of victories we had in trade tribunals and courts. We were just at the victory line, and then the Conservatives basically snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. As a result, we were forced to pay \$1 billion, which legitimately would have come back to the softwood lumber industry in Canada. We also lost 100,000 jobs and 200 mills closed as a result of Harper's folly and the unbelievable and irresponsible approach to trade by the Conservatives.

I will ask my colleague if he thinks we can gain some lessons from the appalling sellout of our natural resources, our softwood communities and our workers.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Madam Speaker, I recall that very vividly. It was no small failure. Capitulating after winning victory after victory in the softwood lumber industry has set a very bad precedent since then. I commend our trade ministers for holding their feet to the Americans, winning case after case and not capitulating.

What the member said is no different from what Prime Minister Harper said when we were renegotiating NAFTA. He said we should take any trade deal the Americans give. The Conservative leader of the opposition at the time, Erin O'Toole, said not to put in countervailing tariffs. He was scared to put in any tariffs. However, it was due to those tariffs and strong negotiations that we were able to make an even stronger free trade deal with the United States.

• (2155)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the debate for two or three hours now. The parties are firing shots at one another, such as “we would do better” or “we are the best”. We are hearing about the grievances of Ontario and Alberta.

The fact is, the U.S. president-elect posted a message on his social media platform. As a result, we are having this emergency debate. Americans watching from Washington are going to say that the Canadians are losing their minds and are afraid. Personally, I think the Americans have far more to lose by not trading with us than the other way around.

I would like to ask my esteemed colleague, without disparaging the debate we are having this evening, whether we should calm down a bit, negotiate responsibly and not overreact to the president-elect's bullying.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Madam Speaker, that is the approach the government has been taking. The Prime Minister is meeting with all the premiers of the country to find a proper strategy. My speech did not actually target anybody from the opposition in that regard. I answered a question just before from my colleague as to the approach that the Conservative Party took versus the Liberal government of this tenure.

We need an all-Canada approach. Canada should not freak out; the member is absolutely right. I think the U.S. has more to lose. However, this emergency debate demonstrates that we need a team Canada approach. We need to talk to all the provinces, all the territories and all members of Parliament.

There were some great opposition members at that time who helped. I recall Rona Ambrose helped with the team Canada approach, even though she was from the Conservative Party. She was tasked with it. Brian Mulroney, another great leader of the Conservative Party, jumped in. They acted not in a manner that was detrimental to Canada but in a manner that was supportive. I think those days of Conservative leadership are long gone. The new leadership is more about themselves, as we have seen with other matters.

I thank the member and their party for continuing to show the support for Canada to be strong in this. The Americans would have to capitulate to their own tariffs at the end of the day.

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-249, an act respecting national action for the prevention of intimate partner violence.

\* \* \*

### U.S. TARIFFS ON CANADIAN PRODUCTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today, as it always is, as we speak in this important debate about the prospect of the tariffs proposed by President-elect Trump. This is an important moment for our country, and it is an important moment for us to reflect on so we respond in a way that is beneficial not just to Canadians but to our shared North American prosperity.

Canada and the United States have a strong and unbreakable relationship that dates back centuries, and when it comes down to this conversation, it is important to start with the facts. We know in Canada that our biggest market is the United States, and the economic prosperity and future of both governments are predicated on the idea that we must work together, because our economies are intrinsically linked and entirely intertwined.

Canada has much to be proud of. We are a world leader from batteries to clean energy and from AI to agriculture. We are a place where investors from around the world want to place bets. They want to be here and be part of the growth happening in Canada. Indeed, Canada is set to be the fastest-growing economy in the G7 in 2025.

There are also concerns we all share about making sure we have a safe and secure border and that our communities are safe and secure. We are all working hard to do that, and we are working with the Americans, as we have always done, to ensure that our border is safe. For our government, standing up to meet domestic and international challenges is not just about partisan politics; it is about working together and having a united approach as Canadians. It worked for us in 2016 and it will work in 2025.

After all, our shared prosperity is built on a set of facts and the facts are clear. In 2023, bilateral trade between our two countries was worth \$1.3 trillion, which is about \$3.4 billion in trade every single day. For 36 U.S. states, Canada is the number one market. The U.S. is our top merchandising trading partner, with over half a trillion dollars of Canada's merchandise being sent in 2025. The U.S. is the single greatest investor in Canada. In 2022, stock investment was worth over half a trillion dollars, representing half of all investment in Canada.

This is a generational relationship, not one crafted overnight. It was built over successive governments of all political parties, because we have taken an approach that working together is the right way to share and build prosperity.

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As we think about those facts, it is important to remember a couple of things. From the opposition we see bluster, paranoia and, as the Prime Minister said earlier, people “freaking out”. That is not what Canadians need. They need to see strong, calm and resolute leadership predicated on the idea that when we craft a good deal, we do not need a winner and loser. If we build together correctly with our American friends, we will build shared prosperity in a win-win situation.

That is the approach our government has always taken. It is the approach we take to everything we do. A rising tide lifts all boats, and that is the approach we intend to take in working with the incoming U.S. administration. It means having meaningful conversations, as the Prime Minister has already done with President-elect Trump. It does not mean gaslighting Canadians and making idle threats, and it certainly does not mean raising panic. It means working hard on the challenges we face and share and building on our common interests. That is how we get over the finish line on these matters, just as we have done in the past.

Whether regarding security, technology or natural resources, our economies are inextricably linked. These tariffs hurt us all. They do not only penalize Canada; they penalize U.S. consumers by making goods more expensive for Americans. Whether it is food, auto parts or energy, all of these things will have an impact on Americans, just as they would on Canadian businesses.

When we look at how to come through this period of opportunity and challenge, it is important for us to remember that the best approach we can have is not to tear Canada down or to approach this from a position of weakness, because we are not in a position of weakness. We are partners with our American friends, as we have been and will be for generations. If we take that approach and take pride in what Canada is, in who we are and in our resources and intellectual capacities, we have the ability to do anything.

● (2200)

Putting Canada first is always going to be our government's priority, but putting Canada first does not mean it has to be at the detriment of our friends and neighbours. In fact, putting Canada first means success not just for Canadians but for our American friends as well. A strong Canadian economy is good for the United States just as a strong U.S. economy is good for Canada, if we do the work together to ensure that our shared priorities are considered and that the concerns each of our countries has are reflected in the decisions we make, and if we are prepared to have difficult conversations with one another. That is what we have always done. Empty slogans get us nowhere. Being negative gets us nowhere. What gets us somewhere is rolling up our sleeves and doing the hard work that is required to get to good deals.

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I spent years living in the United States; I studied there. Some of my best friends are Americans, and I have had the privilege to understand, by working in the United States and in Canada, that we have so much in common. We all want to do well for our communities and our families. We want to build national prosperity, but we also want to look out for our friends and neighbours. We want to make sure the people we care about are taken care of, which is an important principle as we enter into conversations and build a team Canada approach.

This is a time for us to put aside differences and to focus on what is important. What is important is to make sure Canadian interests are protected; to understand our shared interests; to understand the areas of opportunity for both countries; and to build, with resolution, into those areas of strength and opportunity. In so doing, we will strengthen our economy, the U.S. economy and, as we look at North America, the Mexican economy. We will build a strong economic ecosystem that allows for small and large businesses to prosper and allows for Canadians, Americans and Mexicans to prosper. Most important, we will continue to share those things we have in common while also celebrating the things that make Canada unique.

That is why we have already started the work, working with our premiers from coast to coast to coast and engaging with the incoming administration in the United States. Our job is to work for Canadians. Our job is to make sure Canadians see a government that is capable of handling difficult situations with measured, thoughtful responses, by showing that in conversations and being willing to listen to points of view that are different from ours, but never backing down on things that matter most to Canadians and to our prosperity.

The point I would emphasize is that our history is clear. Our history has been one of getting good deals done in the interests of Canada. The Conservatives' record on this is suspect at best; they would capitulate at every turn. Our track record is one of making sure Canadians are protected, but done in a way that the partners with whom we do these deals also feel they are benefiting, which is how good deals get done. Good deals are done when people respect one another, talk about the things that need to get done and do them together. It is an important lesson for all of us in the House as we engage in this debate. Perhaps the most important lesson we should all take away from tonight's conversation is the deep care that all of us are showing in ensuring Canada's interests are protected.

What I think is different is that many of us, certainly all of us on this side of the House, believe that putting Canada's interests first means being able to work with others, to have difficult conversations, to negotiate, to be strong in our values and to put those values at the centre of every conversation we have. Economic prosperity is built on the idea, ultimately, that we take the best of who we are, we support that, we grow and we prosper on the backs, on the intellect and on the hearts and minds of every Canadian from coast to coast to coast. Our businesses, big and small, have a role to play in this conversation, as do American businesses.

It is my hope and aspiration, and I certainly think it is everyone's on this side of the House, that by taking a team Canada approach, by showing a unified front and a willingness to negotiate and work hard without compromising what is important to Canada, we will

create a win-win-win situation for all of our partners in North America.

• (2205)

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, tonight we have heard a lot about a united Canada. We have heard a lot about Canada first. The leader of the Conservative Party, when he speaks of a weak Prime Minister and a weak Liberal Party, happens to represent the national Conservatives here in Canada. No one in our country is buying that this guy, the leader of the Conservative Party, is in any way, shape or form opposed to his big brother, his best friend, Donald Trump. That has been clear. Canadians know this. He gets his talking points directly from the guy.

Does the member believe in any of the words coming from the leader of the Conservative Party in relation to any of the real facts on this issue, or in his opposition to Trump?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, I do not believe much of what the Leader of the Opposition says. When it comes to protecting Canadian interests, he is an individual who refuses to get a security clearance to ensure that he has the information to protect his own party, let alone his own country. He is a man who speaks of freedom but refuses to let the members of his caucus speak freely, vote their conscience or represent the interests of their constituents.

What troubles me most is the fact that when there is an opportunity to talk Canada up, when there is an opportunity to focus on the strength this country has economically, the Conservative leader chooses to talk Canada down at every single turn, to make up facts and to present whatever he has seen on the Internet as somehow being relevant. All that does is break and shake the confidence of Canadians.

However, Canadians know better. They know that facts matter and they know that this is the best country in the world. We have work to do, but they will see the numbers for 2025 and know that this will be the fastest-growing economy in the G7.

• (2210)

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague is a fellow British Columbian, and I know he understands the very desperate state of British Columbia's forest industry. The region I represent has lost numerous sawmills over the past several years. Across British Columbia there have been many more. The current softwood lumber dispute with the United States is a worrisome contributing factor to the downfall of the forest industry.

When the softwood lumber agreement and the softwood lumber dispute are raised in the House, often we hear platitudes and rhetoric along the lines of taking the issue very seriously and working in a concerted manner. We rarely hear unique and new strategies for actually addressing and resolving the dispute with the Americans.

What ideas does the Liberal government have for resolving the dispute? We hear that it is a priority for it, yet we do not see very much progress in terms of resolving it. What ideas and strategies can be brought to the fore?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, I share my colleague's concern for the forestry sector in British Columbia that tragically took its biggest hits as a result of decisions made by the Harper government, of which the current leader of the Conservatives was a member.

We all know that the incoming president of the United States is a deal maker. This is an opportunity for us. It is a chance for us to sit down with someone who likes getting a good deal done, and to sit down at the table and say that these are the concerns that have been lingering for quite some time.

It is in the President-elect's interest to get the deal over the finish line, because it will make homebuilding and construction better and cheaper in his country, and it will continue to support businesses in my home province. This is an opportunity to sit down with someone who, at their core, loves the art of the deal.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, New Democrats have been consistent in our approach to strengthening our industries here in Canada and strengthening good-paying union jobs. How we do that is by making certain that there is predictability for the export of goods, the creation of those goods from raw material and value-added production for those goods here at home.

Why has it taken so long, even today, for the government, for the Liberals in particular, to reject the strategy? Why not participate in a policy like the one the New Democrats are calling for, which is to increase our ability to create value-added products we can make here at home?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, any strong economic strategy has to encompass all elements. It is not "and/or". It is not "this or that". It can be both. We do need to talk about how we continue to build industry and to take elements from natural to production in this country, just as we do need to do for other parts of the supply chain. That is the beauty of having an integrated North American economy; it allows us to be able to play in any and all portions of those sectors in the economy.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Let us go back 10 years ago, to 2014. On April 30, 2014, The New York Times published an article entitled "Life in Canada, Home of the World's Most Affluent Middle Class." The article stated that "median income in Canada appears to have surpassed median income in the United States, based on more than three decades of international income surveys analyzed". That was in April 2014.

We can then fast-forward almost a decade, to 2022, when the current government had been in power for six years. On April 8 of that year, in 2022, the Minister of Finance delivered her budget, budget 2022, and in that budget, the government published a chart on page 25 entitled "Average Potential Annual Growth in Real GDP per capita, Selected OECD Countries, 2020-2060". In this chart, Canada is dead last.

I do not know who put that chart in the government's budget. I suspect it was not the minister's exempt staffers, and I suspect it was not the minister herself. I suspect it was Finance Canada officials, who put it in the budget to demonstrate how much trouble

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Canada's economy was in after six years of the government's fiscal and economic management.

That chart, where Canada was dead last in projected per capita GDP growth in selected OECD economies from 2020 to 2060, was an indictment at that time of the government's economic policies. Despite that chart being in the budget, and despite a number of people commenting on that chart, the government failed to heed the principles of good budgeting and fiscal management.

It failed to heed the principles outlined by former Liberal finance minister Paul Martin in his budget speech of 1996. I am going to quote from that budget speech because I think it is instructive for the House, and the government should heed the lessons. It reads:

Here are our principles. First, governments created the deficit burden and so governments must resolve it first by focusing in their own backyards by getting spending down, not by getting taxes up.

Second, our fiscal strategy will be worth nothing if at the end of the day we have not provided hope for jobs [and growth]. We must focus on getting growth up at the same time as we strive to get spending down.

Third, we must be frugal in everything we do. Waste in government is simply not tolerable.

Fourth, we must forever put aside the old notion that new government programs require additional spending. They do not. What they do require is the will to shut-down what does not work and focus on what can. That is why a central thrust of our effort is reallocation. Whether on the spending side or on the revenue side, every initiative in this budget reflects a shift from lower to higher priority areas.

Finally, we must always be fair and compassionate. It is the most vulnerable whose voices are often the least strong. We must never let the need to be frugal become an excuse to stop being fair.

That was finance minister Paul Martin in the 1996 budget speech he delivered in the House, outlining the principles for responsible budgeting that the current government has utterly failed to heed. Because the government failed to heed the warning on page 25 of budget 2022's document and the warnings of former finance minister Paul Martin, the economy continued to falter.

● (2215)

A year later, on April 17, 2023, Jonathan Deslauriers and Robert Gagné at the Centre for Productivity and Prosperity at the Walter J. Somers Foundation did an analysis of Canada's living standards. Here is what they concluded:

In 1981, Canadians enjoyed a \$3,000 higher per capita standard of living than the major Western economies (adjusted for inflation and currency fluctuations). Forty years later, Canada was \$5,000 below that same average. If the trajectory continues, the gap will be nearly \$18,000 by 2060. Canada's Department of Finance has also reported these alarming projections.

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According to their analysis, on the current track the government has put Canada on, we will go from having the sixth-highest living standard in the leading OECD 19 economies in 1981 to dropping to 15th place. All the while, our closest trading partner and ally, the United States, ranks at third place, with the third-highest standard of living in the group.

Subsequent to that analysis in Policy Options, many, many other experts rang the alarm bell about Canada's faltering economy, people like the former governor of the Bank of Canada David Dodge, the former Liberal finance minister John Manley and former policy and budget director to former finance minister Bill Morneau, Robert Asselin. However, despite all the warnings coming from experts across the country in academia and in political and policy circles, the government failed to heed the warnings.

This year, the senior deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, Carolyn Rogers, added to these warnings. With respect to Canada's economy, on March 26 she noted that productivity improved in the U.S. economy coming out of the pandemic, but that this had not happened in Canada. It was quite the opposite. She noted that Canada's productivity is unchanged from where it was seven years ago. In fact, she issued this very stark warning: "You know those signs that say 'In an emergency, break the glass'? Well, it's time to break the glass."

This is very strong language coming from a central banker. Canada's central bank is saying publicly that we are in an economic emergency. It is using the word "emergency". It is saying that Canada is falling behind other countries because of weak business investment, a lack of competition and a failure to integrate new immigrants into the workforce, all of which are responsibilities of the government.

A couple of months later, on May 6, 2024, the Financial Times of London did an analysis titled "A warning from the breakdown nations". Here is what its analysis concluded:

Take Canada first. Widely admired for how it weathered the global financial crisis of 2008, it missed the boat when the world moved on, driven by big tech instead of commodities. Canada's per capita GDP has been shrinking 0.4 per cent a year since 2020—the worst rate for any developed economy in the top 50. New investment and job growth is being driven mainly by the government.

Private-sector action is confined largely to the property market, which does little for productivity and prosperity. Many young people can't afford to buy in one of the world's most expensive housing markets. Pressed to name a digital success, Canadians cite Shopify—but the online store is the only tech name among the country's 10 largest companies, and its shares are trading at half their 2021 peak.

That is the end of its analysis.

On September 30, The Economist published an analysis titled "Why is Canada's economy falling behind America's? The country was slightly richer than Montana in 2019. Now it is just poorer than Alabama." A couple of weeks later, The Economist also published a very harsh, I would say, but accurate assessment of the Prime Minister.

• (2220)

I will just finish by saying this: The government has put Canada in a very poor position, and it is unable to meet the challenges of the new administration south of the border.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I find it amazing that we have Conservatives who truly want to believe that they are in a better position to negotiate a trade agreement; in fact, they were the first to capitulate in the last go-round with President-elect Trump.

As much as the member opposite tries to give the false impression that Canada is broken, when it comes to foreign investment, where people are placing their money, Canada was number one in the G7 and number three in the world on a per capita basis.

The Liberal government has generated over double the number of jobs that Stephen Harper did in the same time span. That was attributed, in good part, to the record number of free trade agreements that the government has signed off on, far outnumbering the trade agreements with the Conservatives.

Why should Canadians believe that the Conservatives have a chance at negotiating a fair deal for Canadians when they have demonstrated capitulation?

• (2225)

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, the member is utterly wrong.

Here is an analysis from National Bank Financial by Matthieu Arseneau and Alexandra Ducharme, from several weeks ago. They say, "Consequently, GDP per capita has fallen by around 4.0% cumulatively since 2022, which is unprecedented outside a recession."

Speaking of investments, I will quote the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, who was in front of finance committee about a month ago. On investment in the Canadian economy, he said, "Foreign capital, even some Canadian capital, is going to the United States, because they can get faster regulatory approvals."

The fact of the matter is that the government has driven investment out of this country. As a result, it has driven down productivity, driven down per capita GDP, and made Canadians a lot poorer and this country a lot more vulnerable to an incoming new administration.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's intervention, which was very focused on the productivity problems in the Canadian economy. This is a topic that obviously concerns everyone.

What industrial policies does he think Canada should implement to correct this productivity problem?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and I note that he represents the former riding of the Right Hon. Paul Martin.

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I would like to respond by saying that it is clear that we need to attract domestic and international investment in the Canadian economy. We have to start by lowering taxes on investments. The government is doing exactly the opposite by taxing capital gains, which reduces Canadians' investment in our economy and foreign investment in Canada.

[English]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the United States under President-elect Trump is likely to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, as it did in his first term. This is something that will have severe implications for trade.

My question for the member is this: Does he feel Canada should maintain its commitment to the Paris Agreement, particularly in light of the fact that other markets, such as the European Union, are increasingly considering climate commitments as part of their trade relations.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, it is really important for Canada to ensure that our approach to climate change is integrated with that of the United States. Our economies are integrated, from autos to food manufacturing and from energy to services. We cannot have a regulatory environment here that is substantially different from that of the United States.

It is really important that we ensure that there is a redoubling of our efforts on regulatory synchronization between the two countries. It is an initiative that was started under former prime minister Stephen Harper that was largely abandoned by the current government. I note that the minister has recently resurrected the initiative, but it seems to me to have been too late in doing that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to a truly vital issue this evening. Over the past nine years, a number of yellow flags have been raised by our NATO partners, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the defence industry. Now, our number-one defence partner, the United States of America, has raised a huge red flag.

The U.S. government has had enough of potential threats to its citizens' safety originating in Canada. It has had enough of Canada always trying to avoid paying its fair share in terms of military obligations. It obviously thinks it is a shame it does not have a serious partner to work with.

Canada is in this crisis situation because of the Prime Minister's foolishness. Members on this side of the House have brought these issues to the Prime Minister's attention many times. Maybe this time, he will do something. There are so many things I could bring up this evening to demonstrate just how incompetent this Prime Minister and his ministers have been. I will focus on the disaster this government caused at National Defence.

Where do we start? For nine years, we have been criticizing the Liberals for making big promises on this file, on defence, and then failing to keep their promises every time. They keep deferring spending and deferring funds for goods and equipment to future years.

Significantly, the Liberals have also changed the rules of the game when it comes to defence spending. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, reported defence spending increased by approximately \$7 billion in 2017 over the previous fiscal year, but only because of NATO's more flexible guidance on what constitutes defence spending. As a result, Canada's numbers on spending came to include measures not previously considered defence spending. Veterans' benefits and expenditures on the Canadian Coast Guard, peacekeeping and DND IT support are now part of Canada's NATO calculation.

In other words, the Liberals created \$7 billion in new spending out of thin air. As a result, any comparison between the current government's spending and that of the Harper government is like comparing apples to oranges. Canada is now the only NATO country that is not meeting its two investment pledges: to invest at least 2% of its GDP in defence and to invest at least 20% of its defence budget in new equipment and R and D.

The Liberals cut the Canadian Armed Forces' budget by nearly \$1 billion, despite their promise not to do so, and yet the 2023 budget specifically promised to exempt the Canadian Armed Forces from the government's spending review. Let us remember that, in budget 2023, the current President of the Treasury Board, the former defence minister, asked all departments to start being more careful and making budget cuts, but there was an exemption for the Canadian Armed Forces. Despite all this, \$1 billion was cut from the Department of National Defence's budget.

Last year, the former chief of the defence staff, Wayne Eyre, said it was impossible to cut almost \$1 billion from the defence budget without that having an impact. He went on to say that it was an issue the department was facing, and that he had had a very difficult session with the commanding officers of the different branches as they tried to explain this to their people. Those people knew the security situation was deteriorating around the world, so trying to explain it to them was very difficult.

According to the Public Accounts of Canada, the Liberals have left billions of dollars in defence funding unspent since 2015—

● (2230)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Jonquière on a point of order.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, I am really fond of my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles. I really like him.

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We are supposed to be talking about tariffs, but he is talking about national defence. Perhaps because of my limitations, I am trying to understand the connection between the two. I am sure my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles will be able to tell me the connection between national defence and tariffs. I am sure he can tell me, because I am not following for the moment.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** As we know, members are given a lot of latitude during their speeches. However, the points raised during a debate must be related to the subject at hand. I am certain that the hon. member will be sure to make the connection with the motion before the House.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Jonquière must be following what is going on right now and why the new U.S. president-elect is threatening to impose 25% tariffs. These are the consequences related to border management and drug trafficking. Canada's national defence, which is a bit player as far as the Americans are concerned, only adds to the friction. That is why we are taking stock of Canada's military situation in relation to our partnership with the Americans. It is part of our overall national security. That is why Canada is currently being criticized.

According to the Public Accounts, the Liberals have let billions of dollars in defence spending fall by the wayside since 2015. This essentially means that through their mismanagement, they have failed to spend the billions of dollars that were allocated for national defence. Only 58% of the Canadian Armed Forces would be able to respond to a crisis if called upon by NATO allies today. Nearly half of all military equipment is considered unavailable and unusable. This is one reason why the American president is fed up. It seems pretty clear to me.

The Liberals ended up choosing the F-35s to replace the aging CF-18s, but that happened only after several years of mismanagement and political interference in the procurement process. That is something else the Americans are sick of. Richard Shimooka of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute described this situation as disastrous in a 2019 report.

For our part, when we were in power, we took our military obligations seriously. For example, we quickly acquired five C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft, 17 CC-130J Hercules transport aircraft, 15 Chinook helicopters, some Leopard tanks. We modernized the CP-140 surveillance aircraft, as well as the Halifax class frigates, and so on. That made our American colleagues happy. We were with them in Afghanistan to fight against the Taliban.

Retired Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie said something about Canada's ailing military. Let us not forget that he was a Liberal member for four years. He did not seek reelection because he understood the problem I am talking about. He said that in the past decade, the Liberals “spent more money on consultants and professional services than it did on the Army, Navy and Air Force combined”.

Here are a few facts. We have fewer than 35 personnel deployed on UN missions, compared with almost 2,500 in 2003. We are the only NATO country whose level of military operational readiness is falling, while all the others' readiness levels are soaring. We have

the longest and least efficient supply system in NATO, of all member countries, in fact. We are the only NATO country without a concrete plan to reach 2% of GDP, a target that was agreed to by the Minister of Defence in 2008, reiterated in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and I could go on. We are the only NATO country whose defence minister has publicly admitted that he failed to convince his cabinet colleagues of the importance of NATO defence spending and the 2% GDP target.

“This is borderline atrocious”: That is a quote from Vice-Admiral Mark Norman, for those who were here in 2016 and 2017. Members will remember Admiral Norman. Vice-Admiral Norman said, “Readiness is all about measuring the ability of your armed forces to do what it is they're expected to do. And fundamentally, that's all about going somewhere and fighting. And, you know, it's a pretty dire situation when you're...not where you need to be”. What Admiral Norman was basically saying is that we need to be ready for combat. We always need to be ready for any deployment we are asked to do. That is not happening now. We are not ready.

The Liberal government has a disastrous record on national defence. Canadian forces members have not had any leadership in 10 years. As we used to say back in my day, when the situation changed, it went “order, counter-order, disorder”. For nine years, it has been “disorder, disorder, disorder”.

We want to put Canada first again. For that, there needs to be a plan.

Where is the plan?

• (2235)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member spoke in regard to the percentage of the GDP. I can tell the member that, for the last four years in which Stephen Harper was the prime minister, the highest percentage of the GDP was actually lower than our lowest amount of spending as a percentage of the GDP. In fact, the Conservatives were so bad under today's leader of the Conservative Party that they were actually less than 1%. Now, the Conservatives want to come across as if they believe in investing in the Canadian Armed Forces. That is a joke. All one needs to do is take a look at the Conservatives' last four years in government.

Does the member not recognize the hypocrisy of the leader of the Conservative Party regarding his position on that issue alone?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, if the member opposite had listened carefully to what I said earlier, he would have heard that today's numbers are different from earlier figures because NATO rules changed in 2017. NATO allowed Canada to include the Coast Guard, veterans' pensions and the Department of National Defence's IT expenses in the defence budgets. Some \$7 billion was been allocated to this spending, which suddenly, magically, ended up being factored into the GDP target.



The Liberals came in and said they were doing more than the Conservatives. I understand how. They took a bunch of expenses that were already being incurred and included them in the calculation. That helped boost the figures. What did they do in 2023? They cut a billion dollars from the budget, even though the President of the Treasury Board said that the government would not normally touch National Defence. They made cuts. Some \$7 billion was added, and it has been going down ever since. They are talking nonsense.

• (2240)

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, 60 years ago, the Canadian philosopher George Grant published *Lament for a Nation*.

We are talking about tariffs. The Conservative response seems to be to do whatever the Americans want us to do. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills said we need more integration. The member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles says we need more defence spending. The Conservative leader even said we need to develop a warrior culture. The member for Thornhill echoed the U.S. President-elect's comments, saying that we must acquiesce to U.S. demands on the issue of border management.

I am committed to Quebec independence. That is what I wish for. Is Canadian independence important to the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles and his colleagues?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I will remain respectful because my colleague is new here. He is flexing his muscles and having a bit of fun, but he has no idea how the Canadian and U.S. forces work together.

Maybe he should check his notes and look up what NORAD is. Canada and the United States work together as part of a larger, bi-national military organization. That is NORAD. Together with NATO, we are all interconnected. Canada and the United States are NATO's western flank. We are geostrategically important, and we have to work with our American partners. We cannot work independently.

I would remind him that if Quebec should delight him by separating someday, it will have to engage with the rest of Canada to help defend Quebec. He should keep that in mind.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about disorder. I could talk to him about disorder. We saw it when the Harper government capitulated on softwood lumber. We lost \$1 billion that was given to the Americans. We lost 100,000 jobs, not just in Quebec, but also in British Columbia and across Canada. We lost 200 softwood lumber plants.

It is the Conservatives' fault because of their total capitulation. We cannot trust the Conservatives to negotiate anything because they failed so miserably. What does my colleague have to say to the 100,000 workers who lost their jobs because of the Conservatives?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I do not think my colleague is ever going to know what it is like to run a government. However, his support for the Liberal government over the past nine years ensured that the country's national debt doubled.

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What will he say to Canadians who are now required to pay more for the goods and services they need because inflation has gone up, everything is more expensive and the price of housing has doubled because of the inflationary measures of this government, which is supported by my colleague and his friends?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to be here tonight to talk on a really important subject, which is the proposal that the President-elect of the United States has put out, at least publicly, the concept of a 25% tariff on Canadian products into the United States. Before I start my remarks, I would like to recognize the regrets here in the House of my hon. colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, someone who has deep relationships in the United States. I am fortunate to be able to take his time this evening, but he did want to recognize that he wished he could be here for the debate. He has a presence—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member knows not to mention who is in the chamber and who is not. I just wanted to remind him of that.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore is a great member of Parliament and a good friend to the Canada-U.S. relationship.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the fact that it there was an election tonight in Nova Scotia. Tim Houston, who was the premier going into the election, was re-elected with a majority mandate. I would like to congratulate him on his successful election. I would also like to congratulate Zach Churchill, the leader of the Liberal Party, as well as Claudia Chender and all the candidates who put their names forward in Nova Scotia. I think we, as elected members of Parliament, can certainly respect and understand the importance of people putting their names forward for democracy. I look forward to working with all the newly elected and re-elected members of the legislative assembly in Nova Scotia, in Kings—Hants and across Nova Scotia.

This is a crucial debate. Obviously, I think that any concept of tariffs on the most integrated economies in the world is problematic. The proposal would not only hurt the Canadian economy, it would hurt the American economy and consumers on both sides of the border.

We do not have a whole lot to work with as parliamentarians, as has been reported and has been put out by the president-elect on his social media channels. He has alluded to the fact that, in his first day of office, once assuming it on January 20, 2025, he would put a 25% tariff on Canadian and Mexican imports into the United States. It is worth noting that the Canada-U.S. relationship is one of the most unique in the world. We share the longest undefended border, and we have nearly 3 billion dollars' worth of products and services being traded between our two countries on any given day. That represents nearly a trillion dollars of trade. There is no country in the world that matches that reality.

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I saw the president-elect's remarks. We, I think, as Canadian parliamentarians, want to work with the incoming administration. The Republican Party and President-elect Trump were elected in the United States. At the same time, we need to be able to find a pathway to work with that new administration and understand how we can get to an outcome that is going to be satisfactory for citizens on both sides of the border because it should be in the vested interests of any parliamentarian or any member of congress to get that outcome. We serve the people. We serve our citizens here in Canada, and this is extremely important.

The debate tonight is a debate about presumably the impact of what these tariffs would represent, as well as how the Government of Canada responds, but I would argue how members of Parliament in the House should respond because the government has a responsibility, but so too do we. Every elected member of a Canadian constituency has a responsibility to represent Canada's interests and, of course, be the voice for our people here in Parliament.

I want to break my remarks down tonight into a few different categories. I want to start by talking about the economic relationship, but I also want to talk about defence and national security. I want to talk about a North American continental approach. I also want to talk about a team Canada approach and how we should go about this relationship over the next couple of months. However, I will start with the economy.

I believe that, for 32 out of the 50 states in the United States, their most important trading partner is Canada, which would be 64% of the United States. We have a deep economic relationship. In fact, in Canada, 75% of our exports, whether in goods or in services, go to the United States. We as a government, and many previous federal governments, look at diversifying trade as a good thing. Of course, we want to partner around the world, but we cannot get around the facts that we have one of the most advanced economies in the world right on our doorstep and that our relationships are integral and connected.

With talk of a 25% tariff on Canadian products, while I am not suggesting that the government should do this right away, if there was no movement on this issue between now and January 20, 2025, any reasonable government in the country would have to respond at some point to protect our national interests. That would just lead to impacts on both sides of the border about business interests and the impact on communities.

● (2245)

We have been here before. This government has managed a rocky Canada-U.S. relationship. Throughout our history, since Confederation and the Declaration of Independence, there have always been times throughout the relationship where relations can be strained, but we know that even in those times, the Canada-U.S. relationship must prevail because of the shared interests and values we have between our two countries, the protection of freedom, democracy and liberty and the promotion of western liberal democracy across the world. It will be incumbent on all members of Parliament in this place to engage with their congressional colleagues on Capitol Hill to remind them about the importance of the economic relationship, a two-way relationship that benefits Canada and the United States equally.

I want to talk a bit about the resources that Canada has that can benefit the United States. We wake up every morning thinking about the United States and their importance in a continental relationship. The United States is one of the largest countries in the world and, arguably, the most powerful country in the world. The U.S. may not think about Canada in the same way that we think about it every morning. I think of the importance of critical minerals, not only on the reduction of emissions and in the context of climate change but also in the context of defence and security. We possess the critical minerals the United States needs. The other critical mineral superpower in the world is China. We know from the relationship and the way in which both Democratic nominee for president, Kamala Harris, and President-elect Donald Trump have approached this that there is a concern around China's influence in the world.

Canada has the critical minerals that the United States needs. We have seen investments by the Department of National Defence in Canada's north in partnership with Canadian companies alongside our government to make sure we build a supply chain that will work in a North American context. A 25% tariff, at the heart, goes directly against this type of thinking and would not be helpful to the American interests across the United States.

When we talk about energy, Canada is an energy superpower. We should be deeply proud of that, whether it be our oil and gas sector, renewables or other forms of energy. Nuclear energy is also a key opportunity to partner in deeper integration with the United States. The United States needs our energy market. I had the opportunity at the Halifax International Security Forum to have a conversation with a representative from Amazon. Amazon is looking at artificial intelligence and deep data centres as a way to help drive its business, as well as innovations that are going to be needed around the world, but it needs renewable energy to do that.

Canadians listening at home tonight would be proud to know that Canada is one of the best grids in the world from an electricity perspective. Nearly 86% of our electricity that is generated is emissions-free. It leads the world. It is a tremendous opportunity and competitive advantage. As American companies look to expand their footprint in the digital space, whether it be in Quebec, British Columbia or across this country, we are well positioned to capitalize upon that, but 25% tariffs do not help in that.

In the integrated market, on any given day, whether it is a company in Kings—Hants, Nova Scotia, Etobicoke—Lakeshore or Surrey, British Columbia, we have companies that do business across borders and vice versa. There are great American companies that provide products and services that we need in this country, so we cannot look at this from an and/or perspective.

I listened to questions in question period today and heard the Conservatives using the words “Canada first”. Any member of Parliament in this place wants to place Canadian national interests at the top of what we advocate for every day, but that type of thinking plays into an isolationist type of view that I do not think is beneficial when we are talking about the Canada-U.S. relationship. We have to be talking about partnership. Every time the Conservatives stand in this place and talk about Canada first, we should be talking about North American advantage and how Canada can co-operate. That puts Canadian interests at the heart of what we are doing alongside the Americans in a global context. I want to talk about that in an economic sense, but we need to talk about defence and national security.

● (2250)

I submit that the world is probably the most dangerous it has been in the last 100 years. We have war in Eastern Europe and Ukraine, provoked by Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation. We have war in the Middle East, and I was pleased to see a cease-fire today between Israel and Hezbollah. That is important news, but again, there remains instability in that region, and we have a rise of authoritarian governments around the world.

Again, I bring members back to my experience at the Halifax International Security Forum. One of the panels this weekend in Halifax was on the CRINKs, China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, and their involvement in the world. They are not out to protect and promote democratic values. They are out to do the opposite, and Canada has an interesting role to play in the world here. We have to promote the ability for western liberal democracies to succeed in this challenge that we are facing, which is, again, the most dangerous world we have seen in 100 years.

That bears upon a responsibility for Canada and the United States to take a leadership role in the world, and the way we do that is by working together. It is not by putting up walls or tariff barriers between us. It is by looking at ways that we can further integrate our economies and ways that we can co-operate in the interests of national security.

I think it took a bit too long, but I fully support the fact that the government has committed to a 2% target on NATO. It is going to require billions of dollars between now and 2032 to scale up to that amount. The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore and I were in Washington in July as part of the NATO conference, and we had these conversations alongside congressional leaders in the House and in the Senate about the ways Canada can be a key partner in NATO.

Madam Speaker, do you know what is concerning? I heard the shadow critic for defence today stand up in the House. It was the first time I had seen in a long time that the leader of the official opposition allowed him to speak in this place, and he asked questions on defence. The Conservatives love to beat their chests on the defence question. They had defence spending under 1% when they left office in 2015, and they have not yet committed to the 2% target, so my question to my hon. colleagues on the other side of the House is when they will formally commit to the 2% and help work and push this government to do more on defence spending, because not only is it a moral imperative in the world that we are facing

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right now, but it is going to be an extremely important element in terms of that relationship with the United States.

When we talk to Republican congressional leaders, they will be engaging with the president-elect about the importance of U.S. influence in foreign policy, but they will be saying NATO countries have to step up and deliver sooner on their commitments. The government is starting on that path. The opposition should be joining us and saying they fully commit to 2%, but I do not hear a lick out of them in relation to foreign policy. They do not talk about it. They do not talk about their view in the world, and I think it is probably incumbent on them, if they think they are the government-in-waiting, to start talking about how they view the world and Canada's role in the world, particularly as it relates to defence.

I just want to take an opportunity to talk about the team Canada approach. This is extremely important. We saw the premiers write to the Prime Minister and talk about the importance of bringing the premiers of the provinces and territories together. We have to be united in a team Canada approach. I know we can have partisan debates in here. I just took a bit of a shot at the Conservatives on the opposite side, but I did so in good faith, hoping and knowing that at the end of the day, Canada's interests should come ahead of any partisan interests in this place.

We are in a critical moment, and I think it is incumbent on the government, to the extent that it can find goodwill across this House, to build consensus and to go to Washington and make sure we are advocating for Canada's interests as a united team Canada, alongside the premiers. I think that should include the provinces. We have seen Premier Ford, and we have seen Premier Wab Kinew and Premier Danielle Smith talk about their desire to get to Washington and to Capitol Hill. That is important.

Canada is a big federation. We have regional interests that may differ, or there may be particular strategic assets, depending on whether someone is in the Atlantic or if they are in British Columbia, the west, Ontario or Quebec, that may differ in terms of how they want to engage in this relationship, but we have to do it in an aligned approach. I think that is incumbent on all members of Parliament.

● (2255)

We should be thinking about our work and our ability to travel to Capitol Hill and engage constructively with our American colleagues in Congress about the ways we can work together. We need to build those relationships. It is muscle memory. We need to be able to spend time on Capitol Hill. Some of us do this very well. There may be others who have never actually taken the opportunity to go to Washington. It is important that we do that and that we invite our American colleagues to come to Ottawa, so we can reinforce the partnership that we have together.

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The last item is regarding industry and key stakeholders. This is going to be important. The cross-border business relationship needs to be reinforced, and we have to find symmetry regarding ways that we can create wins for industry in both the United States and Canada. I believe there is a window and a great opportunity to do more of that, and we should view this relationship not as a contentious one or one that is a threat to Canada. I know a 25% opening conversation on tariffs is problematic, but we should view this as an opportunity in terms of how we can further deepen the relationship and build wins on both sides of the border.

It would be irresponsible of me not to talk about the agriculture question. I chair the House of Commons agriculture committee, and I want to talk a little about some of the cross-border wins that I just alluded to. We need to be identifying harmonization of policies that are wins for our Canadian agriculture sector and the U.S. sector as well. I want to give one example, which is Bill C-280; I think it is by the member for Simcoe North. It is in the House. I am deeply disappointed that the Senate has amended the bill, notwithstanding that it was agreed to with 323 votes to 1 in this place. It will be coming back to the House, and I would ask the House to reject that amendment. Furthermore, if the bill is going to be delayed, it is absolutely responsible for the government to take the contents of the bill and put it in some type of economic legislation. We are mired in a question of privilege, and things are blocked here in the House. However, there are important pieces of legislation that we have to get through for the Canada-U.S. relationship and for Canadians; Bill C-280 would be one of those.

I think about opportunities around the Pest Management Regulatory Agency and the EPA and ways that they can share information to be able to drive questions around crop management and crop protection products and approvals. That is an easy win that I presume a Republican administration would see as straightforward policy that we could also sell on our side of the border.

I think about the ability to align on the standardization around standards and what products are actually marketed under. That is something we could align in a North American context.

Around wilderness protection, people in the United States, regardless of whether they are Democrats or Republicans, are big on protecting nature and natural lands. We can also find bipartisan or multipartisan consensus here in Canada around protecting natural landscapes. Those are things that we could do together in alignment in an international context.

I want to talk about Nova Scotia quickly. We are fortunate to be exempted from the forestry tariffs that have been discussed in the House. As an entire Parliament, we need to continue to lean in on that question. The forestry sector matters to this country, and we should be there.

The president-elect mentioned two things in his post yesterday: fentanyl and the border. I would hazard a guess that any member of Parliament in this place wants to tackle the question of fentanyl and the impact of drug abuse in this country. We are all standing there, and the government can do more.

Certainly with respect to the border and any immigration mechanisms, we can make sure we give confidence to the incoming ad-

ministration that by no means should there be a 25% tariff on our products. It would hurt American industry, and we can work with the incoming administration to make sure that we have partnership.

I look forward to taking questions from my hon. colleagues.

• (2300)

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member talked about the border and said that there is nothing to see here; everything is great. I was listening to a CBS News report from about a week ago, which talked about the border. A 295-mile part of the border between Canada and the United States includes New York, Vermont and New Hampshire. In 2023, 19,000 illegals were captured crossing that border, and 321 were on the United States terrorist watch-list. This is exactly the problem. The current government has been incompetent in managing our borders; this is why we are in the situation we are in.

Does the member want to comment on that failure?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I would like to comment. I have the privilege of having the Minister of Public Safety in my Atlantic caucus, and we have talked about this explicitly.

When the member talks about 19,000 cases, he is talking about incidents. An individual could show up at the American border having forgotten their passport and that counts as an incident. When the member uses that number of 19,000, it is somewhat misleading. There are problems, and we do need to make sure that we are addressing them. The Minister of Public Safety has addressed that in the House.

When the member uses the number 19,000, it is a bit misleading to this House because it relates to any incidents, including a Canadian who shows up to the border in Saint John who wants to go into Calais who forgot their passport. He should be careful and use those numbers accordingly.

• (2305)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I heard my colleague opposite talk about Bill C-280, but I wonder if he could also talk about Bill C-282, which, I would remind members, seeks to protect supply management.

We are currently negotiating with the government, and there are some things we absolutely must not compromise on, including the well-being of Quebec farmers. I would like my esteemed colleague to tell me whether his government and his Prime Minister will force the senators' hand and respect the will of the elected members of the House.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I want to welcome my hon. colleague because I think this is our first interaction since the by-election he won. Congratulations to him.

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My riding in Atlantic Canada is home to the largest number of supply-managed farms east of Quebec. I fully support supply-managed farmers. It is a very important sector in Canada, not just in Quebec. It is a very important sector in Atlantic Canada, in western Canada, in Ontario and in British Columbia. I think that it is absolutely vital for all parliamentarians to come together to protect this sector for the future.

Yes, I support this bill. If the Senate rejects this bill, I think it will be important for all members to reject the Senate amendment. It may soon be necessary for the government to introduce a certain economic bill. I hope that the Bloc Québécois will support us in fixing the gridlock in Parliament caused by the Conservatives and the question of privilege.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, once again, a big happy birthday to you. I am sorry that you are here so late with us all tonight on your birthday.

I thank the member for Kings—Hants. I am sure the member is just as excited as I am to hear the news of the provincial election. We have the first woman leader of the opposition elected in Nova Scotia, Claudia Chender. This is very exciting news.

I am certain the member, being from Nova Scotia, loves lobster just as much as I do and the people who catch it. Who else loves lobster? People around the world love lobster, including in the United States. Some 51,000 tonnes of lobster were caught in Nova Scotia just last year, valued at more than \$1 billion, and 60% of that was exported into the United States.

How is the member supporting these local lobster fishers to ensure they can continue to work, and that we can continue to see the benefits of lobster coming back into Canada in light of these tariffs being promised by Trump? How are we preparing to make sure that we are supporting these lobster—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I will start by wishing you a happy birthday. I cannot think of any greater privilege than being here at the heart of democracy in this country.

To my hon. colleague, yes, I am very proud of all our provincial leaders, like Zach Churchill. Claudia Chender ran a tremendous campaign; I think the world of her as well. I would like to congratulate Premier-elect Houston.

On lobsters, yes, the seafood industry is absolutely crucial to Atlantic Canada and to Nova Scotia. I also think about industries like Michelin, the tire industry and the interconnected nature that it has. This would also disrupt those types of economies.

The member asked me what I am doing personally. I am planning on going down to Capitol Hill in January. I have meetings lined up with Republican congressional leaders. I think that she should do the same, along with every member of this House, to make sure that we are doing our part to sell a team Canada approach to protect our national interests and promote economic co-operation in the continent.

• (2310)

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to wish you a very happy birthday.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants brought an exceptional idea of a team Canada perspective. I was on the international trade committee, which included the Conservative member for Prince Albert, when we finalized the CUSMA. We all worked together, from Seattle all the way to Washington, D.C., meeting business people, trades, unions and others to convince them that there should be a strong relationship. I want to thank the member for that idea. On the other hand, I see Conservatives are using scare tactics that there will be a flood of illegal migrants to Canada.

Can the member talk about how our government is prepared to deal with that situation, the one Conservatives are trying to scare people about, if it arises?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I will take 30 seconds to respond and then I will try to move a unanimous consent motion.

What I would say is the border is an important element. We have heard the Minister of Immigration talk about measures the government is taking. We will be there to help support. I do not think it is responsible for any member of Parliament to suggest we have a porous border and we are not there to help support. We will be there as a government to maintain our borders alongside the United States. We will also be willing to tackle that question of fentanyl.

While I have the floor, Madam Speaker, our hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands, who does great work in the House, wants to ask a question. I would ask unanimous consent that we allow for an additional 30 seconds for her to ask and 30 seconds for me to respond.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We still have time for another question.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the floor.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, during the debate tonight, the leader of the official opposition referred to the president-elect as the president, as though the tariffs had been announced by a president with power to enact tariffs immediately. I applaud the member for Kings—Hants for saying he will be going to Washington to meet with colleagues. I think we all should be trying, and we should be asking all parties and all members of Parliament in this House with contacts or friends in the U.S. Congress or in any influential position to work with us. This is not the President of the United States; Donald Trump is president-elect. He will be inaugurated on January 20.

I would ask the member if he agrees it would have been better if the Leader of the Opposition had recognized we could work together across party lines and get down to the U.S. to make sure the Americans understand that tariffs hurt them, too.

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**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, we have some cupcakes out back for you on your birthday. I hope you will give me a few extra seconds.

I think the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said it best. When I listened in the House and the Conservatives were saying they would take a combative approach and want to use “Canada first”, I do not know what that language means. I think it is incumbent on all of us in the House to use our relationship beyond politics to be able to say that now is the time to promote Canadian interests in the United States, to promote continental unity and the ability to find common ground, even if we do not always agree on everything, so we can protect Canadian interests and continental security. I certainly applaud the maturity of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands in pointing that out, notwithstanding the member for Carleton's remarks earlier today.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon.

I rise in the House today with great concern for the future of our economy, particularly in the key sectors of aluminum and softwood lumber, which are essential to the prosperity of Quebec and our regions. These industries support thousands of families and workers in Quebec. However, today, they are being threatened by a series of economic factors as a result of this Prime Minister's incompetence.

Quebec's aluminum industry produces roughly 30% of the world's aluminum, but it is vulnerable to unfair competition, mainly due to the infiltration of cheap Chinese aluminum. Our Quebec producers, who comply with strict environmental standards and invest in cleaner production, are being penalized by this unfair competition. Similarly, the softwood lumber industry, which contributes approximately \$12 billion to the Canadian economy, is under constant pressure from countervailing duties imposed by the United States, which are making an already difficult situation for our producers even worse.

Yesterday, President-elect Trump announced that he plans to impose a 25% tariff on all Canadian products. This decision will have a direct impact on the aluminum and softwood lumber sectors.

• (2315)

These new tariffs will only increase production costs for our companies, making them less competitive and potentially putting thousands of jobs on the line in Quebec. This announcement is a major blow to industries already facing difficulties, yet the Liberal government has still not implemented any concrete measures to protect our workers and producers.

What is even more shocking is that these threats were predictable. President-elect Trump has been talking about the possibility of 25% tariffs on Canadian products for years, even during his election campaign. However, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister were caught off guard. Just a few days ago, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was asserting that Canada would be fine. Clearly, neither she nor the Prime Minister were following what the president-elect was saying. This government is clearly incapable of anticipating the economic threats we

face. This government's inability to defend our economic interests has continually weakened our industries.

Clearly, what the Liberals are best at is weakening our economy and attacking our forestry industry. We saw that this summer with their threat to impose an order, supposedly to protect woodland caribou. In reality, experts cannot say for certain whether this order will protect caribou. One thing they can confirm, however, is that it will kill our forestry industry. The order that the Minister of Environment wants to impose on the region will jeopardize 1,400 forestry jobs in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and on the north shore. Worse still, the mayor of Sacré-Cœur says that her municipality depends on logging and will turn into a ghost town if the order goes through. I should point out that the Bloc Québécois is complicit in all this. Bloc members voted twice to keep the current Prime Minister in place, leaving him free to impose an order that will be devastating for the region.

That is not all. We recently saw three sawmills close their doors in Quebec, including the one in Saint-Ludger-de-Milot in my region, leaving 100 workers out on the street in a village with a population of 600. The closure was blamed on the high price of softwood lumber. All of this is due to the government's inability to negotiate an agreement on softwood lumber, to protect our forestry workers and to use a bit of common sense before presenting policies that are disconnected from the realities of Quebec's regions.

We have been under this government for nine years now. There have been three U.S. presidents, but there is still no agreement on softwood lumber. In contrast, the previous Conservative prime minister managed to get one signed 80 days after he was elected.

Another critically important sector in my region is aluminum. It is essential that we eliminate the carbon tax, which is overburdening producers by increasing their production costs and compromising their competitiveness. This tax must be eliminated to ensure that our businesses can remain competitive on the international market, especially in the face of competitors who are not subject to similar constraints. It is also imperative that we cancel all tax hikes for producers and workers. Our businesses are facing major challenges, and the additional tax burden is only making matters worse.

My riding is home to Rio Tinto and several other companies that supply the aluminum industry in the region. However, this sector is being threatened by Chinese products that are produced with no environmental standards and no protection for workers. Unlike the Prime Minister, my leader understands that aluminum is an economic driver in my region. In fact, he was in Saguenay this summer to talk about his proposals for protecting our Canadian aluminum.

• (2320)

A common-sense government will impose tariffs on Chinese aluminum to protect jobs in Saguenay and to protect the environment as well. As I said, my region produces the cleanest aluminum in the world. Every tonne of aluminum produced in Saguenay reduces greenhouse gas emissions. We produce two tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions for every tonne of aluminum. In China, it is 14 tonnes.

The tax hikes that Canadian companies are subject to make our producers less competitive and slow down innovation. We need to reduce the tax burden so that our industries can grow, hire staff and continue to produce in Canada. The role of government is to defend the interests of our workers and our industries. However, in the Liberal era, this government has consistently been reactive rather than proactive. Not only are we suffering the consequences of weak leadership, but we are also suffering the consequences of decisions that were made without any serious consultation with the sectors involved. Our key industries, such as aluminum and softwood lumber, deserve a government that anticipates challenges, faces them head-on and protects our jobs, our families and our economic future. In addition to these economic issues, it is clear that the Liberal government's weakness in managing our borders and our country's security contributed to Donald Trump's threat to impose 25% tariffs on Canadian products.

Conservatives have always advocated for concrete action to secure our borders and fight these threats while protecting our economy. Our vital industries like aluminum and lumber deserve a government that acts to protect the jobs and competitiveness of Canadian businesses. We must stand up for our workers, our companies and our economic future in the face of these external threats. The time has come to put an end to Liberal inaction and take concrete action to ensure Quebec and Canada are prosperous. Canada first. It is time for an election.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### OFFICIAL REPORT

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on a quick point of order, I misquoted an Economist article title. I would like Hansard corrected so that the correct title of the article is in Hansard. The title of the article, dated September 30, 2024, was, “Why is Canada’s economy falling behind America’s? The country was slightly richer than Montana in 2019. Now it is just poorer than Alabama.”

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sure the hon. member's record will be corrected.

\* \* \*

#### U.S. TARIFFS ON CANADIAN PRODUCTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, after listening to many Conservatives talk about the issue of trade, I will note that previously, during round one of trade negotiations with the United States, when there was not that much pressure, we witnessed the Conservatives capitulate. In essence, they said it did not matter and to give the Americans whatever they wanted, doing so to sign off on a trade agreement. The government disagreed and continued to have those discussions, and ultimately we were able to deliver a much more substantive trade agreement with the United States as a result. We did not have to capitulate like the leader of the Conservative Party wanted us to.

Why does the hon. member believe that his leader would not do the same thing he did a few years ago and just capitulate, giving

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whatever the United States wants in order to sign off on an agreement? We have demonstrated that we—

• (2325)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Madam Speaker, what worries me about this government is our Prime Minister's credibility in relation to President-elect Trump. We are very concerned, and I think the credibility is not there.

The way our Prime Minister negotiates is another concern. It seems to me that he is always a step behind, always reacting to events. We saw that in many files. In fact, when CUSMA was negotiated, the Americans were already negotiating with Mexico. The Prime Minister was dragging his feet and then, all of a sudden, he jumped on the bandwagon. I think our leader knows where he is going. He knows how to make decisions and he shows tremendous leadership.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I just want to correct a few inaccuracies we heard from my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

First, it is thanks to the Bloc Québécois that there was a special committee on caribou, a special committee on the environment. I hope that he will acknowledge that. Second, the reason why aluminum from Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean is particularly competitive is that it is clean aluminum, as he says, or low-carbon aluminum. What would be the point of not having a price on carbon? That would put us at a disadvantage. Not having a price on carbon would put the aluminum smelters in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean at a disadvantage.

What my colleague is saying is that we need to get rid of carbon pricing, the United States needs to make aluminum from coal and that would be great. It is rather inconsistent of him to say in his speech that we have the greenest aluminum but there should not be a price on carbon. How can we be competitive if we do not put a price on carbon? I would like him to explain that to me.

**Mr. Richard Martel:** Madam Speaker, I do not think my colleague's question is a bad one, but it is one thing that bugs me a little when it comes to the forestry sector.

My colleague seems to have a lot of fun doing round tables and sending out press releases, but when it comes to defending the forestry sector here in Ottawa, we never see him. He has meetings in the region, but we do not see him here in Ottawa. He has not asked any questions to defend forestry workers.

I am very concerned for the people in my region who work in this sector. My colleague says he supports them, but here, we see the complete opposite.

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**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very familiar with my colleague's region, having lived in Chicoutimi—Le Fjord myself. That is where I learned French. I love that region. Its forestry industry was extremely vital before the Harper regime decided to slash everything, not just in Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, but also in British Columbia, Alberta and across the country.

We lost \$1 billion, 100,000 jobs and 200 softwood lumber mills because of the Harper regime's irresponsible actions. Does my colleague understand the consequences of the Harper government's irresponsible decision to capitulate on softwood lumber? What does he have to say to the 100,000 workers who lost their jobs?

**Mr. Richard Martel:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. He is someone I respect a lot. There is one thing I do not understand about his side, however, and that is why it supported this government's inflationary spending. The food banks are full and people are struggling to pay their mortgages at the end of the month.

I remember one thing very clearly. After nine years of this government, there has been no agreement on softwood lumber, and yet the former Conservative minister had one in 80 days.

• (2330)

[English]

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, tonight we are having an emergency debate to discuss proposed 25% tariffs by the President-elect of the United States. We have to ask ourselves, "How did we get here?" The answer to that question is, "It is because the Liberals have so badly managed our relationship with the United States over the past nine years." I could speak for two or three hours about that, but I only have 10 minutes, so I will only be able to address a few of these issues.

The first one is softwood lumber. We have had a softwood lumber dispute, unresolved by these Liberals, for the last nine years. As a result of this, we have lost tens of thousands of jobs in the forestry sector, and over \$9 billion in duties has been collected by the United States. That \$9 billion could have been used to invest in new equipment, new machinery, new sawmills, new technology and new jobs for Canadian workers. Instead, sawmills have closed and Canadian workers have lost their jobs, many of them unionized workers. These were good-paying jobs. They have all gone down to the United States.

Now, I understand why the United States is doing that, because they are trying to protect their workers. The question is, why has the Liberal Prime Minister repeatedly failed to protect Canadian workers? That is just on softwood lumber. Those tariffs total, on average, the countervailing and anti-dumping duties, about 15%, and it has wreaked havoc on Canadian workers. Now, we can only imagine what the proposed tariff of 25% would do to forestry workers from coast to coast across Canada. That is failure number one, and the old saying is the sequel is always worse than the original.

The original failure by the government has been on softwood lumber. It is a horror movie in and of itself. However, the sequels actually just keep getting worse. The effect on Canadian workers is bad enough, but Canadians in general suffer the consequences of a

Prime Minister who has incompetently managed the relationship with our largest trading partner. Let us remember, the trading relationship with the United States accounts for 40% of our GDP. It is the most important trading relationship that we have in Canada.

A Prime Minister really only has a few core responsibilities, one of which is to keep Canadians safe. We know the Prime Minister has miserably failed on this. Violent crime is surging, people are out on parole five minutes after they have committed a crime. That has been an abject failure.

The other very important thing is to maintain the trading relationship with the United States. Once again, the Liberal Prime Minister has been an absolute failure and a disaster. We start with softwood lumber, it is still not resolved nine years later, tens of thousands of jobs have been lost, and billions of dollars worth of tariffs have been collected, to the detriment of Canadian workers and Canadian industry.

From there we fast-forward, to 2018, when the United States under then-President Trump, imposed 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum. Now, we have to ask ourselves, "Why did they impose those tariffs?" Well, it is actually pretty interesting because it was about the border.

In 2018, it was about the border, and in 2024, these proposed tariffs are about the border. History repeats itself when there is an incompetent government. The 232 tariffs were actually because Chinese steel and aluminum were coming into Canada and being diverted down into the United States, taking away American jobs and American steel production.

The Americans tried to warn us about this, repeatedly. I know this from my consultations with the steel and the aluminum industry. They were asking for Canada to come up with a way to deal with this, the anti-circumvention methods of bringing Chinese steel in through Canada and flooding into the United States.

• (2335)

Guess what. The incompetent Prime Minister and the incompetent Liberal government did absolutely nothing, despite repeated requests from the United States to clean up the border and stop allowing the steel to come in, so it imposed punishing 232 tariffs on Canadian industries. We lost jobs in our steel industry and lost jobs in our aluminum industry.

I know the government will say it brought tariffs in against the United States, etc., but the whole thing could have been avoided if it had not so incompetently managed the relationship with our largest trading partner. Because of how the government behaved, the United States put punishing tariffs on our steel and aluminum industry, which caused all kinds of damage.



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Again, who are the ones that suffer from the Prime Minister's incompetence? It is not him. He continues to live his lavish lifestyle, but the workers, the unionized workers in particular, are the ones who suffer and lose their jobs when a Prime Minister so incompetently manages the largest trading relationship we have in our economy.

That is the interesting thing, that the 2018 tariffs were about a border issue. One would think that even a government as incompetent as the Liberal government would realize that maybe we should make sure we are taking care of our border with our largest trading partner and not treating it as an irritant, but the government does not. It just continues to bumble along and mismanage the relationship.

Where do we end up? We end up with a situation now where there is the potential of punishing 25% tariffs being levied against all goods coming into the United States. This would have an unbelievably devastating effect on the Canadian economy. One of the reasons, again, is the issues on the border.

Before I spoke tonight, I had the opportunity to watch a news report from a CBS affiliate in the United States. The report talked about 295 miles of border between Canada and the United States that encompasses New York, Vermont and New Hampshire, and said that the number of arrests that are being made by the U.S. border services is skyrocketing. Seven thousand people entered the United States illegally and were arrested in 2023, from just this 295-mile stretch of border. In 2024, according to the report I watched tonight, that number is up to 19,000. These are 19,000 arrests, not incidents, and according to the report as well, 321 of the people who were arrested out of those 19,000 were on a terror watch-list.

The Liberals mismanaged the border with respect to steel and aluminum, allowing Chinese products to come in, resulting in punishing 232 tariffs being slapped on Canadian steel and aluminum, which resulted in economic devastation in those industries. There were jobs lost by hard-working union members. I visited these members at steel plants across the country. They work hard. They lost their jobs because of government incompetence. Now they face the same reality because of how incompetently the Liberal government has mismanaged its relationship with our largest trading partner.

When we try to think about the effects of this, we have to think about the workers who are going to be affected. There is 93% of our auto manufacturing that goes to the United States, and 84% of our steel goes to the United States. When we look at unionized workers in the auto sector, the mining sector, forestry and oil and gas, 412,000 union jobs are at risk.

I do not know what the Liberals' approach is, other than incompetence, but we need a new approach. We need a Canada first approach.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, no government in the history of Canada has actually signed off on more trade agreements than this government. That is just a fact. Now we are having to do a second Trump trade agreement. The most recent trade agreement was between Canada and

Ukraine. The Conservatives voted against it. Every other political party voted in favour of it, and just the Conservatives voted against it. When it came to the last United States trade agreement, they capitulated and wanted to give everything away.

Why should Canadians trust the leader of the Conservative Party today, when he finds it so easy to throw away important opportunities for Canadians? I would suggest he is not putting Canada first.

● (2340)

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, we voted against the Ukraine free trade agreement because they tried to impose a carbon tax in a trade agreement for the first time ever. I read every trade agreement we have. Carbon pricing and carbon leakage are not in a single one of them. They were trying to put a carbon tax in a trade agreement with a country at war. It was a terrible thing to do; that is why I voted against it.

On the renegotiation, I have read the book by the United States lead negotiator. The member should read it. In it, with respect to their great negotiating tactics, he states that, on August 27, they had an arrangement with only a few hours to spare. However, the entire Canadian delegation was absent because of the cold U.S.-Canada relationships that went from June until August 22, when a new United States-Mexico trade agreement was signed.

Canada was not at the table for three months of those negotiations because of the absolute and utter incompetence of the Liberal Prime Minister and government. The Americans had a trade agreement and said that Canada could sign it or not. If that is negotiating well, they need to go back to school.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I have been waiting a long time to ask this. I was really disturbed by the speech from his leader, the leader of the official opposition. He decided, in the same way the Conservatives said the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement was woke, to attack the commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, who has served this country for almost as long as the leader of the official opposition has been alive. He worked, served in Afghanistan and commanded naval destroyers.

Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee deserves an apology from the Conservative Party. Will the hon. member be honourable enough to do that on the floor tonight?

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, I do not even know what to make of that. It is not a question that is relevant to any of the debate tonight with respect to an emergency debate on proposed tariffs by President-elect Trump. The contribution of the Green Party to this debate is to talk about a comment about the wokification of the military, which is actually a legitimate problem. It is one of the reasons we are having such a difficult time attracting soldiers. The Liberal government has really destroyed proud military institutions in this country. I am disappointed that this is the member's contribution to the serious threat to workers' jobs in this country, which has resulted from the mismanagement of the trade relationship. I thought she would ask that question, rather than trying to attack the next prime minister of this country.

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**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party was part of a cabinet with Stephen Harper that made serious, severe cuts to Canada border control. We are talking well over a thousand jobs, millions of dollars, and then they wonder why some of the problems occurred after that butchering of the department by the Conservative Party.

Can the member provide his thoughts in regard to why those cuts were made?

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, if only he knew someone in the government if these alleged cuts took place, which of course they did not. The Conservatives cut bureaucracy, not frontline BSOs. If only he knew someone in the government to fix this problem if it existed. They have been in the government for nine years. They have not figured out that there is a problem with the border. It is the epitome of why we are where we are; the government is incompetent from top to bottom.

**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 to speak to what is a very important issue for all Canadians in every region of our country. I thought maybe a good way to start it off would be to talk about the per capita foreign investment that we witnessed in 2023, where we saw that Canada, on a per capita basis, was number one out of all the G7 countries. In fact, if we take a look at all the countries around the world, we actually placed number three. That is important because it speaks volumes about where investors are looking to invest, and Canada is a prime destination for foreign international investment. One of the reasons for that is that they see in Canada an environment that values trade.

As I indicated earlier, no government in the history of our nation has signed off on more trade agreements with other countries than this government has. We understand the true value of international trade. And as the weeks and months go on, what we will be seeing is a great deal more discussion about trade between Canada and the United States because of the re-election of Donald Trump to the office of president. That will take effect, as members are very much aware, in January 2025.

I would like to emphasize that, when one takes a look at the first round of negotiations, one needs to reflect on the role the Conservatives played in opposition when the trade discussions between Canada and the United States got a little tense. The Conservatives and their leader—

• (2345)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I apologize for interrupting the member, but this is an extremely important debate about a topic on which hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of jobs depend. All the parties are here tonight, except the Conservatives do not have a single member of Parliament in the House. I find that—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member cannot mention who is or is not in the House. I would like to remind the member of that.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, with regard to the point of order, I believe the member is fair in his assessment. If the Conservatives truly believed in the issue they wanted to debate this evening as an emergency debate, one would think they would be fully engaged, yet it is the absolute opposite.

Having said that, we take the issue seriously, and that is why we need to consider how the Conservatives behaved in the last go-around. I am very concerned about Canadian jobs and the impact of the negotiations on the ultimate renewed trade agreement, which will eventually have to come into being. If the Conservatives were to have their way, they, and in particular this leader, have already demonstrated how quick they are to capitulate and give the Americans whatever they might desire in order to have a signed trade agreement.

We have clearly demonstrated, on the other hand, through the last nine years, that we know how to get it done and that we have the civil servants, the political will and the desire to get trade agreements done, and for a very good reason. I can take a look at exports in my home province of Manitoba and talk about things that are maybe not well known, such as pharmaceuticals. Manitoba exports a lot of pharmaceuticals. We can talk about wheat, canola, pork, potatoes, agricultural machinery or our mining industry. Manitoba is a leading bus manufacturer in North America. In fact, I can recall reading press statements about buses being sold to New York and many other states.

These are the types of things that generate real, tangible jobs. Manitoba's pork industry is an industry I have talked a great deal about in the past because it is a great example. There are literally thousands of direct jobs for people, from hog farms to processing plants, whether it is HyLife in Neepawa, Maple Leaf in Brandon or in Winnipeg, or others. There are thousands of direct jobs, not to mention thousands of indirect jobs. There were eight million hogs last year. This industry contributes a great deal to the province. What we apply to Manitoba can be applied to every province. Exports matter and they make a difference. They contribute to Canada's middle class in a real and tangible way.

The Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians back in 2015 to work hard in developing, supporting and increasing Canada's middle class. We did that in a number of different ways, including building a healthier infrastructure by spending record amounts of money, investing in Canadians and ultimately signing off on these trade agreements. We took a trade deficit situation from Stephen Harper and turned it into, on the positive side, a trade surplus. We looked at ways to enhance trading opportunities, which helps build that healthier middle class.

• (2350)

There are so many opportunities. Earlier this year, I was with the Minister of Agriculture in Manila, Philippines, where we opened up a trade office. One of the events I attended was at a local grocery store in Manila that had a profile of the many Canadian products on the shelves for sale. It was an impressive number of products. The manager said that Canadian products were in high demand. However, there is so much more potential. We also talked about other aspects of our agricultural industries at the trade office.

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Early in December, in the next week or so, I will be back in Manila with the Minister of International Trade to look at ways to enhance trade opportunities between Canada and the Philippines, two great nations. There are opportunities for both countries.

We cannot underestimate the value of trade between Canada and the U.S. I thought it was very telling how the Deputy Prime Minister started off her comments earlier today when she addressed the House. She said:

Canada is the largest export market for the United States in the world. It is larger than China, Japan, the United Kingdom and France combined. It is also the case that the things we sell to the United States are the things it really needs. We sell the United States oil, electricity and critical minerals and metals

Canada is essential to the United States' domestic energy supply. Last year, 60% of U.S. crude oil imports originated in Canada, and the energy the United States imports from Canada is more important today than ever, at a time when we see how hungry AI is for energy and how important AI is in the economic vision of the new U.S. administration

She went on to talk about team Canada and listening to the different stakeholders.

However, what do we get from the leader of the Conservative Party when it is his time to shine on the trade issue? He says the Prime Minister is just having a Zoom meeting, belittling that Zoom meeting. The Prime Minister is actually having a Zoom meeting with the premiers of Canada, the first ministers of the provinces and territories. I see that as a positive thing.

It is nice to see one member across the way, even though he is not necessarily a Conservative member. I appreciate members of the Bloc filling some of the seats. Having said that—

● (2355)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member is not to reference whether people are in the House or not.

We have a point of order from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, I apologize. Again, happy birthday.

I just want to be clear. The member for Winnipeg North illegally stated that there were no Conservative MPs in the House for this important debate.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member knows that he cannot say indirectly what he cannot say directly.

I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to wrap up.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Happy birthday, Madam Speaker. I do apologize for referencing that there were no Conservatives in the House throughout my speech.

Having said that, I—

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Winnipeg North is saying that there are no Conservatives in the House—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members that we cannot reference whether there are a lot of people in the House, a few people in the House, certain parties in the House or certain individuals in the House. It would be best if members would allow the speech to continue.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, my point is that, whether it is the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister or Liberal MPs in general, we go around and talk about Canada being the best country in the world to call home. We are proud of that fact. Conservative members of Parliament, led by the leader of the Conservative Party, across Canada and in the chamber, proclaim that Canada is broken. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We need to talk about how Canada has opportunities to continue to grow and to expand our economy to continue to build a healthier middle class in Canada.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will not be mentioning the absence of the Conservatives today in my point of order, but I will wish you a very happy birthday. Thank you for presiding over today's very important discussion with all of our colleagues, minus the Conservatives.

● (2400)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, this is a really important debate. It would have been nice if at least some Conservatives would have been here.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would like to remind members that they are not supposed to say indirectly what they cannot say directly.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun on a point of order.

**Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé:** Madam Speaker, I would like to wish you a happy birthday on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Thank you, but it is now midnight and no longer my birthday. However, I want to thank you for the special day you have given me.

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1). Goodnight, everyone.

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)



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