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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is time for Canada to recognize the state of Palestine. This Friday marks International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. For far too long, the Palestinian people have suffered being stateless. Canada has long supported a two-state solution. Canada took the first step toward diplomatic relations 30 years ago. Canada has a representative office in Ramallah; Palestine has a representative office in Ottawa. Time is past due to take the next step, to stand up for what is right. We must end this misery, preserve human rights and recognize the state of Palestine.

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BELLA THOMSON

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I am wearing pink to honour the life and legacy of a remarkable young girl, Bella Thomson, better known around the world as Bella Brave. Bella had a big personality and an even bigger TikTok following of seven million people; she would brighten people's day with videos of her dancing, singing and short music video collabs with her mom and even the Calgary Flames.

Bella had to overcome many obstacles in her life. She was born without an immune system. She was a frequent visitor to the children's hospitals in both Saskatoon and Toronto, and she underwent a bowel transplant in 2023. She had every right to complain; instead, she chose to use her life experience and platform to encour-

age other kids going through tough times and to spread the overflowing joy that she possessed.

Having received an organ transplant, she was a strong advocate for signing up to be an organ donor and for the Make-A-Wish foundation. I want to leave members with the words of her mother, Ky-la, after Bella passed away: "Bella would want you to remember; God is love, be brave and you are never too old to bring a stuffy."

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CANCER WARRIOR CANADA FOUNDATION

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cancer is a reality that will affect two in five Canadians, including my mother. Early detection is the key in the fight against this disease. Many organizations are working hard to support all cancer patients, but organizations such as Cancer Warrior Canada Foundation are at the forefront of supporting and empowering cancer patients.

Last Friday, I was grateful to attend the seventh annual awareness and fundraising gala organized by Cancer Warrior's founder Navneet Sharma, along with board members Sita-Mohan, Nisang, Indu and Akshay. The event featured a survivor walk in which 15 brave survivors showcased outfits designed by Dinesh K. Ramsay. This walk aimed to break the stigma associated with a cancer diagnosis.

By raising awareness, offering hope and empowering those affected, we can all contribute to saving lives. The work of the Cancer Warrior Canada Foundation exemplifies how collective efforts can have a major impact. Let us all be inspired and support this vital cause.

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[*Translation*]

LE PAVOIS

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Le Pavois is celebrating its 35th anniversary.

The goal of this organization, which was founded in Limoulo, is the social, occupational and educational integration of people with mental health challenges. It provides support to enhance their quality of life through three social economy enterprises.

Statements by Members

Over the years, many women have stood out as the heart and soul of this organization. First, there was the founder, Vesta W. Jobidon, the first woman who believed in this cause. Then, Lisette Boivin served as the first executive director from 1989 to 2015. Today, Le Pavois is led by Francine Cyr, a dedicated woman who always has the well-being of her members at heart. Thanks to these remarkable women, our community is able to count on a reliable, recognized mental health resource.

I want to thank all those who have worked so hard over these past 35 years. They are all extraordinary.

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● (1410)

DANIEL BISSONNETTE

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary individual from my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges: Daniel Bissonnette.

Mr. Bissonnette has been a key figure at the Musée régional de Vaudreuil-Soulanges since 1981, including a remarkable 38 years as executive director. Under his visionary leadership, the museum has grown not only in size, but also in reputation, to become one of Quebec's most respected historical institutions. For over 40 years, Mr. Bissonnette has been working tirelessly to preserve and share our region's rich heritage.

As Mr. Bissonnette gets ready to go on a well-deserved retirement this December, I would like to thank him for his important contribution to the culture of Vaudreuil—Soulanges and of Quebec as a whole. I thank Daniel for everything that he has done.

On behalf of everyone for whom he has made a difference, we wish him a happy retirement.

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[English]

JIM AITCHESON

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the mayor of the Township of Perth South, Jim Aitcheson, following his sudden passing last week. Jim was dedicated to his family and his community. He was a proud life member of the Downie Optimist Club. In politics, he was first elected as a Downie Ward councillor, and he would go on to serve as deputy mayor, mayor and three-term warden of Perth County. Jim served as warden during some of the most challenging times the county has faced. Under Jim's leadership, significant efforts were made to improve mental health supports for first responders and the communities they serve.

Jim was a no-nonsense type of leader, and while some of his advice may have used language that would not be considered parliamentary, we always knew where we stood with Jim. To his wife, Lori, and their kids, Kelly, Tracey and Greg, I want to say that I know they are as proud of him as he was of them.

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to welcome to Ottawa Mr. Jaspal Singh Manjhpur, a human rights defender from Punjab. A distinguished lawyer, Mr. Manjhpur has dedicated his career to defending religious minorities and others facing systemic discrimination. He has litigated landmark cases that now guide legal teams across the subcontinent in securing fundamental rights. As counsel for many political prisoners, he advocates for freedom of expression. Beyond the courtroom, he advocates for policy reform and has authored many reports on human rights in India.

Guided by the Sikh principle of *sarbat da bhala*, the welfare of all, Mr. Manjhpur exemplifies the fight for justice, dignity and human rights. I urge all members to join me in thanking him for his service.

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SCARBOROUGH FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, food insecurity is an issue for many families, and I would like to recognize an organization making a difference in our community: Feed Scarborough. More than just simply a food bank, Feed Scarborough has embraced the UN sustainable development goals as a guiding framework. This means that its commitment goes beyond hunger to creating pathways toward economic stability, educational growth, health and environmental sustainability.

Its food bank is complemented with services and programs to reduce poverty, promote quality education, promote gender equality and support economic growth. Its healthy meal program provides over 2,000 nutritious, balanced meals weekly, and its school hamper program partners with local schools to provide nutritious food hampers to families in need, ensuring children have the energy and focus for academic success.

I would like to thank the team and volunteers at Feed Scarborough for their commitment to addressing food insecurity in Scarborough, and I encourage all who can to support their local food banks.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, government documents show that about 1.1 million temporary resident visas will expire by the end of next year, yet when asked at committee how his department would ensure these individuals leave once their visas expire, the immigration minister had no plan. After nine years of mismanagement, the minister's only solution is to hope people leave voluntarily. At committee, he deflected, offering vague answers about monitoring and partner organizations. Canadians deserve better than a minister who cannot explain how his own department enforces immigration rules.

*Statements by Members***LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal coalition is alive and well, and Canadians know it is not worth the cost.

Do members remember when the NDP leader made a big stunt of ripping up his deal with the Liberals? As he said then, “Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people.” However, now, even when Liberal MPs are calling for a new Prime Minister, the NDP leader continues to support the government no matter the cost.

He supports the carbon tax, which he has voted to increase over 24 times. He supports inflationary deficits, which are driving up the cost of living. He supports soft-on-crime policies, which have increased violent crime by 50% across the country. He has also said that he would “fight like hell” for Canadian workers but is nowhere to be seen when we are facing the threat of American tariffs.

It is time for a carbon tax election so that Canadians can vote for our Canada first plan to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

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TAX RELIEF

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, who does not love Christmas music? *If We Make It Through December* is one of my favourites. It is about the difficult times that families experience during the holiday season.

On December 14, our government will help families by pausing the tax on essential items like groceries, toys, children's clothing, holiday goodies and even Christmas trees. However, the Leader of the Opposition, who is a mean one, a Mr. Grinch, does not want the Christmas tax break, that is, unless it benefits his wealthy oil and gas donors.

While Conservatives on the naughty list still refuse to get security checks, on this side of the House, we are making sure that Canadians do not have a *Blue Christmas*. Across Canada, we are giving smart policy instead of cheap slogans, bringing joy to children and helping restaurants thrive, all to make sure that *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*. That is something to sing about.

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● (1420)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every six days, another woman is killed by intimate partner violence. Today is one of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, a call to action to challenge the systems, laws, and attitudes that lead to violence against women, girls and gender-diverse individuals.

We need a Canada first plan that will fix the immigration system the government broke. Canada needs a serious enforceable immigration plan that protects our system's integrity. The Prime Minister's YouTube videos of bogus claims on immigration only create more chaos, mismanagement and uncertainty. The PM claimed in the same YouTube fantasy video that immigration would balance itself out. Is he kidding us? Only common-sense Conservatives will fix this broken Liberal immigration system.

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● (1415)

TAX RELIEF

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start first by wishing my granddaughter a happy 15th birthday.

Canadians have faced much strife
Through challenging years in their everyday life.
Our government hears them. We are here to bring cheer.
Just last week, the Prime Minister made clear:
We are stepping up big at this time of the year.

Starting December 14, here is the decree:
Many daily goods will be tax-free.
Savings like these, where they matter most,
Give families a break they can really toast.

Yet across the aisle, there's a bitter scene;
The Conservatives sulk in a Grinch-like routine.
While we deliver joy, they just complain.
Stealing holiday hopes is their usual refrain.

But Canadians know Conservatives' hearts are too small
To support families struggling, one and all.

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DRUG POLICY

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is National Addictions Awareness Week, when Canadians commemorate the countless precious lives lost from the plague of drug use.

Some 47,000 Canadians have died due to drug overdose since 2015, including more than 8,000 last year alone. Every person had dreams, hopes and aspirations. None of them wanted to become addicted to drugs and none of them wanted to die. They deserved better. Their families deserve better.

All Canadians deserve better than a failing government that thinks the best way to fight an overdose crisis is to flood the streets with more drugs. We need to fully reverse the liberalization of drugs, which is killing Canadians and threatening our borders. We need to ban precursor drugs and prosecute every trafficker, and we need science-based prevention, treatment and recovery.

This madness must stop. A common-sense Conservative government will put an end to this terrible experiment. We will have a Canada first plan to secure our borders and bring our loved ones home drug-free.

Oral Questions

In Canada, gender-based violence is an epidemic, one that disproportionately impacts indigenous women, racialized women, migrant women and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. On December 6, I will join the city of Victoria's vigil to honour the 14 women killed in the École Polytechnique massacre, who were victims of misogynistic violence.

However, it is not enough to commemorate and it is not enough to pledge. We need concrete action. The government has failed to deliver sustainable funding for shelters, failed to provide affordable housing and failed to implement the calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Enough is enough. Everyone deserves to live free from violence.

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[Translation]

PIERRE HOUDE

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary achievement of one of Quebec's most important voices, Pierre Houde, who has been inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

On November 11, he received the Foster Hewitt Award, presented by the National Hockey League Broadcasters' Association to honour a member of the radio and television industry for his entire career. He is, my word, the fourth francophone to win this award, after René Lecavalier, Richard Garneau and Gilles Tremblay.

Hockey fans have been treated to Pierre Houde's dulcet tones on RDS for 36 years. However, Pierre Houde does not just stick to hockey. He is our Formula 1 commentator and is the voice of the Olympics.

I thank Mr. Houde for his passion, his respect for the French language and his careful preparation. I thank him for guiding sports fans through so many battles. We certainly do not want him to tell us that it is over.

I wish all Quebecers a Stanley Cup with him soon. We want to hear him say over and over again, "et le but!" My word, Pierre Houde, we want to hear it again.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada trades nearly twice as much with the United States as it does with all other countries combined. Forty per cent of our economy is tied to that relationship, but this week President-elect Trump threatened a 25% tariff on all goods. After nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, we are unprepared for this crisis. The economy is shrinking. Food prices have risen 37% faster here than they have in the U.S.

Canadians now carry the highest household debt in the G7. Canadian housing inflation is the worst it has ever been, and our military is in shambles. We need a Canada first plan. The Prime Minister must cancel his plan to hike carbon tax by 61¢ a litre. He

needs to stop his reckless energy cap that will cut Alberta and Saskatchewan production by 35%. He must reverse his billion-dollar cut to the military, and he must invest in securing our borders against illegal fentanyl imports and exports.

Canada needs leadership with the brains and the backbone to stand up for this country and to stand up for Canada. As Laurier said, "Canada first, Canada last, Canada always." Let us bring it home.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when someone tells us who they are, it is wise to believe them. When the Leader of the Opposition demonstrates an authoritarian personality, we had better pay close attention. Dr. Jennifer Gunter, The New York Times' women's health columnist, warns that Conservatives have "proposed", and voted for, "forced birth" legislation "nine" times. All have been defeated, but if those come back, and I think he would let them, we would have a Conservative leader who tells us he would use the notwithstanding clause to override our charter protections.

We have a Conservative leader who disregards voices from corporate Canada, but he will take their money. He says he will bully cities to ignore voices from our neighbourhoods on property development. He spies on and muzzles his own MPs, whom Canadians thought were their voices in Parliament. He, like his mentor Stephen Harper, is a party of one. He treats his own caucus with an iron fist. Would he do the same with the rest of the Canadians? Who knows, but it is best not to give him the chance.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1425)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are facing a threat of tariffs from the United States. What is the state of affairs after nine years under this Prime Minister? Our economy is weakened, our armed forces are weakened and our borders are weakened. Most of all, the Prime Minister is weakened.

When will there be an election so Canadians can choose a strong leader to protect our economy and put Canada first?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find this deeply ironic. We offer Conservative Party members a chance to put Canadians first and what do they do? They vote against initiatives that will help Canadians. They voted against dental care. They are going to vote against a school food program. They voted against more day care spaces. Now, they are going to vote against the tax holiday we are offering Canadians to help them get by over the next few months.

The leader of the Conservative Party wakes up every day, ready to block help for Canadians. He only thinks of his own interests, not the interests of Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is too weakened to protect our economy against Donald Trump's threats.

Trump was elected president three weeks ago and has made this threat repeatedly for the past few days and what is the Prime Minister's plan? He is planning a Zoom call with the provincial premiers, who are saying that the Prime Minister is too weak. Quebec is sending the Sûreté du Québec to protect the borders. Alberta says that the Prime Minister is not standing up for our economy.

When will we have a carbon tax election to elect a strong leader who will protect our economy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the leader of the Conservative Party is playing petty politics and putting on a show in the House, we are working every day to help Canadians. Our members are the voices of Canadians in the House, while the Conservative members are the voice of their leader in their ridings. They are voting against initiatives to help Canadians, whether dental care or the school food program. They are saying that everything is broken, while trying very hard to break everything for Canadians.

We are here to invest for Canadians. They are here to obstruct everything and drive a wedge. They are not here to help Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians face an unprecedented threat from President-elect Trump's potential tariffs. What is the state of things here in Canada? Our economy is weakened. Our borders are weakened. Our military is weakened, and most of all, our Prime Minister is weakened.

Why can we not have a carbon tax election so that Canadians can choose a leader with the brains and the backbone to protect our economy and to put Canada first.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition focuses on himself and on me, we are staying focused on Canadians. We are investing in the kinds of things that are going to help people. We stood up for dental care. We stood up to deliver a school food program. We are moving forward with more spaces in \$10-a-day child care. Those are all things that the Conservative Party voted against.

Most recently, they have announced they are going to be voting against the GST break for Canadians over the next couple of months, something that is going to help people at a time when they

need that little extra help. However, he does not care about helping Canadians. He just wants them to suffer more so that maybe he has a chance.

● (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he has lost control of our borders. He has lost control of immigration. He has lost control of spending, and with that erratic performance, we now see that he has lost control of himself. No wonder foreign leaders believe they can walk all over him. They see him as a weak, incompetent leader who does not even have the support of his own party.

Why will he not put the country first for a change, and allow a carbon tax election so that Canadians can have a prime minister who will protect this country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can tell that he stood up all night in front of the mirror, trying to practise that line.

The reality is that we have our sleeves rolled up. We are fighting for Canadians every single day. We will stand up for good Canadian jobs. We will make sure we continue to have great relations with the United States as we build a stronger future on both sides of the border.

We are going to continue to deliver the kinds of things that matter for Canadians: dental care, free insulin, school food programs. Those are all programs the Conservatives voted against, and now they are going to vote against a GST break for Canadians right across the country for the next few months. That is not being there for Canadians. That is being there for themselves.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it just proves how weak and out of control the Prime Minister has become that he just engaged in a mass hallucination, listing off a bunch of programs that actually do not even exist outside his own head.

If he is not prepared to stand up for the country when it comes to trade, then why do we not have a real election about taxes? He can run on his tiny two-month tax trick, and I will run on my common-sense plan to axe the tax and to axe the sales tax on new homes.

How about a carbon tax election now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we saw perfectly clearly just now the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to gaslight Canadians. He just said that the dental care program, to pick one, does not even exist. Tell that to the one million-plus Canadians who have gone to see the dentist, many for the first time in years, because of the Canada dental care benefit. This is what he is standing against.

Oral Questions

The Leader of the Opposition is trying to convince Canadians everything is broken, while he forces his MPs to vote against a GST break that is going to help Canadians over the coming months. That is not leadership; that is pandering to the lowest common denominator.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is turning the entire country against him and his Santa's sack of goodies.

The people do not want it. Retailers do not want it. Pensioners do not want it. Students do not want it. Economists do not want it. Even the wealthy with common sense do not want it. Nobody wants their sack of goodies.

Does the Prime Minister realize that votes cannot be bought?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling. That is why, for the next few months, we are giving all Canadians a tax holiday on dinners out and trips to the grocery store. We know that Canadians are facing challenges. With one of the best fiscal positions in the G7, we can help Canadians a little bit more.

Maybe the Bloc Québécois does not want it, but that is because the Bloc Québécois only wants to pick fights. They do not want the federal government to actually be there to help Quebecers and Canadians.

Despite that, this is exactly what we are going to do.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who are struggling are the ones who will not be getting a cheque. However, we can see that the Liberals themselves are struggling.

The Conservatives do not seem to support the Liberals' proposal and neither do the NDP or the Bloc Québécois. No one in the House seems to support this proposal.

If the Prime Minister is so sure of himself, why not make this a confidence vote?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we clearly see that the opposition parties are looking for any political excuse to vote against something that Canadians want.

Canadians need a tax break and that is exactly what we are offering them. It will be up to the opposition parties to decide whether they want to be there for their constituents and for Canadians who are struggling or whether they would rather play petty politics, pick fights and oppose measures in order to show that Canada is broken. That is what the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois will do.

We are here to help Canadians. We are here to invest in their future and we are here to support them through tough times.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with this picture? Danielle is retired for medical reasons. Her disability pension is \$45,000.

Danielle has a partner who earns \$125,000. Guess who is getting a \$250 cheque this spring? Well, according to the Liberals, Danielle's partner will get one, but she will not. She is being punished for being too sick to work. It makes no sense, damn it.

My question to the Prime Minister is simple. What does he have to say to Danielle and all retirees?

The Speaker: I would like to remind all members to be very judicious in their choice of words and to use acceptable parliamentary language.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been in the House long enough to remember a time when, back in the day, the NDP was there to support the working people of Canada. It was the workers' party.

We are trying to acknowledge the burden that workers have shouldered during the pandemic and the inflation crisis. We are acknowledging the work that Canadians do, but that does not take anything away from the investments we have made in seniors and young people. We are acknowledging workers and the fact that they need help, but the NDP is totally opposed to this.

What happened to the workers' party?

It became the government.

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[English]

SENIORS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like most Canadians, seniors are doing what they can to get by, but things are tough. The Liberals have let people down and are watching seniors struggle even to buy their groceries. What is the Liberals' latest disappointment? It is cutting seniors out of their \$250 rebate. Meanwhile, the Conservatives rub elbows with the same grocery CEOs who are jacking up costs.

Will the Prime Minister listen and give seniors a much-needed break? I mean, come on, even his own MPs are asking for him to fix the rebate.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember when the party of Tommy Douglas, Ed Broadbent and Jack Layton was actually a party that stood up for workers. Now we have a government that is recognizing that workers carried us through the pandemic. The Canadian workers saw us through one of the worst global inflation crises the world has ever seen, and we want to give them support because we know things are tough for workers.

This is not to take away anything from the help we are giving seniors or youth. We want to be there for workers. Is the NDP suddenly against benefits for workers? It makes no sense.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense; I could not agree more. Here we have the New Democrats claiming to have torn up their deal, their carbon tax coalition, with the Prime Minister, but then they taped it back together when he promised a two-month tax trick. Then, after taking credit for it, the NDP says it did not know what was in it and that it is now opposed to it. The two leaders cannot even figure out how to give away \$6 billion properly.

Is it not time for a carbon tax election so that we can elect a common-sense government?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, MPs are supposed to represent their constituents here in Ottawa, but the Conservative Party MPs are choosing to represent their leader back in their constituency.

I know that Canadians across the country, including in Conservative ridings, are looking forward to paying no taxes on meals in restaurants, on all groceries or on kids' clothes for the next few months, but the leader is making them vote against these measures to help Canadians. If Conservative MPs want to stand up for Canadians, they need to stand up against their leader.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians are ready to stand up and speak for themselves. If the Prime Minister wants to lecture us about democracy, then why not have a referendum, a referendum election where the choice will be the following: a tiny, two-month tax trick with the NDP-Liberals or a permanent axing of the carbon tax and axing the sales tax on new homes?

Why not let Canadians decide now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the Leader of the Opposition to end the price on pollution would mean ending the Canada carbon rebate that comes to people's homes four times a year and delivers more money to middle-class Canadians than the price on pollution actually costs, while at the same time decreasing emissions.

In regard to housing, the Leader of the Opposition's failed housing proposal was to cut billions of dollars from cities across this country that are investing in building housing. That would drive up property taxes for homeowners and make it harder to build homes. He has a proposal that is electorally interesting for him but will not do anything for Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "electorally interesting" is the Prime Minister's condescending way of saying Canadians actually like my plan. Canadians have figured out that after nine years of the weak Prime Minister's spending \$80 billion on housing, with the result being the doubling of housing costs, spending billions more will not make any difference. We are going to slash the bureaucracy and use the savings to axe the sales tax on Canadian homes.

Why will the Prime Minister not let Canadians decide?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mayors from Kelowna, Abbotsford, Ucluelet and Conservative ridings across the country are speaking up, saying the investments we are making in the housing accelerator are helping them cut red tape, increase densification and create more homes more quickly.

The plan the Conservative Party has put forward to remove those billions of dollars from municipalities, just as they are tackling the housing crisis, would harm Canadians. The Leader of the Opposition does not care about harming Canadians. What he wants to do is gain power, and he will do anything he can to do that. While we stay focused on Canadians, he is focused on himself.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has run a groundbreaking experiment. He has put billions of dollars in a sack and offered it to politicians, and the finding is that they are willing to accept the money. It is incredible. It is a groundbreaking sociological study. He wants to give more money to local politicians who block home building. We want to use the same money to cut taxes for the people who buy homes and build homes.

Why will we not allow Canadians to decide whether they want the money to go to the politicians or to the people, in a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at least the Conservative leader is true to form in that he would rather pick fights with everyone than actually deliver for Canadians.

We know, as we saw during the pandemic and we have seen through the inflation challenges, that working together with the provinces and working together with municipalities to get things built for Canadians is what Canadians want.

What does the Leader of the Opposition do? He insults people. He also votes against direct money in Canadians' pockets, whether it is with investments in child care and dental care or it is investments in taking the tax off groceries for the next few months, these are things he is standing against out of political self-interest.

* * *

● (1445)

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it just shows how out of control the Prime Minister has become; he cannot stay on a subject. He brings up housing, so I agree. I just threw away my script and said, "Let us debate housing."

Oral Questions

Now the Prime Minister changes the subject back to his two-month tax reform trick. Here is the trick, everyone: After the tax break runs out in February, the Liberals are going to hike the carbon tax on heat, housing, gas and groceries, all as a part of a plan to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre.

Will the Prime Minister get himself under control, show some strength for a change and call a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day that I get up in the House, I talk about one thing and one thing only: Canadians and how we are there to help Canadians, how we are there to grow a stronger economy for Canadians with direct investments that will support them with free insulin, with dental care, with more spaces in child care, all things the Leader of the Opposition is voting against.

Yes, we are investing in the most ambitious housing solution this country has ever seen, things the Leader of the Opposition did not do when he was Stephen Harper's failed housing minister. We are going to continue to stand up and fight for Canadians, but the Leader of Opposition gets up, pulls off his little performances and fights against me.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to breathe. He said he was going to talk about one thing, and then he rambled on about 10 or 15 things. They are all things he hallucinates that one day he might do if only he were given another nine years in office, instead of talking about his real record, which is that he doubled housing costs, doubled food bank use, doubled the debt and now wants to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre.

We need a prime minister who is in control of himself, so why does he not call a carbon tax election so we can get one?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say it again. The Canada carbon rebate puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians. The Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about one thing. He talked about food banks. Let us talk about the school food program. This is a program that sends federal dollars directly into school boards, directly to support delivering good food programs for kids, no bureaucracy, just investments in school food programs.

The Conservative leader voted against it, and worse, he forced his own MPs to vote against it, to stand up against their constituents and side with him instead of with Canadians who need help.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, imagine all the smart things we could do with \$6 billion. Everyone in the House voted for a measure that would pay \$3 billion to pensioners aged 65 to 74. We could put \$3 billion into housing to address a major crisis that is affecting many young families. We could think about that.

My problem is this: Does the Prime Minister realize that he may no longer have the confidence of a majority of the House?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from coast to coast to coast, Canadians are struggling. That is why we are helping them directly by giving them a tax break for the next few months to help them get through these tough times. We are also offering direct help to workers, those who have been working for a long time. This measure is not for seniors, in whom we have invested a lot over the past few years, or for young people, in whom we have invested a lot. It is for the workers, who also need a hand. This measure will give workers the help they need.

Again, the Bloc Québécois just wants to pick a fight.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no doubt retirees and young people are asking themselves some serious questions right now.

Clearly, nobody wants these Christmas goodies. Everyone in the House, including the Liberal Party of Canada, voted in favour of the bill that would make retirees equal. I think people, on the whole, are willing to pay a certain amount of taxes, as long as the government does not just fritter that money away.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to risk a confidence vote in the House over this initiative?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has the means and the opposition days to bring forward whatever issues it wants.

In the meantime, we will continue to work to deliver results for seniors, as we have been doing for a long time. We will continue to invest in and care for our seniors.

We also want to invest in workers and acknowledge the fact that they are struggling and going through an extremely tough time because of global inflation and the pandemic. We are here and we can see it.

If the Bloc Québécois members want to vote against workers, they can, but they will have to explain their decision to Quebeckers. The rest of us are here to help workers.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we need a plan to protect our economy from President-elect Trump's threats.

The Americans and the provincial premiers have warned of chaos at the border and in the immigration system. There are 4.9 million permits and visas that are set to expire within the next 13 months, or about a year from now. If those people do not leave or if they enter the United States illegally, that threatens our economy.

What is the plan to ensure that the people who should leave do leave?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year in our country, thousands of resident permits, visitor visas and work permits expire, and the people go home. Our immigration system has mechanisms for managing our border to ensure that these people leave the country and that there are consequences if they do not leave. We will continue to strengthen these measures.

We have taken steps to ensure that immigration keeps pace with our economy. We have taken steps to strengthen our border, and we will continue to so.

There is no need to panic like the opposition leader. We are here for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, his minister said that it was impossible to know whether or not these people were leaving the country. His own immigration department just released a document saying that it does not know exactly how many people who should not be in this country are still here, but “[e]stimates from academic sources range between 20,000 and 500,000 persons, although there may be more”. There could be 500,000.

What is the plan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just unveiled an immigration plan that will reduce immigration levels for the next few years. This will help get homes built. It will also give the economy a chance to catch up with the postpandemic influx of immigrants who came to help alleviate the labour shortage.

We are adjusting our immigration system to meet needs, while also strengthening the protection and integrity of our borders. I know that this is what Canadians expect, and we will always deliver on this commitment.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have to protect our borders if we are going to protect our economy from President-elect Trump's tariff threats. The Americans and the premiers are all concerned the Prime Minister is too weak to do that. The data from his own immigration department confirms that fact. According to documents produced by his ministry, there are between 20,000 and 500,000 people in Canada who are not supposed to be here and another three million people who have to leave within the next year.

What is the plan to ensure that people who should leave do leave?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year, there are visitor visas, work permits and student visas that expire, and every year, the vast majority of those people return home to their countries. We have procedures and processes in place to make sure that happens. We have consequences if they do not. We will continue to strengthen those.

Continuing to talk down our country and talk down our systems is something that the Leader of the Opposition is doing because he is more focused on trying to get elected than on actually solving the problems Canadians are facing. That is why Liberals continue to step up and deliver on the needs of Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is another weak answer from a weak leader. The reality is the Prime Minister says that people just voluntarily leave when their permits and visas are up. However, his minister admitted this week that is impossible to prove because they do not keep track. The closest thing they could get to an answer was their department saying, “Estimates from academic sources range between 20,000 and 500,000 persons”, although there may be more. We are talking about people who should not be in our country.

Once again, what is the plan?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Liberals laid out an immigration plan just a few weeks ago that talks about how we are going to make sure our immigration numbers allow for our economy to catch up and for our homebuilding to catch up. We have a strong and robust immigration system that has delivered for Canadians over decades now.

The fact that the Leader of the Opposition continually throws up his hands to say that Canada is broken is him talking down not just our institutions but Canadians themselves. Canadians are optimistic and ambitious about the future. That is why we continue to invest in them. His answer is cuts to services, cuts to benefits and cuts to Canadians.

* * *

ELECTORAL REFORM

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised Canadians would see real change to our electoral system. It has been nine years, and in true Liberal fashion, he broke this promise and let Canadians down. Clearly, this was an election-year tactic and the result is increased division, partisan games and a lack of representation in Canada's Parliament. The Conservatives sure do not want to make it better because they only care about the profits of their rich corporate friends.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians why he dropped the ball on electoral reform?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much care about electoral reform. I have been very clear that I would bring in a ranked ballot tomorrow if we had that option.

The NDP is turning its back on workers right now, asking a question about electoral reform when Canadians are worried about whether or not the opposition parties are going to support the tax break that Canadians need or the investments in workers that they deserve.

Oral Questions

Right now we need a party and a Parliament that is focused on helping and supporting Canadians as they get us all through this difficult time with their hard work and ambition, and right now talking about politics is the last thing Canadians want to hear from the House.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister is not saying is the fact that seniors and persons with disabilities are workers. No one should have to work more than one full-time job in order to put a roof over their head or afford food. A recent report from Edmonton suggests that the minimum wage is not enough to survive. People are having to make tough choices. They cannot afford their groceries, they cannot afford their medication and they cannot afford their rent. The Liberals are holding up relief by excluding seniors and persons with disabilities from the \$250 rebate. Worse yet, the Conservatives would cut.

Will the Liberals stop letting Canadians down during this difficult time?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of next year, because of this government, Canadians with disabilities will be receiving \$200 every single month. That is making a real difference in the lives of Canadians living with disabilities. We know there is more to do and we will be doing more.

In regard to workers, it is astonishing to see the New Democratic Party of Canada turn its back on workers and say that workers do not deserve a little support, workers do not deserve to be recognized for the efforts they made to get us through the pandemic, to get us through the global inflation crisis. These are things we are standing up for to see and recognize workers and the NDP is blocking them.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week our government announced measures that will provide financial support for Canadians over the holidays. These measures should be supported by all MPs. However, we know the Leader of the Opposition has muzzled his members. According to one Conservative MP, we recently learned that “Everybody is being watched. What we say, what we do, who we talk to.” The leader of the Conservative Party has gone so far as to stop his MPs from asking the government for supports.

Can the Prime Minister explain why the Leader of the Opposition should unmuzzle his MPs and allow them to support Canadians instead of forcing them to repeat his embarrassingly bad slogans?

The Speaker: The question does not regard the administration of government. I see that the Prime Minister is standing, but the question does not regard the administration of government.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Stop, please. Order.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

• (1500)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it looks like the member for Kingston and the Islands is not getting into cabinet after all. Some people bring happiness wherever they go; others bring happiness whenever they go.

This is a two-month tax trick that will print cash, add to inflation and make Canadians worse off. If the Prime Minister disagrees, why will he not stop being so weak? Why will he not have the courage to call a carbon tax election and allow Canadians to vote to axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians elect members of Parliament to be their voice in Ottawa, not Ottawa's voice or their leader's voice in their communities, but the Conservative leader shamefully puts his own interests ahead of Canadians'.

We announced a tax break for all Canadians and a \$250 rebate to put more money in the pockets of working Canadians. Conservative MPs know their constituents want this, need this and support this, but the Conservative leader is muzzling them and forcing them to vote against direct support for Canadians. Shame on him.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's radical liberalization of hard drugs has been lethal for Canadians, 47,000 of whom have died of overdoses since the Prime Minister took office, more than those who died in the Second World War fighting for Canada. Overdose deaths are up 200%. Now our American friends say they may hit us with tariffs because of the Prime Minister's Liberal policies on fentanyl.

How many lives and jobs is the Prime Minister willing to sacrifice for his radical Liberal agenda?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are using all the tools at our disposal to save lives and keep communities safe for everyone. Meanwhile, Conservatives are choosing to use struggling people as political props to spread fear and misinformation.

From the very beginning, we have been there to work on an evidence-based, compassionate, public policy and public health approach. We have been there and we will always be there to work with the provinces and territories to meet this time of crisis. While the Conservative leader plays politics, we are going to be there to support Canadians, grounded in science and evidence.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the science and evidence are now proven. After nine years of the radical liberalization of drugs, overdose deaths are up 200%. The worst overdose numbers come from British Columbia, where the policies have been most radically and enthusiastically implemented. The NDP-Liberals have claimed that they are backtracking on decriminalization because it has become so unpopular. Just this week, NDP-Liberals voted for a committee report that called for the full legalization of hard drugs.

Will the Prime Minister admit that that is his real agenda?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having an evidence-based and a science-based approach to the opioid epidemic, a compassionate public policy approach grounded in health care, is what we need, not only to save lives but also to create safer communities.

While the Leader of the Opposition plays politics and uses suffering people as props to propagate a brokenist view of this country, we will continue to roll up our sleeves and work hard with provinces and territories to respond to this tragedy to make sure we are putting Canadians first in everything we do.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's radical drug agenda is not the only thing that is broken. Our economy is broken as well.

We now have two million people being forced to go to food banks every single month, a 38% increase in chronic homelessness and 1,400 homeless encampments. Just today, Equifax reported that consumer debt is \$2.5 trillion. We have the worst household debt of all the G7 countries.

When will he call a carbon tax election so we can fix everything he broke?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer the Conservative leader is putting forward to the challenges of Canadians facing homelessness or the challenges of food banks is to cut the programs that are actually investing in direct supports for people. If it is money we are investing in municipalities and provinces to reduce encampments and to build more homes quicker, he wants to cut it. If it is the money we are moving directly to schools across the country so they can deliver more food and take pressure off of grocery bills, he has voted against it. His only agenda is cuts and austerity, while we help Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we told the government so. Today, the Journal de Montréal reported a surge in the number of asylum seekers at the borders. The Lacolle border crossing received more than 80 between Saturday and Sunday, four times the recent average. In the words of

a vice-president from the Customs and Immigration Union, they do not have enough employees to receive that many people.

This confirms two things. First, we were right to predict a rise in migration caused by Donald Trump. Second, we were right to predict that the federal government would not be ready, as usual.

When is this Prime Minister going to take action at the borders?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Québécois is spouting nonsense.

We have renegotiated the safe third country agreement, under which people who arrive at a border crossing must make their asylum claim in the first safe country they reach, which is the United States. We did indeed settle this issue with the Americans by renegotiating the agreement, but the Bloc Québécois claims they do not know that. They are just trying to pick a fight. They are looking to scare people rather than provide the real facts.

We will always keep tight control of our borders.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is mind-boggling. Everyone warned them.

We knew that the Liberals were not good at managing the borders, so the Bloc Québécois warned them before the U.S. election that migration at the border would go up if Donald Trump won. Quebec warned them. Immigration lawyers warned them. Community organizations warned them. We warned them. Despite all those warnings, the union tells us that there are not enough employees at the borders now that the number of asylum claims is starting to climb.

Once again, this Prime Minister has no plan. Seriously, is he doing it on purpose?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague was so proud of his little written question that he did not even hear my answer to his first question.

We renegotiated the safe third country agreement with the United States to ensure that people arriving at our border crossings would have to return to the United States to claim asylum, instead of entering Canada. We have a solution to this issue. Our government implemented it, but the Bloc Québécois is refusing to acknowledge the facts. All it wants is to do is frighten Quebecers.

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are facing Donald Trump's threats with a weak Prime Minister and from a weak economic position.

Now we find out that the Prime Minister does not even know how big the deficit is. Spending is out of control and getting worse by the day, as the Prime Minister tries to buy support from the Bloc Québécois and the New Democrats to stay in power.

I will ask the question again very slowly. How much is the Government of Canada's deficit?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be presenting our fall economic statement very soon, and the Leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity to provide his feedback. However, I already know very well that he will vote against it, just as he has voted against all the measures we have put in place to help Canadians, such as our upcoming tax break for Canadians in the coming months. He does not think Canadians need it.

We have the best fiscal situation of any of our G7 partners, and he refuses to help Canadians. Why is that? It is because he would rather have people struggling so that maybe they will vote for him. The reality is that we are going to help Canadians.

• (1510)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is showing once again that he is a weak Prime Minister who has lost control. He lost control of the borders, he lost control of immigration, and he lost control of government spending.

He says he cannot say how big the deficit is, even though he already tabled a budget for this year. That is odd. It is the first time I have heard that from a Prime Minister.

I will ask him an easier question: What was the Government of Canada's deficit last year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while he continues to obstruct and vote against initiatives that will help Canadians, the leader of the Conservative Party is focused on finding ways to attack me, whereas we are focused on creating help for Canadians.

We are offering a tax break for the next couple of months, but the Conservatives are going to vote against it. We are providing help for workers, but the Conservatives are going to vote against it, just like they voted against the dental care program, the school food program and more child care spaces.

The Conservatives do not want Canadians' lives to get better because their leader wants to convince them that everything is broken.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a weak Prime Minister who has lost control of everything. He has lost control of the borders, lost control of immigration and lost control of spending. Recently, it came to light that the deficit is much bigger than his finance minister reported in the recent budget.

The Prime Minister claims that he cannot tell us what the deficit is for this year, so we will make it easier for him. What was the deficit last year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see the lengths to which the Conservative leader will go to not talk about the fact that we are proposing a tax break for Canadians over the coming months, and that is because he is going to vote against that. He is going to vote against direct help for families at the grocery store and with children's clothes, supports for Canadians for everyday expenses. Why is that? He would rather continue to see Canadians suffer because maybe that would help him get elected rather than actually solve the challenges Canadians are facing.

We are stepping up to deliver on dental care, on a school food program, on initiatives that directly help workers, and that is what we will continue to do.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, affordability is an important issue for my riding, as it is everywhere else. Workers in Sudbury were happy to hear that they will be receiving a cheque for \$250 to support them.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians what other measures have been announced to support them in the run-up to the holidays?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sudbury for her question and her hard work.

We know that the last few years have been challenging. That is why we are giving all Canadians a tax break. This means that for two months, Canadians will pay no tax on groceries and other everyday essentials. We are giving Canadians more money in their pockets to help them afford the things they need and save for the things they want.

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[*English*]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to show how weak the Prime Minister is, he actually had to read a script just to talk about his tiny two-month tax break. My question a moment ago, though, was about the deficit. He admits that deficits contribute to inflation. We now have a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who the Prime Minister appointed, showing that the deficit is far bigger than he advertised in his last budget.

Once again, what was Canada's federal deficit last year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from someone who stays up late every night rehearsing his little performances in the mirror.

The fact is that we are continuing to step up for Canadians because we have the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the best debt-to-GDP ratio and are projected to have the strongest growth in the G7, ahead of the United States next year. These are things that we have done because we have been investing, not just in Canadians and supports for them, but also in drawing in global investment, which was the third-largest foreign direct investment in the world last year. People are investing in Canada because they believe in Canadians.

Why does the Leader of the Opposition not believe in Canadians?

• (1515)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that he will leave the economy to bankers. Well, the bankers sure are rolling in cash. They are collecting interest on the national debt, which he has already doubled, while Canadians line up at food banks. The question, though, was about the size of the deficit. Somebody cannot run a half-trillion dollar G7 government if they do not know anything about the finances of that government.

Can the Prime Minister tell us if he actually knows the size of the deficit?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Speaker, what we are focused on is delivering for Canadians, being there to recognize that Canadians need support now as we build a stronger future for them. That is why we are drawing in global investment to a higher rate than just about any other country, per capita, in the G20. We are delivering things that make a real difference in Canadians' lives, such as dental care, a school food program, more spaces in child care at \$10 a day, a tax break for the next two months and direct support for workers.

Those are all things that the Conservatives are voting against because they care more about themselves than they do about Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not know. I was tempted to accuse him of hiding it, but as Napoleon Bonaparte said, we should never attribute to malice what can be explained by incompetence.

Who is actually running the government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition continues to focus on me, I am going to stay focused on delivering for Canadians, on delivering a tax break over the next few months that would help Canadians with the cost of everything, and on delivering supports for workers, seniors and youth.

These are all things that the Conservative Party votes against, not because Conservative MPs do not care about these things, but because they have been throttled and muzzled by their leader, so they cannot be their community's voice in Ottawa. They are there to be their leader's voice in their communities. Shame on them.

Oral Questions

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people in my riding are counting us to deliver essential supports, like the Canadian dental care plan—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Excuse me, colleagues. I am going to ask all members to please not take the floor unless they are recognized by the Speaker. I had great difficulty hearing the answer to this question. I am going to ask the hon. member for Brantford—Brant to please not take the floor while the Speaker is speaking.

The hon. member from Vaughan—Woodbridge, from the top, please.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, people in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge are counting on us to deliver essential supports, like the Canadian dental care plan, but the Conservative Party's stubborn blocking of the House for their social media clips is putting this program at serious risk. This is not about politics, this is about Canadians and access to health care.

Can the Prime Minister remind us all what is at risk if the House continues with politics over Canadians?

• (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his hard work on the file. Canadians are not surprised to see the Conservative leader blocking key programs that support them, but I think we are all kind of surprised to see the NDP standing by. The NDP is actually helping Conservatives block dental care, health care for refugees and clean drinking water for indigenous communities. The NDP owes it to Canadians to stop playing the Conservative Party's games, do the right thing and end this obstruction of Parliament so we can all deliver for Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal's housing failure hurts people experiencing gender-based violence. Women's Shelters Canada found that, because of the rising cost of housing, almost all shelters are unable to meet increased demand. This is forcing women into precarious housing or to return to abusive situations. The Liberals are compromising safety because of their failed housing plans, and the Conservatives care so little they heckle during this critical life-and-death question.

Will the Prime Minister commit to increasing investments in affordable rent-geared-to-income housing today?

Concurrence in Committee Reports

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, no one should have to return to a violent or at-risk situation because they cannot find housing or because they cannot get into a shelter. That is why we continue to step up to work with provinces and municipalities to ensure that there are options for people fleeing domestic violence. It is a deadly serious question. We will always be there to work with provinces, territories and municipalities to support women and anyone fleeing domestic violence.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in 2024, 358 people on the U.S. terrorism watch-list were stopped from crossing into the United States from Canada. How did these terrorists enter Canada in the first place? The immigration minister's failure to secure our borders puts Canadians in danger, and his incompetence has now placed Canada's economy at risk with a 25% Trump trade tariff.

Will the Prime Minister fire this incompetent minister before he does even more damage to Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should turn to his friend, the leader of the Conservative Party, and ask him why he is refusing top secret briefings on national security. He should ask his buddy, the Conservative leader, why he will not get the security clearance necessary to understand how to better protect his party and Canadians. The Conservative leader refuses to take top secret briefings or get a security clearance because he would rather play politics with Canadians' safety than actually act to keep Canadians safe. Shame on that member and shame on the Conservative leader.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As we know, not only can words be unparliamentary but gestures can be as well. I was in the process of negotiating with the government House leader as to whether we could get unanimous consent to table the text messages from the Liberal member for Vaughan—Woodbridge when he was asking to join our caucus. As I was in the process of doing that, the Liberal member for Vaughan—Woodbridge made a very vulgar and rude gesture, giving the middle finger to this side of the House. That is extremely unparliamentary and I would ask the hon. member to apologize.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, at this moment in time, I seem to be living rent-free in the heads of many of the Conservative members; it is unfortunate. I did not do anything vulgar to the Conservative member. I have been in the House for nine years. I have always tried to act in the most honourable way with all members of Parliament and in all things. I actually co-chair some committees with Conservative members, and that is my reputation. I have nothing to apologize about. I raised my hand to give the script to the page. That is it.

● (1525)

[Translation]

The Speaker: I see the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable rising on another point of order.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, as you know, in the House, we are called on to respect the honour and words of members who rise. However, people have a duty to be honest with their constituents and their colleagues.

I personally witnessed the gesture—

The Speaker: Order.

I have heard the point of order about another member. That member rose to say, on his honour, I presume, that he did not make the alleged gesture. As the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable mentioned, the Chair will always act on the assumption that all members are honourable, and I will therefore accept his word. However, as suggested, we will check the video and I will come back to the House of Commons if necessary.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable. I hope it does not concern the same point that the Chair just dealt with.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I am offended.

You just questioned my word. You cast doubt on the comments I just made about the gesture made by one of my colleagues.

I find that unacceptable.

CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORTS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

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

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:27 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the amendment of the member for Kingston and the Islands to the motion to concur in the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Call in the members.

● (1555)

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

(Division No. 895)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton

Concurrence in Committee Reports

Atwin	Bachrach	Sgro	Shanahan
Badawey	Bains	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Baker	Barron	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Battiste	Beech	Sorbara	Sousa
Bendayan	Bibeau	St-Onge	Sudds
Bittle	Blair	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Blaney	Blois	Thompson	Trudeau
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Turnbull	Valdez
Bradford	Brière	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Cannings	Carr	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Casey	Chagger	Virani	Weiler
Chahal	Champagne	Wilkinson	Yip
Chatel	Chen	Zahid	Zarrillo
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Zuberi — 181	
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier		
Coteau	Dabrusin		NAYS
Damoff	Dance		Members
Davies	Desjarlais		Aitchison
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Aboultaif	Allison
Diab	Dong	Albas	Baldinelli
Drouin	Dubourg	Arnold	Barrett
Duclos	Duguid	Barlow	Beaulieu
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Barsalou-Duval	Berthold
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith	Bergeron	Bezan
Fisher	Fonseca	Bérubé	Blanchette-Joncas
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Blanchet	Bragdon
Fraser	Freeland	Block	Brock
Fry	Gaheer	Brassard	Calkins
Gainey	Garrison	Brunelle-Duceppe	Carrie
Gazan	Gerretsen	Caputo	Chambers
Gould	Green	Chabot	Chong
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Champoux	Dalton
Hanley	Hardie	Cooper	Davidson
Hepfner	Holland	Dancho	Delteil
Housefather	Hughes	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Hussien	Hutchings	d'Entremont	Doherty
Iacono	Idlout	Desilets	Dreeshen
Ien	Jaczek	Dowdall	Ellis
Johns	Joly	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Jones	Jowhari	Epp	Fast
Julian	Kayabaga	Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Kelloway	Khalid	Ferreri	Gaudreau
Khera	Koutrakis	Gallant	Genuis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Généreux	Gladu
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Gill	Goodridge
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Godin	Gray
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Gourde	Hoback
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Hallan	Jivani
Lightbound	Long	Jeneroux	Khanna
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kelly	Kmiec
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Kitchen	Kramp-Neuman
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kram	Kusie
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Kurek	Lantsman
Masse	Mathysen	Lake	Lawrence
May (Cambridge)	May (Saachich—Gulf Islands)	Larouche	Lemire
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Leslie	Liepert
McLeod	McPherson	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lobb
Mendès	Mendicino	Lloyd	Majumdar
Miao	Miller	Maguire	Mazier
Morrice	Morrissey	Martel	McLean
Murray	Naqvi	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Michaud
Ng	Noormohamed	Melillo	Morantz
O'Connell	Oliphant	Moore	Motz
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor	Morrison	Nater
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Muys	Patzer
Rayes	Robillard	Normandin	Pauzé
Rodriguez	Rogers	Paul-Hus	Perron
Romanado	Rota	Perkins	Redekopp
Sahota	Sajjan	Poilievre	Rempel Garner
Saks	Samson	Reid	Rood
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Roberts	Sauvé
Schieffe	Serré	Ruff	

Concurrence in Committee Reports

Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 149

Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Berthold
Bezan
Bittle
Blanchet
Block
Boissonnault
Bragdon
Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Casey
Chagger
Chambers
Champoux
Chen
Chong
Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jivani
Jones
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc

Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Battiste
Beech
Bergeron
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chabot
Chahal
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Damoff
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
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
Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khalid
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier

PAIRED

Members

Duncan (Etobicoke North)

Plamondon— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment carried.

The next question is on the amendment as amended.

If a member participating in person wishes the amendment as amended 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.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

• (1605)

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

(*Division No. 896*)

YEAS

Members

Angus
Bachrach
Blaney
Cannings
Dance
Desjarlais
Gazan
Hughes
Johns
Kwan
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Morrice

Ashton
Barron
Boulerice
Collins (Victoria)
Davies
Garrison
Green
Idlout
Julian
MacGregor
Mathyssen
McPherson
Zarrillo— 26

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif
Albas
Ali
Anand
Arnold
Arya

Aitchison
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Atwin

Chen
Chong
Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jivani
Jones
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc

Concurrence in Committee Reports

Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lighthound
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
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Robillard
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
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zimmer

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
Rayes
Reid
Roberts
Rodriguez
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
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zuberi — 302

PAIRED

Members

Duncan (Etobicoke North) Plamondon— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment as amended defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

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

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, we do request a recorded division.

• (1620)

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

(Division No. 897)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Anand
Arseneault
Atwin
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Bittle
Blanchet
Blois
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gerretsen
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde

Ali
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
Desbiens
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gaudreau
Gill
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos

Royal Assent

Lamoureux	Lapointe	Gazan	Généreux
Larouche	Lattanzio	Genuis	Gladu
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Godin	Goodridge
Lebouthillier	Lemire	Gourde	Gray
Lightbound	Long	Green	Hallan
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Hoback	Hughes
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Idlout	Jeneroux
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Jivani	Johns
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)	Julian	Kelly
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Khanna	Kitchen
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Kniec	Kram
McLeod	Mendès	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Mendicino	Miao	Kusie	Kwan
Michaud	Miller	Lake	Lantsman
Morrice	Morrissey	Lawrence	Lehoux
Murray	Naqvi	Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Ng	Noormohamed	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Normandin	O'Connell	Lloyd	Lobb
Oliphant	O'Regan	MacGregor	Maguire
Pauzé	Perron	Majumdar	Martel
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski	Masse	Mathyszen
Qualtrough	Rayes	May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Robillard	Rodriguez	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Rogers	Romanado	McPherson	Melillo
Rota	Sahota	Moore	Morantz
Sajjan	Saks	Morrison	Motz
Samson	Sarai	Muys	Nater
Sauvé	Savard-Tremblay	Patzner	Paul-Hus
Scarpaleggia	Serré	Perkins	Poillievre
Sgro	Shanahan	Redekopp	Reid
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Rempel Garner	Richards
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Roberts	Rood
Sinclair-Desgagné	Sorbara	Ruff	Scheer
Sousa	Ste-Marie	Schmale	Seeback
St-Onge	Sudds	Shields	Shipley
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Singh	Small
Thériault	Therrien	Soroka	Steinley
Thompson	Trudeau	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)	Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)
Trudel	Turnbull	Strahl	Stubbs
Valdez	Van Bynen	Thomas	Tochor
van Koevorden	Vandal	Tolmie	Uppal
Vandenbeld	Vignola	Van Popta	Vecchio
Villemure	Virani	Vidal	Vien
Wilkinson	Yip	Viersen	Vis
Zahid	Zuberi — 184	Vuong	Wagantall
		Warkentin	Waugh
		Webber	Williams
		Williamson	Zarrillo
		Zimmer — 145	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Chong
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Dalton	Dance
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desjarlais
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Gallant	Garrison

PAIRED

Members

Duncan (Etobicoke North) Plamondon — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.**ROYAL ASSENT***[English]***The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall

Ottawa

November 27, 2024

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the schedule to this letter on the 27th day of November, 2024, at 10 a.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ken MacKillop
Secretary to the Governor General

The schedule indicates the bill assented to on Wednesday, November 27, was Bill S-13, An Act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

TAX BREAK FOR ALL CANADIANS ACT

Hon. Terry Beech (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-78, An Act respecting temporary cost of living relief (affordability).

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly, with one respecting its participation at the 23rd winter meeting in Vienna, Austria, from February 22-23, and with the other respecting its participation at the 31st annual meeting in Bucharest, Romania, from June 29 to July 3.

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group on the 22nd bilateral meeting in Tokyo and in Tohoku, Japan, from May 13-17.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

[English]

The first is the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, entitled “Harms Caused by Illegal Sexually Explicit Material Online”.

The second is the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, entitled “The Holding of a National Forum on the Media”.

• (1625)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a dissenting report, in both official languages, on harms caused to children, women and men by the ease of access to, and online viewing of, illegal sexually explicit

Routine Proceedings

material. It was a Conservative motion that led to this important study to bring understanding to the real harm experienced by many Canadians within virtual spaces.

Conservative members of this committee believe that the report fell short in a number of areas, notably that women are overwhelmingly the primary targets of online harms. Current legislation fails to include deepfakes. Existing legislation must be amended to address the criminal nature of online harms. A victim-centric approach and more effort are needed to prevent uploading of illegal sexually explicit material. There is a growing need to protect Canadians from the threat of online harms, and the Liberal government's online harms legislation, Bill C-63, will not satisfy the need for protection and will only limit the freedoms of Canadians.

It is my honour to table this dissenting opinion on behalf of members of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand on behalf of Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and table, in both official languages, a dissenting report to address an important aspect that was missed during the consideration of the report on the national forum on the media. The message is clear and simple, and it might be the shortest dissenting report ever tabled in the House. It contains three words: Defund the CBC.

After failing to produce content that Canadians actually want to watch and want to listen to, missing key performance metrics, cutting hundreds of jobs, and giving \$18 million in bonuses to CBC executives and managers amidst declining trust, viewership and ad revenue, the solution is to simply defund the CBC so that we can encourage creative and free journalistic expression and so that we can let journalism thrive through the work of journalists, not by the heavy hand of a bloated, bureaucratic, woke, biased and outdated model that the CBC represents today.

* * *

NATIONAL FOOD COOPERATIVE STRATEGY ACT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-421, An Act to establish a national food cooperative strategy.

He said: Mr. Speaker, grocery prices in Canada are increasing at the fastest rate in over 40 years. Many Canadians are struggling to put food on the table, with more people than ever resorting to food banks for help. Canada's grocery industry is dominated by a handful of large corporations, limiting consumer choice, and in 2023, these corporations reported over \$6 billion in profits, all at a time when Canadians were struggling with the cost of food.

Routine Proceedings

The bill I am introducing today would develop a national strategy that would help food co-operatives in Canada enable more small and medium-sized businesses compete in Canada's grocery industry. The Competition Bureau Canada has highlighted that encouraging competition in the grocery sector can help lower prices. By supporting the establishment of more food co-operatives, we can foster a more competitive market and can create community-owned businesses. This would ensure greater economic resilience and would promote food security for all Canadians.

Canadians are sick and tired of billionaires getting richer while regular people pay more and more. This bill is a necessary step toward affordable groceries, greater choice for consumers, and a stronger, more sustainable food system for Canada.

I would like to thank my good friend, the member for Hamilton Centre, for being the seconder of this bill.

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

* * *

• (1630)

PETITIONS

MIDDLE EAST

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today signed primarily by Lebanese Canadian constituents in my riding of Scarborough Centre. They draw our attention to the conflict in the Middle East, which has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced many more in Palestine and in Lebanon. Petitioners note that Israeli air strikes have hit UNESCO world heritage sites and health care facilities, and they point to the death of over 170 health care workers.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to implement sanctions on the Netanyahu government, to ensure a clear and unambiguous two-way arms embargo, to support a United Nations resolution calling for our peacekeepers in Gaza as part of the development of mechanisms and to ensure civilian protection. They are calling for peace and for recognition of the state of Palestine.

HONG KONG

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition adding 827 names to the thousands of signatures that have already been added to a petition I tabled previously. The petition is about the situation in Hong Kong, and more particularly with respect to the fact that Hong Kong's basic law has completely been eroded and that the national security law imposed by China and adopted in Hong Kong has gotten rid of even the most basic of rights, including freedom of the press.

On August 12, Hong Kong's top court upheld the conviction of seven of Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy activists, including 82-year-old Martin Lee and 76-year-old Jimmy Lai, who was the owner of Apple Daily. That publication has now been shut down and Lai is in jail. In fact, he is actually in court trying to defend himself.

The offences of these individuals are that they participated in a peaceful demonstration on August 18, 2019. The group of 47, which includes legislators, were found guilty on May 30, in the exercise of their democratic rights for participating in election pri-

maries. These pro-democracy activists have since been sentenced. Some of them face as much as 10 years in prison for their pro-democracy activities.

Given the extraterritorial reach of the national security law in article 23, there is ongoing fear of surveillance among the Hong Kong diaspora. In light of the recent spying charges laid against staff at the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in the U.K., Hong Kongers want to be assured this is not happening in Canada.

Therefore petitioners are calling on the Canadian government to call on Hong Kong and the PRC to release Jimmy Lai and the group of 47 and others, whose only crime was to exercise their rights and freedoms as prescribed by the UN human rights declaration; stop according any special rights or diplomatic status to the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office; and proactively apply sanctions, under the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Officials Act, against Chinese and Hong Kong officials.

JUSTICE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to present a petition with over 700 signatures, including some from my constituency and across the country.

The petitioners cite the events of this summer in the arrest of Canadian citizen, Captain Paul Watson, who was detained in Greenland and has been held under arrest by the Danish government. The concern raised by the petitioners is that since 2012, the Government of Japan has been attempting to extradite Paul Watson in various efforts, although the notice was condemned by the European Parliament in 2017.

It is very concerning because the events, according to petitioners, all occurred in Captain Paul Watson's efforts to fight whaling activities that were and have been found to be illegal and were carried out by Japanese vessels in international waters.

I will summarize by saying that the petitioners ask the Prime Minister to immediately request the release of Canadian citizen Paul Watson from Danish prison and, further, to request the withdrawal of the Interpol notice that was issued against Paul Watson by the Japanese government for Captain Watson's efforts to protect marine mammals from illegal whaling activities.

• (1635)

FARMERS' MARKETS

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first calls on the Government of Canada to create a national nutrition coupon program fund that would strengthen and grow all existing and proposed provincial farmers' market nutrition coupon programs across Canada.

BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition emanates from my home province of Prince Edward Island. In November 2020 there was a special committee on poverty that presented its final report to the provincial legislature, calling on the Government of Prince Edward Island to begin negotiations with the Government of Canada with a view to develop and implement a basic income guarantee demonstration program for Prince Edward Island.

The initiative received the full support of all political parties; therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to begin immediate negotiations with the Government of Prince Edward Island to develop and implement a basic income guarantee demonstration program in the province of Prince Edward Island that would be administered, monitored and evaluated for at least five years.

ERITREA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition responds to concerns that have been raised by many people in the Eritrean Canadian community about ongoing human rights abuses in Eritrea, as well as foreign interference emanating from Eritrea.

Petitioners want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that Eritrea has been ruled by a brutal authoritarian dictator under a totalitarian system for the last 30 years. There is no constitution, no election, no parliament, no freedom of the press and no freedom of movement and association. The people of Eritrea have the same aspirations for freedom and democracy that people always and everywhere have.

Eritreans continue to flee indefinite military conscription, religious persecution and political repression. Petitioners note that a very high number of people have fled and yet continue to face threats in the form of foreign interference while they are living elsewhere. Those people who have managed to flee face intimidation and extortion from representatives and agents of the regime that are abroad. People are also harassed and forced to pay large amounts of money because members of their family have fled.

Petitioners are concerned about the use of Eritrean embassies for foreign interference. They also highlight other forms of repression that happen abroad.

Petitioners also draw the attention of the House to the conspiracy and the collaboration of the Eritrean dictator and the Russian regime, and how that is facilitating neocolonial efforts of the Russian state in Africa, which I know should be of great concern to all members.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to engage actively with Eritrean political and human rights activists, especially with pro-democracy groups working here in Canada and building coalitions around the world. They want to see Canada take a leadership role among western allies to challenge the Eritrean dictator's collaboration with Vladimir Putin and Russian neocolonial policy in Africa in general.

Routine Proceedings

Petitioners want to see an investigation of foreign interference activity here in Canada and stronger measures to ensure that the asylum system here in Canada is not abused by people who are affiliated with the regime.

Petitioners want Parliament to advocate for the release of all imprisoned journalists and parliamentarians. They highlight specifically the cases of Dawit Isaak, Petros Solomon, Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo, Haile Woldetensae, Ogebe Abraha, Hamid Himid, Saleh Idras Kekya, Estifanos Seyoum, Berhane Ghebrezgabihier, Aster Fesehazion, Germano Nati and Beraki Gebreselassie.

The petitioners would also like to see strengthened sanctions against human rights abusers in Eritrea.

● (1640)

TAX RETURNS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is an issue of concern to many Canadians who file their taxes and would like to have more flexibility in how they do so. Nobody likes filing their taxes, but petitioners in this case are frustrated by the fact that paper filing is being discouraged.

Petitioners note that Canadians need to file their taxes regardless of their level of connectivity. They are frustrated that CRA will no longer print line-by-line instructions in the paper package and will impose financial penalties for paper filing for certain kinds of taxes, including business filing and GST/HST returns. This is unfair to Canadians who do not have the same level of connectivity or who simply prefer to file in other ways.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to remove all penalties associated with the paper filing of tax returns and also to make available printed copies of the line-by-line instructions for tax filing for anyone who requests them.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is regarding the Liberals' so-called feminist international assistance policy. Petitioners note that the Muskoka initiative, launched by the previous Conservative government, involved historic investments in the well-being of women and girls around the world and that the initiative emphasized value for money and ensured that investments were made in priorities identified by local women.

Privilege

By contrast, petitioners say that the Liberal government's approach has shown a lack of respect for the cultural values and the autonomy of women in the developing world by supporting organizations that violate local laws at the expense of international development priorities like clean water, access to basic nutrition and economic development, and that it pushes ideology at the expense of local priorities.

The petitioners also note how the Liberals' approach to international development for women and girls has been criticized by the Auditor General for its failure to measure results.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to align international development spending with the approach taken in the Muskoka initiative and to focus international development dollars on meeting the basic needs of vulnerable women around the world, rather than pushing ideological agendas that may conflict with local values in developing countries.

Petitioners also want to see better measurement of the outcomes in the work being done by the government.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition raises concern about the very radical and extreme agenda of the government and of some of the people who have testified in support of it on the issue of euthanasia. Canada already has the most liberal euthanasia regime in the world, which is being used as a cautionary tale in debates around the world on this very issue.

This particular petition highlights with grave concern a proposal for the expansion of euthanasia to include babies from birth to one year of age. This was a proposal made by Louis Roy of the Quebec college of physicians and surgeons for the legalized killing of infants. Petitioners see this as morally abhorrent and as the sort of thing that, frankly, a few years ago we never would have expected to hear openly uttered let alone advocated for in Parliament.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to block any attempt to allow the killing of children.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition highlights the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in the People's Republic of China and shares some of the history of that persecution.

Petitioners call for stronger steps by the Government of Canada and Parliament to combat the ongoing, now 25-year-long, persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, who simply wish to exercise their religious freedom and to practice a spiritual discipline that emphasizes truthfulness, compassion and tolerance.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my petition is also on the subject of Falun Gong or Falun Dafa, a peaceful practice that emphasizes truth, compassion and forbearance and that is centred on Chinese traditional practices. Its practitioners have been persecuted for, frankly, no good reason by the Chinese government since 1999.

The petitioners request that Canada take a strong stance against the persecution, and in particular against the practice of organ har-

vesting. Falun Gong practitioners in many cases, and this is extremely well documented, have been used for involuntary organ harvesting. We can imagine what this results in for the people whose organs are being harvested; it is effectively a form of permitted murder. The issue was well investigated by David Kilgour and David Matas, who presented impressive testimony at the international human rights subcommittee, of which I was chair.

The petitioners ask that we take a strong stand on the issue.

* * *

• (1645)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand at this time, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Natural Resources.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 26 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start today by offering a hearty congratulations to the government. The privilege debate in the House is now the longest in recorded Canadian history. I am sure that there is birthday cake, balloons and streamers in the back.

Privilege

Even though this might be a gift for the government, Canadians really want a gift in return. What they want in return is the production of the unredacted documents that the House has asked for and that the government fails to give. It is the power of the House of Commons, the power of the people. We are all elected by the people to ask the government and the government, under the power of Parliament, because of the Speaker's order, needs to give.

We are now six weeks into the House costing taxpayers a million dollars a day and still we have no production of documents. It is really a travesty in the House. We obviously have bigger fish to fry. We have bigger problems. As we stand here, we have a multitude of problems in the country. People are paying 37% more for groceries in Canada than they are in the U.S. We have a housing crisis, the biggest in a generation, where Canadians are paying double for mortgages, rents and down payments. There are 1,400 tent encampments across the country and two million Canadians are lining up at food banks, in Canada, a G7 nation.

We have the highest household debt in a generation. We are headed into more disaster. In the headlines this week, President-elect Donald Trump has announced a 25% tariff that he is going to levy on all goods and services to Canada if Canada does not fix its border.

We look at what that means for Canada. It is going to be devastating to all of our sectors. We put much importance on U.S.-Canada trade. We have had an incredible relationship for so long, so much so that we depend on trade for 40% of our economy. Our trade with the U.S. is almost double that of all other countries combined. We have a \$1.2-trillion responsibility.

We look at what has happened with trade. We have a weak leader, a weak Prime Minister who is not able to stand up for Canadians, who does not have a backbone. We are entering a really dangerous period of Canadian economics and Canadian sovereignty, where we are trying to hold on to what we have from CUSMA.

The U.S. is not just a partner; it is a lifeline to global trade. The consequences are dismal. If we do not get a trade deal together, if we are not able to stand up to President-elect Trump, then the consequences will be jobs and paycheques. There is going to be a depression for the Canadian economy.

It happened nine years ago when the Prime Minister was elected. When the government tried to negotiate with Trump last time, it failed. The government likes to say that it stood up to Trump and won.

I would recommend to anyone Robert Lighthizer's book called *No Trade is Free*. He was the U.S. trade representative the last time around. In his book, he goes into the details of what happened during the trade negotiations. They were dismal. On June 8, when we hosted the G7 summit and we were supposed to sign CUSMA, supposed to have the trade deal done, the finance minister and the Prime Minister went behind the U.S.'s back. They tried to have a team Canada approach and it failed miserably. They went to the press and said that they had an agreement signed. They rolled over the U.S. government and those representatives and they maddened those representatives. After that June 8 summit, when President-elect Trump left Canada, Canada was sidelined. It was put to the

side of CUSMA and, for three months, Mexico got to go into those trade negotiations. Mexico benefited from that.

Because of that failure in those trade negotiations, Mexico is now the U.S.A.'s number one trading partner and Canada is number three. When Conservatives were in power, we were the U.S.A.'s number one trading partner.

- (1650)

It says it right here in the book. The former chief of staff, Peter Navarro, had a really good quote. When he left those meetings on June 8, he said that the Prime Minister has a "special place in hell". Trade relationships were sour. We did not have a Prime Minister who stood up for Canadians and their values and, of course, we saw the end result of that.

The end result is worse than we could think. Half a trillion dollars of investment has gone south. The average American worker now makes \$32,000 more than the average Canadian worker. We have had entrepreneurs, investment and venture capital all escape south. It is not just a bad trade deal; it is increased taxes; it is the fact that we have a planned increase to the carbon tax of 61¢ per litre; we have increased capital gains taxes and we have decreased incentives for entrepreneurs, for investors and for capital as a whole to be placed into Canada.

Because of the lack of trade negotiations, the fact that the President-elect is tweeting, or truthing, that he is going to put these tariffs into place means that we are going to see decreased investment into Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday, we had an emergency debate on the issue of trade between Canada and the U.S. Now, the Conservatives have finally decided to have some discussion, when late last night there was no one around from the Conservative—

The Deputy Speaker: We cannot indicate whether someone is here or not.

I will remind the hon. member to just tie it back to the topic at hand, probably a couple of times more.

The hon. member for Bay of Quinte.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, have no fear, I will get back to markergate. The government seems to be sponsored by Sharpie because it only produces documents that have black ink. There is so much black ink on these documents that the printers have stopped working until they get an apology from the government. It comes back to the point that there are documents the House required and we have been sitting here for six weeks. With the amount of time that this member across the way speaks, I would think that he would love an opportunity to speak about something other than this privilege debate in the House.

Privilege

Of course we can go back to privilege, but that means we are not dealing with the bigger issues today, including tariffs. What is happening outside these borders does matter. Maybe the member would be delighted to know there are bigger things we would love to be talking about, including the fact that these tariffs on our most important trading relationship in the whole world are going to affect this economy, the Prime Minister does not have a plan to deal with the President-elect and he is weak when it comes to standing up for Canadians and what we require in this country.

The whole premise of that is we have an open border. We have more and more documented border incidents. The U.S. customs border agency looked at those numbers and they were pretty phenomenal. The Globe and Mail today talked about the number of incidents at the border in 2021 versus 2023; the number has gone up 1,000%. Last year alone there were over 24 documented incidents. These are not incidents where people are crossing the border and are caught, someone is trying to bring something in or has the wrong documentation; these are people not using a border crossing and crossing into the U.S.

When we talk about a porous border and the problems we have with immigration right now, our American counterparts are saying that the longest undefended border in the world is not keeping fentanyl out of their country or our country. It is also not preventing illegal immigration going south. We know the big problems when we look at the news of what is happening from the northern parts of Mexico into the U.S. Americans are saying that it is no longer safe and that our border is allowing some of those instances as well, which is very concerning.

We have to protect our borders, but we also have to ensure that we look at how we are protecting ourselves. One of the biggest problems in Canada right now is that we do not put enough money into our military. The government has planned to cut a billion dollars out of the military budgets at a time when we are not even coming close to meeting our NATO budgets.

When we talk about security we have to link that to trade, and when we talk about trade we have to link that to security. They are intermingled. If we are at the table with NATO, we are not going to find ourselves at the trade table. It is not just looking at our defence and military, it is also defending our borders and ports, where we have massive breaches of cybersecurity. Almost every day in our ports we have cybersecurity attacks.

It is also the Arctic, our northern border of North America, which we all know we have to defend. In Fortress North America, it is Canada's obligation to defend the Arctic because Russia is located in the Arctic.

When we talk about the immigration problem, we also talk about what is happening with the drug problem in Canada. We have 47,000 Canadians who have died from overdoses since the Prime Minister's drug liberalization policies, more deaths than in World War II. We need to emphasize the need for stricter drug policies, border security and prosecuting fentanyl traffickers to save lives and to protect communities. I come from one of those communities. Belleville, Ontario was ground zero for the opioid epidemic; the Municipality of Belleville declared a state of emergency that is still in place. We had 47 overdoses in only 36 hours and just one month

ago we had 11 overdoses in two hours. This is an epidemic happening not just in our big city centres, but also in our rural city centres.

• (1655)

When we look at preventing fentanyl and drug abuse in Canada, it means we have to protect the borders. What our trading partners are saying is that we need to protect the southern part as well.

We talk about the need to look at what our trading relationship looks like and why we need a strong leader. Canadians believe that we need a strong leader. There was a poll out this week that said 47% of Canadians believe the Leader of the Opposition would be the the best leader for dealing with President-elect Trump, while only 17% thought that the current Prime Minister would be best.

Donald Trump wants our businesses. He wants our jobs and he wants our resources. He probably wants the current Prime Minister to stay in place, because under him, the Americans have gained investments and jobs. The Prime Minister is putting a tax on carbon, which taxes our farmers and truckers. That puts the price of production up and means that our competitiveness against the Americans is down. They are able to compete against us because we have more taxes. Every time the Prime Minister raises a tax or blocks resource production, the Americans win. That is why they want the Prime Minister in and why it is so imperative that in the future, we have a new prime minister who can stand up for Canadians.

This is not just about the economy; it is also about entrepreneurship. This week at the trade committee, we had Ms. Dickinson from *Dragon's Den*. She was talking about the economic gap in Canada. We were asking her if the government really looks after entrepreneurs and investments in Canada and she said no. She said that the increase in capital gains seemed like just a cash grab. She felt that new tax increases on entrepreneurs hurt entrepreneurs like her, women entrepreneurs who are struggling hard to make Canada the place that they invest in, that they take risks in and that they ultimately grow and scale a business in. She said it is not just bad policy; it is economic vandalism. As she put it, there is no plan and no strategy, just tax grabs.

Privilege

Canada needs to stop relying on government band-aids. Entrepreneurs need incentives, private investment and a clear vision for growth. We have to empower innovation and bring prosperity home. That is why we have an economic gap in Canada. When we look at the money needed to invest in businesses, we need to look at what is happening with venture capital. The Americans generate \$200 billion of venture capital a year. Venture capital is the money that private investors invest in small, medium and large businesses. In Canada, it is only \$6 billion. It used to be \$15 billion. We have a problem of generating the capital needed to invest in businesses.

We could go further to talk about the bigger problems we have. We could have open banking in Canada. We have the capacity for not just the five to six big banks that have 95% of all the banking business in Canada. We could allow financial tech organizations to start up, giving access to capital to Canadians and the Canadian entrepreneurs who want to start, scale, innovate and provide great Canadian paycheques.

We want to talk about those things, but we are stuck in a privilege debate because of a green slush fund of \$1 billion, \$400 million of which, or 40%, was locked into 186 instances of conflicts of interest. Because of that, the public accounts committee decided to make sure we got all the documents related to this \$400-million slush fund and provided them to the government as a whole and ultimately to the RCMP. That is why it came to the House. The House decided. It was not just the Conservatives. The government loves to say that the Conservatives are filibustering, but it was Conservative, Bloc and NDP members, who make up a majority of the House, who stated that the government needs to hand over these documents to the police.

People would not believe the excuses we have heard here about why the Liberals would not. For the first couple of weeks, it was that we were violating the Charter of Rights, that somehow Parliament was underneath the charter, even though Parliament is supreme to it. Then, for some reason, the Liberals said the police did not want the documents; they were conducting their own investigation. The third iteration was to say that we should just flip this matter back to committee. Even though it came from committee, they think the answer is for it to go back to committee.

• (1700)

Ultimately, what this comes down to is that none of those answers hold any water. The only answer the government can give to this place is to answer the authority of Parliament and give the unredacted documents over. That is the only reason we have been here for six weeks locked in the longest privilege debate in Canadian history. The government should be ashamed of itself.

When we look at the problems across this country, we could be sitting in the House debating a lot of different items and issues. We could be talking about tariffs, how we are going to approach trade and how we are going to fix it. We could be talking about how to help entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, who only want to invest, innovate and save in a free Canada. However, we are not. We are in this place debating privilege.

The answer could not be more clear: On behalf of Canadians, the Liberals should hand over the documents, unredacted. The Liberals

should get rid of the black ink, lose their sponsorship with Sharpie and give over the documents that Parliament has asked for. If they do not, here is the big problem: It sets a dangerous precedent in this place. If Parliament's authority is wiped out, the people's power in the House is diminished.

When we all look around, we see that we have a green House of Commons. Does anyone know why it is green? It is supposed to signify the fields when democracy was handed over to the people from royalty, and we are supposed to represent the common people. That is why it is called the House of Commons. When we walk in here, the ultimate power does not rest with the government, the prime minister or the ministers. All the power of this place rests with the people.

When the people and Parliament ask for something of the government, the government has to hand it over. It is not "maybe", it is not "yes, but" and it is not "let's put it to committee". The Liberals have to hand the documents over. The failure to do that is a failure of democracy. It is a failure to listen to the people of the House, and it shows a government that is tired, a Prime Minister who is weak and, ultimately, a dead government walking.

We know that the only answer for that is a carbon tax election, where the people would have the ultimate referendum to decide who should be in power in this place and who should represent them. That is what we are looking for at the end of the day. We are looking for a prime minister who will stand up and put Canada first when it comes to the economy, Canada first when it comes to trade and, most importantly, Canada first when it comes to democracy, putting the people in power and ensuring that the people are in control of the House of Commons. As Laurier said, "Canada first, Canada last, and Canada always." Let us bring it home.

• (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the self-serving multi-million dollar political game continues.

My question to the member is related to the member's statement about individuals within the Conservative caucus having the power in a democratic system to say something. Here is a news headline: "[The leader of the Conservative Party]'s office maintains tight control over what Conservative MPs say and do." Conservative MPs are saying this, off the record of course. Referring to the Leader of the Conservative Party, they say, "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."

Today, we introduced legislation that would give a GST tax holiday to Canadians. The member does not have to speak on behalf of the leader of the Conservative Party because we already know the leader is voting against Bill C-78. My question is, will the member make a commitment to give a tax break to his constituents and vote yes on Bill C-78?

Privilege

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, I make the commitment that when we have a carbon tax election, we are going to axe the carbon tax, along with the 61¢ a litre increase the Prime Minister wants to impose on all Canadians, all farmers and all truckers. We are going to axe it permanently; we are going to axe it forever.

I am one of the members who have, of course, spoken here, and we get to speak freely in the House on behalf of Canadians. I would ask the member and his caucus a simple question: Are they able to speak in their caucus like we can in the Conservative caucus?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I picked up something from my colleague's speech about the RCMP. There seems to be a lot of confusion in here about what the RCMP actually said. I am wondering about that.

I hold the same view as the Conservatives. I would like to see the documents. I believe in the supremacy of Parliament, and that has been reaffirmed again and again. We always have to stand up for Parliament's right to send for papers. However, given the current impasse and the questions we have over what the RCMP wants, I want to put this to my colleague: Would it not be a prudent measure to get this motion to the procedure and House affairs committee so we can call the RCMP commissioner before the committee to educate MPs on what the proper process is? I ask because if there is anything nefarious in those documents, the last thing we want to do is ruin a potential police investigation.

I am wondering if my colleague has thoughts on the police process and if he is curious about hearing directly from the RCMP commissioner at committee. Maybe the Conservatives could call him forward as a witness.

• (1710)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, it does not matter what the RCMP said, because the RCMP should not be directed by the House of Commons. At the same time, this is not about the RCMP, because it is conducting its own investigation. It is about the power of Parliament to have documents produced. It does not matter if the motion says to give documents to the King of England; the fact of the matter is that Parliament has asked them to be given to the police.

The RCMP will conduct an independent investigation away from the government. The RCMP should act independently on its own accord, but this is completely about the House of Commons and its power. The privilege debate is about whether the government will hand documents over. If it will not, I hope the NDP will finally agree to an election so the people can decide this once and for all.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, we have talked a lot about this question of privilege and these documents that we are not receiving. There have been different stories about why the government should not give them to us. One of them is that we cannot interfere. My colleague has already talked about this, and we are not interfering.

Now, law enforcement will make the decision whether to process the potential evidence that we have, but if we do not hand it over,

what is that called, legally speaking? What does one call withholding potential evidence from law enforcement?

Do we really want to go there?

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, we are not looking at police procedure here; this is parliamentary procedure.

What is the precedent for the government not handing over documents that Parliament has asked for? In other words, what is the precedent for the government not doing what Parliament or the power of the people has asked for? That is the real question. We have to take that back to all of our constituents.

This is a historic lesson. We are locked in the longest privilege debate in Parliament's history because of the government's refusal. Other governments have gotten the hint before. Normally they call an election or put the issue to the people, but the government has not. The real question has to be what kind of power we want the people in this House of Commons to have in the future, because right now the precedent is that they would lose all of it.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not like asking questions about this, but the trend of the NDP-Liberal government is toward greater obstruction and censorship. We are looking at the censorship bills Bill C-11, Bill C-18 and Bill C-63, and we cannot forget the Winnipeg lab. Do members remember when we were requesting those documents and the Prime Minister went as far as to take the Speaker to court? He actually called an election to keep Canadians from having that knowledge. I am extremely worried about the precedent we would set if we do not challenge the government on this point.

Could my colleague please talk about the importance of precedent? Enough is enough for the Canadian people with the government. Let us call an election.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, the government and the Prime Minister promised to be the most transparent government in Canadian history. Instead of having that title, we are having the longest privilege debate in Canadian history. We have seen the opposite of what was presented. I think Canadians are finally seeing that.

We know that Canadians want an election. They not only want an election, but they want a carbon tax election to decide between a small rebate coming in the form of a cheque and axing the tax on newly built homes for the long run. They want an election. Let us have an election.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Bay of Quinte, representing the Conservative Party, says it does not matter what the RCMP has to say. This is what the RCMP says about the Conservative idea: “There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections.” The Conservatives' response is that it does not matter what the RCMP has to say; after all, their own self-serving leader wants to endlessly debate this multi-million dollar privilege motion. Who cares about Canadians or the RCMP?

Of course it matters what the RCMP has to say. Will the member opposite do the honourable thing and retract that bizarre statement?

• (1715)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about whether the government should be directing the RCMP or Parliament to do an investigation versus what is at stake in this debate. What is at stake is the fact that Parliament has asked for something. We are not here to direct the RCMP to conduct an investigation or to use certain pieces of evidence. We are here to ask for documents to be handed over.

The RCMP can decide not to take some of those documents, to use some of that evidence or to use none of it. That does not matter. What matters is that Parliament has asked for something to be done by the government, and the government has to do it for democracy, for Canadians and for Canada.

* * *

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the House:

- (a) firmly condemn the violent acts and the antisemitic gestures which took place during the demonstrations in Montreal on November 21 and 22;
- (b) condemn all attacks against the Jewish community and state clearly that Jewish Canadians, like all Canadians, have a right to live safely in this country;
- (c) condemn all forms of support for Hamas or any other terrorist group; and
- (d) reaffirm the right to peaceful and free protest.

[*Translation*]

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

It is agreed.

[*English*]

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to seek unanimous consent for the following motion: I move that the House recognize that the Liberal government waited nearly a week to condemn the violent anti-Semitic riots in Montreal and recognize that the member for Mount Royal says one thing—

Privilege

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

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. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the security-conscious residents of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to speak to this amendment to the amendment to the motion. The motion calls for an investigation into the Liberal government's ongoing failure to follow an order of the House to produce documents.

When I last rose in the House to speak to a subamendment to the motion, I highlighted how the failure of the government to produce the documents reflected the contempt the Liberals have for Parliament, our democracy and Canadians. During that speech, the member for Waterloo was kind enough to prove my point. The member interrupted my speech to claim she could not see the relevance between the Prime Minister's long history of showing contempt for Parliament and a motion concerning the government's current contempt for Parliament.

Today, I would like to make the same argument; however, rather than focusing on the dictatorial views and practices of the Prime Minister, I would like to make the case that the Liberals' incompetence is just as much a threat to democracy. It is my sincere hope that a Liberal MP will prove that point while putting the cherry on top by demonstrating that Liberals also do not listen very well. Canadians have been speaking up and calling for an end to the current government, if we can even call it that.

By definition, for a party to be a government, it has to govern. From this side of the House, it really appears as if the Liberals have just given up governing. The Liberals have abandoned passing legislation. The Liberal House leader has issued instructions to the media to regard our leader as the de facto prime minister and hold him accountable the way they would a real prime minister. The Liberals are completely consumed with their own drama teacher. It is as though they have lost the will to live. Rather than schedule a MAID appointment, the Liberals are just lying in the middle of the road, blocking traffic while Canadian commuters are stuck in the jam. This is all because they refuse to release documents they were ordered to provide by Parliament.

Privilege

Refusing to listen to Parliament is a recurring pattern with the Liberals. It is very timely that the Special Committee on the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship has tabled its report on the case of the national microbiology laboratory in Winnipeg. This is especially relevant today because it reveals a pattern of covering up for incompetence. Canadians may recall that the current government refused to hand over documents demanded by Parliament so that we could learn what actually happened at the lab. The government was so determined to ignore the will of Parliament that it took the former Liberal Speaker to court. That was an unprecedented attack on parliamentary democracy. Not only has that never happened before in Canada, but it may have also been a first for any parliamentary democracy. That is how far the Liberals were willing to go to keep the truth from Canadians.

Thanks to the Prime Minister's calling his pandemic-spreading election, all the work to hold the Liberals accountable had to be restarted. When the Liberals returned with even fewer votes and fewer seats, they had no choice but to seek a deal. The government would hand over the documents to MPs who were willing to agree to be permanently gagged about what they saw. These MPs would review the redactions the government claimed were necessary for national security; if the members disagreed with the government, the redactions would be reviewed by a panel of arbiters to determine how the information would be made public. The process was what allowed our colleagues to produce the report on what happened at the Winnipeg lab, and I want to thank the members of the committee for their work. The government had been smearing anyone who dared to ask about the lab. This report reveals that we had more than enough reasons to be concerned.

In August 2018, CSIS met with bureaucrats responsible for security at the lab. CSIS communicated its concerns about the two scientists at the centre of the controversy. The bureaucrats did nothing. In September 2018, the same bureaucrats learned that one of the scientists had been listed as inventor of a patent in China that may have contained information produced in Canada. The bureaucrats did nothing. In October 2018, the same bureaucrats learned that two individuals from China who had been sponsored to work at the national microbiology laboratory by the two disgraced scientists attempted to leave the national lab with 10 tubes in two bags.

● (1720)

That same month, one of the scientists took a trip to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It was during that time that she signed up for the notorious thousand talents program. Members of that program have been arrested, tried and convicted of espionage in the United States. The program is a major pipeline for the Communists who control China to steal technology.

Near the end of October 2018, the scientist's husband tried to leave the lab with two styrofoam containers that he insisted were empty. The bureaucrats did nothing. It was not until December 11, five months after CSIS first spoke with the officials at the Public Health Agency and the national lab, that bureaucrats decided to brief the president of the Public Health Agency. What did the top public health bureaucrat do when presented with these troubling facts? She did what the current government does best: She hired some outside consultants to conduct a fact-finding study. The consultants handed in their report three months later, on March 23,

2019, and their recommendation was an administrative investigation.

While the bureaucrats were busy hiring consultants to conduct studies to recommend investigations, on March 31, the two Communist agents shipped out live samples of Ebola and henipavirus to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It was not until the end of May 2019 that the public health bureaucrats picked up the phone and called the RCMP.

More than two months passed; the two scientists were escorted from the lab by the RCMP in July 2019. The Public Health Agency did not officially terminate their employment until January 2021. We were paying a salary to two Communist agents while the government told them to sit at home and await further instructions. Unsurprisingly, these scientist spies did not listen; they moved back to China, out of reach of Canada's legal system.

To sum it up, CSIS warned government officials of a threat posed by agents working on behalf of the Communists who control China. The senior government officials downplayed the concerns until it all blew up in their faces. No one bothered to brief the Liberals, or the Liberals did not bother to read their briefs. This is the same brand of incompetence that led to the public inquiry into foreign interference.

The Liberals ignored the warnings because they did not want to believe them. Liberals had fully bought into the belief that Russia had installed the 45th president and was plotting to do the same here in Canada, so it was easy for them to believe that someone they did not like received help from an odious regime. When the Liberals learned they were being assisted by the most odious regime on earth, the cognitive dissonance hit really hard. Taking real action would have meant admitting that they were not white knights in shining armour and, in fact, were no better than any politician they despised next door.

The Liberals reassured themselves by saying such things as “intelligence is not evidence”. It is ironic that Canadians can find no evidence of intelligence inside the government. Obviously, when talking about spies inside one of Canada's two most secure biolabs, issues of national security come into play.

That does not give the government the right to ignore Parliament, but it can explain a government's reluctance to make information public. However, what our colleagues saw was that nearly all the redactions were aimed at protecting the bureaucrats from embarrassment. Our colleagues were the ones who were gagged so that they could review the documents. The bureaucrats let spies run free in the most secure lab in Canada; they then sought to cover up their incompetence and tell the gullible Liberal ministers that, for national security reasons, the documents could not be shared.

Privilege

The DEI Liberal ministers lack the intellectual fortitude to challenge their deputies, which brings us back to today and to this motion. However, there is one major difference: Nothing about the green slush fund involves national security. This is a classic case of Liberals helping to enrich Liberals. We saw it in the sponsorship scandal. In Ontario, we saw it with the Green Energy Act. When those McGuinty-Wynne Liberals were booted from office, they packed up their taxpayer-funded moving vans and came to Ottawa to run the Prime Minister's Office.

It is clear that the only reason the Liberals refuse to release the documents is that the documents would reveal the full extent of the corruption. It has left them resorting to ridiculous excuses. My favourite is the claim that the Liberal insiders have a charter right to steal taxpayers' dollars. That is the level of desperation they have descended to.

• (1725)

They can make as many excuses as they want. They can invent as many fake rights as they want. None of it matters. Canada will always be a parliamentary democracy and in a parliamentary democracy, the government answers to Parliament. This is not open to debate or interpretation. It is a fact. They must release the documents. While they are at it, they can release the names too. However, the Liberals will not. They will not let Canadians see the truth.

Providing the documents would make it easier for Canadians to connect the dots, including dots like the proud socialist Minister of Environment having a financial interest in a venture capital fund, like the owner of the venture capital fund sitting on the board of SDTC during this period of Liberal corruption, and like SDTC giving funds to companies that the venture capital fund had also invested in.

The Liberals were so happy with this venture capitalist's work on the SDTC board, handing money out to their friends, that the cabinet appointed her to sit on the board of the Liberal Infrastructure Bank.

The Minister of Environment's favourite capitalist came to committee and was adamant that she had always recused herself from decisions relating to companies she had interest in. She also insisted there were only two companies. Naturally, my colleagues were curious. They had a list of companies that SDTC had given funds to and a list of companies that the venture capitalist had invested in. The names that matched up on both lists were more than two, quite a bit more. The environmental activist turned venture capitalist had an explanation at hand. She simply explained that her venture capital fund only invested in the company after it had received SDTC funding. She was the longest-serving board member and sat on the project review committee. What a cozy little relationship.

The taxpayer-funded Sustainable Development Technology Corporation employees would receive applications from hundreds of companies every year. These hard-working, diligent employees reviewed the applications and filtered out the duds. After this long application process, only the most viable projects from the most viable companies were recommended by the staff at SDTC. Those recommendations went to the project review committee.

I believe the venture capitalist when she insists she followed the conflict of interest rules. She had been on the board long enough before the former minister for Rogers decided to stack the board with friends. She would not do anything to jeopardize her access to the SDTC pipeline of promising investment opportunities. Researching investment opportunities is what makes or breaks a venture capital company.

Luckily for her and her investors, like the Minister of Environment, she had taxpayers fund her research. I always thought the man the Montreal newspapers like to call the "Green Jesus of Montreal" was an odd fit for the Liberals. It must be pretty awkward for the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice having to condemn the watermelon brigade protesters who come to their homes and target their families when their colleague was arrested for invading the property of former premier of Alberta Ralph Klein.

When I learned that the same man who stood in the House and declared himself to be a proud socialist was really a venture capitalist, it all made sense. He is a raging hypocrite and a perfect fit for the Liberal Party. He preaches socialism for the people but practises capitalism for himself and his well-connected Liberal friends.

For Canadians watching at home now or in the future, I ask that they consider the case of the proud socialist environment minister and his friend the venture capitalist. We have laws prohibiting public officials from conflicts of interest. We have laws against corruption. If laws were broken, the evidence will come out, if not by the current government, then by the next. What we do not have are laws preventing well-connected Liberals from taking advantage of every opportunity to enrich themselves. The Minister of Environment likes to claim all his carbon taxes will create economic opportunities. That was the same pitch Dalton McGuinty used when he brought in the Green Energy Act in Ontario.

• (1730)

Ontario's Auditor General found the Green Energy Act destroyed 60,000 jobs and cost ratepayers billions of dollars in extra fees. However, well-connected Liberals made a fortune by forcing industrial wind turbines down the throats of small rural communities.

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As we saw with the case of the venture capitalist, she followed the conflict rules to the letter so she could continue to find promising investment opportunities at the taxpayers' expense. Those same taxpayers, hard-working Canadians, never get those same opportunities. Now the proud socialist venture capitalist, the Minister of Environment, gets richer while Canadians line up at food banks.

The government can make a show of shutting down SDTC, but in the end, it feels like we are all playing a game of Whac-a-Mole. Just as we knock down a bunch of well-connected Liberals at SDTC, new ones pop up at the Infrastructure Bank or the local journalism initiative. We know the \$400 million given out at SDTC was only the tip of the iceberg, which brings us back to the motion and the amendment.

As I have explained, this is not about national security. There is no reason to withhold the documents. The government's excuses have become ridiculous. The government even claimed handing over the documents to the RCMP would violate people's rights. I would ask Canadians to think about what the government is claiming. Well-connected Liberals may have broken laws to enrich themselves.

The victims in this case are the Government of Canada and, through it, the taxpayers of Canada. Now the Liberal Party is claiming that to share evidence, the government would be victimized and it would violate the Charter rights of well-connected Liberals. Imagine if the government took this view on all crime. It would be like telling a rape victim she cannot describe the appearance of her attacker to police because it would violate his right to privacy.

While this example is meant to illustrate just how absurd the government's argument for withholding the documents is, there is probably some woke academic working on a paper arguing that reporting crime violates the rights of criminals from marginalized communities. While this idea might become part of some future Liberal platform, I have not seen or heard any policy announcement from the government that would prevent the victim of crime from providing evidence of a crime to police. For now, it is still legal for victims to report crimes against them to police.

The government's claim it cannot turn over documents to the RCMP falls apart like a wet paper straw. That means there are only two plausible scenarios for why the government refuses to hand over the documents. The first is what we will call the bio lab scenario. Just as we saw in the Winnipeg lab case, the bureaucrats were embarrassed by the fact they had allowed a couple of spies to run free in what was supposed to be one of the most secure facilities on the planet. Those bureaucrats told their political masters the documents needed to be redacted for national security and the Liberals were too incompetent to ask any tough questions.

In this situation, the bureaucrats at Industry Canada tasked with oversight of Sustainable Development Technology Canada failed at their job and do not want the public to know. These bureaucrats told their political masters the documents cannot be released because it would violate people's due process rights and the Liberal government is too incompetent to realize it is being duped. Incredibly, this first option is the best-case scenario.

The second possible option is the ad scam scenario. In this case, the documents contain evidence of criminality beyond just failures to recuse for conflicts of interest. We know the Auditor General only looked at a sample of the funds handed out by Navdeep Bains' hand-picked board members. Only the documents in the possession of the government would reveal the true scale of the government. The government cannot hand them over to the RCMP because that would only result in well-connected Liberals being arrested.

As this tired, worn-out, weak government prepares for the Hail Mary of election campaigns, the last thing it wants is a series of stories covering the trials of well-connected Liberals. Covering up for rampant criminality is objectively terrible, but it would at least rationally explain why the so-called government has abandoned governing and given up on Parliament altogether. We must never assume malice when incompetence is still an option.

Fortunately, whether the government is acting with criminality or from incompetence, the solution is the same. It is time for a carbon tax election, because only a carbon tax election can end the corruption of well-connected Liberals helping well-connected Liberals.

• (1735)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the motion that members are debating says we are supposed to take the issue and, instead of debating it, send it to PROC. This is a Conservative motion. The moment the Conservatives stop speaking on the motion, it will go to PROC, as the motion suggests.

The member opposite should be congratulated. She has just given the 200th Conservative speech in this multi-million dollar filibuster. The Conservatives' arguments are absolutely bogus. The issue should be going to PROC. They are doing a great disservice to Canadians.

Does the member support the legislation we introduced today, Bill C-78, to give a GST tax break to Canadians for the holiday season?

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Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, this is about the demand for the production of documents. The Liberals may wish to hide everything off in a committee someplace, but by keeping it at the forefront, Canadians are reminded, and some for the very first time, that the Liberals will not hand over documents. The corruption we have seen in a fraction of the documents that the Auditor General audited is just the tip of the iceberg. If she has a chance to go through all the documents, we may find there is criminality involved with members on that side of the chamber.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois completely agrees that the government has to be transparent and disclose the information in the documents.

However, I have one fairly simple question I would like to ask my colleague. I know that, in the past, she opposed a motion that reaffirmed Canada's commitment to the Paris Agreement. My question is this: Does she agree that the planet is warming, as the scientific data show? In simpler terms, does she believe that global warming is real?

• (1740)

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the climate has been changing since earth was first created. We have gone through hundreds of millions of years. In fact, this place where we are now used to be a desert at one point, and at another point it was buried by a glacier. It is really insulting to ask whether or not somebody believes in climate change, unless of course they are referring to the church of climate change, socialism.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, did the member just say that man-made climate change does not exist? Is that what we just heard in the House? I am speechless as an Albertan who represents a province where, for example, the beloved city of Jasper burned down because of direct impacts of climate change. I am looking around the world, where we are seeing women and girls directly impacted by climate change, where people are losing their homes, their lives and their livelihoods to climate change.

Did the member just say she does not believe that human-caused climate change exists?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, had the member been listening, the question asked of me was whether or not there was climate change, to which I said of course there was. If the other member wants to dream up some other conspiracy theory, she is quite welcome to.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speeches because she really gets down to the ideological drive of the current government. She knows that when the current Prime Minister was asked which country he admired the most, he said he admired the basic dictatorship of China. Most people on this side would have said Canada.

My concern is the drift of the government toward more censorship and more authoritarian methods to control information that is given to Canadians. In a free society, that is unacceptable.

Could my colleague please comment on this increase in censorship and how it leads to totalitarian governments?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, there have been several bills before the House, including the one to tax the Internet. There have been many censorship bills, such as Bill C-11, which restricted what we can see and hear on the Internet.

With all of this, be it the carbon tax or anything that makes life more expensive, it is the goal of the government to make life less affordable. All that is meant, as the Prime Minister himself has said, to change this from a democratic society to one where technocrats and autocrats like him run the country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is a bit much to hear the member say that, when we know that there are Conservative MPs who have been very clear in saying, even though they wanted to be anonymous when they were saying it, that the leader of the Conservative Party is "the one who decides everything. His main adviser is himself ... The people around him are only there to realize the leader's vision."

Today, for example, we brought forward legislation, Bill C-78, that is going to give a GST holiday on many products. I am wondering if the member will wait until her leader tells her how to vote on this legislation or if she will vote the way she feels her constituents want her to vote. I believe that would be to vote yes for Bill C-78 to give Canadians a bit of a tax break for the holiday season. Would she not agree that would be good?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the Liberals deny, distract and delay, and that is exactly what that question was doing.

We are here today because there is every indication that the government is hiding corruption. We have seen a bit of what has already surfaced in the papers, but we want to see how deeply it runs. That is what this debate is about. As soon as the Liberals produce the documents required by Parliament, as is the law, we will move on to their next little mission, whatever that is, to make life less affordable for Canadians.

• (1745)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, what I particularly like about debates in the House is that we learn so much. I just learned that my Conservative colleague has admitted, in answer to my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, that climate change is caused by humans. We can look at the blues.

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The Conservatives, they tell us, are very focused on government spending. Now that we know they admit that climate change is caused by humans, does my colleague agree with me that sending Canadian taxpayer dollars to the world's biggest polluters does not make any sense? What is more, these are the wealthiest companies because they make record profits.

Does she agree with me that we should stop sending money from the Canadian government to Alberta's oil companies?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, they have to stop taxing Canadians and taking that tax under the guise of being able to change the weather, and they have to stop giving that tax money to the friends of Liberals, so they can invent alternative forms of energy production that end up costing taxpayers and homeowners even more. We went through this already in Ontario. People had to decide whether they would heat their homes or eat. The Liberals destroyed it at the provincial level and are trying to make it happen all across Canada.

Conservatives are going to stop that. We are going to make things right.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to say that it was an honour to join those at the Lucan Scout and Guide Hall as it celebrated its 40th anniversary, which is a truly remarkable milestone. The event was filled with nostalgia and excitement, especially as I had the privilege to witness the opening of a time capsule that had been sealed since 1984. It was fascinating to see the items and memories preserved from the past, each one telling a unique story about the people and events that shaped the group's history. The experience was not only nostalgic, but also deeply inspiring, reminding everyone present of the enduring gift of scouting and community.

What made the day even more special was the opportunity to contribute to the legacy being created. I presented the hall with a new portrait of King Charles III for the participants to hang for future generations. I am thrilled to share that a record of my statement of the events made today in the House will be preserved for the next time capsule, ensuring that future generations can look back and appreciate this moment.

I send my congratulations once again to the Lucan Scout and Guide Hall on 40 years of incredible service, dedication and community building. Its contributions have truly made a lasting impact, and I wish it continued success and growth over the years to come. Here is to the next 40 years of achievement and cherished memories.

As we are into the festive season right now, I would also like to take a quick moment to extend my warmest and most heartfelt Christmas greetings to everyone in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and beyond. As we come together to celebrate the joyous season with family, friends and loved ones, let us pause to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas: the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ. His arrival brought hope, peace and love into the world, and his message continues to inspire and guide us today.

The season is a time of renewal and a chance to embrace the spirit of kindness, compassion and generosity. It is also a reminder of the importance of community and the bonds that unite us all, regardless of our backgrounds or our beliefs. As we gather at our festive tables, exchange gifts and share the laughter of those closest to us, let us also remember those in need and extend a helping hand whenever we can.

May the Holy Spirit fill everyone's homes this Christmas, blessing them with warmth, joy and peace. May our hearts overflow with gratitude for the blessings of the past year and with hope for the opportunities that lie ahead. Let us carry on the values of Christmas, which are love, forgiveness and understanding, not only during this holiday season, but also throughout the coming year, spreading light wherever we go.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas filled with cherished moments and unforgettable memories. May the love of Jesus Christ bless everyone and their families today and always. As we look on to the new year, may it be one of promise, prosperity and happiness, filled with health, success and countless reasons to smile. I wish a merry Christmas and a bright and prosperous new year to all.

We are here today again debating a privilege motion, which I have spoken to once before. We are here because the Liberal government does not want to produce unredacted documents to give to the RCMP. I would like to read into the record a list of every Liberal scandal that I could find. I will give fair warning that the list is not exhaustive, and I strongly believe that most rational individuals will believe that the government has not finished adding to the count. Traditionally, we would have the 12 days of Christmas, but after nine years of NDP-Liberal government, I bring members 68 scandals this Christmas instead. Let us take a walk down scandal lane together as we review the 68, and counting, Liberal scandals.

There was the Aga Khan vacation scandal and the prison needle exchange program. The Prime Minister pressured the then justice minister to get Liberal donor SNC-Lavalin off the hook and fired that justice minister for not helping with the cover-up. There was the "people experience things differently" response to groping allegations and the WE Charity scandal. The Prime Minister assaulted an NDP MP in the House of Commons and prorogued Parliament to escape the WE Charity scandal.

The Liberals sent personal protective equipment to China during a pandemic and gave hundreds of thousands of dollars in ventilator contracts to Liberal Party insider Frank Baylis. There were the fake charges against Mark Norman. There is rampant sexual assault in the military, and they illegally invoked the Emergencies Act, fabricating reasons to explain the Emergencies Act being invoked. The Public Health Agency of Canada was found in contempt of Parliament in the Winnipeg lab document scandal, and there was the Public Health Agency tracking scandal.

There was the trampling of Canadians with horses and the seizing of Canadians' bank accounts. There was rampant abuse of staff in the office of the then governor general, who was appointed by the Prime Minister, and the Governor General wasted over \$100,000 to throw private jet parties. There were Liberal connections with illegal casino magnate, vaccine delays and unwarranted vaccine mandates.

The Prime Minister dressed up in racist costumes on an official trip to India and dressed up in racist blackface costumes at least three times over 11 years, but this number is only how many times the Prime Minister can remember doing so. There were the mass airport delays and cancellations, and there was the decriminalization of hard drugs. The flag was lowered for half a year, and the Prime Minister polluted more in one year on his private jet than an average Canadian does in half a lifetime. There were also more than 72 secret orders in council.

• (1750)

The Liberals sent diplomats to a party at the Russian embassy during the invasion of Ukraine, and they have a minister who gave a \$17,000 contract to a Liberal-aligned media firm. They let Thomson Reuters take the Prime Minister's chief of staff to the White House press correspondents' dinner, and the DND minister misrepresented service.

The Liberals tried to get unwarranted border searches of electronics, and they restricted online free speech. They spent \$11 million to renovate the Prime Minister's cottage, raised the carbon tax during an energy crisis, ignored racist laws in Quebec and misinformed Canadians about electoral reform. The Prime Minister skipped the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to go surfing in Tofino.

The Liberals were eliminating mandatory minimums for gun offences while going after law-abiding firearms owners. The Prime Minister is flying in his private jet to climate conferences and was partying in Scotland maskless while Canadians were still under lockdowns. The Liberals failed reforms in the ATIP system and awarded contracts to government employees without proper bids, such as those with GC Strategies for the ArriveCAN, or arrive scam, app.

The Prime Minister had an \$8-million barn built at Harrington Lake and a Jamaica vacation that cost Canadian taxpayers at least \$162,000. We have the Liberal cover-ups of foreign interference with the family friend rapporteur, Liberals not naming foreign threats, and the Bernardo and Magnotta prison transfers. The Liberals have a known compromised MP on their benches.

There was the former Speaker's Nazi scandal and the Liberals' waiting to designate the IRGC as a terrorist group. We have skyrocketing debt, skyrocketing inflation, skyrocketing addictions and skyrocketing overdose deaths. Other scandals include other Randy, the incompetent mismanagement of CERB, the failing promises on Senate reform and an anti-Semitic human rights chair.

The ECCC politicized the Jasper wildfire response, and a \$9-million penthouse was purchased for Tom Clark. There is the illegal plastics ban and the green slush fund, or SDTC, which is why we are here today. There are the CBC bonuses, the CBC CEO's travel

Privilege

to Paris and the immigration crisis. The Liberals are pulling refunds away from farmers for unnecessary fertilizer tariffs and then charging them interest. The Minister of Environment awarded funding to his own company. There is India's criminal activity and how it was announced and then retracted. We found out there was no other Randy. Now there is \$6.5 billion to be spent in a shallow attempt to buy votes. There is more to come, I am sure.

That is the over 68 scandals from the last nine years. Meanwhile, Canadians are struggling to eat, heat and house themselves. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government and its heavy-handed carbon tax, that is what is happening in Canada. The government has a pattern of giving its friends hundreds of millions of dollars, taxpayer dollars, while shirking responsibility for all it has done to destroy Canadians' livelihoods.

McKinsey & Company, the consultants being sued because of their role in providing hard drugs to Canadians, has been awarded \$200 million in contracts since 2015. Most of the time the Prime Minister's WEF buddy, Dominic Barton, led the board of directors, only to run off when the drug market became too hot for him. Members need not worry. The Prime Minister failed to hold Dominic Barton accountable for contributing to one of Canada's greatest calamities, and one of the NDP-Liberals' greatest calamities since they formed government, but he did give him a position in government as the Canadian ambassador to the People's Republic of China, of all things. With drug-related overdose deaths increasing 400% after his legalization experiment and overdose deaths becoming the number one cause of death for teenagers, do we think a big promotion and a paycheque for another Liberal insider was worth the tax dollars? I think most Canadians, and in fact all Canadians, would say no.

Let us go back over the McKinsey contracts to let Canadians know about how their \$200 million was spent. The Auditor General report cites that 90% of its contracts did not have the appropriate guidelines. It was not even clear what the purpose of the contract was or if the desired outcome was achieved, with 70% of contracts being non-competitive and sole-sourced directly to McKinsey, without a single attempt to explain why a non-competitive process was justified. McKinsey even raised a statement of work to skirt the Canada Border Services Agency after its initial statement did not qualify.

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This is not how we manage a free, fair and democratic society. It will take years, if not decades, to recover from the calamity and restore public trust. With thousands of Canadians dead, many more addicted to hard drugs and every Canadian taxpayer robbed, it is certain the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the crime, the corruption or the cost.

● (1755)

Another scandal the incompetent NDP-Liberal government has been involved with that people are still livid about is the arrive scam app. While Canadians struggled through the implications of the pandemic, the NDP-Liberal government managed to waste at least \$60 million on an app that did not work.

The app was originally designed for declaring customs in advance, but the only thing the app completed was enriching a shady, two-man, IT company that had ties to senior Liberal politicians. The Prime Minister not only allowed this to take place but also defended it. Initially budgeted at \$80,000, the app's cost ballooned to over \$60 million. Let us think about that: An app that was mimicked by university students in a basement over a weekend somehow cost taxpayers \$60 million.

The Auditor General not only reported that the arrive scam app cost around \$60 million but also admitted that the exact cost was impossible to calculate due to CBSA's poor record keeping. CBSA also reported that \$12.2 million of the \$60 million could be unrelated to the app. Where did the money go? It went to Liberal insiders. What a surprise that is. While Canadians are struggling, the NDP-Liberal government has put its own interests ahead of Canada, hidden the truth rather than face accountability and wasted taxpayer dollars on pipe dreams and vanity projects.

The report also states that GC Strategies was paid up to \$19 million, when the original cost was \$9 million. GC Strategies was handed a non-competitive contract, despite there being no record of a request or even a proposal. For an app that cost \$60 million, it did not work at all. The app's failure actually led to 10,000 Canadians being quarantined despite doing everything right.

Canadians deserve to know where their taxpayer dollars are going and why their money is going to waste. While Canadians did their best to stay healthy and safe, the Liberals spent their money around programs that did not work, in order to line the pockets of their elite friends. Canadians are paying the price, not only in higher taxes and rising costs but also in blatant corruption that has affected the very top of the Liberal government.

We would think the Liberals had learned a lesson, but alas no. Let us take a look at another ethics scandal involving one of Canada's now most notorious ministers, the now unemployed former minister of employment. It has come to light that he maintained ties to a lobbyist who secured a staggering \$110 million in federal contracts. That is not all; the minister himself was also a director of a company that raked in an additional \$8 million in government contracts. This is not just mismanagement; it is deceit.

It has been reported that the minister tried to conceal payments he was receiving from his own lobbying firm while the same firm was lobbying his own ministry. I cannot believe it, but it gets worse. Text messages from the minister's business partner showed

that a Randy was in regular contact with the co-owner of the company even while serving as minister. What was his excuse? He claims it was just another Randy.

Canadians deserve better than this. They deserve better than the flimsy excuse from a senior cabinet minister. We have learned that the same business allegedly claimed to be indigenous-owned despite the minister's repeatedly stating that he is not indigenous. This is a clear pattern with the Liberal government, lining its own pockets while Canadians struggle to make ends meet. The cost of living is skyrocketing and families are forced to make very tough choices, yet Liberal ministers seem more concerned with enriching themselves.

An affidavit filed last week claims that a company co-founded by the former minister and his partner took a \$250,000-deposit for medical gloves that were never delivered. Even though the minister was supposed to cut ties with the company after his re-election in 2021, it is clear he continued to co-own and benefit from it.

Canadians are tired of the lies, the cover-ups and the complete disregard for ethical standards. They deserve accountability. How much money was taken from hard-working taxpayers? Did the minister defraud indigenous people by falsely claiming an indigenous identity? It is not enough that he lost his job and that his company is barred from receiving federal contracts for 90 days. That is a slap on the wrist for this level of corruption and indecency.

● (1800)

Canadians deserve a government that is transparent, accountable and focused on serving the people, not on serving itself. It is time for a common-sense Conservative government to restore trust, integrity and fiscal responsibility in Ottawa. If what I have said is not enough to make members agree, let us unpack a few more things that have happened recently.

The Liberal government placed a massive tariff on fertilizer coming from Russia when the invasion of Ukraine began, and most of the fertilizer that is used in Ontario and Quebec comes from Russia. Farmers pre-ordered and prepaid, months in advance, for what they required for the spring planting. Such a sudden change drove prices through the roof and helped contribute to the inflation on food prices that Canadians still suffer from.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be midnight, pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28, the minister's request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

* * *

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.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, even the Liberals had second thoughts about the slapdash tax and its impact, and they issued a partial refund. The refund was paid from the government to a distributor, who did the honourable thing and returned the refund directly to farmers.

However, almost a year later, the government has decided that it wants the money back, and it is demanding interest. Fairness seems to apply only to Liberal insiders. How fair is it that farmers who are suffering from poor policy decisions are now on the hook for the NDP-Liberal government's being too reprehensible to honour a rebate?

Recently I had the opportunity to ask bureaucrats from across departments whether the action was even legal and how they had received the power to make such a decision. They could not answer. One person even suggested that it was up to the individual border agents.

It is beyond ridiculous to suggest that a decision impacting farmers' livelihood and costing millions of dollars did not follow procedure or was not grounded with a law or policy. It is absurd for the government to suggest that such a decision would and could be made by an individual CBSA agent. However, in the wacko government, apparently nobody bothered to check first.

Now let us look at the finance minister and her vibe cheque, because yes, now the government is slashing temporarily and spending \$6.28 billion in a thinly veiled attempt to buy votes from Canadians who are already earning a six-figure income. One might think that they could take a moment and think to use some of the money to pay off the over \$1.2 trillion in national debt, but why would they? Going deeper in the hole for showmanship and self-glorification is the ultimate Liberal play, tried and true.

Do not take my word for it; here is testimony from Jeff, the owner of a small business in my riding: "How does the government expect my small business to take HST off of all of these items in one night? We have to collect the HST December 13 and have it off on December 14. How am I supposed to manually do this for all the items in a convenience store? It would be easier to close my business for two months than to do all of this. This is an absolute joke and a travesty to lay this on small business owners and right before Christmas and for only two months. It's going to take me a week to manually change every item. If I get it wrong, I'm going to be charged interest by our government. What an absolute embarrassment of a government, and no wonder no one wants to start a small business anymore."

Privilege

Small businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy, and what I hear when I am speaking with Canadians is that from farms to convenience stores, everything the NDP-backed Liberal government is doing is set to destroy them. Canadians are tired of the relentless, oppressive flood of ineptitude coming from our Prime Minister and his horde of yes-men and yes-women.

People do not want policy and government run from scribbles off the back of a napkin. They deserve a positive change. They want hope for a better future. They want common sense, and only a Conservative government will give them that.

We will axe the tax, letting people keep more of their money that they worked so hard for. We will build homes, starting by removing the GST on new builds, which will save people up to \$50,000, and get an additional 30,000 homes built every year. We will fix the budget, beginning with a dollar-for-dollar rule to curb excessive government spending. We will stop the crime by repealing the broken catch-and-release bail policies that are endangering our lives.

I plead with the Liberal government to hand over the unredacted documents to the RCMP and let it do the investigation. Let us get Parliament going. Canadians deserve accountability and transparency from the Liberal government, and they want it today.

● (1805)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member liked to focus some attention on scandals. Let me give her a list of her current leader's scandals while he was in government for nine years: anti-terrorism, \$3.1 billion; Phoenix scandal, \$2.2 billion; G8 spending scandal; ETS scandal, \$400 million for that one; F-35 scandal; Senate scandal; and elections scandals, with more than one scandal there. I have a booklet—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): First of all, members who want to participate should wait until it is the appropriate time, and I am sure the hon. member who made her speech will be able to respond. I know she is very capable.

I caution the hon. parliamentary secretary about pointing to a document. He can quote from the document but he cannot show it.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have a book that clearly shows 70 actual scandals and abuses of power when the member's leader was involved with Stephen Harper. In fact, this is one I find really interesting: "Harper Found in Contempt of Parliament". That is while her leader was Harper's parliamentary secretary. There is also, of course, contempt of Parliament.

Fast-forward to today, and the Leader of the Conservative Party, as the leader of an opposition party, is in borderline contempt of Parliament because of a multi-million dollar game. That is all we are witnessing from the Conservative Party. When will the current Leader of the Conservative Party start paying more respect to Canadians and stop the multi-million dollar abuse of power and contempt of Parliament?

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I take offence at my hon. colleague's comments, because what I believe Canadians want is an open and transparent government. The NDP-Liberal government even said itself that it promised to be the most open and transparent government that there was.

Instead, what we have had in nine years of NDP-Liberal government is the most corrupt government in Canadian history. I gave 68 scandals and a list of things that have happened in the last nine years, and the list is growing. What Canadians want is a responsible government that will be accountable to the Canadian taxpayer with their money, and that is what Conservatives are going to do.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, people sometimes watch our debates, and some folks have a good memory for what happens in politics. They realize that no matter which party is in power, whether it is dark blue or red, and which party is in opposition, the two sides will accuse one another of having been worse. It is inevitable. It is always the same.

My question is this. Is it not time we gave more thought to ensuring that governments, regardless of political stripe, really do have the common good in mind, the welfare of ordinary folks, rather than that of the big lobbies that can impress people with their luxury receptions?

[*English*]

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, yes, I truly believe that Canadians want us to work together collectively for the good of the Canadian people, and that is what I do here day in and day out as I represent the people of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. What the people in my riding are telling me is that they want the government to be held accountable for all the scandals. They are hurting.

We are in a cost of living crisis because the government mismanages everything it touches, and everything in this country is broken. The government needs to be held accountable. What Canadians are asking the government to do is hand over the unredacted documents to the RCMP so the Liberals can be held accountable.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, the previous intervention was just a small snapshot of what Canadians have been treated to over the last two months, basically the Conservatives and the Liberals arguing with one another over whose record was worse while in government. I

have news: They are equally bad. There is a long list of scandals in Conservative governments and in Liberal governments. To borrow from Tommy Douglas's Mouseland, the red cats and the blue cats are arguing in front of mice over who is going to be the better government.

That aside, I asked the following question previously to a Conservative colleague because there was some mix-up or poor understanding of what the RCMP actually wanted in this case. I do support Parliament's unfettered right to send for documents.

If the matter does eventually get to the procedure and House affairs committee, what would my hon. colleague think about using that opportunity to call the RCMP commissioner forward as a witness so he could explain to parliamentarians exactly what the correct process is? I am sure the member would agree with me that we do not want to interfere in or unjustly deviate from an ongoing police investigation.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, the reality is that the Liberal record is also the NDP record because the NDP members continue to back up the Liberal government. They are the ones propping this Liberal government up. Canadians want a carbon tax election, and they want it now. However, the NDP members continue to vote with the Liberals and back up the Liberal government, prolonging this Parliament and prolonging the suffering of Canadians due to the cost of living crisis. It will not call a carbon tax election, which is what Canadians want. That is the NDP record.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to be giving a speech later, and I would love to run through those scandals again, just to reiterate how scandal-ridden and plagued the Liberal government is.

We have a government that is unwilling to comply with an order from the Speaker. The Liberals want to do cartwheels about the ghost of Stephen Harper hiding under their beds. However, what does it say when the Liberals talk about these scandals, yet will not comply with something very basic when people have clearly broken the law?

• (1815)

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, it says that there is no transparency or accountability in the government, which is what Canadians are asking for. One of the scandals I read into the record was on the plastics registry and the plastics ban. I have received a copy of a letter from a congressman in the United States who wrote to the Canadian ambassador, saying this: "Violation of Trade Agreements: The 'Canadian Plastics Registry' seems to violate USMCA's environmental and trade provisions, especially in Chapter 24, sections 2, 4, and 5, potentially undermining established trade agreements."

Also, the Coalition of Concerned Manufacturers and Businesses Canada has said, “the [Liberal] government [needs] to abandon its plans to impose a ‘plastics registry’ on that important industry. This policy proposal has been found to contravene the USMCA trade agreement and has become an ongoing trade irritant.” Everything the Liberal government touches, including this plastics ban, is detrimental to, and is undermining, Canadians, who just want a carbon tax election, so let us call one now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in my first question, I talked about how scandalous the leader of the Conservative Party has been during his time in government. Let me amplify how things have not changed. He is the only leader in the House of Commons who refuses to get the security clearance. There have been people murdered in the streets. We have all sorts of issues regarding foreign interference, and he says that he does not want to get a security clearance. Why is that? The leader of the Conservative Party does not have the courage to come forward and say that there is something in his past that he is hiding, and he does not have the courage to come forward and tell Canadians what it is.

Will the member tell and encourage her leader to get that security clearance?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind members that when someone has the floor, the hon. members know full well that they are to provide the opportunity for that individual to make their responses. If anybody else wants to participate, they should wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex has just a little over a minute to respond.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: You might want to side step it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. parliamentary secretary not to keep adding words because he does not have the floor.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I find that comment rich, coming from the Liberal benches, because the Prime Minister has a security clearance. What has he done about it? You still have people who are compromised sitting on your benches—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member knows that she is supposed to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the members.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I apologize. Through you, the Liberal Party has people who we know are compromised sitting on their benches. If the Prime Minister has security clearance and if he knows about it and has done nothing, then why should we have security clearance? We do not need a security clearance. We need a carbon tax election so that Canadians can decide for themselves who has the right to govern in this country. This country needs a new mandate. Conservatives want a carbon tax election, and so do Canadians, so let us call one.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I have some comments

Privilege

for the member from Winnipeg, but before I do, I want to recognize a few people, and I will gladly share with the member from Winnipeg.

I want to recognize the life of Helen Methot. She leaves behind her husband, Clair Methot, and her grandson, among others, Dylan Methot, who has been a friend of mine for about 30 years. I remember when Helen and Clair helped me, when I was about 17 years old, with tremendous generosity, and I was very saddened to learn of her death recently. My deepest condolences go to her family. May perpetual light shine upon her.

On a happier note, I recently met someone from Kamloops, Trish White. She let me know that she would be getting married this weekend to Bruce Wilby. I would like to congratulate Trish and Bruce on their upcoming wedding. I wish them a lifetime of happiness on their special day that is coming up in just four days.

I will move on to the heart of the comment. I love how the Liberals just love to tell the world that it is the right who has conspiracy theorists. They are not even doing it with a wink and a nudge anymore. They are coming out and saying it outright.

What they forget is that the Leader of the Opposition was part of cabinet, and he would have had a security clearance. He has actually said very clearly that he will not be muzzled, and I do not blame him. They are so concerned about whatever it might be with their wink and nudge conspiracy theories that they are trying to perpetuate, and they would like to tell us that it is only the far-right that does it. However, it is now coming from the left, and perhaps we might even say the far-left, given the member from Winnipeg. They have these conspiracy theories that they perpetuate here in the House.

At the end of the day, we just need the names revealed. Release the names. That is it. The member from Winnipeg is laughing at the fact that I said to release the names. He is laughing. I am being heckled right now by the Liberals when I say to release the names. We cannot make this up. There are people in this very House who are undermining democracy. The Liberals are laughing when I say to release the names. This is how seriously they take foreign interference. The Speaker has to tell them to be quiet as we talk about foreign interference.

Our leader has said that when if becomes prime minister, he would release the names. The Liberal Prime Minister refuses to release the names. What is the Prime Minister hiding? Why are two Liberal members running defence for the Prime Minister and laughing when we talk about foreign interference and when we say to release the names? Perhaps there is something to hide over there. Perhaps there is something that the Liberal—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

Privilege

I want to remind members, again, while someone else has the floor, to please give it the respect that it deserves. I think that the House can function better if everybody abides, and this is everybody I am speaking to here, as a whole, by the rules of the House. I think that we would be able to work a lot more smoothly, that things could flow better and that more people would be able to have their voices heard.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo can continue with the speech.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, just to be clear, it is the member from Winnipeg and the member for Brampton West who were laughing and heckling as I was talking about releasing the names. It is pretty simple. Our leader has said that he will release the names. There are people who are potentially compromised in this place. There are people—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, their leader can get the names. All he has to do is get the security clearance. Then he can release the names—

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

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I am happy to respond to that. It is not the Leader of the Opposition who should get the names. It is Canadians who should get the names. Here we have Liberals stymieing, time after time, saying if only this were the case or if only that were the case. There are parliamentarians who could be compromised, and there are parliamentarians who may have broken the highest law in the land here. It is one of the most serious laws we have on the books.

We have said to release the names, time after time. Release the names. There are people here who may be compromised, and the Liberals think it is funny. The Liberals think we should be heckled about it. Shame on them. Release the names. There are people who fought for our freedom. This is the month when we remember. They fought so we could be free so that we could speak our minds in this place. There are people who want to undermine it, and the Liberals think it is funny. Release the names.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I would say something, but I cannot.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North just said, “I would say something, but I cannot.” I do not think I have ever seen him at a loss for words.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is turning into individuals trying to debate each other when they are not supposed to be. There are no questions and comments at this point.

Order. Again, I would ask members to please be respectful of each other and to please wait until the appropriate time to make comments. I would ask members to maybe write their thoughts down in case they are afraid they are going to forget them.

I would ask the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo to continue with his speech.

• (1825)

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this place. Sometimes we talk about really happy things, sometimes we talk about sad things and sometimes we talk about things that are important, whether happy or sad. This is a time when we are talking about something that is important, but it is very sad. I would go as far as to say that I am quite despondent about where we sit as a Parliament. We are essentially at an impasse, which falls directly at the feet of the Liberal government.

Madam Speaker, there is an order from the Chair that you occupy right now that says the government is to turn over the documents. Only the Liberals could be so brash as to try to reframe the conversation. I talked about conspiracy theories from the left. It is not a conspiracy theory when we have to ask what is in those documents. Has it been 36 days now? A number of days have gone by, and we have been demanding the documents. What could possibly be in those documents that is so damning that the Liberals do not want to do it?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, we have a member saying that my boss's name is in those documents. I am pretty sure that the Leader of the Opposition's name is not in those documents.

Let us table the documents so that we can see whose names are in it. We know whose names are probably in it: those of Liberal insiders. Do members know why? It is because this is a corrupt government that loves to line its own pockets. We know there were 186 conflicts of interest, while the Liberals sat on their hands, worth \$400 million. They attempt to justify it. They sit here and say that it is no big deal, wink-wink, nudge-nudge; we should talk about some other conspiracy theory of the left. It is absolutely deplorable that we have to sit here demanding these documents be put forward.

Let us go back in our history, if we can. In 2018, given public criticism, the former Liberal industry minister expressed concerns with respect to the Harper-era chair; two alternate chairs were then put forward. Lo and behold, what happened? Liberals love to benefit Liberals. It is just the way of life. Just as water is wet, Liberals love to line Liberal pockets. A Liberal-friendly chair takes the chair of SDTC, also known as the green slush fund, and we have 186 conflicts of interest. We have what I believe to be clear criminality at its core. People were voting on giving one another money. This was money for green projects, something that should ostensibly be laudable. Yes, let us make our economy greener. However, in the eyes of the Liberal insiders and the Liberal government, the whole point of SDTC was not to make our economy greener but to line Liberal pockets. That is absolutely deplorable. Then, to make matters worse, the government refuses to hand over the unredacted documents. Liberals like to line their own pockets, and they like to get richer and richer. When they are caught, they refuse to hand over the documents.

The Auditor General of Canada has found that SDTC, also known as the green slush fund, was essentially for Liberal insiders—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

REQUEST FOR WITNESS TO ATTEND AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE

The House resumed from November 18 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to speak to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. government House leader is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 43—PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-78

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): moved:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order, or usual practice of the House, the bill in the name of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, entitled An Act respecting temporary cost of living relief (affordability), be disposed of as follows:

- (a) the bill be ordered for consideration at the second reading stage immediately after the adoption of this order;
- (b) when the House begins debate at the second reading stage of the bill, one member of each recognized party and a member of the Green Party may each speak at the said stage for not more than 10 minutes, followed by five minutes for questions and comments;
- (c) at the conclusion of the time provided for the debate or when no member wishes to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill be deemed put, a recorded division be deemed requested and the vote shall not be deferred;
- (d) if the bill is adopted at the second reading stage, it shall be deemed referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed;

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(e) during consideration of the bill, the House shall not adjourn, except pursuant to a motion moved by a minister of the Crown; and

(f) no motion to adjourn the debate may be moved except by a minister of the Crown.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be here in the House this evening to discuss a government bill, Bill C-78, and to finally be moving forward on behalf of Canadians. This is important legislation that will deliver meaningful savings for Canadians with a GST/HST exemption across the country. Canadians will be able to buy essentials, such as groceries, snacks and kids' clothing, all tax-free. It is a bill that is focused on making life more affordable for Canadians and building on previous government actions that are already saving families and individuals thousands of dollars a year.

As Canadians, we take care of each other. It is a promise at the heart of who we are, and it goes back generations. From universal public health care to employment insurance and strong, stable, funded pensions such as the Canada pension plan, there has always been an agreement that we will take care of our neighbours when they are in need. It gives our workers stability and our businesses the confidence that the right supports will be in place to keep our country and economy fair; keep people healthy, safe, ready and well-supported; and keep the middle class strong.

On the other side of the aisle, we see a party obsessed with making devastating cuts to child care, dental care, housing and pretty much everything else that supports Canadians' affordability, leaving the middle class worse off. That is what the Conservative Party will do if it is ever fortunate enough to form government. Conservatives are not interested in investing in Canadians. They are only interested in their own political advantage and gain.

In 2015, our government recognized that the economy had changed. Canadians needed more support. We created the Canada child benefit to help with the cost of raising children. Today, that benefit is providing nearly \$8,000 per child. It is indexed to the cost of living, which allows families to keep up with the cost of living as it naturally tends to increase over time. We promised and delivered affordable child care from coast to coast to coast, with eight provinces and territories already providing care for \$10 a day or less. Before 2021, child care fees in Canada cost as much as, if not more than, rent or a mortgage; few parents could afford it. When my family had our first young daughter, child care was up to \$1,800 per month, and it certainly had my wife and I pause and consider whether both of us were going to go back to work. That is the case for many parents. We realized that this support, the Canada child benefit, made it cheaper and easier both for parents to return to work and for kids to get the best start possible.

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Liberals knew that it was fundamentally unjust that families should struggle, especially mothers, which is why we created a high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive Canada-wide early learning and child care system. In less than a year, we reached early learning and child care agreements with all 13 provinces and territories. That is remarkable. Provinces and territories have already announced measures to create over 100,000 new spaces, and we are well on our way to reaching our goal of 250,000 new spaces by March 2026.

We have also never forgotten that the promise of access to health care is at the heart of Canada's social safety. That includes ensuring access to affordable dental care. The Canadian dental care plan is making the cost of dental care more affordable for up to nine million Canadians. Thanks to the Canada dental care plan, over one million Canadians have now been able to visit a dentist and access the oral health care they need and deserve.

In budget 2024, we announced an investment of \$1 billion over five years to launch the new national school food program with provinces, territories and indigenous partners. This is something I long advocated for, for many years, before getting into politics. I have known many people in the national food movement who advocated for a national school food program. It was an investment from the federal government for many years before that. It is a great pleasure to be part of a party and a government that is investing in kids, ensuring that they get a healthy start to each and every day at school.

● (1835)

Liberals have already signed agreements with three provinces, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba and Ontario, which is great. My home province of Ontario has finally signed up. It is not last like we saw with the early learning and child care agreements. Ontario was third. It is fantastic to see Ontario join and make these investments in our kids.

The program will provide meals for up to 400,000 more children every year, with 160,000 of those being in Ontario, beyond those served by the existing school food programs, so that every single child across Canada can have a fair chance at a good and healthy life, regardless of their family circumstances. This national program is expected to save an average participating family with two children as much as \$800 a year in the cost of groceries.

It is a shame the Conservative members opposite voted against this program. They voted against feeding kids in school. Can people believe that? Every day in this House, for months and months, they cite food bank lineups and the HungerCount report from Food Banks Canada, which has asked for an investment in a national school food program for as long as I can remember. Our government steps up to make that investment and what do the Conservatives do? They vote against it. They vote against feeding hungry kids. That is shameful.

That brings me to today's legislation on the GST holiday with the goal of putting even more money in the pockets of Canadians. Canadians have been through a lot, there is no doubt about that. They have had the pandemic, post the pandemic, shocks to the economy and global inflation. We have had major climactic events and weather events that have obviously put a strain on our econo-

my. Canadians have been living through all that, and we realize it has been challenging. We know this, and we want to step up and help, as we always have done.

Our government, and I am proud of this, always identifies and listens to what Canadians need. We are responsive and trying our very best to govern this country in a way that steps up constantly and supports Canadians when they are in need. We are offering good news this holiday season. This Christmas is going to be more merry and bright, is how I think about it, because Canadian families are going to be able to purchase a lot of the things that they would purchase over the holidays with no GST on those purchases. That is really good for Canadian families who have been challenged with the cost of living pressures that they have been living through.

All of this comes on the tail of really good news for our economy. Inflation was at 2% in October, which means inflation has been within the Bank of Canada's target range all year long. For Canadians, that means prices are more stable. It means that interest rates are coming down, and they have come down four times, which is great to see. That is great news for homeowners, for people renewing their mortgages and for business owners who might be carrying debt. This is solid progress and we should not deny this.

I know the members opposite constantly deny that the economy is steadily improving and stable, and that Canada is doing better than many of its peer countries in this world. The Conservatives cherry-pick indicators from the economy to try and talk down the Canadian economy because they do not want Canada to do well. They would rather Canada do poorly so that they can do well, so that they can use the misfortune of Canadians for their own political advantage, and we see that every single day in this House.

I think Canadians have been going through a lot. This holiday season, the Liberals are waiving the GST on many of the things that they spend money on. This is going to start on December 14. The government intends to give a tax break to Canadians. Why is today's legislation so important? Why is time of the essence? Time is of the essence because we know Canadians need a boost. They need to feel like they can afford more.

Although the economy is improving, Canadians are not always feeling that immediately. Liberals think that offering them a GST holiday for two months over the Christmas period is really going to be helpful to them. The temporary, two-month GST/HST exemption for select expenses will help Canadians be able to buy items like snacks, and children's clothing and toys, all tax-free. It will also apply to prepared foods, vegetable trays, premade meals, salads, sandwiches, books, newspapers, puzzles, Christmas trees and more.

• (1840)

This exemption is designed to help Canadians with many of the things they purchase over the holidays. I think that is great. It would make the holidays just a little better for Canadians and give them a bit of relief. It would boost the economy in terms of the spending Canadians do as well, because I think they will support our retail industry, which will boost local businesses.

For a typical family spending \$2,000 on qualifying goods between December 14 and February 15, 2025, it would mean a savings of \$100, keeping more money in their pockets. With this support, Canadians could focus more on celebrating the season with family and friends and start the new year with a little more money in their pockets.

However, yet again, we see the Conservative leader and his MPs putting their partisan interests above Canadians. They voted against dental care. They voted against the national school food program. They would cut the Canada child benefit, there is no doubt. They would cut the housing supports and investments our government has made. They also voted against more spots in day care, and they are going to vote against the tax break we are offering Canadians to help them over the next few months.

I encourage all members of Parliament to quickly and unanimously pass this legislation to make the holidays a little more merry and bright for Canadians who have been going through a tough time. “Make their Christmas” is my message to every member of the House.

The question I have for the Conservatives is the following: Will the Conservative leader unmuzzle his MPs and let them vote in favour of this legislation? Will he let them vote in favour of their constituents, who deserve a tax break over the holidays? Will Conservatives support their constituents? I have no idea, but what we see every day in the House is that they are not working on behalf of Canadians. They are working on behalf of themselves.

If Conservative members need help filling out a permission slip for their leader to give them permission to speak their mind and vote their conscience in the House, I would offer my help. I will even create a permission slip for them if they need, and advocate on their behalf.

Hopefully, Conservatives will be able to stand up for Canadians for once and actually support a tax break for Canadians over the holidays. It really gives me great pleasure to get to kick off the debate on this topic tonight. It is great to see the House finally doing business that matters to Canadians, instead of hearing Conservatives filibuster for 36 days on a motion they will not allow to be referred to procedure and House affairs committee and wasting all kinds of time, energy and resources at the heart of our democracy. It will be great to get a GST/HST cut over the holidays for Canadian families.

• (1845)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, what I heard this member say is let us “make their Christmas”. Somehow, Liberals are saying that this is the way for Canadians to find joy over Christmas. He says that they are even putting more money in their pockets.

Government Orders

My constituents do not agree with that terminology. I would suggest to the member that what the Liberals need to say is that what they are doing is putting even more of their own money back in their pockets. How about instead of a short-term—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow the hon. member to finish her question in a second.

I have a point of order by the hon. government House leader.

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with respect to the consideration of Government Business No. 43, I give notice at the next sitting of the House a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 43

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member wants to make Canadians' Christmas and says that they deserve a tax break over Christmas. What we are prepared to do is give them a tax break permanently, axe the tax completely and take the GST off home purchases. This short little gift of giving Canadians back more of their own money into their pockets is a sad comment on the government not knowing how to run its business.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I ask the hon. members who want to add something to please wait until I recognize them, because there will be an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hear no holiday spirit from the other side of the House. That is for certain. All I hear is the ringing of that petty little heart of the Conservative leader who cannot find it in himself to give his members of Parliament the freedom to do their job. It is too bad for the House and for Canadians. What is interesting is the member opposite talks about the Canada carbon rebate, which puts more money in people's pockets. The price on pollution has been estimated to only cost families as much as 15¢ on a \$100 purchase at the grocery store. This tax break is 100 times greater than that. The member will not offer her constituents a 100 times greater tax break.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, what is a government that is sinking in the polls faster than the Titanic after hitting an iceberg to do? It can try to get people talking over Christmas dinner. It can come up with some sort of a measure, a PR stunt, a half-baked measure that gives the impression of putting more money in people's pockets. This measure takes the form of a cheque, for workers to be exact, and not for those who are struggling the most.

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We are not against giving gifts to workers, but they paid for these gifts themselves with their own taxes. After saying no to increasing health transfers, after saying no to improving the old age pension, in the name of budgetary considerations that have not exactly been the hallmark of this government since it got here, the government comes up with this \$4.7-billion half-measure that excludes people like the unemployed, people on welfare, pensioners and even stay-at-home parents.

Does the government not realize that this is only fuelling?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I would note that we serve together on the same industry committee and I value the member's input greatly in the proceedings of that committee. However, I am not sure this member has read this particular bill because he is referring to another measure our government announced. Granted, we did announce it at the same time as the GST tax break, but what he is referring to is not within this particular bill.

This bill deals exclusively with the GST holiday over the two-month period during Christmas, from December 14 to February 15. It is a moment in time where all of us have the chance to make the holidays just a bit brighter for Canadians who have been through a lot. I would expect all members to be able to support this.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, once again, the Liberals have been caught copying the NDP's homework. Canadians need to understand that this Liberal measure was announced several days after we came out with our own proposal. Unfortunately, like a lot of Liberal initiatives, it is a poor imitation of the original idea. We were proposing a permanent relief of the GST on these essential items. What Canadians need to understand is that in this bill all these measures are going to come to an end on February 15.

Why is the Liberal Party so adept at offering half measures to Canadians? On the separate issue of the rebate cheque, as I know it is still being worked on, is he going to go back and make sure that when it is offered it actually goes to the people who need it, like persons with disabilities, low-income seniors and students? That is how it should have been originally crafted.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I am thankful to the member opposite for agreeing with the concept of GST relief. However short this pause may be, the timing is perfect when Canadians have been struggling for a long time, the economy is improving and it gives Canadians a break when they most need it, when they are going to probably spend quite a bit of money over the holidays. I know most of us do.

With regard to the other measure the member refers to, which is not a part of this bill, our government has stepped up to support seniors, individuals who are living with a disability and many other groups and segments of the population who are struggling in various different ways. We have done that over and over again. This is our chance to support workers, working Canadians who need a break as well. It is a perfect complement to have a GST holiday and have a cheque for workers going out after the holidays.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I will start by sharing and making clear that the Greens certainly support this GST break for two months. It is a \$1.6-billion expenditure.

We would put forward that there were other options the government could have started with first, for example, by more than doubling the completely inadequate Canada disability benefit. However, on balance, we would support it.

What is markedly different in the legislation to be debated tomorrow versus the draft that was provided last week is that the entire \$250 vote-buying scheme is left out altogether. Now, what was left out in the original scheme, as is always the case, are people with disabilities.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is this: What will it take for the government to recognize that people with disabilities and low-income seniors are the people in this country who need some of the most support? People with disabilities make up 40% of those living in poverty across the country. When the Liberals talk about addressing affordability, why is it that people with disabilities are never included?

• (1855)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, the member opposite and I have had many conversations and very productive working relationships, and I respect his point of view. Our government, quite contrary to what the member has just implied, cares deeply about individuals living with a disability. I know the member opposite cares about those individuals in his community, as well, and has advocated for that. I think we share that passion, commitment and compassion for those individuals who, through no fault of their own, are often living in conditions where they may not be able to work to the degree they would like.

The Canada disability benefit is something our government has offered. I agree with the member opposite that this particular piece of legislation does not apply to them, but it does not mean we cannot consider additional increases to the amount they get in future legislation or the federal budget.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I look at it as a holiday tax break from the GST on a number of products, which is a positive thing for Canadians coast to coast to coast. What surprises me is that the Conservative Party's response seems to be not only that they are going to be voting against this legislation but that they also want to get rid of the carbon rebate. That would really hurt the constituents of Winnipeg North, as I suspect it would hurt 80% of Canada's population. Could the member provide his thoughts on that?

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Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I am always shocked as to how the Conservatives' oration and rhetoric do not align with their actions. They talk every day in the House about tax cuts, but when it comes time to vote in favour of a tax cut for Canadians, they are unwilling to. They did this back in 2015 when the Liberal government first got into power and offered a middle-class tax cut. I do not know if members remember that, but it was a great measure. The members opposite, if they were around at that point, definitely voted against that too.

When we opted for tax fairness in the last budget and worked on measures to increase taxes for some of the most wealthy and invest that money in more affordable housing, the Conservative members voted against it. When we offered a GST rebate before, the grocery rebate, they voted against that. They vote against everything because of hyperpartisanship. If it comes from this side of the House, they are against it; it does not matter whether it is good for Canadians or not.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the great Thomas Sowell said, "The more people who are dependent on government handouts, the more votes the left can depend on for an ever-expanding welfare state." I cannot think of a better quote for tonight's debate, when we are talking about this temporary, two-month tax trick the Liberal-NDP government has introduced, which is nothing but a cheap gimmick just to buy votes from Canadians.

Overwhelmingly, with everyone we talk to, in no matter what part of the country, it is a common theme; people ask, "What happened to Canada? What kind of place did Canada turn into? How did Canada get so weak? How did Canada end up getting such weak borders, such a weak economy and such weak security?" The answer is simple: We have a weak, incompetent, selfish Prime Minister.

Growing up here, after immigrating to this country, I remember we did not have much. I know many people can relate to this story today, but the outcomes are much different. For me and my family, we did not move here with very much. We lived basement to basement, sometimes all in one room, because it was all we could afford. My dad was a taxi driver and my mom worked different jobs, including at a Tim Hortons and a long-term care home. I did not really get to see my parents growing up because they were working all the time just to put food on the table.

I remember at a very young age, my brother and I got a paper route. We would finish elementary school, come home and put together the newspapers. They would come in five or six bundles and we would have to put them together and hand them out, sometimes in the rain or snow and sometimes we would be chased by a dog. We had to earn money; we had no other choice. Growing up, I was considered an at-risk youth, but I did not feel much different from anyone else. Even though my family all struggled really hard, we could get by. That was the difference.

Even though we were not making much money, at that time, people could still afford a home, pay their rent or afford a mortgage payment. They could also go to the grocery store and were still able to get a week's worth of groceries with a powerful paycheque. This is why people keep asking, "What happened to Canada?"

I was an at-risk youth who lived through a lot of poverty and did not think there would be much of a future. My parents also did not think I would have much of a future just because of the way I grew up. I was very fortunate to grow up in the riding I get to represent today. That is the voice I bring to the House, for those people who grew up just like me.

Today the difference is, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Canada we all once knew is gone. The Canadian dream my and many other immigrant families came here for, and those who were born and grew up here knew about, where people could put in hard work, earn a powerful paycheque, live in a community safe from drugs, especially government-funded drugs, and safe from being abused or even murdered. We see today the rise in violent crime. That was the difference.

It only took nine years of the incompetent, weak Liberal-NDP Prime Minister to turn this country into what it is today. I could not have imagined we would be living in a country where over two million people visit a food bank in a single month, a third of whom are children. One in four people in this country are skipping meals and parents are doing it so they have enough food to give their kids. This is something I know about very well because I saw it in my own household, but we could still afford our rent then. We could still get groceries, even though we had to delay when we got them.

● (1900)

Today, we hear about moms putting water in their kids' milk just so they can stretch it out. They are buying less nutritious food and going shopping in the almost-expired aisles because that is all they can afford. There are other concerning statistics we have never seen in Canada before. One in five children live in poverty in this country. Child poverty is up after nine years of the incompetent Liberal-NDP government.

Canada has had the worst living standards of the last 40 years. Our GDP per capita has been on the decline for two years. In fact, technically, we are in a GDP-per-capita recession. In simple terms, Canadians are getting poorer. It is not just a term we use but what Canadians are feeling today. As much as the finance minister says the Liberals are in a vibecession, whatever that means, the vibe is clear in this country. Canadians are getting poorer. They are suffering or else two million of them would not be lining up at food banks.

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Our jobs, our businesses and our investment are fleeing to the U.S., where there are fewer regulations and a better return on investment. In fact, almost half a trillion dollars' worth of our Canadian jobs and investment has gone to the U.S. It is making U.S. workers richer and the U.S. economy better, building pipelines in the U.S., and Canada is left footing the bill. That is what nine years of incompetence does. The Prime Minister has driven our good jobs and good investment out of Canada. That is the vibe of Canada today.

There was an explosion in population growth, even though the incompetent former immigration minister was warned by his own department that it was about to explode the immigration levels. There was already a housing crisis. They warned him it was only going to get worse. He ignored it. Just like this two-month temporary tax trick to buy votes, they exploded the population for votes and votes only. What did that do? It did exactly what his department told him it would, the same thing he ignored. It made housing even worse.

What kind of a government spends almost \$89 billion on housing and sees housing costs double? What kind of measure of success is that? Is it really something to celebrate? Is it really a vibecession that it spent so much money to achieve such a horrible outcome? All of these people the Liberals brought here in search of getting more votes for themselves are now living under bridges and sleeping in their cars; they cannot afford housing because the Liberals have doubled housing costs. That is the reality.

Do members remember when we used to be able to go to the grocery store and get a full week of groceries for \$200? What does \$200 get us now? It gets barely a bag, maybe a little more. That is why people are suffering so badly in this country. That is what nine years of incompetence from the Liberal-NDP government has done. When it doubles the national debt and food bank usage, it is nothing but misery for the good people who just want to work hard and make something for themselves and their families.

What does the Prime Minister do after doing all of that to them? He continues to kick them down harder. He kicks them down with a punishing carbon tax scam, one that takes more from Canadians than they get back in fake rebates, which was proven by the Liberals' own Parliamentary Budget Officer, and one that does not help to reduce emissions. We know that because their own department told us that.

They have no measure that tells us how much lower the emissions would be if they increased the carbon tax scam, because they know it is like the Prime Minister, not worth the cost. However, Canadians are left with that cost. They see that cost when they fill up with gas, when they go to the grocery store and when they have to turn up the heat, which they are all doing now since winter has started. They do not have the luxury of the multi-millionaire trust fund baby Prime Minister.

• (1905)

They actually have to go grocery shopping themselves, unlike the Prime Minister. They have to pump gas themselves. They have to drive their kids around to get to tutoring or to play sports. They do not have the luxuries that the spoiled Prime Minister has, who

has exploited Canadians and made them poorer. That is the difference.

However, we have a common-sense Conservative leader who knows about hard work and who grew up in arguably the greatest city in the greatest province in this country, Calgary, Alberta. He talks about the common person because he is a common person. He is definitely an extraordinary person, but one who cares about everyday Canadians. That is why, on this side of the House, we have common-sense policies for the common people, the people who built this country and have kept it afloat even though the incompetent Liberal-NDP Prime Minister continuously kicks them down with his failed policies.

Has anyone ever seen so many homeless encampments in the country? The Prime Minister brags about housing, on which he somehow spent almost \$90 billion. The only thing that really went up is the homeless encampments that have popped up around the country. Liberals brag that no one has invested as much in housing as the government has, but what did it get Canadians? It got them more homelessness, more food bank usage and more pain and suffering, but I guess it is all good because all of the people who are suffering are just in a vibecession; it is fine.

Canada is in an absolute productivity crisis after nine years of the government. We already know how much investment it drove out. We just have to look at the wage gap between a U.S. worker and a Canadian worker, and that gap is widening. In fact U.S. workers are \$32,000 better off than Canadian workers. If the incompetent government had just kept pace with former prime minister Stephen Harper, then the gap would not be as wide and Canadian workers would be at least \$4,300 richer a year. That would make a huge difference.

However, the government and its failed policies, supported by the NDP because its leader really wants his \$2-million pension and keeps the incompetent, weak Prime Minister in place, have made Canada's economy worse than Alabama's, which has one of the lowest economies in the U.S.

Canadian household debt is the worst out of all of the G7 countries, but we have to look at why. With an average paycheque, Canadians used to spend about 40% just on housing, but after the government doubled housing costs and the national debt, what did that do? Instead of 40% of a worker's paycheque, now it is 60% to 80% in some cases that goes just to housing.

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As I said before, when we go to the grocery store, we notice the difference. Prices in the U.S. are 37% lower at the grocery store than in Canada. It is all directly because of the carbon tax scam. The Liberals tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food and the grocery store that sells the food. Of course at the end of the day, the Canadians buying the food get hit with the overall cost. That is why it is a scam, nothing more, and why things are so expensive at the grocery store.

The government comes up with cheap gimmicks, the lollipops they give just to garner more votes. This is the reality. It is because it knows it cannot on its own record. It has had a failed record over the last nine years; that is why we have the statistics we have.

If I were to read the statistics about two million Canadians using food banks and one in four Canadians skipping meals, we would not think we were talking about a first world country. We would definitely think we are talking about a third world country. That is what the government has done.

● (1910)

The government keeps talking up a big game, but the member for Whitby talked about muzzling and not being able to speak, and that is ironic. The Toronto Star, of all outlets, published an article entitled “Liberal MP says he was threatened with ‘consequences’ for opposing \$250 cheque proposal”. The article says, “Hamilton MP...said earlier this week that he would vote against the government’s cash rebates because they leave out seniors and people with disabilities.”

The article also says, “New Brunswick MP...said she would support the current measure when it comes to a vote, even though she believes it is too restrictive”, and “Newfoundland MP...said he would like to see the cheques expanded to include seniors who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, but would support it as is because he does not want to cut off help for Canadians.”

According to the article, the St. Catharines MP, who is a Liberal, “said the benefit should be ‘targeted’, and said the Liberals have already enacted measures to help seniors, such as Ottawa’s dental care program, which prioritized [seniors].” He is not in favour of what the government is putting out, yet Liberal MPs are being muzzled.

Remember the 24 MPs who supposedly signed a letter, who wanted the Prime Minister out? Where are they now?

An hon. member: They are waiting for a cabinet post.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, like my friend just said, either they are waiting for a cabinet post or they just went away. What the Prime Minister is good at is muzzling people, especially women and especially strong indigenous women, ones that used to be in his cabinet, like Jody Wilson-Raybould who stood up to his corruption and said no to it. What ended up happening to her? Not only was she muzzled but she was also kicked out of cabinet and out of caucus.

That is the record of the fake feminist Prime Minister, someone who has done blackface more times than even he can remember and someone who virtue-signals about his carbon tax scam and belittles everyone who has to drive their car to work or to take their

kids to sports. He slams a carbon tax scam on them as he jet-sets around the world on his little celebrity tours, taking selfies with celebrities and trying to make himself look flashy for whatever role he is going to try to play after the next election.

After the next election, the weak, incompetent Prime Minister will be replaced with a common-sense Conservative leader and a party that will bring back and restore the Canada that we once knew. We will axe the tax. We will get rid of the carbon tax scam for everyone for good, and we will do it to everything.

We will build the homes. Not only will we take the GST off homes built under a million dollars, which will help create 30,000 more new homes and save people on their mortgages and the cost of housing, but we will also incentivize municipalities, the ones that the Prime Minister keeps shovelling billions of dollars to that end up building more bureaucracy and not more homes. We are going to incentivize them to have 15% more homes built, permits closed, or else we are going to withhold their infrastructure dollars until they meet that target. That is how realtors work. That is how municipalities should work.

We are going to fix the budget. The incompetent Prime Minister, who said budgets balance themselves, does not think about monetary policy. Recently he said that he will let bankers think about the economy.

Do members know what? Our common-sense Conservative leader not only does think about the economy but he will also fix the economy. We are going to bring in a dollar-for-dollar law. For every dollar any department wants to spend, it has to find a dollar of savings, just like what we have to do in our homes on our household budgets and what businesses have to do.

● (1915)

We are going to stop the crime, lawlessness, chaos, drugs and disorder that the Liberal-NDP government has unleashed all over our streets. We see it every single day. Another story comes out every single day, and most of the time it is from repeat offenders. We are going to bring in “jail, not bail” policies to keep the repeat violent offenders in jail, where they deserve to be.

I will finish by saying that instead of taking pennies off Pringles or chump change off chips, a common-sense Conservative government, with the member for Carleton as the prime minister, would axe the tax on everything for everyone for good. We are going to bring home the Canada we all once knew and still love.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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• (1920)

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I think there is some debate right now with regard to what just happened, but I was here and wanted to make sure that my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn had his additional papers. He did not. He was looking for them. I am working to make sure that he does have—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member actually ended his speech, and then other members came in to rise and were trying to raise a point of order. I was rising to recognize the hon. parliamentary secretary for questions and comments. The hon. member indicated that he had finished his speech at that time.

There is another point of order, from the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, just to be very clear, I was sitting right behind the member who was giving his speech. All he was doing was adjusting to actually find the piece of paper he was looking for. He found it, and he is ready to present it. That is from somebody who was close.

I would challenge the clerk; we actually saw what was happening right in front of us. The member was looking for the document he needed. I just challenge you, Madam Chair, that you—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are no challenges to the Chair that way. I just want to remind the member that it is not proper to challenge the Chair. I actually am sitting in front of the member as well. Before I continue, I will allow other points of order.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has the floor.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, it is very straightforward. When a member concludes their speech and sits down, that is it. Other members cannot come in and try to cajole them to change their mind and get up again. It is a little bit of a disservice to Parliament, how the Conservatives are acting right now.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I just want to point out that the convention here is that we take people at their word. I clearly saw the member still on his feet. He was leaning over. I had the perfect vantage point. I was just a little behind the hon. member. I could actually see behind the table. He had not made contact with his chair at all. It might have looked like it. He was looking for the document that contains the rest of his speech.

I think the most reasonable thing to do is for the member to have the opportunity to continue speaking. He was reaching for the document. The most reasonable thing to do is to take the member at his word and allow him to finish.

I know that the member for Winnipeg North does not often get a chance to speak, but I am sure he will have an opportunity in a moment. Then he can ask his question.

I think the conventional thing to do would be accept the member for Calgary Forest Lawn at his word and allow him to continue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind hon. members that I am in the Chair.

I see that the hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, just so we are perfectly clear, the member who is right across from me sat down and I stood up. Other members said, “No, no, there is this.” I was ready to ask my question, and you were just about to recognize me to ask a question, when there was an interruption across the way. The member had clearly sat down. I stand prepared to ask my question as I did minutes ago.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies has already risen on this point of order, but I will allow him to interject one more time. Then members will allow me to speak.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I was not allowed to finish. When I said “challenge”, I was going to challenge you to look at the video to see that he did not sit, because he did not actually sit. I was sitting right behind him and saw that he was looking for a paper and trying to find a document.

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did look at the video, and he did sit. The hon. member had unlimited time, and he indicated that he was done with his speech.

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 shocked that the Conservative Party of Canada, under the leadership of the leader of the Conservative Party, has decided to vote against a tax break for the holiday season on a number of products, a way to assist Canadians in every region of the country. The Conservatives are doubling down. Instead of giving that tax break during the holiday season, they are telling 80% of my constituents, in fact millions of Canadians, that they will also get rid of the carbon rebate, which is going to take more money away from constituents.

Why is the leader of the Conservative Party being the grinch of Christmas and not allowing Canadians to at least have some relief during the holiday season?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, that member is right: We are going to axe the tax for good for everybody.

The minority of Canadians who get this phony cheque will not need a rebate anymore because we will not take the money from them in the first place. As the Liberals' own Parliamentary Budget Officer said, a majority of Canadians pay more into this scam than they get back in phony rebates.

We are going to keep the money in Canadians' pockets. That is going to lower the cost of gas, groceries and home heating. We are going to fix the economy too, because we know the tax blows a massive hole in our GDP and drives investment out of Canada. It has already done this.

Government Orders

That is what we are going to do. Instead of penny-pinching over Pringles, we are going to axe the tax for good to bring the cost of groceries down.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think that when a government is in free fall as the government is now, its first instinct is to panic. It starts improvising out of necessity. What could it possibly come up with next?

We are being invited to take part in a complete sham, a real PR stunt that does not even help the people who are struggling the most. Right now, the most vulnerable people are those who are more likely to buy products that are not taxed anyway.

Does my colleague agree with me when I say that we are really just contributing to the pervasive cynicism? Even if the measure will essentially only help the wealthiest, those with money, the government can pat itself on the back by telling itself that people will be talking about it around the dinner table at Christmas.

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, the member is right. This will help the people who are better off in society. They are the ones who will be able to eat at restaurants and might get more GST taken off. What it does not do is help the struggling Canadians the Liberal-NDP government has forced into food bank lines to get cheaper groceries and help them get the cost of their gas down. The only real way to do that is to have a carbon tax election now so that common-sense Conservatives can axe the tax for good, and not only for gas, groceries and home eating, but for new homes being built. That is going to help bring down the cost of everyday living for Canadians.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is important for everyone to understand what is happening in the House tonight. Remarkably, we are debating a confidence motion, one that has been publicized well over the last number of weeks. A re-engagement between the NDP and the Liberals has been enacted with the agreement to conduct two elements: One is this temporary tax trick, and there was another guarantee, an agreement to give out \$250 cheques to Canadians. However, it was limited to just some Canadians; it was not for all Canadians.

It is clear that the Conservative Party and the NDP Party have opposed these measures, but now we are learning Liberal members also oppose the \$250 cheques, and that is what is missing in the legislation. As a matter of fact, one Liberal member, the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, was quoted as saying, “These comments—

• (1930)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We had already clearly said today that this was out of the scope of the discussions.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like you to find out who that was. That type of language in the House of Commons is clearly unparliamentary. What we heard from the video was completely inappropriate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will take it under advisement. I did not hear what happened online.

I was listening to the hon. member, and I was trying to tell him that questions about political partisanship are out of the scope, as was said earlier today by the Speaker during question period.

I would like the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn to answer the question so that we can move on.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. Out of all newspapers, the Toronto Star talked about how it is not just Canadians who know this is a cheap gimmick to buy votes; the Liberals themselves know about that. The MP for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek was brave enough to say that he was “threatened with ‘consequences’” for opposing this proposal for \$250 cheques.

The reason it is a trick is that, at the same time as it is going to issue these cheques, the Liberal-NDP government will jack up the carbon tax once again. That is where this trick comes from. It is trying to buy votes, giving out these little lollipops so that people can ignore the fact that the Liberal-NDP government has doubled housing costs and raised the carbon tax scam that has made everything more expensive, which sent more than two million Canadians to food banks. All these things are just a major distraction and nothing more.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, when this member first—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just moments ago, you ruled that my question was out of order because I was asking my colleague about what is clearly dissent by members of Parliament for a portion of the bill that has been stripped out. You ruled that the question was out of order. Madam Speaker, on what basis did you rule it to be out of order?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I agree with the hon. member that the question itself is not out of order. I overreached in thinking it was a more partisan kind of attempt to bring the question, but the hon. member did get the answer.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, I did not get to finish my question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn referred to it and made mention of it. I did overreach in reacting to the hon. member as I did and telling him that the question was out of order.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, is that an apology?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, it is an apology.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

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Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, as I was about to say, when I first came into the House, the member who made their speech today was very congenial, and I actually enjoyed conversations with him. However, over time, that has really stopped; it is really sad what has happened today and over the past months and even over the last years with the Conservative Party of Canada and its commitment to itself rather than to people.

The member spoke tonight about grocery prices. I want the member to know that corporate greed is why people cannot afford their groceries, and this member just voted again to prop up more corporate greed by refusing to have financialized landlords come to committee to tell us why they are displacing renters, persons with disabilities, immigrants and people living in poverty out onto the streets.

I want to remind the member of what the Conservatives are supposed to be doing in the House by sharing the NDP's record from the last three years. This is a reminder to the member that the NDP has achieved \$10 day care for Canadians, which is already bringing the economy up for women. The NDP has achieved dental care for people. People in my office are crying that—

• (1935)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We need a question. We have to limit each intervention to two minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, what has the Conservative Party of Canada brought to Canadians in the three years that it has sat in the House and done nothing?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, what is sad is that the leader of the NDP put on a theatrical performance that he learned from the former drama teacher Prime Minister. He pretended to rip up their agreement only to tape it up once again, once the New Democrats used the people of Elmwood Transcona for their votes, to go back with the most corrupt Prime Minister in Canadian history.

What did the New Democrats do? What are they supporting? They are supporting the doubling of housing costs for Canadians and the quadrupling of the carbon tax scam. They are supporting the fact that more than two million Canadians are going to a food bank in a single month in this country. One in four Canadians is skipping meals. One in five kids is living in poverty. Those are the policies that the Liberal government has brought about in our country, which the NDP has supported, and why? It is because the leader of the NDP is greedy for his \$2-million pension. That is all this is about. That is why the leader of the NDP continues to prop up the Prime Minister and why Canadians' suffering is so bad.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This place has to function based on facts. That was absolutely untrue; I want the member to retract it and apologize for saying something he knows is untrue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will give the opportunity to the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn to finish his answer.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, facts speak for themselves. The Liberal-NDP government has doubled housing costs. It has doubled the national debt. The Liberals and New Democrats are the ones who forced Canadians into a food bank,

and they want to quadruple the carbon tax scam. Let us call a carbon tax election now so that common-sense Conservatives can axe the tax for good and kick the costly Liberal-NDP coalition to the curb.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague and friend, the member for Shefford.

Eliminating the goods and services tax, or GST, on diapers and children's clothing is great and should be made permanent. However, we have serious reservations when the government says it is going to eliminate the GST on champagne and fancy restaurants, where only the rich can afford to go.

In fact, the proposed measure seems to benefit the rich more than anyone else. As we know, lower-income people pay rent, which is not taxed. At the grocery store, they buy staples, which are already tax-free. That leaves heating, and the government did not want to remove the taxes on heating in this bill. This means that the wealthy are the ones who will save money thanks to the gifts presented here.

On top of that, retailers are not happy with the measure because it involves huge costs, thousands and thousands of dollars to make the changes not once, but twice. This is a huge expense for temporary populist measures.

What is more, the way the government is going about this is unprecedented in the House. It is proposing a measure that will last for only two months and imposing a major gag order. We were only able to review the content of the bill just a few hours before debating it in the House. We were told that we will not be able to amend it or to examine it in committee. That is really unacceptable.

The government is really out of steam. It is tired and trying anything it can. It is giving people a little pre-election Christmas gift. That is called taking people for fools. When this government took office, it said that it wanted to do things differently. Quite frankly, it has become just as cynical as all of the other governments. This is a petty government. What it is doing is really petty.

I will now return to SMEs and small businesses. They are reaching out and telling us that they are worried. The adjustment costs are very high and can amount to several thousand, if not tens of thousands, of dollars per business. Small businesses can never earn that money back through the extra sales they stand to make. They have to check their entire product list, to make sure that products are correctly identified, and then pay their employees overtime wages for that. This involves recalibrating machinery, cash registers, and so on. The technicians needed to perform this work are already scarce, and recalibrating these machines is said to cost about \$4,000.

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For the big players, like Walmart, which have to regularly recalibrate their machinery and recheck their prices, this is no big deal. They have the necessary financial means and they can adjust. It is a different story for small businesses, however, and the bill makes no provision for any compensation to help them in that regard.

I will give some examples. The owner of a small business that offers accommodation told us he was closing his business for those two months. He calculated the cost of keeping his business open during the holidays and during the two months and he calculated the cost of adapting to the measure. To minimize the losses, the owner decided to close his business that offers accommodation. Also, a bar owner said that he knew that the measure applied to restaurants, but he hoped that bars would be exempt because he really did not feel like going through this.

As I was saying, in Quebec, every business, restaurant and bar will have to hire a technician to recalibrate the point of sale machines for January 1, because that is when tip options on the machines will have to be calculated before tax. They will already have to bring in a technician for that, but now they will also have to bring one in on December 14 and on Valentine's Day, two months later. The technician will have to come three times. As I was saying, there is a shortage of technicians. Obviously, the government never thought of that. It never thought about consulting anyone to see how these things work. Such is the government's way. The business owners are going to have to bring in technicians three times.

That same bar owner said his price for a pint of beer was \$7.50. If the government takes the GST off, he is not going to lower his price to \$7.22 or \$7.15. The price will still be \$7.50, and he will pocket the 5%. However, he does not want this to happen at all, because he wants to avoid all the headaches it will cause him. He gave another example. There will be no tax on drinks containing less than 7% alcohol, but drinks containing more than 7% will continue to be taxed. He will have to do an inventory of all his drinks and all his receipts to see what is taxed and what is not. He will have to do all that for an exemption that will last only two months.

He also talked about the following big problem. When he makes a bloody caesar, he uses one ounce of vodka and some juice. When he adds a lot of ice, the alcohol content is under 7%, but when he does not use a lot of ice, it will be higher than 7%. He does not know what he should do. He is going to pocket the GST because he does not want to lower his prices. He does not want this measure, because he thinks it is ridiculous and way too much of a hassle. It is unprecedented to go to so much trouble for two months. This government is really tired and on its last legs, so it is willing to try pretty much anything.

● (1940)

I have another example. Children's clothing is fine. The bill says that it must be for children under 14. If someone has a teenager under 14 who is tall and needs adult clothing, they will have to pay the tax because their child is too tall. Obviously the Liberals have thought long and hard about this.

Other things to mention include all the costs to the provinces. I will start with Quebec. We know that the QST, the Quebec sales tax, is based on the sale price, which has the GST added to it. If there is no GST for two months, the QST would be calculated on a

smaller amount. Should Quebec also draft a whole bill to compensate for that loss? Obviously, that is not going to happen. There is going to be a shortfall. I imagine that, in its great wisdom, the federal government called the Quebec government to say that it would compensate for this shortfall, which I estimate at between \$30 million and \$40 million. No, it did not think of that either. This is a government that writes its bills at the last minute, on the back of a napkin. It is a real mess.

What is more, as we know, Ottawa pays Revenu Québec to collect GST on Ottawa's behalf. Ottawa gives Revenu Québec money. Given that all of the adjustment costs will be additional costs for Revenu Québec, I would imagine that Ottawa would have acted the gentleman and called Revenu Québec to offer it the necessary compensation before Revenu Québec had to ask, but no, there is nothing about that in the bill either, because the government does not look beyond the end of its tiny nose. We could say that it has a nose as long as Pinocchio's, but when it comes time to think about all of these applications, it does not look beyond the tiny nose of a petty government.

Worse still, for the five provinces that have the harmonized sales tax, or HST—Ontario and the four maritime provinces—it is Ottawa that collects the tax. Their tax level is the same as it is for the GST, so everything changes at once, everything is harmonized. With this bill, however, they have discovered that the provincial sales tax, for example in Ontario, will be zero for two months. Understandably, Doug Ford seems to agree with the idea of lowering taxes on beer and was unwilling to lock horns with Ottawa. In provinces like Ontario, where the harmonized tax is 13%, if I am not mistaken, specifically 5% at the federal level and 8% at the provincial level, the province will still have to absorb the bulk of this measure's cost, which will make it possible for people to buy bottles or cases of champagne to ring in the New Year. As if people who buy champagne really need such a gift. As for the major restaurants, the treasuries of those five provinces will bear the brunt of the cost, again without any consultation. In this particular case, I think that the government was trying to set a trap for the provinces and for the Conservatives, thinking that all this really makes no sense and that the Conservative Premier of Ontario would no doubt refuse to let anyone play around with his finances.

The government could have said that it wants to lower taxes, but it is the Conservatives who do not. Doug Ford and the provinces that have the HST did not fall into the trap. Now, the government has to play the role of "Grandpa Ottawa" and claim that it is the one in charge of what the provinces do with their tax bases. It is outrageous, but that is what it comes down to.

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I want to point out something else. I am thinking about all the businesses in the Outaouais and in Gatineau. Consumers will get a 13% tax holiday if they go to Ontario, but only 5% if they go to Quebec. Someone who wants to buy a big video game console tax-free, or a case of champagne, will go shopping in Ontario, which is just great for our retailers, who will have had to pay thousands of dollars to adapt only to see their sales drop, because the Liberals did not think of that either when they drew this up on the back of an envelope.

I would have liked to talk about the \$250 cheques. They were in the first bill that we were told was going to be introduced, but it was such a mess, and there were so many mistakes in it, that they are left without a dance partner. They are no longer able to find a partner for this ploy to buy votes, which reminds me of the cheques that Stephen Harper sent to families in the summer of 2015; we all saw how that turned out. Most of all, these measures remind me of Maurice Duplessis, who gave fridges to his constituents so that they would vote for him. The government thinks that by giving us cheques and a GST holiday that we will vote for them. Do they take us for fools?

• (1945)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this legislation affords members of Parliament of all political parties a look at how we can give a bit of a tax break by saying that during the holiday season, for two months, Canadians do not have to pay the GST on a number of products. I would have thought members of all political parties would reflect positively on this particular motion. I am a little but not overly surprised that the Conservatives are voting against it. However, listening to the member opposite, it sounds like the Bloc is going to be joining the Conservatives in voting against it.

Would the member not recognize that during the holiday season, given what Canadians have had to endure, even though we have done relatively better than virtually any other country in the world, it is a good thing to give them that bit of a break, even if it is just for two months? Why would he not support it?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, we cannot even study the bill in committee. We cannot even amend it. We cannot do anything.

For example, seniors have been calling my office to talk about the fact that children's diapers will be tax-free, so why not seniors' diapers as well? This is no joke for these individuals. What they are asking for is not even in the measure, but a \$100 bottle of champagne is. Now that is using the collective credit card wisely. I would remind members that the government is handing out money that it does not even have.

Why did it proceed this way? Why did it not double the goods and services tax credit, a measure that would have cost nothing to administer and would have gone to those who need it? It could have done that, but it did not. I agree that the measure should include children's diapers, but including bottles of champagne for the rich and fancy restaurant meals is ridiculous.

The government is going about this in a very foolish way.

• (1950)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think that the country's financial problems are actually structural problems. There are a lot of people across the country with debt. Next year, a million people in Canada are going to renew their mortgages.

Does my colleague agree that, if the government throws an extra \$6.5 billion into the economy, there is going to be a problem and there is a risk that inflation will go up?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, if we include the cheque for \$250, the gift from the government to buy people's votes, then this initiative is going to cost more than \$6.5 billion.

We have been asking the government to address the inequity among seniors with the old age security pension, but the government said that doing so would cost too much. It would cost \$3 billion, or half of the amount we are talking about now. If the government had put \$3 billion of this \$6 billion into restoring fairness among seniors and the other \$3.5 billion into housing, that might have helped. It would have been structural. It would have made a difference.

This is a small, short-sighted government that has no vision. It just wants to get re-elected and minimize the losses.

That is not going to fix the foundations of the economy. There are many challenges. The government is past its expiration date.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that Quebecers will benefit from this bill. The NDP lobbied hard for taxes to be taken off essentials for families. There are benefits.

I want to come back to another benefit that was brought in by the NDP, namely the dental care program. It is more popular in Quebec than in any other province in the country. One million Quebecers are participating in the NDP dental care program. To date, 400,000 people have received dental care services. However, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to it. That is what I do not understand. The NDP works to ensure that ordinary people, real people, get benefits. The Bloc Québécois seems to oppose this program that helps people. Quebecers have already voted. A million of them have said it is a good NDP program.

Why is the Bloc Québécois opposed to a program that helps so many people in Quebec?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, first of all, the GST holiday for essentials is great. We have no problem with that. However, why design the measure to include \$100 bottles of champagne and \$500 restaurant bills? That is short-sighted, and it makes no sense.

As for dental care, Quebec was already administering a public program. Now, the government is handing it over to the private sector, to Sun Life, for a total of \$2 billion. That means that people in Quebec are paying \$500 million just for the administration of this program. It would have been better if the government had invested \$500 million in dental care, while respecting jurisdictional boundaries.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, this evening we are debating a bill. As we, Bloc Qu b cois colleagues, talk to each other about our meetings with constituents in our ridings, we have come to realize that many people are angry about this. Even experts on the economy have said that it is a bad idea.

In these inflationary times, the Bloc Qu b cois pointed out that it has long been calling for action to help the most vulnerable get by; it is calling for solutions. However, the devil is in the details, as we say in Quebec. The more we go through the bill, the more we realize that it completely misses the mark.

At first, I must confess, even I was naively taken in by this mirage. When I got home last Thursday evening, I thought that I would hear about this measure and that it might make a few people happy. Instead, as soon as I got back to my riding, I learned that constituents were unanimously disappointed. They were not fooled. To add to what was said by my colleague, the member for Joliette, people linked this measure to another one-time cheque mailout. In 2015, the Harper government gave cheques to families; in 2021, the Liberal government did the same. At the time, we could tell that an election was coming. This government sent out cheques to seniors, but only to those aged 75 and over.

I will take the time to talk about seniors. My colleague from Joliette said that he may not have touched on that in his speech. I know that there is nothing about seniors in the bill that we are talking about this evening, but the fact remains that the two subjects were addressed at the same time. I want to mention the fact that seniors will be excluded from the \$250 cheques. I will also come back to what could have been done with the \$6.3 billion in question and give the government some ideas, in case it does not have any. Finally, I will close by mentioning some other opponents of this bill.

First, let us talk about the fact that seniors are unanimously opposed to this. Last weekend, we read the information that was starting to come out about this announcement, and we were shocked to realize that seniors were once again being forgotten. That is right. There will be no cheques for retirees, students, people with disabilities or others who could use the money. However, everyone with a taxable income of up to \$150,000 could get an election gift of \$250. What a display of cynicism and crass opportunism. It is shameful.

As early as last weekend, I was in contact with seniors' groups. In fact, it all happened quite quickly. It culminated in seniors' groups coming to Parliament Hill today to criticize the fact that they are once again being ignored by the government. Earlier this week, FADOQ spoke out to explain why giving this cheque only to working Canadians is a bad idea. Unfortunately, its members are not the only ones who feel that way.

I would like make a quick aside. I want to commend my colleague from Honor -Mercier for reiterating in an interview this morning that this measure is a bad idea. That is coming from a former member of the Liberal government's cabinet, but I digress.

I want to come back to the FADOQ:

The federal government abandons retirees

The federal government has once again demonstrated its disregard for retirees by excluding them from its one-time \$250 payment, a measure announced on November 21st. This payment, called the Working Canadians Rebate, will be distributed

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next spring and is reserved for workers with an individual net income of less than \$150,000 in 2023.

FADOQ spoke out on behalf of its members and retirees in general and communicated their displeasure and dissatisfaction to the offices of the Minister of Finance..., the Minister of Seniors..., as well as the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Quebec lieutenant.... Our president, Gis le Tass -Goodman, urged them to include seniors in this program to correct an inequity.

Today on Parliament Hill, three more groups came to speak out. Micheline Germain, president of AREQ-CSQ, said, "If someone had told me that I would one day have to advocate for retirees to be eligible for a \$250 cheque meant to help Canadians cope with the rising cost of living, I would not have believed them".

That is how ridiculous this situation is. It is not as if inflation affects only workers. Furthermore, it is not as if there are not that many vulnerable retirees in Quebec.

The Association qu b coise de d fense des droits des personnes retrait es et pr retrait es, or AQDR, which advocates for retirees and pre-retirees, reiterated what the research chair on inequality said at the Bloc Qu b cois conference on the financial situation of seniors. The AQDR pointed out that nearly half of Quebec seniors do not have a livable income. Seniors have fixed incomes, and for far too long, those incomes have not been keeping up with wage growth.

• (1955)

Second, what could this money have been more usefully spent on?

The money could have been spent on increasing old age security pensions. We have been calling for a 10% increase for seniors aged 65 to 74, like the one for seniors aged 75 and up, for more than two years now.

Poverty does not wait for people to turn 75. Needs are growing, and food banks are no exception. My thoughts are with SOS D pannage, an organization back home in Granby. That organization recently told me that more and more seniors are requesting food assistance. A temporary GST pause is not going to help them.

On the occasion of the last homelessness day, I read that homelessness was on the rise, including among seniors and students. My measure is less expensive and better targeted. We calculated that Bill C-319 would cost \$3 billion. As the leader of the Bloc Qu b cois said in his speech today, the other \$3 billion could have been used for housing or to address homelessness.

The GST holiday is not a targeted, meaningful measure that will help families get through the inflationary crisis. As my colleague from Joliette mentioned, there are other measures that would have done more to help families, such as the GST credit.

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The most expensive budget item and biggest worry for families is housing and access to home ownership. I attended a housing conference in Granby last Friday, where housing experts talked about the ineffectiveness of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, and the problems it is having.

I want to reiterate that \$3 billion could go to Bill C-319 and the other \$3 billion could be invested in social and community housing. My colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert toured Quebec and wrote a report on housing that sets out a dozen great recommendations for the federal government. I toured Quebec to talk about Bill C-319. There was strong support in Quebec for both of our projects.

I am not even talking about the funding for the Reaching Home strategy, which should be increased. In fact, Quebec is still waiting for its share so that it can work on the homelessness file. Assistance was promised for cities that are having issues with supervised encampments. They are still waiting.

Third, there are other problems stemming from the GST pause. Last Thursday evening, the chamber of commerce and industry told me that this will cause problems. My colleague from Joliette explained it very well. A family services organization called Maison des familles Granby et région said that this is just a band-aid solution that is not going to help vulnerable families in the long term. The executive director wants to have dinner with me soon so we can talk about it. The tourism body Commerce tourisme Granby région warned that there will be issues for businesses, which will have to reprogram cash registers. For example, ATLAS&CO sells children's gifts and holiday products. First of all, not all products in the store will be exempt from GST. What is more, the holiday season is approaching. This is peak season for retailers, but they will be busy reprogramming their registers, all while there is a labour shortage. This is a big problem.

Then there are the elected municipal officials who got less money than expected from the federal gas tax fund. Municipal infrastructure is needed to help with the housing crisis. The federal government needs to do its part, instead of dumping all the work onto Quebec and the municipalities.

I want to make one last point. This debate underscores more than ever the importance of the bill I introduced. The Bloc Québécois is once again calling on the government to give a royal recommendation to the bill that puts an end to having two classes of seniors and increases old age security by 10% for those aged 65 to 74.

According to the OECD, Canada is one of the industrialized countries where people experience the biggest drop in purchasing power when they retire. Clearly, this is a major problem. I do not want the government to tell me that it is too expensive. I do not want it to tell me that it cannot afford it because all the money is tied up in the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Basically, we are asking the government to focus on its responsibilities and, above all, its central mission, which is to protect people, especially pensioners aged 65 to 74. The government has deliberately overlooked them once again in favour of priorities that will do nothing to really help families and workers. Let us not forget that social housing and homelessness are crucial issues, not to men-

tion all the harmonization problems between the various provinces and Quebec.

Since I am running out of time, I will now inform the House that I move the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by adding the following:

“(g) it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Finance that it study the subject-matter of the bill and, for the purposes of this study, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance shall be ordered to appear before the committee, for at least three hours, at a date and time to be fixed by the Chair of the committee, but not later than Friday, December 13, 2024.”

On that note, I look forward to my colleagues' questions.

• (2000)

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

Questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

• (2005)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am somewhat disappointed that the Bloc would move such as amendment. I guess their relationship grows closer with the Conservative Party. At the end of the day, this legislation would give a GST tax break to Canadians on a wide variety of products. That would be a wonderful thing to take place for two months during the holiday season. I understand the Conservatives have said that they are going to vote against it. Now we have the Bloc that seems to want to put it off and take the risk of Canadians not receiving this tax break during the holiday season.

Why does the Bloc party not want the people of Quebec and all Canadians to receive at least some sort of a holiday relief? Does she not believe the people of Quebec deserve some relief during the holiday season?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I do not think that my colleague heard the rather unanimous comments from Quebec. I gave the point of view of community organizations, citizens and economic organizations. Everyone really is unanimous. Over the weekend, elected officials at the municipal and other levels of government told me that this measure is completely ridiculous. It excludes basic necessities and includes products that are not essential. It is temporary, when what people really need is long-term strategic assistance.

They do not need a band-aid solution. They need a government that has political vision and that is going into the next election to serve the public's interests, rather than its own.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member just spoke about something extremely important, about the structural problems that exist within our economy right now, the debt and deficit. People are looking for relief, but they are not looking for short-term relief; they are looking for long-term relief from an affordability standpoint, which, in our view, also includes axing the carbon tax because it is having a cascading effect across the economy. From a structural standpoint, these pieces being spread out about the economy are not going to do anything.

Does the member agree that, structurally, it is not going to have an impact on the major problems that exist today?

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I can see that neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have a grasp of Quebec's reality. No one back home talks to me about the carbon tax. People talk to me about meaningful measures, like increasing old age security by 10% for seniors aged 65 to 74. Given the current economic uncertainty and the likely return of inflation, it is more important than ever to restore the purchasing power of these seniors. In fact, the Conservatives, and even some Liberals, voted for it, including the member for Honoré-Mercier. At some point or another, all of the parties have supported this bill.

Another way to help our economy is to protect our farms. I am thinking of Bill C-282, which deals with protecting supply management. We hear about it in Quebec. With the economic risk and uncertainty expected over the next period, plus the growing risk of inflation, protecting Quebec's farms, protecting our farm model, protecting supply management and writing down in an act that we are going to protect our farms here is important.

When I am in Quebec, I hear more about those two things than I hear about the carbon tax.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague and I always listen to her speeches with great interest.

There is no doubt that this measure will benefit Quebecers. We are talking about zero-rating a number of essentials that struggling people need. However, the Bloc Québécois opposes it.

There is another issue supported unanimously by Quebecers, and that is pharmacare. The largest coalition in Quebec's history, which includes the labour movement, the Union des consommateurs and health care professionals, has unanimously told the Bloc Québécois that it should vote in favour of the NDP's plan to implement pharmacare. Currently, drug plans in Quebec leave 15% of Quebecers behind. The same applies to dental care. Quebecers are calling for what the NDP is proposing, but the Bloc Québécois says no. They do not want to listen to Quebecers. It seems to me that there is a contradiction here.

Can my colleague enlighten me? Why is the Bloc Québécois opposed to all these measures that Quebecers want?

● (2010)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the New Democrats do not understand the reality of Quebec.

With regard to the dental plan, what I am hearing is that seniors did not know where to go, that people were confused, that dentists have changed their minds and that the money was given to a private company. The government could have done many things with that \$6.3 billion, such as increase the health transfers. That would have been helpful to Quebec's health care system and social services—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Westminster—Burnaby.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is just another example of the NDP getting things done in this Parliament. When we look at the past four years, starting with COVID and all the measures, Conservatives basically did not contribute anything to the COVID measures. Members will recall that during that period, it took unanimous consent to get material through. It was the NDP driving the government to provide more supports for families, seniors, people with disabilities, students and small businesses, and trying to ensure that people were taken care of at all times during COVID.

Madam Speaker, I would ask if the member could be brought to order, please. It is very difficult to hear myself, being at the end and under this ceiling.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Which member was it? I could not hear anything, so I apologize to the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I worked with people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing before coming into Parliament. There are certain acoustic weaknesses in the House of Commons, and one of them is that when people are talking under this roof, the sound carries quite heavily.

During COVID, the NDP provided a lot of supports. Members will recall that subsequent to that, whether talking about dental health, pharmacare, affordable housing or the red dress alert, we were ensuring that unionized people who go on strike are not undermined by replacement workers with the anti-scab legislation. The NDP did all of those things that made a real difference in the quality of life for people, particularly when we talk about dental care. This is a reality that is, effectively, changing the lives of so many Canadians.

Government Orders

A million Canadians, mainly seniors at this point, have already benefited from the NDP's dental care program. That means each and every Conservative MP, on average, has 3,000 or 3,200 people in their ridings who have benefited from the NDP dental care program. Members will recall that the Conservative members absolutely refused to adopt this. They were kicking and screaming to make sure they could block it at every opportunity. The NDP succeeded, procedurally, in getting dental care and pharmacare through, ensuring that people in the Conservatives' ridings, including in Barrie—Innisfil, benefit from what the NDP has succeeded in doing. Thousands of people in every single Conservative riding have benefited from the NDP's work.

We are not expecting Conservative MPs to thank New Democrats for helping their constituents when they refused to. However, it is important that, with this bill now, given how Conservatives acted in the past, blocking everything that benefits people—

• (2015)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member said the NDP has done so much work for our ridings. I was just at a committee meeting where we heard that we have lost thousands of forest workers because—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is debate. I would like to let the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby continue his speech.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I apologize. I did not want to interrupt the speech, but is there a party going on in the House that I have not been invited to and am not aware of?

There seems to be a lot of jabbering going on.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, I am going to ask everyone to be as quiet as possible so we can hear the member's speech.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, just to follow up on the comment by my colleague from Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies about forestry, was he kidding? The Conservatives under Harper, with Harper's softwood sellout, lost a billion dollars, basically snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Not only that, but they closed 200 softwood plants across the country. That cost us 100,000 workers. There is a lot of resentment about Harper's softwood sellout and the lost jobs, not only in Prince George but also right across the country.

I am sorry, but when the Conservatives start talking about softwood workers, they should give me a break. Their policies were terrible. That was the worse, most corrupt government in Canadian history; it was incompetent in financial management and had many scandals, which were all covered up by the Conservatives. Now they have the audacity to say they took care of forestry workers. They sure did: They threw them out of work. That is not how an

NDP government works. We make sure that people get good, unionized jobs. People have the wherewithal to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head.

I want to come back to what the NDP has accomplished. When we look at the bill that we will be voting on tomorrow, it is another example of the NDP putting pressure on the government to get it to actually do the right thing. The government does the wrong thing. It has followed what the Conservatives put into place far too many times, such as the massive overseas tax havens that cost us over \$30 billion a year, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, courtesy of the Harper regime and every single Conservative MP. Their constituents cannot thank them for pharmacare, dental care, anti-scab legislation or affordable housing, but they can thank their Conservative MPs for allowing the richest and most entitled people in Canada, as well as the most profitable corporations, to take over \$30 billion in taxpayer money offshore every year. That is thanks to the Harper regime. Its most notable achievement was to hollow out and gut the federal budget.

It is because of those things that we have the current motion before us tonight. We simply cannot ever trust Conservatives to do the right thing. We cannot always trust the Liberals to do the right thing either, but when they accept NDP leadership, they do end up doing the right thing. As far as Conservatives are concerned, Conservatives simply do not. That is why we need a motion that actually gets us through all the gates and obstacles, so we can get this GST relief to Canadians.

Colleagues will recall, of course, that it was the member for Burnaby South who called for this, who said we needed to take the GST off family essentials. The NDP members think differently from the Liberals and the Conservatives, who are always just paying lip service. In the case of the Conservatives, they are badly damaging the country every time they get the reins of power.

The NDP called for taking the GST off all essentials. That includes the cellphones that we use, which are an essential service. We pay far too much for our cellphone bills. We are being gouged in this country. We also want to take the GST off home heating, children's clothing and a variety of other essentials. The government has done part of that, but certainly not all of it. We believe that, this Christmas season, we have a responsibility as parliamentarians to step up and actually get the GST relief adopted. Now, Conservatives do not feel that way. They prefer to be imposters. They would love never to do anything to help anybody. That is their *modus operandi*: They come into the House and pontificate but never accomplish a damn thing.

Government Orders

If we compare the leaders who will be contesting the next election, we know that the Liberals are not popular. There is no doubt that they have made a number of mistakes. I will take the member for Carleton and the member for Burnaby South and compare both of their accomplishments. I will take one for the last 20 years and the other one for the last 20 weeks. Let us take the member for Carleton over the last 20 years. What is his singular accomplishment? I have been in the House for that same period of time, and I can tell members that the one thing he did in 20—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (2020)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we have order? I cannot hear the hon. member.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I know it is difficult for Conservatives to hear the truth. I know that it pains them, because they live in a weird silo where everything they have done is good, but they have a terrible record.

If they do not want to listen, they can simply leave the House, as the Speaker pointed out. They certainly did not have any problem leaving the House yesterday. When we had the emergency debate on the Trump tariffs, every party was here. The Green Party was here the whole time. The Bloc Québécois was here the whole time. The NDP was here the whole time. The Liberals were here the whole time. The Conservatives showed up late to work and then booked off early because they do not give a damn about this country and certainly do not give a damn—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we please not use language that is not parliamentary? We also know that we cannot mention presences or absences in the House.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, not only did the member mention the presence or absence of a member, but he used very unparliamentary language. I would ask for him to retract it and apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will ask the hon. member to retract that expression.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I retract the expression that caused such offence.

I hope that Conservatives will take that as a lesson the next time they use blatantly insulting and unparliamentary language in the House and refuse to withdraw it. This is how adults work in the House of Commons. This is how we should work in Parliament. When the Speaker asks us to withdraw, we withdraw. Unfortunately, we have never seen a Conservative do that because they do not want to respect Parliament.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the rules of Parliament are clear. The retraction shall be short and to the point—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It was. The hon. member resumed his speech.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, it cannot be a jumping off point to lecture us. That is not appropriate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is latitude.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, my goodness, the Conservatives are a sensitive group. They are just so sensitive to criticism. They are sensitive about their record and sensitive to criticism.

Let us continue the comparison. The member for Carleton, in 20 years, has accomplished one singular accomplishment: He managed, as housing minister, to build six homes. That is great. However, the Conservatives are right to point out that the housing prices have doubled under the Liberals, and they are right to point out that the food bank lineups, as tragic as they are, have doubled in size. What Conservatives will not admit is that the same thing happened under the Harper regime. Housing prices doubled under Harper, and the Conservatives have never admitted to that. They have never apologized for their role in that. Of course, as well, we know that food bank lineups doubled during the Harper regime. What Canadians are living through is half the responsibility of the Conservatives and half the responsibility of the Liberals.

Now, the Liberals, to their credit, will accept NDP leadership, and we get things done, such as dental care and pharmacare. We finally having investments in affordable housing. The member for Carleton thought it was cool to build six homes in his long tenure as minister of housing. The Liberals now have the wherewithal, because of the NDP pressure in the last budget, to build hundreds of thousands of homes over the next few years, and we take full credit for having made that advantage.

When we look at the member for Carleton, we see there were six homes built in 20 years. Now, let us look at what the member for Burnaby South has accomplished just in the last 20 weeks.

In the last 20 weeks, we have this GST relief, which we will be voting on tomorrow, that would take the GST off of family essentials. The GST, I have to mention, is a Conservative tax.

Conservative MPs can thank New Democrats for working on behalf of their constituents, but they will not, because Conservatives do not do that. They do not thank us. Each one of the MPs who are in the House has 3,000 constituents who are getting dental care. They have dental care because of the NDP, but I have never had a conservative MP come up and say, “Thank you, NDP, for fighting so hard for my constituents.”

Government Orders

For the GST, it would be similar. We are going to make sure that Conservatives' constituents are taken care of. We are going to take the Conservative GST off of family essentials, and that is going to make a difference. Does it go as far as the NDP would go? No, we would include home heating. We would include telecom, where we pay far too much, to ensure that Canadians have that, and we would make this permanent. However, we are not going to block a bill when we know that it would benefit Canadians right across the country. We are going to make sure that the bill gets through, and that is why we are coming back to this motion so that we can actually get it through.

If we ask Conservatives to do anything, they never will. It will take them years and years. They will offer a ton of excuses, but they will never get things done on behalf of their constituents. Their modus operandi is to make things as bad as possible. They certainly succeeded in the Harper regime in doubling housing prices and food bank lineups, and now the Liberals, unfortunately, saw that as an example and did the same thing. The reality is, in this corner of the House with the NDP, we actually believe in doing things that will benefit people, which is why we are going to be supporting the bill, and making sure that it is implemented tomorrow night.

Let us come back to this comparison. On the one hand, we have the member for Carleton, with 20 years and a fat pension. My goodness, it is a \$20-million pension. The fattest pension in Parliament is for the member of Carleton. It is just a big, fat pension. Of course, in the 20 years it took to earn that pension, he built six houses.

Now, let us look at the member for Burnaby South over the last 20 weeks. A million Canadians have dental care because of the work done by the member for Burnaby South and the members of the NDP caucus over the last 20 weeks. In the last 20 weeks, we also got the pharmacare bill through the House and through the Senate. In just a matter of a few days, we are going to have agreements with provinces to start the flow of that medication. That means that everybody with diabetes, and there are four million people with diabetes in this country, will have their diabetes medication covered. Some of them are now paying \$1,000 or \$1,500 every month for their diabetes medication.

● (2025)

Constituents, like my constituent, Amber, paying \$1,000 a month for her diabetes medication, will have that crushing financial burden taken off their shoulders. That is an important fundamental shift in how we treat health care and expand health care for four million Canadians. Provinces are signing on and have already expressed interest, except for Conservative provinces, which I will come back to in a moment. When they sign, what we will see is a fundamental relief in that crushing financial burden that comes from diabetes, and many families looking for contraception will not have to struggle to see whether they have enough money to pay for their contraception and family planning.

I will come back to the Conservative provinces. We have a couple of provinces that have the worst health outcomes in the country and they are Conservative. When we look at Conservative provinces, we see the highest crime rate and we see the poorest health outcomes. Those two are connected. Conservatives will say,

“We are never going to sign on to pharmacare.” However, the reality is we saw the same opposition by Conservative provinces to universal health care, one of Canada's proudest achievements. In fact, when we ask Canadians what institution they admire most, they say it is universal health care in this country.

Tommy Douglas, the first leader of the NDP, was the founder of universal health care in this country and always believed that pharmacare was the next step. However, when we got universal health care through this House at that time, the Conservative provinces opposed it. What happened? First, the provinces that signed on saw how universal health care was a benefit and some of the Conservative provinces' leaders suddenly realized they had a political problem if they did not sign on, so they actually had the foresight to sign on to universal health care. There were some Conservative provinces that did not, run by very stubborn Conservative leaders who did not really care about their populations at all. What happened, and this is why it took three years to fully implement universal health care, is that those Conservative leaders were defeated. Their population said, “hell no; we are not going to allow this Conservative extremist to block our universal health care.”

I predict that the same thing will happen with universal pharmacare and what we are going to see is Canadians demanding pharmacare as the provinces sign on and people get the benefit. Why should somebody with diabetes in Alberta have to pay and pay, when in British Columbia, which has a progressive NDP government that is signing on to universal pharmacare, that person has their diabetes medication and devices covered?

When we look at the accomplishments of the member for Burnaby South over the last 20 weeks, which include things like anti-scab legislation, affordable housing, dental care, pharmacare and I could go on and on, we can see that the member for Burnaby South has done 10 times more, if not 20 times more, than the member for Carleton with his fat pension has done in 20 years. That is the comparison that people are going to see when we have our election in 2025. We know it is scheduled then, and that is when Canadians will make that comparison. Do we go with somebody who is all hot air, or do we go with somebody who has actually done things for us? I do caution Conservative MPs who have had 3,000 or 3,500 constituents in their ridings who already benefit from the NDP dental care plan. They might have to think a bit, when they are campaigning, about how they explain why they have opposed something that has benefited so many of their constituents.

Government Orders

The final thing that I want to mention is the issue that the member for Carleton has raised. I think he said that it is a “trick”. He likes to say that. He likes to say that programs do not exist. It is very Trumpian. It is sort of saying, “I am just going to pretend that there is a different reality”, with respect to dental care, for example. However, the reality is that there is a former Conservative leader who called for exactly this type of program of Christmas temporary GST relief. That was Erin O’Toole, and there is video on that, so I would encourage my Conservative colleagues to actually watch and educate themselves and see Erin O’Toole calling for exactly the same thing that the NDP is bringing to the House tonight.

● (2030)

The proposed GST relief on essentials would make a difference right across the country. The NDP would do it better and do it differently, but we are not going to stand in the way of something that is going to benefit people. It is for that reason we will be supporting the bill and supporting the motion tonight.

I am going to sit down now. I am going to be contacting my chair, and I just want to assure Conservatives that when I contact my chair, I am not going to change my mind and pretend I should still speak, or try to play some games. I am just going to sit down—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is time for questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like my colleague across the way, I am a bit surprised that today’s far right Conservatives have made the decision to vote against this legislation. It would appear as if the Bloc is going to do likewise. This legislation would at the very least, and I know the NDP will want to do more, provide some tax relief from the GST.

I want to pick up on the member’s comments in regard to pharmacare. Like him, I am very passionate about it. Fortunately, between the Liberals and the New Democrats, we were able to come up with legislation. One of the fears I have is that a future Conservative government would get rid of the pharmacare program, when in fact we should be looking at ways we can expand it, to include things like shingles, for example.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts on the fear factor of the Conservatives’ hidden agenda that would not only not support pharmacare but look at getting rid of it in some form or another.

● (2035)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I would like to start off by saying the Liberals were not passionate about pharmacare when, three and a half years ago, they stood in the House and voted down the NDP’s bill on the Canadian pharmacare act. They voted with the Conservatives. It was the evil coalition of Liberals and Conservatives, a corporate coalition, voting down pharmacare.

I am glad that three and a half years later we have put in place the rudiments of pharmacare. It is going to help people with diabetes and contraception, but yes, absolutely, we need to move be-

yond that to all classes of drugs. This is a no-brainer. It would save \$4 billion for Canadians and save hundreds of lives every year.

I am hoping the Liberals have changed their heart from their previous mistakes and that they actually become passionate about what the NDP has brought to this country. Will the Conservatives cut it and scrap it? Absolutely. I would not trust anything in the hands of the member for Carleton. After 20 years, he has accomplished nothing.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, Tommy Douglas was from Saskatchewan. He was an amazing man, a man of God who valued people for the right reasons and did a good thing.

However, since then, I watched my province over the last years, prior to the current government forming power, being driven into the ground. There were no jobs. Out of six children on my side of the family and five on my husband’s, everybody left the province but two because there was nothing there anymore. Now, fortunately, business is welcome and things are booming in spite of what is happening federally.

I would like to mention, and perhaps the member would like to comment on, the fact that in Saskatchewan, when the NDP had its convention, it requested that the federal NDP leader, in his lovely suits and lovely watches, not attend the convention.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I find it a bit disturbing that a member from Saskatchewan, where there are cases of scurvy, would say things are great in Saskatchewan.

The reality is there was a recent election. The people of Regina and the people of Saskatoon, the two principal cities in Saskatchewan, did not vote Conservative. They voted New Democrat. In fact, all of the ridings in Regina and all of the ridings except one in Saskatoon voted NDP. That shows people in Saskatchewan do not feel Saskatchewan is going in the right direction at all. They gave a warning to Scott Moe and to every single Conservative federal MP to not take them for granted anymore—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are getting a bit away from the scope of the motion.

The hon. minister is rising on a point of order.

Government Orders

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I move: [Translation]

That the House do now adjourn.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 8:38 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:38 p.m.)

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