



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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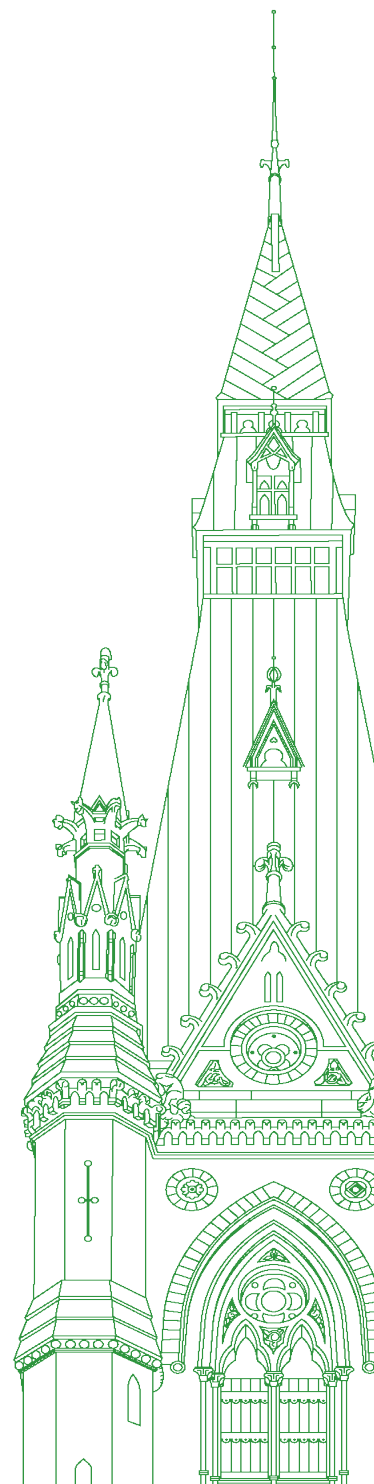
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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 14, 2021

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The Chair would like to take a moment to provide some information to the House regarding the management of Private Members' Business.

As members know, certain procedural realities constrain the Speaker and members insofar as legislation is concerned.

[*English*]

Following the replenishment of the order of precedence, the Chair has developed a practice of reviewing items so that the House can be alerted to bills that, at first glance, appear to impinge on the financial prerogative of the Crown. This allows members the opportunity to intervene in a timely fashion to present their views about the need for those bills to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, following the May 31st, 2021, replenishment of the order of precedence with 15 new items, I wish to inform the House that there is one bill which preoccupies the Chair: It is Bill C-301, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act, standing in the name of the member for La Prairie.

[*English*]

The understanding of the Chair is that this bill may need to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[*Translation*]

I therefore encourage hon. members who would like to make arguments regarding the requirement of a royal recommendation for Bill C-301 to do so at the earliest opportunity.

I thank hon. members for their attention.

[*English*]

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR A GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME ACT

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.) moved that Bill C-273, An Act to establish a national strategy for a guaranteed basic income, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely honoured to rise in the House today to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-273, an act to establish a national strategy for a guaranteed basic income. I give my thanks to the member for Malpeque, who seconded the bill and is a champion for a guaranteed basic income pilot in his home province of P.E.I., and to the member for Beaches—East York, a true progressive who traded his spot so I could stand in the House today to begin second reading of Bill C-273. I feel blessed to call him a colleague and friend.

Basic income is not a new idea. It is one that has been circulating in Canada for decades. This bill is being introduced after the many years of advocacy, research and work of many leaders, including Professor Evelyn Forget; former minister, MP and senator, the Hon. Hugh Segal; Ron Hikel, who directed the MINCOME program in Manitoba; Sheila Regehr, chair of the Basic Income Canada Network; Floyd Marinescu, executive director of UBI Works; the Hon. Art Eggleton, former senator, MP and minister; and Senator Kim Pate, among many other current senators. I stand on all of their shoulders. Their work is the reason this bill exists.

Even though a motion on basic income was presented in the House by the member for Winnipeg Centre, Bill C-273 represents the first time a bill on basic income has been introduced in the House of Commons, and it is a true honour for me to speak at the second reading of this bill.

We are slowly coming out of a once-in-a-generation pandemic, and we are all wondering what kind of world we want to come back to. We are all asking ourselves questions about how we want to live, inquiring about some of the models and systems that are currently in place. We are looking with new eyes at the economic model that has been the foundation of global growth. We have a much better understanding of the human impacts on our planet, which are accelerating climate change, and are asking ourselves how we can change the way we live. We see more clearly the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and other global disruptors on the most vulnerable and are asking what our obligations are to those who are less fortunate than us.

Private Members' Business

In building back better, what is the world we want to live in? As we chart a course forward, I believe we need a 21st-century approach that provides stability and better supports for Canadians, tackles income inequality, enhances productivity and spurs economic growth and innovation.

Bill C-273 proposes to create a new model that would serve as the foundation of our social welfare system. The bill, at its core, is about enabling implementation pilots between the provinces and/or territories and the national government to test large-scale guaranteed basic income programs. This bill is not about testing whether basic income is a good idea. There is already strong and substantial data that supports the effectiveness of a guarantee basic income, but there is much less information on the best ways or models to implement and deliver basic income at scale.

Bill C-273 would enable us to frame, test and validate different models to get to those answers and the data. The results of these implementation pilots and data would ultimately be used to create a national guaranteed basic income model. The bill does not propose which basic income model to use, whether it is a negative income model, the Ontario model, the MINCOME model or any other model. It also does not articulate a price tag or propose to eliminate any existing government-assisted income or support programs.

Bill C-273, if passed, would have all these details worked out between the provinces and/or territories and the federal government. It would allow for interested provinces or territories to model and create a program that works best for their populations. This bill would also collect data in three key areas: the impacts to government, the impacts to the recipient and the impacts to recipient communities. It also proposes the creation of a framework of national standards.

Why am I proposing a bill on guaranteed basic income? Canada's current social welfare system, created in the 1940s and modernized in the 1970s, is still largely at the foundation of the system we have today. No matter how many times it is adjusted, too many Canadians are still falling through the cracks. There are literally hundreds of income and support programs for Canadians, delivered by dozens of departments and ministries. This complexity leads to our current service model missing many of the Canadians most in need, and focuses too often on applications and auditing Canadians and far less so on delivering the actual support they need. Meanwhile, even with these programs, income inequality continues to grow despite our deliberate efforts to tackle it.

• (1110)

I am so proud of the many ways our federal Liberal government has tried to directly address income inequality and reduce poverty over the last five years, such as raising taxes on the top 1%, reducing it on the middle class, introducing the Canada child benefit, increasing the Canada workers benefit and increasing the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, among many other things. We have greatly reduced poverty in Canada by over a million people, but income inequality continues to be an issue. That is why I believe it is time to review the foundation of our social welfare system and bring it into the 21st century. I believe that a new service model could be a guaranteed basic income program, one that may simplify our social programs while better delivering support.

Even before the pandemic, almost half of all Canadian families were \$200 away from coming up short on their monthly bills. The jobs they rely on are not what they used to be. People used to turn to part-time and temporary work as a last resort during tough times, but now for many, multiple jobs are needed to pay the bills and meet responsibilities.

Indeed, the world of work is changing faster than ever before. More workers are shifting to the gig economic, there are more temporary and short-term jobs, and many jobs, whether blue collar or white collar, are being eliminated by automation and artificial intelligence. In addition, disruptions in our economy are happening at an accelerated rate, faster and more frequently, leaving more Canadians working harder, longer and feeling like it is more difficult to get ahead.

Throughout history, humans have had to adapt to major disruptions like the ones we are going through now, which include COVID and the move to digital economy, among many others, and we eventually do adapt. However, the period of change can be harsh, even ruthless, leaving countless workers behind, with many never recovering. Our social safety net is not well designed to help Canadians through transitions, so in my opinion we need a new model, one that provides stability to those who have been trapped in a cycle of poverty, to those who are in danger of falling into poverty and to the middle class threatened by disruption.

Workers cannot weather economic change without a strong financial floor under them that provides them with stability. Too many jobs no longer provide that floor. Low-wage work prevents people from moving on to better opportunities. People cannot take time to train for tomorrow's job market or turn an idea into a business that employs other people. People need financial freedom to move up the economic ladder and innovate.

Young people understand this volatile future because they are already living it. They know that the guarantees made to them no longer hold true. We promised them a middle-class lifestyle if they got an education and worked hard. Instead, they are inheriting an economy facing non-stop disruption. They are being forced into a gig economy and temporary jobs or facing threats from automation. We need a social welfare system that is more responsive, less complex, more flexible and better at managing labour changes, disruptions and transitions. A basic income program can offer that.

Finally, I see the guaranteed basic income as a cornerstone of Canada's innovation and economic growth strategy. Providing an equal opportunity for everyone to succeed is a fundamental value at the heart of Bill C-273. We need a system that removes all obstacles regarding access to opportunity and that allows people to be their best selves. Canada's economy and success will be dependent on our ability to innovate. The only way for Canada to achieve its economic potential is by allowing all Canadians to achieve their full personal potential.

It is vital to note that the operational design of a basic income program is critical to its success. Ron Hikel, director of the MIN-COME Manitoba program, said there are three essential design features of a system that will provide sufficient income and address variability of income, greatly encouraging work, minimizing fraud and reducing public costs. The design of any basic income model or implementation pilot must be thoughtful, and guaranteed income implementation pilots should be monitored and adjusted as they unfold to ensure they are producing the impacts that are desired.

There are three common often repeated myths of basic income. One, it will encourage people to stay at home and not work; two, social programs that are helpful will be eliminated; and three, it will cost too much.

Basic income pilots have been tested all over the world. Beyond our borders, countries such as Japan, Finland, Iran and the United States have tested it. The verdict is that a basic income helps reduce poverty without reducing people's desire to work. Some people find that last part hard to believe, even though basic income recipients in pilots around the world show they continue to work. That is because most basic income models would not cover all costs, but would provide the stability needed to improve options. Recipients of basic income do not see it as a handout but a resource that they use to retrain, go back to school or search for full-time work, and when they do, they often find better work, earn more and stay in jobs longer.

• (1115)

As for the cost, some people believe that the price tag is too big. However, real life has shown us that the cost of doing nothing is bigger. What is the cost of not altering a system that we know is outdated? What is the cost of not better supporting Canadians to be their best and more productive selves? In the end, it may be cost-effective, if pilots generate more value than they cost.

Before the pandemic, our social safety net was already failing; the pandemic just pointed a spotlight at it. In the months ahead, pandemic supports will start winding down, and families will go back to hoping that their limited monthly savings are enough to get by on. My sense is that we know they will not be.

Private Members' Business

We are faced with some big questions as we come out of this pandemic, and as we tally up the costs and face the hard truths that have come to light over the last 16 months. The late Shimon Peres, former president and prime minister of Israel, at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2014 said that the world is changing faster than ever before, but the opportunity before us is to shape the world that we want to live in. So, what is the world that we want to live in? In Canada, what kind of society do we want to create?

Mark Carney tells us that the crises facing the world today come from a focus on price and profitability at the expense of fairness and income equality. Recognizing that our current models have not resulted in a fair and more equitable world, what are the right values for Canada to pursue now?

Maybe we want to create a base set of principles that is at the root of our society: that all Canadians have access to food, a roof over their heads, health care, freedom from violence, greater choice and full access to opportunity. Maybe we want to balance, making policy decisions that look only at improving productivity, efficiency and creating jobs while also providing Canadians with stability, dignity and personal growth that will have greater success in achieving those goals. Maybe we want to create a new foundation for our social welfare system, one that provides stability, dignity and the right incentives for all Canadians to be supported so they can contribute as their best selves.

We have done this before. After the Depression and World War II, a compassionate Tommy Douglas imagined universal health care for all men and women, many of whom he was seeing in the streets. Many had served in the war but, when coming home, could not afford health care and had become destitute. Tommy Douglas had imagined free health care services for all, and starting in one province he showed that it could be done and how best to do it. We then expanded health care to the rest of Canada, and we are not poorer as a country; we are richer for it. We also did this with public pensions and old age security for seniors. Again, we are a better, richer and fairer country because of these programs.

Private Members' Business

In conclusion, the world is in transition now, and it is a moment when we need our governments to step up and create the world that we want to live in. This is that moment. Our aging social infrastructure is ill-suited to support the needs of Canadians today. Too many people no longer have a fair shot at opportunity. Creating a new model that provides stability can restore a fair shot for everyone and boost our innovation and economic potential. A guaranteed basic income, as would be enabled by Bill C-273, is the simplest, fastest and most effective way to get it done.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member plead her case at length, but what she is talking about is a pilot project with the provinces, not a guaranteed minimum income.

I will not comment on the substance of the matter, because a guaranteed basic income, or minimum income, has potential advantages. However, I have to point out that it is up to each province to introduce it. The social assistance programs we are talking about, the income assistance programs, ultimately, and other social programs are a provincial jurisdiction.

Rather than reflecting on these conditions for the 21st century, there are two things the government could do right away. First, it could strengthen and reform the employment insurance system for workers. Second, it could stop discriminating against some seniors and increase old age security for all seniors aged 65 and over.

Could my colleague comment on that?

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, there are two things that I want to address. The first is in terms of adjusting our current EI system. As I mentioned in my speech, it was a system that was created in another era, and it was meant to serve a population at a time with different challenges and opportunities. For me, it does not matter how many times we adjust the system. Still too many people cannot actually access the supports. Still too many people are falling into poverty. We do not have the agility and flexibility in the system that we need for the unpredictability of the work world that we see both today and in the future.

In terms of the participation of the provinces, support programs are actually offered both provincially and federally, and I think—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I do have to allow for other questions. There are only five minutes for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on her private member's bill and advancing the idea of basic income. However, as we know, leading basic income efforts have indicated that basic income is actually not a silver bullet and it must be in addition to current and future government services and supports.

My concern is with proposed subparagraph 3(3)(d)(i), which provides the option of “the potential of a guaranteed basic income program to reduce the complexity of or replace existing social pro-

grams”. My concern was amplified last week, on June 3, when the member for Davenport voted in support of reducing the CRB from \$2,000 to \$1,200 come July, in the FINA committee, which is a totally unlivable income.

Is the member willing to make amendments to her bill to ensure that cutting our social safety net is off the table?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her leadership on this issue. There are two things I will address.

One is in terms of what support programs would be included in any type of basic income implementation pilot. The bill does not actually call for any programs to be reduced. I think it is just gathering the data as to what would be reduced if there are any programs that are flattened over time. It is really up to the provinces and territories to work with the federal government to come up with a pilot for their citizens. The principle should be that everyone is better off.

In terms of what the member referred to in the finance committee, there was a proposal to actually increase CRB, but it was ruled out of order because of a technical thing that does not allow motions to come before the finance committee that would increase the budget.

• (1125)

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Davenport for her important work on Bill C-273. In my riding of Cape Breton—Canso, health care is top of mind for all constituents.

Can you tell us about the relationship between basic income and social determinants of health, and how basic income can reduce the strains on our health care system?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to address the questions to the Chair and not to the individual member.

A brief answer from the member for Davenport.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his tremendous support and leadership. The reason we want to have these types of implementation pilots is that we want to test how we could better support our populations in an era that is changing faster than ever before. We know that the current costs of poverty and the current costs of not providing enough support to our population do have negative effects on health. I think that is the reason we want to be testing these implementation pilots moving forward.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is very good to be back on the floor of the House of Commons. Like so many parliamentarians, I have been participating virtually for months, so it really feels great to be here today with you and everyone in the House.

I am pleased today to put some thoughts on the record concerning Bill C-273, an act to establish a national strategy for a guaranteed basic income.

What is a guaranteed basic income? There are many different policy iterations of it. On the whole, it would essentially be monthly cheques to every Canadian. Some of the policy iterations of this would provide basic cheques to children as well. The amount tends to vary depending on the plan, some having a few hundred dollars a month and others seeing it more as a means to cover all basic necessities, like CERB, which was of course \$2,000 a month. In simple terms, a guaranteed basic income is like CERB, but for everyone, forever.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has estimated that a national guaranteed basic income could cost \$85 billion per year, rising to \$93 billion per year in 2025-26. To pay for this at the federal level, Canadians could expect to see a tripling of the GST, which currently sits at 5%, or an increase of personal income taxes to 50%. Introducing a basic income following the costliest year in Canadian history, where federal government spending hit \$650 billion in 2020 and is predicted to hit \$510 billion in 2021, is cause for concern, especially since we have received no viable, tangible strategy of how the Liberals are going to raise enough revenue from taxpayers to responsibly pay back the \$354 billion of deficits from 2020 or the \$154 billion of deficits predicted for 2021. Just six short years ago, the federal budget was a mere \$298 billion. The Liberals have doubled Canada's national spending during their time in office, and now want to talk about adding another \$93-billion permanent spending program to the bottom line. I think Canadians are reasonably concerned about this.

The basic income proposal is about more than spending, of course. One of the main arguments is to address poverty, and policy proponents argue that the benefits to the country's social fabric will outweigh the costs. In 2019, Statistics Canada estimated that 3.7 million Canadians, or one in 10, live below the poverty line. A 529-page report, quite a lengthy report, by researchers and economists at three leading Canadian universities concluded after a three-year investigation that a basic income would not be the best way to address poverty. Rather, the report found that government should focus on improving existing programs that already target those who really need them, for example help with rental assist, youth aging out of the child welfare system or perhaps Canadians living with disabilities. Proponents of basic income argue that it will help those living at the extreme inequalities in Canada, those who are homeless, for example. We know that often those who suffer from homelessness also suffer from severe addictions, with the two often feeding into one another.

I have grave concerns about the impact of a basic income on Canadians suffering from addictions. We know that COVID-19 has had severe, extreme and deadly outcomes in Canada since the pandemic began. In fact, overdoses have killed more young people, by far, than COVID-19. In Toronto, fatal suspected opioid overdose

calls to paramedics were up 90% in 2020. In Manitoba, 372 overdose deaths were recorded last year, which is a full 87% jump from the year prior. In British Columbia, the latest data tells us that an average of five people die every single day from illicit drug overdose, with 500 people having died in the first three months of 2021 alone. In fact, Canada-wide, in the six months following the implementation of the COVID-19 lockdowns and restriction measures, there were 3,351 apparent opioid toxicity deaths, representing a 74% increase from the six months prior, a truly devastating statistic.

What happens if we send a monthly cheque of thousands of dollars to those who are severely addicted to drugs? When CERB was first introduced, a constituent of mine, a mother, called me in desperation, terrified that her adult son, who was unemployed and did not qualify for CERB, would apply for CERB, get it and have a severe and possibly deadly relapse. Frontline workers confirmed this fear, like those at Winnipeg's Main Street Project, who have said they believe that CERB has hiked drug use and contributed to opioid abuse and addiction. This is a real concern I have about a basic income, and I really have not heard a coherent solution to address it.

It is difficult to break out of the poverty cycle. We know this. The data tells us that once a person has been unemployed for more than a year, it can be extremely difficult to rejoin the labour market. It can create a dependency on social programs and a disincentive to work. In this sense, a basic income could create a permanent underclass in Canada.

● (1130)

Importantly, there is an inherent dignity in work. MPs are hearing from small businesses in our communities across Canada, particularly in the service industry and the construction field, that it is more difficult now than ever to hire workers and that prospective employees are opting to stay home on government emergency support programs rather than going to work.

Millions of Canadians are, of course, working and taking whatever work they can find, but some are not. We know working and earning an income provides both economic and social benefits. It is necessary for providing for oneself and one's family, and it also boosts confidence through the earned satisfaction of a paycheque. It provides purpose and builds personal responsibility, personal growth and perseverance. It provides daily structure and a reason to get out of bed in the morning. We know it contributes to our personal identity. Many people say "I'm a nurse", "I'm a truck driver", "I'm a scientist", or "I'm a small business owner". It is part of who we are.

Private Members' Business

As Sean Speer said in the Financial Post a few years ago, "Work is one of those crucial activities and institutions that underpins the good life."

Recently my grandfather passed away. He was 91, and he was born in the Prairies in the last pioneer generation in Canada. There were very few government support programs in his early days. CERB and public health care were unheard of at the time. People simply had to work very hard every day or they would not eat.

Now, we have developed a kinder, more compassionate society that takes care of people when they fall on hard times, and that is very good. My grandparents' generation built the strong prosperous country that allows for this type of public generosity in Canada. However, near the end of his life, my grandfather remarked that sometimes it seemed to him that young people feel a sense of entitlement to an easy life of comfort, free from struggle. As a young person, I do get that sense as well.

Last year, when CERB was first introduced and the Liberals were creating a student version of it, it happened to be at the same time that our country's food resources were at risk. Every year Canada brings in about 40,000 temporary foreign workers, generally from Central America, to work in our agriculture sector to produce the food that feeds Canadians and, in fact, feeds the world.

However, with the border closures, it was very difficult to get these workers in and our food supply chains were at risk. Now, with tens of thousands of service sector jobs in tourism, hospitality, and the restaurant and bar industry closed, many students who relied on that work for summer employment, and I use to be one of them, obviously did not have the same opportunities.

At the time, just over a year ago, the Conservatives suggested to have able-bodied young people, full of energy, work, as a temporary measure, in our agricultural sector. They could be picking fruit, working in the fields, living on farms for the summer, contributing to the COVID effort and really securing our food supply chains.

This proposal was met with quite a bit of apprehension, to say the least. In fact, when I consulted university student leaders during committee on this idea, one student, and I will never forget this, said that students go to university so they do not have to do those jobs. That is what she said. This was coming from a student who was at a committee meeting asking for government handouts for students.

The student benefit was important, and I am glad it was provided. However, I found these comments very discouraging, not just for the younger generation but also for what was implied, which was that a labour job or an entry-level job with limited requirements for complex skills or education was somehow not respectable, or that those jobs were beneath certain Canadians, notably some student university elites, apparently, who looked down their noses, perhaps, at an honest day's work in the sun.

What does that message send to those aspiring to break into the job market at the bottom of the ladder, or the millions of Canadians who have to work at minimum wage jobs. I was one of them. I worked in dozens of these types of jobs, in restaurants, retail and manual labour. I have done them all, and I am a better person for it. It taught me the value of hard work. It shaped my work ethic and

character. I learned many valuable skills that really carry me today. I could go on about the value working part-time since I was 14, on and off, has added to my life.

We know there is no better way out of poverty than getting a job, even when someone has to start from the bottom. The experience, skills, and socialization are ultimately unmatched.

In conclusion, that is why the Conservatives and the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Durham, are focused on a jobs recovery plan from the economic destruction of the COVID-19 pandemic. Priority number one for a federal Conservative government would be to recover and create one million jobs, and get every industry in Canada firing on all cylinders and leaving no demographic or region of the country behind.

Meanwhile, the Liberals are here today to talk about basic income, which is more money for everyone forever. We know that is not a jobs plan. It is certainly not an economic recovery plan. Conservatives want to create an inclusive economic recovery that will build a stronger Canada with more opportunities for everyone, so they can succeed in the job market and not need to collect cheques from the government every month. That is our focus and will be our number one priority should we form government after the next election.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the member for Davenport, who introduced Bill C-273. Everyone on the Standing Committee on Finance very much appreciates her contribution.

I studied economics for years, and I remember that the great union leader Michel Chartrand published a book about citizen's income with Michel Bernard. I was immediately intrigued by the idea. I was also surprised to learn that right-wingers such as the father of neoliberalism, Milton Friedman, also supported the concept. My professors and classmates and I debated it during our classes.

Whether it goes by guaranteed minimum income, basic income, universal allowance or basic living stipend, citizen's income will feature prominently in political debates in the years to come in Quebec, in Canada and around the world. There are two reasons for this: one, the unprecedented accumulation of wealth by advanced societies, most of which is being hoarded by a handful of individuals and must be redistributed; and two, the unprecedented growth in precarious employment, with its attendant insecurity, poverty and misery.

In Canada, the wealthiest one per cent hold 10% of the wealth, while over one-third of the labour force hold non-standard jobs. The social safety net no longer protects these part-time, self-employed or temporary workers. That is what this pandemic has proven, since the employment insurance regime fell apart as soon as the crisis began and the crisis seems to have once more exacerbated inequalities.

The various social programs, especially employment insurance and social assistance, do not provide the minimum social safety net our fellow citizens are entitled to receive. It is not surprising that vulnerable workers raise their eyebrows when promises are made regarding the right to a citizen's income that would be paid without the exclusions and bureaucratic nitpicking that come with existing programs.

However, this generous plan to redistribute wealth in our society runs contrary to another plan: that of the guaranteed livable income promoted by advocates of neo-liberalism, which would be just enough to enable people to eke out a living in exchange for the dismantling of the current social safety net. Once again, the benefits of such a policy depend on how it is done and to what extent. Once again, as the saying goes, the devil is in the details.

Support for individuals and families is the responsibility of Quebec and the provinces, not Ottawa. Let us look at an example and ask ourselves about the consequences of allowing a program to be run by Ottawa instead of Quebec.

In 1940, Quebec ceded its jurisdiction over employment insurance to Ottawa through a constitutional amendment. As reform after reform was made to the system, employment insurance eventually lost its primary purpose and practically its fundamental meaning. EI collapsed at the beginning of the crisis, even though its very purpose was to provide insurance in this type of extreme situation, but it was already failing to fulfill its role even before the pandemic hit. Barely four out of 10 unemployed workers were entitled to EI benefits. For women and youth, it was about one in three. This tracks with the increase in the total percentage of jobs that are not permanent full time, which is over 40%. What is more, the different governments in Ottawa changed EI from an insurance program into a hidden tax by pilfering \$59 billion from the fund, money that was effectively taken from the unemployed. Quebec agreed to a constitutional amendment and Ottawa did not play its role. It betrayed us.

The majority of the programs in the social safety net, aside from employment insurance, fall under Quebec's jurisdiction. I am talking about welfare, the CSST, the QPP, child benefits, disability benefits, and so on.

A guaranteed minimum income in Quebec would require a major overhaul. Because so many programs have been adopted since the 1960s, it would be very complicated to dismantle the existing social safety net and bring in this universal policy. Dismantling these programs could end up making many people receiving government assistance worse off. I am not saying that we should not do this because it is complicated, but we need to be well aware of what we are doing. We would have to ensure that no one who might be affected by this kind of change would see any change to their well-being. I am thinking about seniors, single mothers and people living with a disability.

Private Members' Business

Furthermore, because of the way Canada's federation is structured, this kind of program would require the federal and provincial governments to work together closely, which is always a big challenge. In the best case scenario, Ottawa collaborates in the initial stages of a program, as appears to be the case with the new child care program. However, Ottawa has an unfortunate tendency to renege on its commitments and break its word. Health care and EI are examples of that. Just ask the first nations: This country has a history of failing to keep its word.

● (1140)

If Quebec wanted to establish a citizen's income, it would have to repatriate the employment insurance program. However, as constitutional scholar Henri Brun pointed out to the Commission nationale d'examen de l'assurance-emploi, co-chaired by Gilles Duceppe and Rita Dionne-Marsolais, the federal government's exclusive jurisdiction over employment insurance "could not be transferred to the provinces, or Quebec in particular, without a constitutional amendment" that would have first obtained the agreement of seven provinces representing more than 50% of Canada's population. As they say, good luck, Charlie Brown.

In practical terms, establishing a citizen's income, or even a more modest guaranteed minimum income program, necessarily involves the collaboration of the two levels of government, because the income security system is a complex web of assistance and social assistance measures, not to mention there would be major implications for income tax rate structures.

If Ottawa were to embark on such an initiative, as suggested by Bill C-273, it would effectively be expanding, not to say intruding, into Quebec's constitutional areas of jurisdiction. The history of such intrusions calls for caution, to say the least.

Does the Liberal Party really want to reopen the Constitution? That is what should be done here with, I repeat, the agreement of the seven provinces that represent over 50% of the Canadian population.

Take health, for example. Although health falls under provincial jurisdiction, that did not prevent Ottawa from using the spending power it is granted under the Canadian Constitution to intervene. In 1957, the federal government passed the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act by promising to cover 50% of the cost of the provincial and territorial plans that provide hospital insurance to all of their residents. In 1966, the federal government passed the Medical Care Act by promising to share the costs fifty-fifty.

What is happening today? Federal transfers may have covered 50% of health care costs in the 1970s, but today they barely cover one-fifth of Quebec's health care costs. What is more, this percentage will drop to about 18% in a few years because Ottawa unilaterally decided to use a new formula related to GDP growth, which will deprive Quebec of billions of dollars. We know that this government's approach involves throwing the provinces some crumbs if they meet certain conditions. The Liberal health minister from the previous Quebec government referred to this as predatory federalism.

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The federal government also changed its rules for how it allocates budgetary funding among the provinces. The allocation is now done on a per capita basis, even though Quebec's population is older and seniors depend more on health services than younger people do. The Government of Quebec calculates that because of this new rule the province will lose \$174 million a year and over \$2 billion over the next ten years.

The Commission nationale d'examen de l'assurance-emploi showed that the federal system is not adapted to the specific needs of Quebec and its regions, any more than the federal health transfers are. There is every reason to believe that it would be the same story with the citizens' income.

To recap, if Ottawa wants to set up a guaranteed minimum income that would enable people to live with dignity, it would have to reopen the Constitution with the approval of seven provinces representing over 50% of the Canadian population. Canada, Quebec and the provinces would also have to agree to replace, in whole or in part, existing social programs, such as EI, supports for seniors like the GIS, social assistance, programs provided by Quebec's Commission des normes, de l'équité de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, Quebec pension plan payments, child benefits, disability benefits and so on. Governments would also have to ensure that nobody affected by the transition, such as seniors, single-parent families and people with disabilities, would end up worse off than before. Lastly, we would all have to trust Ottawa and hope it keeps its promise not to take a program everyone finally agreed on and slash it a few years later. That has never happened because Ottawa has never shown that it deserves anyone's trust when it comes to administering social measures.

The Bloc Québécois finds the idea of citizen's income to be worthy of consideration, but Ottawa cannot be the one in charge. Quebec absolutely has to be the one in charge because running it in the context of the Canadian federation would pretty much be mission impossible. In other words, and I mean this sincerely, a citizen's income that actually works is possible only if Quebec is independent.

• (1145)

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to start out by congratulating my hon. colleague, the member for Davenport, for her private member's bill, because we know what we have learned during the pandemic is that our social safety net is patchwork and it is insufficient.

This is not an accident. This capitalist economy of Canada leaves those behind who do not fit into its economic agenda. Who is being left behind? It is disabled persons, people with complex mental health and trauma, people who are unhoused and living rough, people who do unpaid work and care work, seniors, veterans, students and the list goes on. I think it is important to note that we cannot understand the poverty that we are experiencing today outside of race, gender, racism, ableism, colonization and the violent dispossession of land from indigenous peoples. To do otherwise is a futile exercise of washing over the ongoing white supremacy of racism that supports inequalities and inequities in the present.

We know that when we provide people with an income guarantee, along with wraparound social supports, it is a cost-saving mea-

sure. It is good economics to look after people. What we found is that during COVID-19, with the creation of the Canada emergency response benefit, a basic income is both possible and feasible in this country. There is no reason for anyone to live in poverty in Canada, and it comes at a very high cost. In fact, the World Health Organization has declared poverty to be the single largest determinant of health, and there is a direct correlation between poverty and high rates of incarceration.

According to federal data, the John Howard Society has shown that the annual cost per prisoner in federal prisons is about \$115,000 a year for one person. In the MMIWG final report, the commissioners found that about 80% of indigenous women who are incarcerated are incarcerated for reasons related to poverty-related crimes, and therefore it is not surprising that in the report they included a demand for a guaranteed livable basic income. The Parliamentary Budget Officer did a careful breakdown, between 2011 and 2012 and found that each Canadian pays \$550 in taxes per year on criminal justice spending.

Do members not think that this money would be better invested in looking after people to make sure that people have what they need and to ensure that we can all live in dignity? Creating lasting and meaningful plans that use human rights frameworks to address poverty would be costly up front, but not nearly as expensive as doing nothing. So much research has already been done, study after study, to prove this. In fact, in 1970 in the Dauphin Mincome study, one of the most ambitious social science experiments ever in Canada, they saw a decrease in hospitalizations, improvements in mental health and a rise in the number of children completing high school.

The Ontario basic income pilot, the most recent study, found that participants of the Ontario basic income pilot project were happier, healthier and even continued working, which goes against all arguments that when we look after people it is a deterrent to working. There has been study after study and pilot after pilot, even though we know the results, as mentioned by my hon. colleague, the member for Davenport. Guaranteed income programs have great results.

Basic income is a way forward in lifting millions of Canadians out of poverty and empowering them to make their own choices.

• (1150)

Basic income would give workers leverage. No one would be desperate to take a job offered at any wage anymore as we saw with migrant workers and meat-packing plants across Canada during the pandemic. Companies operating without adequate safeguards despite warnings from health experts create breeding grounds for the COVID-19 virus.

A basic income would mean not having to put up with degrading work as people could be in a better place to refuse a job offer. This would put the power back in the hands of the workers giving them the power to walk away from abusive work situations.

Although basic income is not a silver bullet, it would save lives in many cases and it would heed the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls call for justice 4.5, which states:

We call upon all governments to establish a guaranteed annual livable income for all Canadians, including Indigenous Peoples, to meet all their social and economic needs. This income must take into account diverse needs, realities, and geographic locations.

However, after more than two years, the government has only recently released a national action plan with no implementation strategy. Not only has the government not acted on the calls for justice, but it was unfortunate listening to our Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that he said that he sees no path for a basic—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member she is not to mention the Prime Minister by name.

The hon. member.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I am sorry, Madam Speaker.

—which goes directly against call for justice 4.5.

Unlike this bill, the motion that I put forward, Motion No. 46, which I introduced last summer was very clear that a permanent guaranteed livable income would not cut our social safety net, rather add to it as stated in paragraph 5 of my motion, “in addition to current and future government public services and income supports meant to meet special, exceptional and other distinct needs and goals...”.

It is not clear in Bill C-273 that the option to get our social safety net is not on the table. Of particular concern is proposed subparagraph 3(3)(d)(i), which states:

—the potential of a guaranteed basic income program to reduce the complexity of or replace existing social programs, to alleviate poverty and to support economic growth,

Leading experts on guaranteed livable income have been very clear that basic income programs are not a silver bullet and basic income must not replace our existing social safety net. Rather, it must be in addition to our current and future public services and income supports that are meant to meet special, exceptional and other distinct needs and goals rather than basic needs.

It needs to build on our current guaranteed income programs that are no longer livable like old age security, the child tax benefit and provincial income assistance and expand them out for those who are falling through the cracks. When we leave people without choices, we place people at risk. Poverty costs lives. Poverty kills.

There is no reason why anyone living in Canada should be destined for a life of poverty. This is especially the case given that we continue to witness billions of dollars gifted by the current Liberal government to subsidize corporations, including the \$18 billion in the past year to big oil and gas.

Private Members' Business

The government has also failed to go after offshore tax havens and companies like Loblaw's that have profiteered off people's suffering during the pandemic and have cut pandemic pay for frontline workers. The pandemic has only made the dire situation of poverty for individuals worse.

We must prioritize people and the collective well-being of our communities, families and individuals over corporate privilege. We must move forward toward a future where all people in Canada can live with dignity, security and human rights. This future is possible. It is simply a political choice.

I would like to congratulate the member on this historic step today. I am pleased to see her moving this conversation about basic income forward and I look forward to working with her to improve the bill.

● (1155)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on private member's bill, Bill C-273, an act to establish a national strategy for a guaranteed basic income, sponsored by my colleague, the member for Davenport, who is also a colleague at the finance committee.

I congratulate the member for Davenport for putting into a legislative format what has been discussed for years. In fact, various concepts of a basic income guarantee have been attempted over many decades, but for one reason or another there is less than complete documentation on how those systems worked, if it was even completed.

There was a program that was mentioned by another speaker in Dauphin, Manitoba in the 1970s, which was a different time from now. The data is really not available in a substantive way. The most recent trial, at least in this country, was the Ontario basic income pilot, brought in as a pilot project by the previous Wynne government, which was then cancelled by the incoming Ford government before any results were known. I think there was a lot of hope in that project that it would give us a baseline of how a guaranteed annual income would work.

Bill C-273 does not preconceive what is the best or the perfect basic income approach, but the bill sets the stage to try different pilots, to attain data in real time and to monitor results. It basically pushes the federal government to provide leadership in this national strategy.

Bill C-273 would require the Minister of Finance to develop and table a strategy to assess implementation models for a guaranteed basic income program in Canada. What the bill is really saying is that there could be different models. The government would be responsible for assessing them, for attaining the data. The act would require development, in consultation with key stakeholders, including industry, indigenous communities and governments, as well as municipal, provincial and territorial governments.

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I heard what some of the other speakers on this bill said, some in opposition to it. My good friend from Joliette, who is also a member at the finance committee, said that this would require a constitutional amendment. Not so. This concept could vary from province to province. What we really need is the data to assess whether it would really work as well as some people suggest it would. There would be all kinds of consultations and the federal government would be required to do that under this bill.

The act outlines specific measures that the strategy must contain, including pilot project, national standards and measures for the collection and analysis of relevant data. I think that is key. I talked to a friend on the weekend who said that a guaranteed annual income is just going to be like CERB was with people not wanting to work. I do not think that is necessarily the case. People may improve their education. They may go for better jobs. They may look for better-paying jobs. As a strong supporter of a guaranteed annual income approach, I am willing to put my beliefs on the line. I believe it would work. I believe people would still want to work. I believe it would address the poverty issues that we have in this country.

I am willing to say that we should do a pilot. Let us put our beliefs on the line. Those who oppose the bill, saying that it will be a waste of money, which people will spend on drugs or whatever, should put their beliefs on the line. Let us actually do a sincere pilot where we collect the data in real time and prove it one way or the other. That is where I think we should be going. The minister, at the end of the program, would also have to prepare a report on the results of implementation two years after the tabling of the strategy. I think that is really important.

• (1200)

Let me turn to subclause (3)(a) in the bill, which states “establish a pilot project in one or more provinces to test models of implementation of a guaranteed basic income program.”

I come from Prince Edward Island, a province that has shown a willingness at the provincial level for the province as a whole to be one of those pilot projects. The member for Charlottetown and I have met with countless groups on the guaranteed income approach, and this province would be absolutely ideal for a pilot project.

There is the province as a whole; then bigger communities, smaller communities, rural ones and urban ones; hospitals and schools; and only 158,000 people. We could have a pilot project over time in Prince Edward Island. There is the willingness on the provincial side, which passed a motion in the legislature, to work with the federal government to attempt one of those pilot projects. This is really what we need. It would provide the evidence to show whether the system works or does not work.

Subclause (3)(d) reads “collect and analyze data for the purpose of assessing, for each model tested.” That is where we need to be. We need to do the pilots. I would suggest to do three across the country. I know there is some interest in B.C. and maybe in a bigger urban area as well, but do the pilot projects, monitor the data and assess it.

Then we all as members of Parliament, regardless of what our position is, would have the concrete evidence in real-time based on

data that has monitored how it impacts people, their health, their income, their community and how it impacts people in the workforce. We would have evidence on whether people are willing to go to work or increasing their education and looking for higher-paying jobs. That is the kind of information we need and that is what I really like about the member's bill. There are no preconceived notions, only that we should do the experimentation.

I want to close by mentioning former Senator Hugh Segal. He is quoted in an article by Jamie Swift in the *Whig Standard*, in which he talks about his book *Bootstraps Need Boots: One Tory's Lonely Fight to End Poverty in Canada*. Senator Segal has long been an advocate of a guaranteed annual income for dealing with the poverty issue in Canada. This is a way to find out if it really works.

• (1205)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

BILL C-30—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Motion

moved:

That in relation to Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at report stage and the five hours provided for the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), there will now be a 30-minute question period.

The hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, for the second time in only a few days, the government will shut down debate to keep parliamentarians, the elected representatives of the people, from doing their job and participating in a fair and balanced debate where every point of view can be properly heard. Once again, as it did with Bill C-10, the government is shutting down debate on Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget.

• (1210)

[English]

It is never a win for Canadians when the government does this. Unfortunately, it has done this twice: last week on Bill C-10, which is an attack on freedom of speech; and today, on a main issue of the government, which is the debate on the budget.

[Translation]

Why did the government not do its homework?

Why did it not let us debate Bill C-30 when required? Why did the Minister of Finance move an amendment last week in the House when she very well could have done so at the parliamentary committee?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would remind all members that we have already spent 22 hours in the House and 40 hours in committee debating this bill. We listened to 160 speeches on this bill in the House, and the committees heard from 132 witnesses.

I would also like to remind all members of the House that it is now June 14. This bill is absolutely necessary for Canadians, for the economic recovery, for the Canada emergency wage subsidy, for the Canada emergency rent subsidy and for the Canada recovery benefit. All these measures are in this bill.

I do not understand why the Conservatives think this partisan squabbling is more important to Canadians than support for the economic recovery.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limouilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, no one is happy about time allocation, especially since these measures are so important and it is important to discuss them. Of course there have been discussions, but limiting debate again is a bit counterproductive because it stops other changes and insights from being proposed.

That being said, would the government have needed to limit debate if it had managed its legislative agenda properly and not prorogued Parliament for six weeks? If Parliament had not been prorogued, the budget could have been tabled sooner and this bill could have been fully debated. Does the government plan to make sure its legislative agenda is sensible and well managed from now on?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Again, I wish to remind members of what this debate is actually about. Today we are talking about economic measures that are essential to Canadians. Today we are initiating the economic recovery. For a successful economic recovery, it is imperative that we continue to provide support measures to Canadian businesses and to Canadians and Quebecers. This support is urgent and essential.

Since we have a minority government, we need the support of progressive parties to bring in what Canadians need. That is what we are doing today.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Finance knows full well, the

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NDP has been pushing to stop the slashing of the benefits contained within Bill C-30. We have a situation in which benefits will be markedly reduced at a time when Canadians need those benefits to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. This will have a dramatic impact on people who are still struggling. Even if the government believes that fewer people might be going for the CRB, that fewer people will need it, the reality is that those who do need that benefit can use that \$500 per week.

Instead of putting in place time allocation, why does the government not stop the slashing of the CRB so all Canadians who need that benefit at this crucial time, as variants hit our country, can use it to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table?

• (1215)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I know the member for New Westminster—Burnaby shares my concern for Canada's working people. He, like me, knows they need continued support as Canada finishes the fight against COVID and as all of us work so hard for an economic reopening to punch our way out of the COVID recession. To do that, we need the income supports and the business supports in this budget. We need to extend those to September 25. Without passing this budget legislation, those supports will expire this month.

Due to the Conservative delaying tactics, we have no choice but to move time allocation because we know Canadians urgently need this support. I am calling on all members of the House, particularly from progressive parties, to support us.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the minister. To be very clear, what we have seen from the Conservative opposition is an attempt to prevent legislation from passing. We have seen that in the form of the Conservatives trying to adjourn the debate in the chamber for the day or by moving concurrence motions. They will do anything but allow bills to pass.

Could the minister continue her thoughts on why this legislation is so very important to Canadians, given that the measures in it are a continuation of what has been our priority, which is the pandemic?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very hard work. As my colleague points out, this is getting really serious. The time for parliamentary theatrics, the time for parliamentary games and the time for the delaying tactics of the Conservatives is long past.

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Today is June 14. The essential business and income support measures in the budget that are holding up Canada right now expire in June. The budget proposes to extend them to September 25. Canadians need that. People have sacrificed so much in the fight against COVID. We need to come together in the House, finish the fight against COVID and support the recovery. That is why we need to pass this budget legislation.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very sympathetic with the position that we need to get Bill C-30 through. There are many provisions there that are helpful. However, on principle, I have always stood against time allocation motions. The House exists to examine legislation and to take the time it takes to review it.

One of the things I am concerned about is that we seem to be under the false time pressure on many bills that an election is looming. We have a fixed election date law. In order to have an election looming, somebody in government must be prepared to break that law because the next election is in October 2023. This bill is important to get through, for sure, because there are immediate provisions that help Canadians, but other legislation continues to need to be studied.

Would the Deputy Prime Minister agree with me that there is no prospect of an election any time soon, unless her government is prepared to break the law?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her hard work.

Let me say a few things. First of all, on the question of an election, let me be very clear: Our government has absolutely no desire for an election. We think the job right now is to work hard to support Canadians, to finish the fight against COVID and to support our national effort to punch our way out of the COVID recession. That is our sole and unrelenting focus.

However, we do not have the luxury of time when it comes to the budget legislation. These income and business support measures run out in June. That is why we need to pass this budget legislation now and that is why the government is doing something we do not relish, which is bringing forward time allocation.

• (1220)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, why is it that the minister does not want the opposition to do its job? Our job is to hold the government accountable and to exercise scrutiny and oversight. This is the biggest budget in Canadian history. It is the biggest debt, at well over a trillion dollars and heading toward \$1.8 trillion. Canadians have never seen this.

As Kevin Lynch, the former deputy minister of finance said, this is the largest intergenerational transfer of risk and debt in Canadian history, and this minister wants to give us just two meetings at the finance committee to review this legislation. We are doing our job.

With this huge debt and interminable deficits facing Canadians, does the minister have a plan to return to balanced budgets, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me just say this to Canadians: Canada continues to have the lowest net debt-to-GDP

ratio in the G7. Following the tabling of our budget, the credit ratings agencies Moody's and S&P both reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating. That is the highest there is. That is clear, objective evidence of the reality, which is that this budget presents a prudent and responsible fiscal path. That is the verdict of the judges who really matter.

Let me also say, through you, Madam Speaker, to the Conservatives: It is time to stop delaying tactics. It is time to stop playing games with Canadian jobs and Canadian businesses, and to extend the supports Canadians need.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question for the Minister of Finance.

Many people in the cultural sector, including those who work in theatre, music, live shows and festivals, are very worried that this budget means the end of direct assistance for workers. That may be all right for the majority of people, but workers and businesses in the cultural sector will need targeted assistance.

Why is the Liberal government trying to impose a gag order, when we could be working together to make direct assistance more flexible and to extend CERB for certain sectors, such as the cultural, tourism and hospitality sectors? I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to answer the questions, because it gives me the opportunity to point out that our concern for creators, cultural workers and tourism companies is exactly why it is so urgent to support Bill C-30. These people, these Quebecers, are the ones who need the support this budget will give them.

However, the only way we can help them is with the support of progressive parties in the House. That is what Canadians want, and that is our job.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is important to remember that we went without a budget for two years before the government tabled one.

This budget was tabled late in the spring and was preceded by an economic statement in November. We are now being asked to urgently pass the budget implementation bill and, obviously, it would be good if we passed it. However, the government is trying to once again impose closure on us, pushing us and saying that it is urgent we take action for various reasons, when the government is the one that dragged its feet and took two years to table a budget.

It seems to me that the reasons that are being given to justify closure do not take into consideration the work of Parliament or parliamentarians. What does the finance minister think about that?

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• (1225)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I would like to once again point out that we have already had a great deal of discussion on this bill. We had 22 hours of debate and 160 speeches in the House as well as 40 hours of debate and 132 speeches in committee.

I would again remind all members of the House that what Canadians and Quebecers want is to get the help they need. We are in the midst of a crisis, a global pandemic, and they need the federal government's support to finish the fight against COVID-19 and ensure a strong economic recovery. We need to take action and do our job.

[English]

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been two years since there was a budget, and this is a budget that is spending like there is no tomorrow. Parliament was prorogued and the natural resource sector is missing from the budget.

Why is it that the government cannot manage its time and is going to restrict debate on this very important piece of legislation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, we can manage our time. The problem, which is threatening to become Canada's problem, is that the Conservatives appear to prefer partisan theatrics and partisan games to doing the work of the country: doing the important work we were all elected to do.

This is a national crisis. COVID has plunged Canada into the deepest depression since the Great Depression. It is time for all of us to set aside juvenile games, roll up our sleeves and pass this essential budget legislation that will continue the wage subsidy, continue the rent subsidy and continue the CRB. These support measures expire in June. We have no time to waste. Let us set aside the juvenile gamesmanship and let us do our jobs.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find it very interesting when the hon. minister talks about gamesmanship and so on. When New Democrats came to the table, we came to work to make this bill better and ensure that instead of giving billions to corporations and banks with absolutely no question we actually gave it to the people: to the taxpayers, people in my riding of London—Fanshawe who are struggling and desperately trying to pay their bills, pay their rent and pay for food.

Why is it that when the government talks about a team Canada approach it does not actually mean it unless it is to do what it wants, when it wants, instead of working for people in Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I have to say that this budget is not about any political party. It is about precisely the people the member for London—Fanshawe has just spoken about so passionately. This budget is about giving Canadians the support they so urgently need to finish the fight against COVID and have a robust recovery. It extends the income supports to the end of September. It increases the OAS for Canadians over age 75. It will build a universal early learning and child care system across the country. That is what my constituents and the people of London—Fanshawe need.

Let us pass this budget, and let Canada get back to work.

• (1230)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on one comment the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands brought up about not having the government break the fixed election law. Why is it that we have speeches tomorrow for MPs who are not intending to run again if there is not going to be an election until the fixed election date, and if there is no need for an election at this point?

The other point I would make is this. We are here to try to fix this legislation. We have just seen the largest transfer of wealth from governments and taxpayers to the ultrawealthy. The ultrawealthy have made out like bandits during this pandemic. There are flaws in this legislation that would cause people to have their CERB cut when they are not ready. The needs of the small business community, in particular tourism, have been flagged in this piece of legislation, and there are a lot of things to fix. It is our job, as members of Parliament and legislators, to fix this legislation. That takes time and democratic debate.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me emphasize that we have already debated this legislation for 22 hours in the House. There have been 160 speakers. We debated it for 40 hours at committee. There were 132 witnesses there.

The member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith asked about an election. Our government does not want an election. We know that Canadians want and expect all of us to get to work to finish the fight against COVID and support a robust recovery. To have that, they urgently need the supports in this budget. I want to remind members of the House that the support measures run out this month. We have no time left. We need to act.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we hear the Conservatives say they need more time to debate this. The reality is that not a single Conservative has talked about how they would like to change the bill; rather, they have said how much they dislike the bill. It is quite clear the Conservatives are going to be voting against this very important piece of legislation for Canadians, so for them to suggest that this side of the House is playing political games is completely false. The reality is that we have a budget here to support Canadians through to the end of this pandemic.

Would the minister like to comment on the actual impact this will have on Canadians, and on Canadian small businesses in particular?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for his hard work and excellent question.

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The reality is that every budget is important, but this budget is urgently needed. It is going to be the budget that finishes the fight against COVID and supports Canadians in the reopening they have sacrificed so much to achieve. It extends the wage subsidy, rent subsidy and lockdown supports until September 25. It extends the CRB. This budget creates a Canada hiring credit that will help businesses recover and will support them as they bring on new workers. It will establish a federal minimum wage of \$15. It will send \$5 billion to the provinces to support the vaccine rollout and our health care systems. How can anyone fail to see the urgency and not support this budget that will get Canadians the supports they need?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, what we see is a government that dragged its feet and took its sweet time deciding whether to table a budget or not. Now it is pushing everyone around to get time allocation, even though it knows nobody will go for it. We will not allow ourselves to be pushed around like that.

Is this not just the Liberals' way of creating an excuse to trigger an election on the grounds that the government is not able to function?

• (1235)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the Bloc Québécois member, but I have to say he is totally wrong about that.

The fact is, our government does not want an election. Our government wants to work for Canadians because we know we are going through a crisis right now. We need to remember that we have spent the past year in a global pandemic and an economic crisis caused by that pandemic.

What our government wants to do now is finish the fight against COVID-19 and support Canadians as we recover. I hope opposition members will understand that this is the practical, pragmatic work Quebecers want and need.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, once again we are faced with time allocation. The Liberal government has played games all along, proroguing Parliament and not releasing a bill. Now we are in the eleventh hour and once again the minister is trying to limit debate.

Nobody on this side of the House is trying to play games. We have been fighting hard to help Canadians. I am wondering when this party will stop playing games and stop ending debate so that we can truly represent the people of our ridings.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, members on the opposition benches have in fact been playing games. That is what we have watched over the past days being done by the Conservatives. They are partisan delaying tactics at a time when Canadians need us to get to work.

I sincerely believe that the member opposite wants to work for her constituents. I do as well. The way to do that is to pass this budget, which, by the way, includes \$18 billion to support indigenous

people in Canada. They need that support. Let us pass the budget and get it to them.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Chair, I am really shocked by the words of the Minister of Finance, who spoke earlier of “juvenile games”, when it is the Liberals themselves who have been the most obstructionist over the last session of Parliament.

The minister is asking why we want to talk about the budget. It is because the Liberals decided to wait until next year to extend EI sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks, because the Liberals created two classes of seniors and abandoned those between 65 and 75 years old, because this is the biggest budget and the biggest debt we have ever seen, and because the rich are getting richer while everyone else is getting poorer, since everything costs more.

We should make a list of all the members who are being deprived their right to speak to all the measures I just mentioned. Why is the government preventing members from speaking?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, what is shocking is the partisan bickering by the Conservatives. They need to realize that the country is watching what they are doing, and it does not have patience for such childish games.

Canada is going through a real crisis today, a global pandemic, and the country needs us to be pragmatic and practical. The country needs support from the federal government, and that is what the budget will provide. I want to reiterate that if this budget does not pass, that support will end in June. That is why we must all set this bickering aside and support the budget.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[English]

The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

• (1240)

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1325)

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

(Division No. 140)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya

Anand
Arseneault
Atwin

Government Orders

Badawey	Bagnell	Schulte	Serré
Bains	Baker	Sgro	Shanahan
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Beaulieu	Beech	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Bendayan	Bennett	Simms	Sorbara
Bergeron	Bérubé	Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Bessette	Bibeau	Tabbara	Tassi
Bittle	Blair	Thériault	Therrien
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois	Trudel	Turnbull
Boudrias	Bratina	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Carr	Casey	Vaughan	Vignola
Chabot	Chagger	Virani	Weiler
Champagne	Champoux	Wilkinson	Yip
Charbonneau	Chen	Young	Zahid
Cormier	Dabrusin	Zann	Zuberi— 184
Damoff	DeBellefeuille		
Desbiens	Desilets		
Dhaliwal	Dhillon		
Dong	Drouin		
Dubourg	Duclos		
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)		
Dzerowicz	Easter	Aboultaif	Aitchison
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Albas	Alleslev
Ellis	Erskine-Smith	Allison	Angus
Fergus	Fillmore	Arnold	Ashton
Fisher	Fonseca	Bachrach	Baldinelli
Fortier	Fortin	Barlow	Barrett
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Benzen	Bergen
Freeland	Fry	Berthold	Bezan
Garneau	Gaudreau	Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Gerretsen	Gill	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Gould	Guilbeault	Boulerice	Bragdon
Hajdu	Hardie	Brassard	Calkins
Holland	Housefather	Cannings	Carrie
Hussen	Hutchings	Chiu	Chong
Iacono	Ien	Cooper	Cumming
Jaczek	Joly	Dalton	Dancho
Jones	Jordan	Davidson	Davies
Jowhari	Kelloway	Deltell	d'Entremont
Khalid	Khera	Diotte	Doherty
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duval
Lametti	Lamoureux	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Larouche	Lattanzio	Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Findlay	Gallant
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Garrison	Gazan
Lemire	Lightbound	Généreux	Genuis
Long	Longfield	Gladu	Godin
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Gourde	Gray
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Green	Hallan
Marcil	Martinez Ferrada	Harder	Harris
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon	Hoback	Hughes
McDonald	McGuinty	Jansen	Jeneroux
McKay	McKenna	Johns	Julian
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Kelly	Kent
Mendès	Mendicino	Kitchen	Kmiec
Michaud	Miller	Kram	Kurek
Monsef	Morrissey	Kusie	Kwan
Murray	Ng	Lake	Lawrence
Normandin	O'Connell	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Oliphant	O'Regan	Lloyd	Lobb
Pauzé	Perron	Lukiwski	MacGregor
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	MacKenzie	Maguire
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Manly	Martel
Ratansi	Regan	Masse	Mathysen
Robillard	Rodriguez	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Rogers	Romanado	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini	McLean	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Sajjan	Saks	McPherson	Melillo
Samson	Sangha	Moore	Morantz
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Morrison	Motz
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Nater	O'Toole
		Patzer	Paul-Hus
		Poilievre	Qaqqaq

NAYS

Members

Privilege

Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Singh
Soroka	Stanton
Steinley	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tochor	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williamson
Wilson-Raybould	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 144

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH AN ORDER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the question of privilege raised on June 7, 2021, by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent in respect to the order adopted on June 2, 2021. In reviewing the lengthy intervention by the hon. member, I want to raise two issues with respect to the motion the member proposes to raise if the Speaker agrees that there is a prima facie question of privilege in this matter.

First, the practices of the House clearly demonstrate that the Speaker has the discretion on the type and substance of a motion to be moved when the Speaker finds a prima facie question of privilege or contempt. There are two avenues that the House can consider in the event of finding a prima facie question of privilege. They are to either refer the matter to the procedure and House affairs committee or find a member, the government or an institution of the government to be in contempt of the House.

This is not what the member is proposing to pursue. The member is suggesting a substantive motion with many separate elements for which formal notice would be required. The member for Louis-Saint-Laurent stated in his intervention:

That brings me to the remedy which I am prepared to propose in a motion, should you agree that there is a prima facie case of contempt here.

In the interest of giving members appropriate notice of where this debate might go, the motion I intend to move would do the following things: (a) it would find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt; (b) it would order the Minister of Health to attend in her place, here in this House, to produce documents that have been ordered; (c) it would then require the minister to be questioned by the House; (d) finally, it would set out the procedures for this questioning because the old practices followed when the witness would be summoned to the House for questioning, which the curious could find explained in a search of Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada*, do not fit neatly into our contemporary rules and ways of doing business.

Page 150 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states, "The Speaker would be reluctant to allow a matter

as important as a privilege motion to fail on the ground of improper form. The terms of the motion have generally provided that the matter be referred to committee for study or have been amended to that effect."

That is not what the member is proposing. The member's proposed terms of the motion represent a substantive motion for which notice would be required. Therefore, I suggest that the member can propose a motion of censure or to refer to the matter to the committee for study. That is the long-standing practice of this House.

The second matter I would like to raise is the lack of any meaningful mechanism to ensure that the confidential information that may be contained in the papers ordered to be provided are not made public. The member is proposing that the Minister of Health table unredacted documents in the House, thereby placing these documents into the public domain. This approach ignores the mechanism that was in the order adopted by the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations on May 10, 2021. That order provided:

(a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in an unredacted form, within 20 days of the adoption of this order;

(b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel discuss with the committee, in an in camera meeting, information contained therein, which in his opinion, might reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation, so that the committee may determine which information is placed before a committee in public....

The in camera meeting being the critical part.

The safeguards, like those contained in the motion adopted by the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, are nowhere to be found in the proposed motion of my hon. colleague. This is a clearly a very dangerous and, quite frankly, clumsy oversight. The government has proposed using the National Security Committee of Parliamentarians, otherwise known as NSICOP, to undertake this work given the nature of the information contained in the documents and the expertise of the members of the committee in matters of national security.

● (1330)

Just as the then Conservative government did in 2010 with the Afghan detainee documents, the government is proposing a similar process that respects the balance of interests between the right of parliamentarians to have access to information and the obligations of the government to protect information related to national security.

NSICOP has a broad mandate to review Canada's legislative, regulatory, policy, administrative and financial framework for national security and intelligence. It may also review any activity carried out by a department that relates to national security or intelligence.

Committee members come from both Houses of Parliament. It is a body that was created by an act of Parliament by parliamentarians. All members hold top-secret security clearances and are permanently bound to secrecy under the Security of Information Act. Members swear an oath or solemn affirmation indicating that they will obey and uphold the laws of Canada and not communicate or inappropriately use information obtained in confidence as part of their responsibility on the committee.

NSICOP was created for exactly these types of situations and is an appropriate place for the review of these documents. The government has provided unredacted documents in response to this motion. The Minister of Health has referred this matter to NSICOP and the government through the Public Health Agency of Canada, provided a copy of the unredacted documents to NSICOP and informed the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of this on June 4, 2021.

It is critically important that there be an appropriate mechanism in place to ensure information that may be injurious to Canada's interests, could compromise national security or the privacy rights of Canadians, or relate to an ongoing criminal investigation, be protected. Providing unredacted documents to NSICOP is the appropriate and reasonable approach. Unfortunately, the House Leader of the Official Opposition has dismissed this option entirely.

Speaker Milliken clearly acknowledged the need to balance these interests in his ruling on April 27, 2010, which is directly relevant to the matter before the House. He said:

Several members have made the point that there are numerous ways that the documents in question could have been made available without divulging state secrets and acknowledged that all sides in the House needed to find a way to respect the privileges and rights of members of Parliament to hold the government to account, while at the same time protecting national security.

The government, for its part, has sought to find a solution to the impasse.

Speaker Milliken then states the following in relation to putting a mechanism in place to ensure this balance is struck:

The Chair must conclude that it is within the powers of the House of Commons to ask for the documents sought in the December 10 order it adopted. Now it seems to me that the issue before us is this: Is it possible to put in place a mechanism by which these documents could be made available to the House without compromising the security and confidentiality of the information they contain? In other words, is it possible for the two sides, working together in the best interests of the Canadians they serve, to devise a means where both their concerns are met? Surely that is not too much to hope for.

Since the member raises precedence from the Australian legislature, I too would like to point out that the Australian legislators have experience putting in place mechanisms to deal with requests for sensitive information. I would draw to the attention of members an excerpt from Speaker Milliken's 2010 ruling. He said:

In some jurisdictions, such as the Legislative Council in the Australian state of New South Wales, and I would refer members to *New South Wales Legislative Council Practice* by Lovelock and Evans at page 481, mechanisms have been put in place, which satisfy the confidentiality concerns of the government as well as those of the legislature. Procedures provide for independent arbiters, recognized by both the executive and the legislature, to make determinations on what can be disclosed when a dispute arises over an order for the production of documents.

• (1335)

Page 986 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 2017, elaborates on this matter:

Government Orders

In cases where the author of or the authority responsible for a record refuses to comply with an order issued by a committee to produce documents, the committee essentially has three options. The first is to accept the reasons and conditions put forward to justify the refusal; the committee members then concede that they will not have access to the record or accept the record with passages deleted. The second is to seek an acceptable compromise with the author or the authority responsible for access to the record. Normally, this entails putting measures in place to ensure that the record is kept confidential while it is being consulted. These include in camera review....

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that you have the power to ensure that if there is a finding of prima facie contempt, the motion to deal with the matter is either a motion to censure or a motion to refer the matter to committee for further study. NSICOP was created for exactly these types of situations and is an appropriate place for the review of the documents. As I stated, this body was created by an act of Parliament by parliamentarians.

The government remains open to discussions with the opposition on how to balance the right of members to consider unredacted documents with the need to protect sensitive information from public disclosure that could be injurious to Canada's interests.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I will take it under consideration.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed from June 11 consideration of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 2.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to rise again to talk about this very important bill.

I had the privilege to serve as the Minister of State for Seniors for four years in the Harper government. In the ensuing days, my passion for being an advocate and champion of the golden generation has not waned. Indeed, in the last months of the previous Parliament, the House unanimously passed my motion, Motion No. 203, calling for action on fraud against seniors, which is a form of elder abuse. June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, so it is perfect timing that I am speaking to this very important issue.

Unfortunately, little has been done since my motion passed. For example, in the Lower Mainland, there has been a wave of scammers and thieves targeting seniors through phone calls or emails and taking advantage of those with weaker digital literacy. People of all ages are locked out of their Canada Revenue Agency accounts. Calls on the government to take further steps to address the systemic increase in elder abuse have once again fallen on deaf ears.

Government Orders

Of course, let us not forget those who take the time out of their day to provide support and aid not just to seniors, but to anyone who is struggling to meet the basics of everyday life. They are the informal and unpaid caregivers. Caring for the caregivers must be a central plank of any government steps to address a post-COVID-19 recovery. Unfortunately, there is little support for them in the budget.

In conclusion, the way forward needs to be treated through a reasonable, responsible, fiscally sound approach that spends Canadian tax dollars in a way that will best help Canada weather the fiscal storm on the horizon while also caring for the most vulnerable citizens. Moving forward, the government should seriously consider these urgent needs.

I am happy to take any questions.

• (1340)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of my concerns certainly has been the lack of support for seniors since the pandemic began. Could the member comment further on that?

Hon. Alice Wong: Madam Speaker, because of COVID, a lot of seniors have been left alone and have not been able to seek assistance. Also, as I mentioned in my speech, a lot of fraud has been committed against them. Protecting seniors against all forms of elder abuse, including physical, mental and financial abuse, is very important. That is exactly what everybody should be doing, but I am afraid the government has done little or close to nothing about it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to address this issue this afternoon. There are a couple of aspects that I would like to provide some comment on, but first and foremost is the idea of Bill C-30, now at report stage, and how important passing it is to all Canadians.

The other day, I talked about a progressive agenda. The Government of Canada has put forward a very strong, healthy, progressive agenda that includes today's bill, Bill C-12, Bill C-6, Bill C-10, Bill C-22 and Bill C-21. Of course, I often make reference to Bill C-19 as well. All of these pieces of legislation are important to the government, but I would argue that the most important one is the bill we are debating today, Bill C-30.

The budget is of critical importance for a wide variety of reasons. I can talk about the benefits that seniors would be receiving as a direct result of this budget bill, in particular those who are 75 and over, with the significant fulfillment of our campaign promise of a 10% increase to OAS for seniors aged 75 and above, and a one-time payment coming up in the month of August for that group. During the pandemic, we have been there for seniors, in particular those 65 and over, with one-time payments closer to the beginning of the pandemic, and even an extra amount for those who were on the guaranteed income supplement. That is not to mention the many different organizations that the government supported, whether directly or indirectly, to support our seniors, in particular non-profit organizations.

We have done a multitude of things, many of which are very tangible. The Minister of Finance made reference to the extension of some of the programs, for example, which we brought in so we could continue to be there for businesses and real people. This was so important. At the beginning of the process, the Prime Minister made it very clear that this government, the Liberal Party and the Liberal members of the House of Commons were 100% committed to working seven days a week, 24 hours a day to ensure that the interests of Canadians in combatting and fighting the pandemic were going to be priority number one.

As to that priority, we saw the establishment of a large number of new programs that ensured money was being put directly into the pockets of Canadians. One was the CERB, which benefited somewhere around nine million Canadians. Virtually out of nowhere this program came into being, in good part thanks to our civil servants, who have done a tremendous job in putting in place and administering the many different programs.

We have seen programs to support our businesses in particular, whether it is the Canada emergency wage subsidy program, the emergency rent subsidy program, the emergency business account or the regional relief and recovery fund. We recognized what Canada needed. The Government of Canada worked with Canadians and with, in particular, provinces, non-profits, territories, indigenous leaders and many others in order to make sure that Canadians were going to be protected as much as possible. All of this was done with the goal of being able to get us, as a nation, out of the situation we are currently in.

• (1345)

We have put ourselves in a position where Canada will be able to recover, and recover well. It is interesting to hear the Conservative Party asking about the debt. Many of the things I just finished talking about are the reasons why we have the debt. The Conservatives in many ways are saying we should be spending more money, while the Conservative right is saying we have spent too much money or is asking about the debt. Some Conservatives are talking about the creation of jobs. The most recent Conservative commitment was that they would create one million jobs.

Between 2015, when the Liberals were first elected, and the election of 2019, we created over a million jobs. We understand how important jobs are. Jobs are one of the reasons it was important for us to commit to businesses of all sizes, and small businesses in particular, to get through this difficult time. We knew that by saving companies from going bankrupt and by keeping Canadians employed we would be in a much better position once we got ahead of the pandemic.

I am actually quite pleased today. I started off by looking at the national news. A CBC story said that when it comes to first doses Canada is now ahead of Israel, according to a graph that was posted. When we think of populations of a million or more, Canada is doing exceptionally well. We are ahead of all other nations in dealing with the first dose.

I am now qualified to get my second dose. Earlier today I had the opportunity to book an appointment for a second dose on July 7. Canadians are responding so well to the need for vaccination. We understand why it is so important that we all get vaccinated. We need to continue to encourage people to get those shots.

It goes without saying that we need to recognize many very special people who have been there for Canadians. The ones who come to mind immediately are the health care workers here in the province of Manitoba. They are a special group of people that not long ago, in a virtual meeting, the Prime Minister expressed gratitude for in a very strong and significant way.

Our health care workers, whether the nurses, doctors or lab technicians, and people in all areas of health care, including those providing and sanitizing facilities as well as a whole litany of people, have ensured that we have been there from a health perspective.

We can look at workers involved with essential items such as groceries. Whether it was long haul truck drivers, people stacking groceries or collecting money for groceries, or taxi drivers who took people where they needed to go, whether to the hospital or the grocery store, they were there. Public institutions were there. I think of Winnipeg Transit bus drivers who opened their doors not knowing who was walking onto their buses. They were all there.

This legislation we are debating today is a continuation of getting Canada in a better, healthier position to deal with the coronavirus. We needed to bring in time allocation because of the destructive behaviour of the official opposition. We wanted to work and the Conservatives wanted to take time off. There was an excellent indication of that last Thursday, which was the biggest day in terms of debate for government. The Conservatives attempted to end the session only moments after the day got under way. It is not right that the Conservatives are playing games. We need to pass this legislation. I would ask all members to vote for it.

● (1350)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague. At one point he said that they would help seniors, in particular those who are 75. "In particular those who are 75" implies that there will be help for those aged between 65 years and 74 years, 11 months and 30 days.

What type of help will it be?

I must say, \$63 a month is not even enough to buy groceries for a person living alone.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada has been supporting seniors from the very beginning. I might get the month wrong, but my friend might recall the payments made in July of last year. There was a one-time payment for people collecting OAS and an additional payment for people who were being supplemented with the GIS. I also made reference to many seniors non-profit organizations, whether the new horizons for seniors program or the non-profit groups that received millions of dollars to expand services to seniors from the beginning until today. This specific bill is the fulfillment of an election campaign

Government Orders

promise from 2019, when we said we would give a 10% increase to those 75 and over, and I think all members should support it.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly agree. Seniors between 65 and 74 do not think this budget is doing enough for them. That is quite obvious and has been brought to the House many times by the parties in opposition, but my question comes to another issue that has been going on during COVID. The Liberals have had two years for this budget. For businesses that opened during the period of COVID, there have been no supports. I have had all kinds of calls to my offices. Callers are told this budget has something for everyone, but it does not have anything for them.

My question to the member opposite is this: Why did the Liberals not have any supports for existing businesses during this time and why are the Liberals, once again, trying to pick winners and losers?

● (1355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the government has recognized not only during the pandemic, but even pre-pandemic, the important role that small businesses play in Canada through, for example, the small business tax reductions. Once we got into the pandemic, we recognized the need to support them in tangible ways. That is why there is the Canada emergency wage subsidy program, the Canada emergency rent subsidy program, the emergency business account, the business credit availability program and the regional relief and recovery funds. Ultimately, we are supporting businesses by putting disposable income in the pockets of Canadians so that they will be able to continue to pay bills and be consumers. We are providing business opportunities for small businesses of all sorts, and now there is the new hire program.

I am sure the Minister of Finance would be able to provide more details as to how we support small businesses in Canada.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government has told us time and again that its most important relationship is with indigenous peoples. We know that in the last few days the Liberal Party has refused to acknowledge the genocide against indigenous peoples, but if we look at Bill C-30 there are some major gaps. One of the biggest crises first nations face here in Manitoba is a lack of housing. We know that overcrowded housing has been a major contributor to the spread of COVID-19 in first nations communities, yet Bill C-30 has no commitment to indigenous-led housing initiatives to deal with the crisis that exists on the ground and the truly third-world living conditions.

How can the government claim that its most important relationship is with indigenous peoples and fail to act on one of the most significant crises they face?

Statements by Members

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, from a historical perspective, when it comes to indigenous-related issues I would challenge the member to point to a government that has done more than this Prime Minister and this government over the last four or five years. Take into consideration the financial and social supports, infrastructure, one-on-one and other types of relationships with respect to trying to build healthier relationships and communities.

We need to look beyond yesterday and into tomorrow to find out what more we can do to deal with issues such as the inquiry we conducted into murdered and missing girls and women of indigenous heritage and the calls to action, all of which the Government of Canada is committed to work on. Ultimately, I truly believe that by empowering and working with indigenous leaders and people we will make the desired changes, hopefully as quickly as possible.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize two outstanding individuals from my riding of Kingston and the Islands.

Reid and Ben, most famously known for their morning show, *Reid and Ben In The Morning*, are so much more than average radio personalities. Whether it is attending local events, celebrating our 2021 graduates or promoting pride month, they always do a great job in showcasing the best that Kingston has to offer.

However, it does not stop there. At times when our community needs cheerleaders the most, they are always there to rally support and lift up spirits. In the height of the third wave of the pandemic, they painted and hung a large banner in front of Kingston General Hospital, which simply said “Thank you KGH”.

Last week, following the terrorist attack in London, Ontario aimed at the Muslim population, Reid and Ben promptly headed to our local mosque with sidewalk chalk in hand and inscribed words of love and inclusion for the most affected by this act.

We thank Reid and Ben for their energy, passion and all that they do for our community.

* * *

● (1400)

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, energy security should be a concern for all Canadians. Distribution of Canadian energy through networks of pipelines is paramount to withstand shocks from a wide range of sources, like natural disasters, geopolitical conflicts and other merging threats. Energy distribution like Line 5 potentially being shutting down will initiate shortages, causing astronomical increases in the cost of everything.

The Liberal government's lack of understanding of the importance of ensuring reliable and cost-effective energy has put Canada at a huge disadvantage compared to other nations. As the Liberal

government continues to spin the narrative of our economic standing globally, it is only countered with the facts.

Thanks to the pending Bill C-10, the Liberals will be able to shut down what we can hear and see, just like North Korea. Canada was once a nation that embraced freedom of speech, but I guess that will be a footnote in history if not censored by Bill C-10.

* * *

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has taken incredible measures to keep the pandemic away from our island shores. In fact, there has been a ban on non-essential travel to our province for over a year now, and the results have spoken for themselves. Compared to other areas of Canada, my riding in the Long Range Mountains has seen relatively small case counts.

However, as we turn the new corner of the pandemic and vaccines are more available, the travel ban is about to be lifted, and Newfoundland and Labrador will once again be open to Canada. Travel to my province and the Long Range Mountains, of course, will be allowed again as of July 1, with folks having their second shot of vaccine.

I am so excited as I received my second dose this past weekend. I am doing my part to keep my loved ones and my community safe, and I encourage all Canadians to do so. I cannot wait to see family and friends reunited.

As members start their travel plans, remember to support the hospitality and tourism sector. Come and explore the Long Range Mountains and see all that Newfoundland and Labrador has to offer.

* * *

[Translation]

YOUTH CENTRE IN MONTREAL

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to recognize the 30th anniversary of Antre-Jeunes, an essential organization that has been a pillar of Montreal's Mercier-Est community since 1991. Its two drop-in centres are open to young people aged 12 to 17 every day after school and offer activities throughout the year.

Antre-Jeunes is a welcoming community place where young people can do all kinds of activities under the supervision of leaders and facilitators. It helps the youth of Mercier-Est expand their horizons by providing them with opportunities for success, learning and personal development.

Antre-Jeunes also offers a street outreach program to meet the needs of young people who do not go to traditional youth centres and use their services.

I would like to thank the director, Joelle McNeil Paquet, and the entire team at Antre-Jeunes for the extremely important work they do. This is a caring, engaged, dedicated, dynamic team that is always there for the young people of Mercier-Est.

Happy 30th anniversary to Antre-Jeunes.

* * *

SOPHIE NADEAU BECKER

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, I would like to recognize another young entrepreneur from my region, Sophie Nadeau Becker, who is 11 years old.

This young lady from Saint-Jacques is already business savvy. She recently launched her family micro-business, which makes and sells homemade treats and bandanas for dogs. Her business is called Ohlala... de Sophie.

Once a week, with her brother Félix's help, Sophie makes dog biscuits and sells them to local stores.

[English]

The business has expanded such that it has now more than 200 clients. The young entrepreneur is even looking for students to join her team this summer.

[Translation]

We admire our amazing young entrepreneurs, who continue to astound us and show us that the future of our economy is in good hands.

[English]

Let us encourage our youth to believe in their dreams; they may well come true.

[Translation]

In the meantime, I encourage the people of Madawaska—Restigouche to treat their furry four-legged friends to Ohlala... de Sophie products.

* * *

[English]

BALTIC REPUBLICS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today as chair of the Canada-Nordic-Baltic Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Eighty years ago, between June 14 and June 18, 1941, citizens of the Baltic republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were forced at gunpoint and taken to communist prison camps. Many were elderly and nearly a quarter were children.

Thousands died on the way to Siberia and many more faced executions when they arrived. Forty-five thousand were only the first during what would become known as the June deportations. Tens of

Statements by Members

thousands more would follow. The horrific actions of the tyrannical Soviet government to assimilate the Baltic nations was unspeakably brutal, violent and merciless.

During those forced relocations, they silenced cultural and religious minorities and arrested, tortured or killed perceived threats to the regime. Let us stand with Baltic Canadians as we mark June 14 as a day of commemoration for all freedom-loving people.

* * *

● (1405)

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate all graduates in my riding, but there is one in particular whose story I would like to share. She is Amanda Saunders at Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador, and her story is incredible.

In 2018, while studying psychology, she was diagnosed with end-stage heart failure. Instead of a classroom, she went to a hospital in St. John's and finally to the Ottawa Heart Institute to receive a new heart. Inspired by her parents, Amanda vowed she would go back to school, and she did just that, for seven months.

Unfortunately, 14 months after her transplant, she was then diagnosed with blood cancer, but let us not think for one moment this would stop Amanda Saunders. She continued her school during her treatments and all through the pandemic. I am proud to announce that Amanda has graduated, and she plans to pursue her second degree.

I congratulate Amanda and thank her for inspiring all of us.

* * *

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this June marks National Indigenous History Month, and Monday, June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day. It is a time when we honour the rich cultures and histories of first nations, Inuit and Métis people across Canada.

Over the past few weeks, from all across the country, we have been confronted with the horrific news from Kamloops, where first nations families found missing children in unmarked graves at the Kamloops residential school site.

Earlier this month, I stood with survivors and family members of residential schools across my own riding. There were five residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador, and four of them were in the riding of Labrador. The intergenerational trauma of these institutions continues to this day among many Labradorians and Canadians.

Indigenous people face poorer health outcomes, systemic racism and injustices. The hard work continues for us as a government and together with indigenous partners—

Statements by Members

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

* * *

EDMONTON MANNING CONSTITUENT

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I stand today to highlight a constituent and friend I have known for over 15 years who has served in the Canadian Army.

Major Alexander Tsang has served our country for 28 years and has deployed across the globe representing Canada. He served in Bosnia and Sudan to help peacekeeping efforts. He continued working with the UN to track down war criminals. This guy is nothing short of courageous.

After his time at the UN, he committed to help our veterans and increase awareness for our soldiers. I have had the honour of working with him on Edmonton Salutes to help recognize our troops.

Unfortunately, Alexander is in a battle of his own against cancer. I wanted to take this opportunity to wish this extraordinary Canadian the best treatment against this horrible disease. Alexander has this, and he has my support.

Get well soon, my friend.

* * *

[Translation]

ONTARIO'S FRANCOPHONIE

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, June 24 is Saint-Jean Baptiste Day. It is an important day for francophones and francophiles to celebrate their culture, language and traditions. This day is also an opportunity to commemorate the sacrifices our parents and grandparents made to defend our language.

This month, Collège Boréal will also celebrate its 25th anniversary. For 25 years, Collège Boréal has consistently provided a high-quality education and served as a leader at the local and international levels. Collège Boréal has built strong ties with the industry and provides its students with a learning environment designed to help them succeed.

[English]

I thank all who contribute to a vibrant francophone community in the Nickel Belt and greater Sudbury area.

• (1410)

[Translation]

I also want to wish the Montreal Canadiens good luck on the road to their 25th Stanley Cup.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's philosophy on growing the economy and creating jobs is doing everything possible to get in the way. What is more is that the Prime Minister will add more national debt than all the previous prime ministers combined. All that money spent under his watch

and still Canada has consistently had one of the highest unemployment rates in the G7. The unemployment rate climbed to 8.2%, losing 68,000 jobs last month.

Small businesses are struggling, falling through the cracks, and a staggering amount will never reopen. Sean, a small business owner in my riding of Niagara West, in business for the last 30 years, had to take on over \$160,000 in debt just to stay afloat. That was after he spent all his life's savings.

The travel and tourism industries have been destroyed.

It is time for the Prime Minister and his party to own up to their failures and change course. Our small businesses and our economy are done waiting.

* * *

BILL C-10

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the priority for Conservatives is getting Canada's economy reopened and back on track. The Liberal government's priority is ramming through Bill C-10, its Internet censorship bill.

I have heard from constituents across my riding who want to see this bill scrapped. New Brunswickers in Liberal-held ridings are frustrated by their MPs' failure to commit to opposing this bill, a bill that fundamentally would alter how the Internet would operate in Canada. Canadians are even more bewildered by how the government is so focused on Bill C-10 rather than pressing issues that impact their health and the economy.

I will not support Bill C-10, a bill that puts freedom of expression in peril. The government should listen to Canadians who are telling it to abandon this poorly thought-out bill that is focused on political power rather than protecting the freedom of speech that Canadians so rightly enjoy.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this past week, Canada's Prime Minister had quite the performance at the G7. He claimed that Canada was a champion on human rights, a benevolent provider of COVID-19 vaccines, and made commitments on infrastructure and the climate emergency. The world ought to know that the reality here at home is very different.

On human rights, the Prime Minister has failed to recognize genocide against indigenous peoples. He has failed to take decisive action to support first nations in searching the grounds of the schools imposed on them so they can bring their children home.

On vaccines, our vaccine rollout has been deeply flawed, putting us well behind other major countries. In addition, we have not championed the IP waiver needed for the world stage.

On infrastructure, in my region dozens of communities have no road access, suffer in overcrowded housing and need health facilities.

On the climate emergency, the government has been part of the problem, not the solution.

Increasingly Canadians see the Prime Minister and the government for what they are: nice words, no action. First nations deserve better. Canadians deserve better.

* * *

[Translation]

GILL TINKLER

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to Gill Tinkler, a prominent figure in the Upper Laurentians region, in my riding of Laurentides—Labelle. Mr. Tinkler is a legendary, world-renowned canoe racing champion whose life story was recently chronicled in a biography.

Now 91, this man is a true marvel, having achieved so much over the course of his life, both on the water and in the forest, and he has always sought to promote physical activity and help others learn to love the outdoors. One of his most notable achievements was when he paddled across Canada for the 1967 centennial. This trip took him 104 days, during which he travelled 5,283 kilometres, along the same lakes and rivers paddled by the first explorers.

I sincerely congratulate Mr. Tinkler, whose involvement with various organizations over the years has significantly helped build tourism in the region.

* * *

[English]

RCMP CONSTABLE SHELBY PATTON

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to RCMP Constable Shelby Patton. Originally from Yorkton, Constable Patton was stationed at the detachment in Indian Head, Saskatchewan. Early Saturday morning in Wolseley, he stopped a stolen truck. Tragically, the criminals driving the truck ran over Constable Patton and ended his life, ripping apart a family and devastating a community.

This young man, a 26-year-old hero who was killed in the prime of his life, was a husband, a brother and a son. Shelby Patton, like the thousands of police officers across the country, literally put his life on the line to protect us. He went to work every day knowing the risks and was willing to make the greatest sacrifice to keep us safe. When we call 911, we often take it for granted that a police officer will come and help. Without people like Shelby Patton, who have the bravery and dedication to their communities, there would not be anyone on the other end of the phone.

I ask all of my colleagues in this House to join me in sending our deepest condolences to the Patton family, to his fellow officers in

his detachment and to the communities of Indian Head and Wolseley, Saskatchewan.

* * *

● (1415)

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day. In 1996, the Governor General of Canada, Roméo LeBlanc, proclaimed June 21 as National Aboriginal Day. In 2017, the current Prime Minister announced the day would be renamed National Indigenous Peoples Day. The government's official website states, "It's an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the cultural richness and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples."

Why June 21? For centuries, many of our first inhabitants would celebrate the arrival of the warm weather and the pleasures of the summer solstice. The summer solstice is the day of the year with the longest light. It is a day with spiritual significance for many people, and it is a good time to celebrate indigenous peoples and culture. I will personally also be reflecting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action, the number 215 and that all children matter.

We all have a role to play.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a weekend our Prime Minister had in the U.K. hobnobbing with the rich and famous. He seemed to have forgotten his mask a few times, and he will not have to quarantine like everyone else when he gets home, because, after all, there is one set of rules for the Prime Minister and another set of rules for everyone else. While he was enjoying his wine and cheese, back here in Canada our economy is shedding jobs, supply chains are crumbling and housing prices are skyrocketing.

Instead of trying to impress his celebrity friends, why is the Prime Minister not focused on getting Canadians back to work?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives really care about the Canadian economy, if they really care about Canadian workers and if they really care about Canadian businesses, let me suggest one simple and very practical thing they can do, and that is to support Bill C-30, the budget implementation bill. This essential legislation extends the wage subsidy, rent support and the CRB. We need it to finish the fight against COVID and to punch our way out of the COVID recession. The Conservatives need to support it.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is so embroiled in scandal that there is no doubt he is not thinking about the economic storm that is brewing. He has been too busy rewarding his friends at the WE foundation, appointing Liberal donors as judges—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt. I believe we have a point of order.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the interpretation, the volume is the same for both the English and the French, so I am having a lot of trouble hearing either one.

The Speaker: Is everyone experiencing that problem or just those who are attending virtually?

I am being told it is a technical problem. Can it be fixed?

[English]

Can you hear me well? Are we still having a problem?

Can you hear me well in French?

• (1420)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the volume of the French interpretation is lower.

The Speaker: Can those who are listening in French hear me?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, I can hear you very well. There is no problem with the interpretation.

[English]

The Speaker: I think we have resolved our problem.

The hon. deputy leader of the opposition. I will let you take it from the top.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Prime Minister is so embroiled in scandal, there is no doubt that he is not thinking about the economic storm that is brewing here. He has been very busy rewarding his friends at the WE foundation, appointing Liberal donors as judges and covering up sexual misconduct in the military. Now, he has no time left to deal with issues like people losing their jobs and businesses shutting down—

A hon. member: Start again.

The Speaker: We will get to this question sooner or later, I am sure. We will have to interrupt the hon. member.

[Translation]

I thank the member for Manicouagan for raising the problem.

The hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, it is exactly the same, and I am not the only one having this problem. People have written to me to tell me that they cannot hear anything and that the volume is set at the same level in both languages.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Manicouagan.

I will give the technical team a few minutes to resolve the problem.

[English]

I am going to conduct a very unscientific test. Can everyone who is out there listening in French hear me in French at different levels?

[Translation]

Apparently not. I think there is still a problem.

Are those listening to the English interpretation having problems?

[English]

It is English to French that is the issue. We will see what our technical folks can do about this.

[Translation]

Can you hear me properly in French?

The francophones seem to be hearing me properly, but there is still a problem. Most people are hearing me properly.

Would someone please find out if it is a problem with the member for Manicouagan's computer?

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I will wait for a call from the technical team.

[English]

The Speaker: The third time is the charm.

The hon. deputy leader of the opposition.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the government members will have a very substantial answer because this will have been the third time they have heard the question.

Of course, the Prime Minister is not thinking about the economy, because he is so busy dealing with all of his scandals, whether it is the WE scandal, whether it is appointing his Liberal donors as judges or covering up sexual misconduct in the military.

Let us be honest: It is hard work for the Prime Minister to put the interests of Canadians first when he is so focused on polishing up his own image and helping out his Liberal friends.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about who is really concerned about supporting Canadian jobs and Canadian businesses, and who, instead, prefers to play partisan games.

Our government is working hard today in the House to pass the budget, which would extend the wage subsidy and rent support, and create a new Canada recovery hiring credit. That is what Canada needs. It is the Conservatives who are blocking it.

* * *

● (1425)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not believe this, but this weekend a top officer with direct connections to the Vance investigation was golfing with General Vance.

Not only does this show zero respect for Operation Honour and zero respect for victims, it shows there is zero respect for the defence minister among the top brass. The minister has refused to stand up for victims and continues to cover up bad behaviour of his buddies.

When will the defence minister admit the top ranks of the military are fast becoming a shambles, and it is a direct result of the minister's failures?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our members and employees deserve an institution in which they can have full confidence. We are working to deliver on the reforms that would bolster our members' confidence in the military justice system.

The acting chief of the defence staff has been reviewing this matter very closely, and it falls within his responsibility in the chain of command. The acting chief of the defence staff has informed me that the vice-chief of the defence staff is no longer in his role, effective immediately.

Our government is working towards a complete institutional culture change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party created the “Liberalist”.

What is the “Liberalist”? It is the list of Liberal Party members, supporters, volunteers and donors. I have no problem with that, but there is a difference between the Liberal Party of Canada and the Government of Canada.

I have a simple question for the Minister of Justice: Did he or anyone from his office or anyone from the Department of Justice check the infamous “Liberalist” before appointing a judge, yes or no?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when our government was elected in 2015, we created a more rigorous, open and accountable system. Our appointments are always based on merit. They are also based on the needs of the various benches, the expertise of the various candidates and the recommendations of the independent judicial advisory committees.

Oral Questions

We are proud of all those who have been appointed since the implementation of our system. They come from diverse backgrounds and political affiliations.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, really, how sad to see the Minister of Justice, a man with a distinguished judicial career, play partisan games and unfortunately be unable to respond to a clear question. Did he, yes or no, consult the Liberalist? The answer is clear, and it is “yes”.

However, he lacks the courage, the honour and the dignity to say so. The Liberal Party has two lists, the list of their cronies and the list of other Canadians.

Why did the government even consult the Liberalist for the appointment of judges? It makes no sense.

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from an article published in *The Globe and Mail* back in the day about the appointment process under the Harper government. It said, “They use their local contacts, such as party fundraisers...to identify lawyers, academics and sitting judges who fit their specifications, and recommend them to the justice minister.”

We changed all that. We will not take any lessons from that side of the House. Unlike the Conservative Party, we have an open process that makes appointments based on merit, not ideology.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 50 years later, the federal government is finally recognizing French as the official language of Quebec. The government is only half a century late. Maybe next week it will recommend a great new television show called *Symphorien*. Seriously, though, this flash of inspiration must have made the government realize that Quebec's official language legislation designates French as the language of work.

Will the government allow Quebec to make French the official language of work in federally regulated businesses, as it should have done half a century ago?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that we recognize the importance of French in Quebec and across the country. Why? Because the French fact is eroding and in decline. We are going to take action. We are going to act on our responsibilities.

As my colleague knows very well, in February we proposed a reform whereby, in some federally regulated businesses in Quebec and in regions with a strong francophone presence, we will recognize the right to work in French and the right to be served in French as a consumer and we will prevent discrimination against francophones. I hope to be able to work with my colleague in the coming weeks and months on these issues.

● (1430)

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government will therefore recognize that French is the official language of Quebec.

Oral Questions

What does that mean, official language? When Canada defined its two official languages in its Constitution, it stated that English and French have “equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada”.

Since the minister recognizes French as the only official language of Quebec, is she saying that it will be the only language used in the institutions of Parliament and government of Canada in Quebec?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that, as the protector of both official languages, the federal government will always take action in its jurisdictions, because it is important to respect not just the Constitution, but also the country's unity.

That said, French requires more protection because it is being eroded and is in decline. Therefore, we are committed to doing more and we will do more. In the coming days and weeks, I will have the opportunity to speak about our future official languages bill which, as my colleagues well know, is currently on the Order Paper.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the current Liberal government is trying to slash emergency benefits to below the poverty level for Canadians who need the benefits to put food on the table. It gives billions of dollars in subsidies to oil companies and \$750 billion in liquidity supports to banks. The Liberals refuse to impose a wealth tax that would make the ultrarich pay their fair share, but have no problem at all taking away money that Canadians desperately need to keep a roof over their head. Why will the Liberal government not do the right thing and stop slashing the benefits that so many Canadians rely on?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me say this. If the NDP truly wants to support Canadian workers, let me suggest one simple thing they can do: support Bill C-30. This budget bill will extend the income supports to the end of September and Canadians desperately need that to happen. It is by supporting Bill C-30 that we can act together to provide Canadian workers with the support they need to finish the fight against COVID.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the old boys' club is at it again. While still under investigation, General Vance played a game of golf with the senior leaders involved in his investigation. Like Major Kellie Brennan said, Vance believes he is “untouchable” and owns the military police. The Liberals have had six years to make substantive changes to the toxic culture in the military. Resignations aside, that toxicity is still there. The government's response was another task force. How can women in the Canadian Armed Forces trust that their allegations will be taken seriously when their accuser is still treated like a VIP?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our members and employees deserve an institution they can have full confidence in and we are working to deliver reforms that will bolster the confidence of our members in the military justice system. Our government is working toward a complete institutional culture change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. As I stated earlier, the acting chief of the defence staff has informed us that the vice-chief of the defence staff is no longer in this role, effective immediately.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is not answering my questions, so I will ask this again. We know from peer-reviewed academic papers, which are public documents, that a Chinese military scientist, Feihu Yan, of the People's Liberation Army, was granted access to work in the government's Winnipeg lab, a level 4 facility where the world's most dangerous viruses are handled. How did this individual gain access to the lab in apparent contravention of security policy?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, the National Microbiology Lab has been working so hard to protect Canadians through COVID-19. I want to thank the hard-working lab employees during this national week of recognition of public servants. In fact, they were one of the first labs in the world to be able to create a PCR test from the original genetic sequence. We have incredible scientists and researchers here in Canada, helping to lead the way.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is still not answering the questions. I have another question.

According to the WHO's director general, the G7 discussed the Wuhan lab leak theory last weekend. President Biden has directed U.S. intelligence agencies to report back in late August on whether the pandemic came from human contact with an animal or from a lab accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Given that government scientists at the Winnipeg lab closely worked with the Wuhan lab, will the government tell us if it is making available government scientists and their relevant documents, including lab notes, to U.S. investigators?

• (1435)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many countries around the world, we have always been clear that we need to understand the origins of COVID-19, and we will work with our international partners to ensure there is a robust and continued investigation into the origins of this virus. It is important not just for Canadians but, indeed, for the entire world so that we can prevent another epidemic of this kind.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations twice asked the Liberal government to provide unredacted documents concerning the security breach at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. The government refused to do so twice.

We then moved and adopted a motion in the House to make these documents available. Instead of complying with the will of the House, the Prime Minister has been obstructing the work of the committee by sending the documents to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians to ensure that Canadians will never get the information that he wants to keep secret. How can the Prime Minister shamelessly take Canadians for fools?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that is not true. I have fully released unredacted documents to the appropriate committee; a committee of all parliamentarians who have the appropriate security clearance to review these documents.

We will never play games with national security. There is an appropriate place to review those documents, they are there and I await the committee's findings.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister will never get the findings because the committee must keep the information secret. Only the Prime Minister can know.

On another topic, we learned that Lieutenant-General Mike Rouleau played golf with former chief of defence staff Vance, even though Mr. Vance is under investigation for sexual misconduct. Mr. Rouleau has authority over the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal and is responsible for the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, which is investigating Mr. Vance.

The findings of this inquiry are now tainted. The Minister of National Defence lacks leadership and has no control over his department or over the chain of command. Everyone is doing as they please. Once again, what message does this send to the women of the Canadian Armed Forces?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member very well knows, the acting chief of

Oral Questions

the defence staff has been reviewing this matter very closely as it falls within his responsibilities in the chain of command. The acting chief of the defence staff has informed me that the vice-chief of the defence staff is no longer in his role, effective immediately.

Our government is working towards a complete institutional culture change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's military is in crisis, and those at the highest levels know they are untouchable.

General Vance is under police investigation, but that did not stop the boys from enjoying a round of a golf. This brazen act by two of the military's most senior commanders is a public declaration that they are neither impartial nor think that the rules apply to them.

The problem starts at the top of the chain of command with this defence minister. When will he admit he has failed in his duties as minister?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely committed to making sure that we have that culture change to let everybody who joins the Canadian Armed Forces have a place to work free from harassment.

As I stated, the acting chief of the defence staff is currently reviewing this matter very closely as it falls within his responsibilities in the chain of command, and the acting chief of the defence staff has informed me that the vice-chief of the defence staff is no longer in his role, effective immediately.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet, despite months of devastating testimony and four generals under police investigation, the old boys' club is stronger than ever.

General Rouleau has the power to intervene in military police investigations, and golfing with Vance sends a clear message that the fix is in. Vance and the senior military brass are untouchable. By turning a blind eye, the defence minister ensures that the military's toxic culture can continue unchecked.

Will the minister admit that he is part of the problem and not part of the solution?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our members and employees deserve an institution that they can have full confidence in. I have been working from day one to make sure that we create the institutional culture change that is absolutely necessary. That is why, in a statement from the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal, he clarified, with regards to an ongoing military police investigation involving sexual misconduct, that he has complete independence from the chain of command in the conduct of policing duties. That said, and as I stated, the acting chief of the defence staff has informed me that the vice-chief of the defence staff has stepped down.

Oral Questions

● (1440)

*[Translation]***JUSTICE**

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals announced that they would stop using the “Liberalist” to appoint judges. I have said it before and I will say it again: The Bloc Québécois enjoys being proven right. This is a good step forward, but it does not fix the problem. The problem is that the Liberals are appointing judges who donate to the Liberal Party.

Radio-Canada reported that the Liberals would stop using the “Liberalist” to identify donors, and the same sources have confirmed that the Liberals do the same checks with Elections Canada. Whether they are using the “Liberalist” or Elections Canada data, they are still making patronage appointments.

When will the minister institute an impartial process?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has taken significant steps to create a better process for appointing judges, one that ensures that our judiciary reflects the country it serves. All judicial appointments are based on merit. There are no partisan considerations in the decision-making process. When we took office, we removed the partisanship in place under the Harper government and brought in a more independent and more rigorous process.

I am proud of the appointments that we have made and the process that we put in place.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is discouraging. The same minister has been feeding us the same line for two years. We know that the judges are competent. That is not the problem. Before, the government was looking up donors in its Liberalist database and now it using the Elections Canada database. Whichever one the Liberals use, it pays off for them, even though using the Elections Canada database might take longer.

With the Elections Canada database, the government will also be able to identify those who donated to the Bloc Québécois, for example. If a lawyer donated to the Bloc Québécois, the government will send that application straight to the shredder. Not only can the government give its Liberal friends special treatment, but it can also discriminate against any others.

Why not have a non-partisan process?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the Ethics Commissioner, making donations to a political party for a specific riding does not in and of itself indicate that there is a friendship. It is completely legal to make donations.

We want qualified candidates from all walks of life and all political stripes to apply. We are disappointed that the opposition is turning this into a partisan game. Our government always strives to meet the needs of the courts and appoint very deserving legal experts of all political stripes.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the problem is not with a lawyer making a donation to the Liberal Party or any other party. The problem is with the minister giving someone a judgeship because of that donation. That is what we are speaking out against.

Yes, there is an advisory committee that screens applications and recommends candidates to the minister. The problem is that the Liberals get the recommendations and look through the list for their friends' names.

Worse yet, last year the media reported that, when the PMO wanted to make sure a good Liberal friend made the list, someone from the PMO would call the minister up in person demanding information.

When will the minister put an end to this cronyism?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is saying is patently false.

Our new judicial appointments process has produced concrete results for Canadians and is creating a bench that reflects the rich diversity of Canadian society. Changes we have made are increasing the number of new judges who identify as indigenous, members of visible minorities, people with disabilities, members of ethnocultural groups and LGBTQ2.

Of all the judges appointed through the new process since 2019, 58% are female, 16% are visible minorities, 9% identify as LGBTQ2 and 5% identify as indigenous.

* * *

*[English]***HOUSING**

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that a Toronto developer is purchasing hundreds of houses and converting them into rentals, eliminating the dream of home ownership for even more Canadians. For months, we have been demanding that the government stabilize house prices and come up with a plan to restore the dream of home ownership for Canadians. Sadly, all the recent budget did was impose a tiny 1% tax on foreign owners, which will do nothing to make housing more affordable.

Why is the minister failing the families he is supposed to be serving?

● (1445)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has prioritized housing affordability and affordable housing through the national housing strategy. That is why budget 2021 is the fifth consecutive budget that plans to invest \$2.5 billion and reallocate \$1.3 billion in funding to speed up the construction and repair, and support 35,000 affordable housing units.

Budget 2021 makes numerous investments into affordable housing, yet the Conservative Party has pledged to vote against it. The Conservative playbook is open now. Fake outrage in the House of Commons, yet when it comes time to vote to help Canadians with housing needs, voting—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Abbotsford.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government cannot hide from the fact that thousands of Canadians are being forced to abandon their dream of owning their home. The current government has had six years to act, with nothing. Now, developers are taking advantage of skyrocketing house prices by scooping up houses and turning them into rentals, removing even more houses from the market. Meanwhile, the government stands idly by as the home ownership dreams of Canadian families fade away.

Why will this minister not act?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative record on housing is \$250 million a year spent on affordable housing. We have spent more than \$27 billion on affordable housing since we came into office. In budget 2021 alone there is \$315 million more for Canadian women and children fleeing domestic violence and more rental supplements.

What did the Conservatives do? They pledged to vote against that. We are building more rental construction across major urban centres. What is the Conservative Party's position on that? It is to vote against it. It is fake outrage in question period and voting against real help for Canadians with respect to affordable housing.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not the quantity of the spending, it is the quality of the spending. We have an affordability crisis in this country. The price of everything is going up: groceries, gasoline, clothing and lumber. In fact, inflation is now well above the government's target of 2%, and it is only going to get worse before it gets better. We are also in a full-blown housing crisis, with millions of Canadians realizing that their dream of home ownership is now out of reach.

Why has the government made life so unaffordable for so many Canadians?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first-time home buyer incentive gives first-time Canadian homebuyers help from our government to buy housing. What is the Conservative Party doing for that? They are voting against it. What did they provide first-time homebuyers in their time in office? It was a mere \$750 in a tax credit.

Meanwhile, we are expanding the first-time home buyer incentive, so that more and more Canadians can have access to affordable housing. In addition to that, we are spending more money than ever before across all the different spectra of the housing needs of Canadians, and the Conservatives have said that they will vote against the budget. That is their real record. They are entitled to their opinions, but—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Oral Questions

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 104 potential graves of children have now been found at the former Brandon Indian Residential School. Chief Bone is calling on the government to “enact legislation to protect all residential school cemeteries.” The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs called for all documents related to the schools to be released, and Southern Chiefs' Organization in Manitoba is calling for “the [UN] and its High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide oversight”.

Will the government immediately heed these calls from impacted nations to respond to this genocide?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts are with all of these communities dealing with these stark realities in terms of the discoveries at Tk'emlúps. We will be there as a government to support all communities with whatever they need for healing, gatherings, commemoration or archaeological expertise. We will be there for all the communities affected by this terrible discovery.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that, on the morning the Prime Minister defied Parliament and went back to court to try to quash the human rights tribunal ruling that found him guilty of systemic discrimination against indigenous kids, we learned more about the medical catastrophe facing children in Kashechewan, where are now 144 children and babies suffering from COVID.

They begged the government for help, and all they got was a band-aid. If the government spent less time fighting indigenous kids in court, it could have been focused on keeping indigenous children safe and healthy. When is the Prime Minister going to end his toxic legal war against indigenous children in this country?

● (1450)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps, since the member opposite asked two questions, I can give the House the update on the very concerning situation in Kashechewan. Indeed, the outbreak is among the children, who are not unimmunized. The situation, sadly, will get worse before it gets better. I have been speaking to Chief Friday over the course of the weekend and assured him we will be there for him.

The House would, indeed, appreciate knowing, as well, that 15 Canadian Rangers have been mobilized in Kashechewan and six additional nurses have been deployed, for a total of 15. We are actively assessing and reassessing as the days go on, but we will be there for the people of Kashechewan.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, I have been deeply disturbed by the rise of anti-Semitic acts in my community of York Centre and across Canada. We have seen Jewish businesses, synagogues and memorials vandalized, and Jewish Canadians have faced acts of violence and intimidation in our communities. These acts of hate have no place in Canada.

Could the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth please tell the House how our government is combatting anti-Semitism here in Canada today?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to combatting anti-Semitism and all forms of hate, prejudice and discrimination through measures such as Canada's anti-racism strategy, in which we adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism.

Last week, our government announced that we will work alongside the Hon. Irwin Cotler, Canada's special envoy to preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting anti-Semitism, on an emergency national summit on anti-Semitism, which was advocated for by many hard-working colleagues, including the member for York Centre and partners such as CIJA.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources sent two Liberal staffers to Newfoundland in January at a cost of thousands of taxpayer dollars as the pandemic raged and just in time for the provincial election. Predictably, these same staff were campaigning for the provincial Liberals. During a pandemic while businesses were closed and staff were working from home, the minister had taxpayers pick up the tab under questionable reasoning.

Will the Liberal Party repay Canadian taxpayers for sending ministerial staffers to help its friends in the provincial Liberal Party get re-elected during the pandemic?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, staff travelled to Newfoundland to support operational requirements on the ground in the discharge of my ministerial duties. All rules were followed to the letter.

They adhered to public health guidelines, including the mandatory 14-day quarantine upon entering the province. They also adhered to the Treasury Board guidelines for ministers' offices and only campaigned on their day off, on one Saturday. I and my office hold ourselves to a high standard. I will reiterate that all rules were followed.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these staffers were in Newfoundland on the taxpayer dollar during a pandemic and were campaigning for the provincial Liberals. It is crystal clear. While Canadians were locked down, losing their livelihoods and their lives, the minister was skirting the rules to help his friends. The Liberals operate under two sets of rules: one for their friends and one for the rest of us.

Will the Liberal Party reimburse taxpayers for this clearly partisan trip?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is crystal clear is there was no interference here. They participated in their capacity as private citizens on one Saturday on their day off. I will quote the Treasury Board guidelines, which I might add were put in place by the previous Conservative government. Section 3.5.4 states, "If a member becomes engaged in campaign activities on a part-time basis, his or her involvement must be on his or her own time, not during regular office hours."

That is exactly what happened here. All rules were followed to the letter. It is crystal clear.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an embarrassment and a scandal. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador should be extremely upset over what happened. Why is the leader of the Newfoundland and Labrador Conservatives so outraged?

It is because two of the Minister of Natural Resources' staffers campaigned for a provincial Liberal candidate at Canadian taxpayers' expense. Geordie Summers-Lubar and Ian Cameron billed taxpayers nearly \$9,000 to campaign for a Liberal friend. Does the Liberal Party intend to repay Canadians for the minister's partisan zeal?

● (1455)

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is riling up an outrage machine. Let me be very clear. All rules were followed to the letter. My staff adhered to all public health guidelines, including the 14-day mandatory quarantine and the Treasury Board guidelines for ministers' offices put in place by the previous Conservative government.

We could continue with these petty personal attacks against hard-working staff, but it was their day off. We will continue to work hard for Canadians on the issues that matter.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these staffers from the Minister of Natural Resources' office would never have gone to campaign in Newfoundland and Labrador if their expenses had not been approved by the minister himself. They arrived in the province on the very day the election was called, and they only left weeks later.

At a time when everyone was teleworking, does the minister expect us to believe that he needed his assistants by his side, in the middle of a pandemic? Nonsense. The Treasury Board directives are clear: Door-to-door canvassing is not cabinet business. Will the Liberal Party repay the expenses they claimed, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the rules of Treasury Board were followed crystal clearly.

Let me be very clear about something else. What happens on my staff members' time off is their business. I will not be policing what they do on their time off. On one Saturday they campaigned. I will leave it there, other than to say and assure the House that all guidelines were followed to the letter, crystal clearly.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, led by the government, all the parties just passed a bill to designate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day to commemorate the indigenous children who were ripped from their families and sent to residential schools. Meanwhile, just this morning, the government was in court fighting indigenous children who were also ripped from their families and sent to foster homes. This is the height of hypocrisy.

Will the government immediately terminate its legal action against indigenous children?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear once again.

The Prime Minister, myself and all of Canada have sent a very clear message that any first nations child who has suffered the consequences of discrimination in the child welfare system, which is broken, will be compensated fairly and equitably.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are in court fighting indigenous children who were ripped from their families in 2005.

I would remind members that the Liberals were also the party in power in 2005. Fifteen years later, this is still before the courts.

I encourage the Prime Minister to do a favour to whoever is prime minister 15 years from now. Will he terminate this legal action? Will he spare the future prime minister from having to apologize for a despicable decision that the current Prime Minister could reverse right now?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could spend all my time talking about what this government has done since coming to power in 2015, the billions of dollars it has invested in reforming a broken system, but I would like to set my colleague straight. She should realize that, in this case, the compensation order was handed down two months ago. We are challenging its proportionality, not the source of the discrimination.

We are committed to compensating these children in a fair and equitable manner, and that is what we will do.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have shown the U.S.A. and the world that it is okay to openly disrespect our Canadian oil and gas sector. The Liberals' anti-oil and gas crusade has real-world consequences. The proof is the cancelling of Keystone XL, energy east, Pacific Northwest, northern gateway, Aurora LNG, Grassy Point LNG and Saguenay LNG. The Liberals' "reimagined" agenda has set the course of the newest anti-oil project, with Governor Whitmer trying to cancel Line 5.

Did the Prime Minister even attempt to talk to President Biden about Line 5 or are we just going to add it to the ever-growing list of cancelled Canadian energy projects?

● (1500)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about lists. TMX was approved and we are building it, with 7,000 jobs created so far. The Line 3 pipeline was approved, with another 7,000 jobs created. We approved NGTL 2021 and thousands of jobs were created. We are building LNG Canada. For orphaned and inactive wells, we have \$1.7 billion, with tens of thousands of jobs to be created. Of course, the wage subsidy has kept more than 5,000 workers in their jobs during the pandemic in Alberta alone. That is our record.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the Keystone XL pipeline was the latest casualty in the Prime Minister's assault on Canada's energy sector. This follows the cancellations of energy east, northern gateway and several other projects that would have meant thousands of well-paying jobs, along with significant economic growth, across western Canada.

When will the Prime Minister just admit that he wants to see Canada's energy sector shut down entirely?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate to the House once again how deeply disappointed we are with the U.S. decision on KXL. Let me also remind members of the House that the Government of Alberta is also deeply disappointed. I know that because our governments worked hand in glove the whole way on KXL. Workers in Alberta are looking to the future and to the opportunities it holds.

Last week, I stood alongside Premier Kenney to announce a \$1.3-billion investment in hydrogen. It includes the development of a new large-scale clean hydrogen facility in the Edmonton area. It is going to create thousands of jobs for Albertans.

Oral Questions

We will work with the Alberta government to build a low-emissions energy future that leaves no energy worker behind, as we will with all provincial governments.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, reconciliation has become a very important topic in the House. The infrastructure, health and education gaps faced by first nations across Canada will not be solved by government programs alone.

In northern Saskatchewan, the forest industry provides tremendous opportunity to address these gaps. Last month, the U.S. announced plans to double the tariffs, literally taking money out of the pockets of indigenous people.

When will the government finally get a softwood lumber agreement? Can the minister confirm that 100% of the duties collected will be returned?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we remain disappointed with the American action on softwood lumber. We will continue to work with the administration. Our focus will be, as it always has been, on the workers within the industry and on ensuring that we have an industry that continues to prosper and grow in this country.

* * *

[Translation]

DIGITAL SERVICES

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during this pandemic, we have come to realize the importance of our digital capacity for meeting Canadians' urgent needs. Our government has shown that it is up to the task and has ensured that Canadians receive the benefits and programs they need in a timely fashion.

We know there is still a lot of work to be done. Can the Minister of Digital Government inform the House of her plans for continuing the important work of delivering essential digital services to Canadians?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Alfred-Pellan for the question and his hard work.

Our digital response to COVID-19 showed that we are capable of responding quickly to provide benefits to Canadians. The new digital government strategy focuses on four areas: modernizing IT systems, improving services, implementing integrated solutions, and transforming how we work. We are committed to providing secure, reliable and easy-to-access public services.

* * *

[English]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has had five years to reach a softwood lumber agreement and he has failed. In fact, in this place, he has referred to the subject of softwood lumber about

four times each of the five years he has been in office. Contrast that with the subject of his predecessor, Stephen Harper, whom he has referenced over 220 times.

I have a simple question. When will the Prime Minister start getting focused on his job, like getting a softwood lumber agreement, rather than passing the buck to others or putting the blame on his predecessors?

● (1505)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. These American duties are completely unjustified and, quite frankly, counterproductive since they hurt workers and businesses on both sides of the border. The minister has raised this with President Biden directly and with Ambassador Tai, and our government continues to press for a negotiated settlement, because a negotiated settlement is in the best interests of both of our countries.

We will do whatever it takes to defend our softwood lumber industry, including instigating litigation under NAFTA, under CUSMA and before the WTO. All options are on the table.

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HOUSING

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost to rent a one-bedroom apartment in Barrie now averages \$1,530 per month, the fifth-highest rental rate in Canada. In May, the average home price was \$720,000, a 38% increase from last year. Everyone, especially first-time buyers and renters, is finding these prices out of reach. Last week's Conservative opposition day motion had a tangible solution to address affordable housing in Canada, but the Liberals voted against it.

It is clear that the Liberal housing plan is not working. Why is the Prime Minister ignoring the housing needs of Canadians?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are investing more money than ever before in affordable housing, including reallocating money from the rental construction financing initiative to turn commercial buildings into affordable housing.

What are the Conservatives doing about that? They are voting against that. Their plan had no real solutions that even came close to the progress we have made and the strong foundation that we are building on the national housing strategy. They spent meagre amounts of money during their time in office. They had no leadership, no strategy, and now they are faking outrage and actually voting against real measures to help Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a fixed-income senior recently shared how he was excited about the new Canada greener homes grant to upgrade his coal-fired furnace. His excitement quickly turned to disappointment after learning the details of the program. With the rising cost of living, he cannot afford to pay up front for the pre and post EnerGuide evaluations, let alone front the cost to replace the furnace itself.

This is yet another example of the “Ottawa knows best” bureaucratic-heavy policy that clearly misses the mark. It makes great talking points, but leaves regular folks behind. When will the Liberals actually figure out a plan that helps Canadians?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the focus is on addressing affordability concerns in the context of actually working to reduce carbon emissions from all sources.

The \$5,000 subsidy is focused very much on enabling homeowners to retrofit their homes, to increase energy efficiency, to reduce carbon emissions and to ultimately reduce their energy bills. That is certainly an element of a broader program to address the crisis that is climate change in a manner that will enable economic progress.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced the appointees to the first Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages.

The Indigenous Languages Act is historic and demonstrates this government's commitment to support the efforts of indigenous people to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen indigenous languages. The establishment of the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages achieves a concrete milestone in the implementation of the act.

Could the minister tell us how the commissioner and the directors will support the efforts of indigenous peoples?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Northwest Territories for his tireless advocacy on this issue.

Language is at the heart of cultural identity. It shapes who we are and our perspective. When we speak our language, we share stories, pass on knowledge and create bonds for generations.

Oral Questions

This morning, I had the pleasure and honour to announce the appointment of Commissioner Ronald Ignace and directors Joan Greyeyes, Georgina Liberty and Robert Watt to the very first Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages. This is a historic day. I have every confidence that the office will bring exceptional strength that will effectively support the aspiration of indigenous people—

● (1510)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

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HEALTH

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here we are in National Blood Donor Week, again, with the ban on blood donations from gay men, men who have sex with men, and trans women still in place. As always, I continue to call on friends and family to step up and donate in the place of those of us who remain banned.

On Friday, the Liberals lost in federal court in their attempt to have themselves excluded from responsibility for the ban. The Minister of Health claims she is waiting for Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec to give her a recommendation to lift the ban.

On what date did she explicitly request a new policy from CBS and Héma-Québec, and what deadline did she give them for a response?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that there is no place for discrimination against the community.

It is important that we continue to press on. We have done more in the last five years than had been done in the previous 10. Of course, until 2013, Canada had a lifetime restriction on blood donation from men who have sex with men. In 2019, it was reduced to three months.

There is more to do, and we will continue to push Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec until we can end this practice.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Vancouver Granville, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, recent rumblings over the Constitution are not without significance, causing some to ask if we are necessarily heading towards renewed constitutional talks.

Government Orders

If so, the environment must be top of mind. In 2008, Ecuador's Constitution gave nature legally enforceable rights to exist, flourish and evolve, the first country to do so. In 2014, Te Urewera, the home of the Tūhoe people, became the first natural feature in New Zealand to be recognized as a legal person with rights.

Like New Zealand, and prior to any possible constitutional change, will the government consider granting legal personhood to significant natural features in Canada?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has recognized the importance of preserving the environment, fighting greenhouse gas emissions and fighting global warming. It is a priority, as my colleagues in that ministry have put before the House, and we have fought that battle all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

We will look at all options. I am not going to commit to any specific thing suggested by the hon. member, but I thank her for her question, and we certainly will always consider all options that will help us advance the cause of fighting climate change.

The Speaker: That is all the time we have today for question period.

We have a point of order from the hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a personal point of privilege. I will not take much of the House's time because I know that time is very precious in this place. However, I believe strongly that it is in this place, the House of Commons, that announcements that affect members should be made.

Today, I am announcing that I will not be re-offering as the candidate in the riding of Malpeque in the next federal election. Tomorrow evening, I will be joining with others not running for speeches and to give heartfelt thanks.

As members know, the election is scheduled for October 2023, but rumours abound there may be one before then. Certainly, the media seems to be pushing that rumour. On the off chance that an election is held before then, I want to give others ample time to consider representing my party in the riding of Malpeque.

It is close to 28 years since I was first elected to this chamber, and when there in person, I am always in awe of its traditions, its history and the opportunity it provides for members to have a say in the legislative mandate and governance of this country.

I am proud to be a Canadian. Yes, there have been moments, as recent events showed, that none of us are proud of in our history. However, I do believe we learn and move forward. We are recognized as one of the best places to live in the world. As stated in our daily prayers, we have the “freedom, opportunity and peace that we enjoy.”

It has been my honour to work with and serve the residents of Malpeque for nine terms. I am thankful for the opportunity to say these few words, and I will join with others tomorrow evening.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS IN JUNE

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of Government Business Motion No. 8, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the subamendment of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to the amendment to the motion to extend the sitting hours of the House.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 141)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bessette
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champoux
Chen
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Dhaliwal
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould

Anand
Angus
Arya
Bachrach
Bagnell
Baker
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias
Bratina
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Champagne
Charbonneau
Cormier
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green

Government Orders

Guilbeault	Hajdu	Block	Bragdon
Hardie	Harris	Brassard	Calkins
Holland	Housefather	Carrie	Chiu
Hughes	Hussen	Chong	Cooper
Hutchings	Iacono	Cumming	Dalton
Ien	Jaczek	Dancho	Davidson
Johns	Joly	Deltell	d'Entremont
Jones	Jordan	Diotte	Doherty
Jowhari	Julian	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Kelloway	Khalid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Khera	Koutrakis	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Fast	Findlay
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Gallant	Généreux
Lametti	Lamoureux	Genuis	Gladu
Larouche	Lattanzio	Godin	Gourde
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Gray	Hallan
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Harder	Hoback
Lemire	Long	Jansen	Jeneroux
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kelly	Kent
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor	Kitchen	Kmiec
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Kram	Kurek
Manly	Marcil	Kusie	Lake
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lawrence	Lehoux
Mathyssen	May (Cambridge)	Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
McCrimmon	McDonald	Lloyd	Lobb
McGuinty	McKay	Lukiwski	MacKenzie
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Maguire	Martel
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Mendès	Mendicino	McColeman	McLean
Michaud	Miller	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Monsef	Morrissey	Moore	Morantz
Murray	Ng	Morrison	Motz
Normandin	O'Connell	Nater	Patzner
Oliphant	O'Regan	Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Paupé	Perron	Rayes	Redekopp
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	Reid	Rempel Garner
Powlowski	Qaqqaq	Richards	Rood
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Regan	Robillard	Saroya	Scheer
Rodriguez	Rogers	Schmale	Seeback
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shields	Shin
Saini	Sajjan	Shipley	Sloan
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Stanton
Sangha	Sarai	Steinley	Strahl
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Stubbs	Sweet
Schiefke	Schulte	Tochor	Uppal
Serré	Sgro	Van Popta	Vecchio
Shanahan	Sheehan	Vidal	Viersen
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Vis	Wagantall
Simard	Simms	Warkentin	Waugh
Sorbara	Spengemann	Webber	Williamson
Ste-Marie	Tassi	Wong	Yurdiga
Thériault	Therrien	Zimmer— 119	
Trudel	Turnbull		
Van Bynen	van Koeverden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vaughan	Vignola		
Virani	Weiler		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Yip	Young		
Zahid	Zann		
Zuberi— 207			

PAIRED

Nil

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

[*English*]

The next question is on the amendment as amended.

[*Translation*]

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

The member for Kingston and the Islands.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I ask for a recorded division.

● (1540)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 142)***YEAS****Members**

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bessette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chen
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Harris	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier

Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Manly
Marcil	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Michaud	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qaqqaq
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Simms
Singh	Sloan
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Tassi	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vignola	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Yip
Young	Zahid
Zann	Zuberi— 212

NAYS**Members**

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bragdon	Brassard
Calkins	Carrie
Chiu	Chong
Cooper	Cumming
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray

Government Orders

Hallan
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmieć
Kurek
Lake
Lehoux
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Schmale
Shields
Shipley
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Uppal
Vecchio
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Yurdiga

Harder
Jansen
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Maguire
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Patzner
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Scheer
Seebach
Shin
Soroka
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment as amended carried.

• (1545)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The next question is on the main motion, as amended.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion as amended be adopted on division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I ask for a recorded division.

• (1555)

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

(*Division No. 143*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval

Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bagnell
Baker
Battiste

Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bessette
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Boudrias
Bratina
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Champagne
Charbonneau
Cormier
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Harris
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Manly
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qaqqaq

Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champoux
Chen
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Dhaliwal
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Ien
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacGregor
Maloney
Marcil
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès
Michaud
Monsef
Murray
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petipas Taylor
Powlowski
Qualtrough

Points of Order

Ratansi	Regan
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Simms	Singh
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Tassi	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vignola	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Yip
Young	Zahid
Zann	Zuberi — 210

Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shin	Shipley
Soroka	Stanton
Steinley	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tochor	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williamson
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 119	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion as amended carried.

NAYS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Harder	Hoback
Jansen	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Poilevre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 14 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in relation to Bill C-10, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report it back to the House with amendments.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ADMISSIBILITY OF AMENDMENTS IN THE FIFTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

The point of order concerns the report that was just tabled: the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage respecting Bill C-10. I would respectfully submit that several of the amendments contained in that fifth report must be struck out because the committee exceeded its authority.

Last Monday, June 7, the House adopted a time allocation motion limiting committee deliberations to only five further hours. The part of the House's order that is relevant to this point of order says, at pages 104.3 and 104.4 of the Journals:

That, at the expiry of the time provided in this order for the committee stage, any proceedings before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the said bill shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

At the committee's second meeting, on Thursday, June 10, those five hours had expired and the Canadian heritage committee proceeded to the disposal of the committee stage of the bill, in accordance with the House's order.

The chair of the committee, the hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, informed the committee that, by the terms of the House's order, the amendments that had been placed on notice could not be moved and therefore could not be voted upon by the committee. The Liberal-Bloc-NDP majority on the committee, however, then overturned the chair's ruling, thereby forcing the committee to consider these amendments without any debate, without any opportunity to question expert witnesses from the department of Canadian Heritage and without any opportunity to hear the wording of the amendment read aloud.

Those events are recorded in the relevant minutes of proceedings for the committee's second meeting on June 10. The amendments subsequently considered by the committee are recorded in those minutes of proceedings, as well, for the committee's meeting on Friday, June 11. Both sets of minutes, as noted in the comment in the fifth report immediately preceding the chair's signature, have been laid upon the table, among others.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition says, at page 779:

Since a committee may appeal the decision of its Chair and reverse that decision, it may happen that a committee will report a bill with amendments that were initially ruled out of order by the Chair. The admissibility of those amendments, and of any other amendments made by a committee, may therefore be challenged on procedural grounds when the House resumes its consideration of the bill at report stage. The admissibility of the amendments is then determined by the Speaker of the House, whether in response to a point of order or on his or her own initiative.

That is why I am rising today on this point of order. In overturning the committee chair's ruling and forcing amendments that had not been properly moved to be voted upon, I respectfully submit that the committee exceeded its authority by contradicting the House's order, which required that "every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment."

To be clear, the questions necessary to dispose of the clause by clause consideration of the bill are questions on the clauses themselves, not amendments that have simply been placed on notice.

The Chair has previously considered a similar case, from which I believe in the current circumstances a distinction may be drawn.

On November 29, 2012, Mr. Speaker, one of your predecessors, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, made a ruling at page 12,609 of the Debates, concerning the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Finance respecting Bill C-45, the Jobs and Growth Act, 2012. In that case, the committee had adopted a time-tabling

motion concerning its study of the bill. It contained language that was similar to that which the House adopted last week in its time allocation motion concerning Bill C-10.

In the case of the finance committee, the chair made a similar ruling to the one made by the hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame and, again, the committee had overturned that ruling.

Following a point of order in the House concerning the finance committee's report on the former Bill C-45, the former Speaker did not set aside the committee's report on the bill. The distinction between these two cases, I would argue, is that the finance committee was interpreting a motion that the committee itself had adopted. In the current case, seven members of the Canadian heritage committee substituted their own judgment for how an order of this House, voted upon by the entire House, should be interpreted.

● (1600)

We often refer to committees as masters of their own proceedings, but Bosc and Gagnon put that in a very important context at pages 1057 and 1058, which state:

The concept refers to the freedom committees normally have to organize their work as they see fit and the option they have of defining, on their own, certain rules of procedure that facilitate their proceedings.

These freedoms are not, however, total or absolute. First, it is useful to bear in mind that committees are creatures of the House. This means that they have no independent existence and are not permitted to take action unless they have been authorized or empowered to do so by the House.

While the case of former Bill C-45 was of a committee majority preferring its own interpretation of a committee motion, the current case of Bill C-10 is of a committee majority seeking to override the House's instruction. It was, to borrow the words of Bosc and Gagnon, taking an action that it was authorized or empowered by the House to do. Therefore, I would respectfully submit that the amendments made to clauses 8 through 47 of Bill C-10 must be ruled out of order and therefore struck from the fifth report.

I would further ask that the committee's consideration of amendments after the proceedings had been interrupted under the provisions of the time allocation order be disregarded by the Chair for the purposes of applying the note attached to Standing Order 76(1) (5) respecting the criteria considered by the Chair in the selection of motions at the report stage.

I do not make this point of order lightly. In fact, one of those amendments that I refer to was sponsored by my own party and several others were voted for by my colleagues, but that is beside the point. Our rules must be followed. Parliamentary procedure is not a body of play pretend rules that can just be set aside at the first moment of inconvenience. It does not matter whether these flawed decisions were taken by majority vote or even with unanimity because the rules of the House must be followed.

Routine Proceedings

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, in a different ruling on May 1, 2014, at page 4787 of the Debates, concerning Bill C-30, the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, found that amendments that were adopted by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, without procedural objection and without dissent, had to be struck from the bill because the committee had acted outside of its authority in adopting them, commenting:

The Chair has no difficulty agreeing with the parliamentary secretary that the amendment is relevant to the subject matter of the bill. Indeed, as a fellow Saskatchewan MP who represents a large number of grain producers, I can certainly agree on the importance of this issue. As Speaker, however, not only can I not simply act according to my personal beliefs, I must respect House of Commons precedents which, in the case before us, are only too clear.

The correct place to put forward the amendments to clauses 8 through 47 of Bill C-10, in light of the proper application of a time allocation order, is at the report stage here on the floor of the House.

Additionally, and in the alternative to the matter I have already raised, I would also draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the amendment known as amendment LIB-9.1 that was made by the Canadian heritage committee to clause 23. The Chair ruled the particular amendment out of order for exceeding the scope of the bill and that it breached the so-called “parent act” rule, which is explained by Bosc and Gagnon at page 771, by proposing to amend a section of the Broadcasting Act which was not touched by the provisions of Bill C-10. The committee, however, voted to overturn the Chair's ruling in that regard as well.

In that particular case, the Chair may simply have to regard the fifth report and note that the amendment on its face does something which the committee was not permitted to do and therefore should be ruled out of order and struck from the fifth report.

The solution for the government here is, like the case of the former Bill C-30, to propose an amendment at third reading to recommit Bill C-10 to the Canadian heritage committee so it may, once properly instructed and empowered, make Liberal-9.1 amendment in the proper manner.

• (1605)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his point of order. I will be returning quickly with a decision prior to the report stage of that report.

* * *

• (1610)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “Investor-State Dispute Settlement: Some Considerations for Canada”.

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

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be presenting the dissenting opinion today on behalf of Conservative committee members on the Standing Committee on

International Trade. I want to thank the analysts, clerk and staff of the committee in working to prepare the report on select impacts of the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, also known as ISDS.

Attached with the report is the dissenting opinion from Conservative members and in this we highlight the role ISDS still has in trade agreements and between countries in depoliticizing the process of dispute settlement. We hope the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of this when it comes to settling investment disputes. We heard from many experts, academics and lawyers in the field during our study on why ISDS mechanisms were still relevant in today's world.

When studying these selected impacts of something as important as ISDS, it is important that we paint a comprehensive and well-rounded picture on ISDS. I hope the government will continue to consider the full picture as it looks to negotiate trade agreements in the future.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Ms. Mumilaq Qaqqaq (Nunavut, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-309, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (Indigenous languages).

She said: Madam Speaker. Today, I am introducing my bill to get indigenous languages on the ballot. Indigenous languages, democracy and reducing barriers to voting are all important to all members of the House, and I look forward to everyone's support in this initiative.

During colonization, the languages of these lands were replaced by settler languages. Indigenous peoples in Canada have always faced barriers in participation in politics. In the last election, voter turnout for indigenous peoples living on reserves was 51.8%. In Nunavut, which is almost entirely indigenous, voter turnout was under 50%, well below the Canadian average of 76% voter turnout.

The federal government's report in PROC recognized that indigenous peoples, especially elders, would face significant barriers to voting in a COVID election. How can it be that in Nunavut, where 46% of voters' first language is Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun, ballots are only in English and French. Imagine if the voters in Quebec or Alberta could not vote in English or French. This is the situation that many constituents in Nunavut face every federal election.

It is profoundly important to us, the indigenous peoples of these lands, to have what we deserve. We need to seize this COVID election as an opportunity to put our indigenous languages where they belong: on Elections Canada ballots beside English and French. This bill asks the federal government to put reconciliation on the ballot. Recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to vote in their languages is one small step in the right direction.

I am urging the federal government and all members of the House to come together and ensure that we use every available opportunity to immediately right this wrong in the spirit of true reconciliation. My name may not be on the ballot in this upcoming election, but I want indigenous languages to be.

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

* * *

● (1615)

PRIVACY ACT

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Privacy Act (prevention of violence against women).

She said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to introduce my very first private member's bill today, an act to amend the Privacy Act, prevention of violence against women. I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, for all her hard work on this very important issue and for seconding the bill.

Gender-based violence is an epidemic that disproportionately affects women. Just recently we heard of another woman who was attacked and killed by her intimate partner. My private member's bill proposes to amend the Privacy Act to provide that personal information under the control of the government institution that relates to an individual who has been charged with or convicted of an offence involving intimate partner violence may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed without the consent of the individual.

I look forward to the debate on this bill, and I hope I can get the support of all members for this.

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

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That, given that since the beginning of the pandemic, Air Canada has received more than \$6 billion in public funding despite laying off more than 20,000 workers; that Air Canada's board of directors approved \$20 million in bonuses, \$10 million of which were paid to executives; and that Air Canada executives responded to public outrage by pledging to repay \$2 million in bonuses, the House call on the government to require Air Canada to fully reimburse the \$10 million in bonuses given to its executive team and to cancel all approved bonuses for senior executives.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

An hon. member: No.

* * *

● (1620)

PETITIONS

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from constituents concerned about forced organ harvesting. I think we all agree this horrific practice must be stopped.

I thank my colleagues, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and Senator Salma Ataullahjan, for their advocacy on this issue, including Bill S-204, recently tabled in the House. The bill would create a new Criminal Code offence for trafficking human organs, while also amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit entry into Canada of any permanent resident or foreign national who is believed to have engaged in this abhorrent practice.

Let us do the right thing and promptly pass this important legislation. Lives hang in the balance.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to table two petitions today.

The first is petition e-3159, which has 10,984 signatures from people who are concerned about approved strip mines in the Alberta Rocky Mountains.

The petition states that strip mining in all its forms causes irreversible damage to the environment, puts watersheds supplying clean drinking water for millions of Canadians at risk of permanent contamination and threatens billions of dollars in revenue and tens of thousands of jobs in agriculture, recreation and tourism. Removing overburden exposes contaminated materials to the elements, destroys habitat and allows wind and water borne pollution to be spread for hundreds of kilometres. Finally, proper consultations with indigenous communities about these mines were not done before they were approved.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to impose an immediate ban on new or expanded strip mines in the Rocky Mountains.

Routine Proceedings

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners are deeply concerned about protecting endangered old growth. They note that a number of first nations have asked for deferrals on old growth.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to work with the provinces and first nations to immediately halt logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems, fund the long-term protection of old-growth ecosystems as a priority for Canada's climate action plan and reconciliation with indigenous peoples, support value-added forestry initiatives and partnerships with first nations to ensure Canada's forestry industry is sustainable and based on the harvesting of second- and third-growth forests, ban the export of raw logs and maximize resources for use for local jobs, and ban the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production.

TRAVEL ADVISERS

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of independent travel advisers across the country.

There are over 12,000 independent travel advisers in Canada who have been without income for one year because of government-imposed COVID travel restrictions, and these small business owners are sole proprietors. Federal assistance programs like CEBA, CERB, CEWS and RRRF exclude the majority of these small business owners, leaving them to slip through the cracks and forcing them into bankruptcy.

The petitioners are asking the government to provide sector-specific funding for independent travel advisers and extend qualifications for the RRRF in the urban areas to include sole proprietors. Many of them are constituents of Regina—Lewvan.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to present two petitions today that are of key interest to the constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The first petition relates to a very significant body of water at the heart of this riding, Saanich Inlet, which is, in effect, one side of the Saanich Peninsula, the one that is more inland and therefore has very little flushing capacity. It is basically up against the side of the riding that continues up toward the Malahat, and needs protection primarily from pollution, sewage from recreational vehicles and any online sewage contamination.

As there is such a thing in Transport Canada, the petitioners are asking the Minister of Transport to designate the Saanich Inlet a zero-discharge zone to ensure that its ecological fragility is protected.

• (1625)

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the second petition goes to another kind of ecosystem, namely the old-growth forests of Canada, specifically in British Columbia, where only 2.7% of the original old growth remains.

Old-growth forests are not renewable, and the petitioners make this point. They also point out that the federal government has an opportunity to assist by working with first nations governments,

which have been increasingly raising their voices and asking for logging deferrals. The potential for federal action includes banning raw log exports and ending the use of forests as so-called biofuel for electricity.

TRAFFIC STOPS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am tabling 10 petitions in the House today.

The first petition is signed by a group of citizens who are concerned about policies related to people being pulled over and having their vehicles impounded. The petitioners highlight a particular incident from this winter, when a young woman was pulled over on a drive from Toronto to Ottawa in the middle of the night. She was speeding, her car was impounded and she was simply left by officers on the side of the road. She asked officers what she was supposed to do in this case and she was told it was all part of the journey. She was able to get a ride to a truck stop, where she camped out for a number of hours until someone could pick her up. However, this was potentially a very dangerous situation for someone to be in.

The petitioners call on the government to supply police with the resources they need to effectively uphold the law and avoid putting citizens in positions where they could be vulnerable, and to ensure that vehicles are only impounded at night if it is absolutely necessary for public safety and that arrangements for the protection of owners of vehicles are made by police in these cases.

EQUALIZATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition is about the equalization formula. The petitioners are concerned about the fact that there is a cap on the fiscal stabilization program. This negatively impacts provinces like mine, Alberta. They are also concerned about perverse outcomes that can result from equalization in provinces where there has been a significant drop in revenue.

The petitioners want the government to immediately increase and backdate the fiscal stabilization program, and they call on the government to commit to working with the provinces to address the current inequalities that exist in the equalization formula.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the third petition highlights the fact that, following the recent conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia that dealt with the Republic of Artsakh or Nagorno-Karabakh, various Armenian prisoners of war were taken who, in violation of agreements, continue to be held. The petitioners want to see action on the fact that prisoners of war continue to be held. They call on the government to condemn Azerbaijan's illegal detention of Armenian POWs, call for their immediate release, use all diplomatic tools available to advocate for the release of those held captive, condemn state-sponsored anti-Armenian hatred in Azerbaijan, denounce the aggressive rhetoric from Turkey and Azerbaijan against Armenia and Artsakh, provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to ensure the safety and viability of the population of Artsakh, and facilitate the exchange of remaining fatalities.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition highlights the human rights situation of the Hazaras, and in particular the historical violence that has been experienced by the Hazara community, with various acts of genocide and other acts of violence. This is the indigenous community in Afghanistan.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to formally recognize the ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the Hazaras between 1891 and 1893 as a genocide, to designate September 25 as the Hazara genocide memorial day and to support Bill C-287 to ensure that all development assistance sent from Canada to Afghanistan is contributing to the peace and security of the region for all peoples.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petitions I am presenting is about property rights. The petitioners say the government should seek the agreement of the provinces to amend the Constitution to include property rights and take steps to enact legislation to ensure that full, just and timely compensation will be paid to persons who are deprived of personal or private property as a result of any federal government initiative, policy, process, regulation or legislation.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is on Bill C-6. The petitioners call on the government to move forward with efforts to ban conversion therapy. They also want the government to fix the definition in the bill. They are concerned about how a poorly drafted definition could result in restrictions on private conversations in which people are not engaged in any kind of quasi-therapeutic practice, but are simply having conversations and expressing personal views. They want the House to protect freedom of speech, clarify the definition in the bill and then move forward with a ban on conversion therapy.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is in support of Bill S-204, a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ without consent. The petitioners are supportive of that bill and want to see it passed as quickly as possi-

Routine Proceedings

ble. The bill is currently before the House, having unanimously passed in the Senate. It unanimously passed in the House in a previous form.

• (1630)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the eighth petition is about Bill C-10. It notes that the CRTC already has sweeping regulatory powers over traditional forms of media. The original mandate of Bill C-10 was to expand those regulatory powers to include online platforms, but Liberal members have since used their position on the heritage committee to amend Bill C-10 to include social media platforms and other Internet platforms. This would amount to a significant attack on freedom of speech.

The petitioners want to see the government reverse its position on this and defend the freedom of speech of all Canadians. This petition calls on the government to respect Canadians' fundamental right to freedom of expression and to prevent Internet censorship.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the ninth petition highlights the genocide of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China.

The petitioners call on the government to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subject to genocide, and to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, to sanction those who are responsible for the heinous crimes that are taking place as we speak in the People's Republic of China. The petitioners would also like to see the government reform supply chain legislation so that we are not importing products made from slave labour.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the 10th and final petition highlights religious freedom and some of the challenges around public worship during the pandemic.

The petitioners note that restrictions on public gatherings during the pandemic are legitimate as long as those restrictions are evidence-based and are applied on an equal basis. They therefore call on the Government of Canada to seek dialogue with faith communities in Canada with an eye to the development of mutually agreeable guidelines for allowing public worship to occur during times of pandemic while preventing the spread of disease.

I commend all of these petitions to the consideration of my colleagues.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 667, 668, 670, 671, 674 and 680.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 667—**Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to the RCMP's Auxiliary Program for the K Division: (a) has a decision been made related to the resumption of allowing (i) tier two volunteers, (ii) tier three volunteers; (b) if the answer to (a)(i) or (ii) is affirmative, (i) what was the decision, (ii) when was the decision made, (iii) who was informed of the decision, (iv) was the decision communicated to the public, and, if so, how; (c) if the answer to (a)(i) or (ii) is negative, (i) when will the decision be made, (ii) what criteria are being used to make the decision; and (d) which organizations and individuals outside of the RCMP have been consulted in relation to these decisions?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), (i) no decision has been made specific to tier 2; (ii) tier 3 volunteers were approved pending the drafting and signing of a memorandum of understanding.

In response to (b), (i) the Alberta RCMP, in consultation with the Government of Alberta, decided to allow the resumption of the usage of tier 3 volunteers, pending the drafting and signing of a memorandum of understanding; (ii) November 14, 2019; (iii) the Government of Alberta; (iv) in the absence of a memorandum of understanding, this decision was not released publicly. However, Albertan communities that have inquired about the status of the auxiliary program have been advised that the program remains in abeyance until a mutually acceptable position on insurance liability is reached.

In response to (c), the decision will be made after the signing of a new memorandum of understanding.

In response to (d), no outside organizations were consulted except for the Government of Alberta, which is our contract partner.

Question No. 668—**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the government report entitled "2018 Export Development Canada Legislative Review" presented in July 2019, which contains 64 findings: (a) what actions is the government taking to reform Export Development Canada (EDC) in light of this report; (b) with respect to finding 51, will the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade propose legislation to amend the Export Development Act to cause EDC to observe the higher disclosure standard expected by stakeholders; (c) with respect to finding 53, will the minister propose legislation to amend the Export Development Act to (i) establish a standard to be used by EDC in its assessment of companies' human rights and environmental performance, (ii) require that EDC undertake due diligence to assess the human rights, environmental and corruption risks associated with transactions and companies, (iii) prohibit EDC from supporting corporate activity that causes or contributes to human rights violations or significant environmental damage; and (d) with respect to finding 55, will the minister propose legislation to amend the Export Development Act to ensure that EDC's business is conducted in a way that supports Canada in achieving its international commitments to reduce emissions in the fight against climate change, including by prohibiting EDC from supporting (i) projects that would increase extraction of coal, oil and gas, (ii) companies who rely significantly on coal for their operations, (iii) companies whose primary business is the export of coal, oil and gas?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) to (d), the "2018 Export Development Canada Legislative Review" report was tabled in Parliament on June 20, 2019. The report has not yet been reviewed by a parliamentary committee. However, Export Development Canada, EDC, and the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade have taken measures that address the key findings of the report.

EDC has developed an ambitious new human rights policy built on the United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights. With this policy, EDC became the first Canadian commercial banking institution to release a dedicated human rights policy. The policy commits EDC to conduct transaction-related human rights due diligence taking a risk-based approach; use its leverage to influence customers' practice and enable remediation for human rights impacts; communicate with stakeholders in good faith; track and report human rights procedures, practices and performance; and use its influence to encourage stronger human rights practices from peers and customers.

To build on this approach, in 2021, the minister asked EDC to enhance its activities with respect to disclosure standards, responsible business conduct and corporate social responsibility in her annual statement of accountabilities, SPA, letter to the chair of Export Development Canada. The minister specifically requested EDC to strengthen its accessibility of information for stakeholders and Canadians and continue to model its human rights policy on industry-accepted best practices and collaborate with corporate social responsibility, CSR, leaders. EDC is committed to upholding rigorous standards of responsible business conduct, RBC, and using its influence to promote RBC within the business community.

EDC has been equally active in strengthening its policies and activities with respect to climate change. In its new 2019 climate change policy, EDC committed to fully end its support to coal and coal-related sectors; measure, monitor, and set targets to reducing the carbon intensity of its lending portfolio; increase transparency around climate-related risks and opportunities, including fully implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, TCFD; and integrate climate-related considerations, such as carbon intensity, into its risk assessment process.

Since the adoption of this policy, EDC set a carbon target to reduce support to carbon-intensive industries by 15% of 2018 levels by 2023. EDC met this target two years early and is currently working to establish a new and more ambitious target. At the same time, EDC has emerged as Canada's largest financier of the clean technology sector, providing \$4.55 billion of support to Canada's clean technology sector in 2020.

As with human rights, climate change issues have been a ministerial priority, as indicated in the SPA letter guidance to the chair of EDC's board of directors. Specifically, in 2021, the minister has asked that EDC scale up and report on its climate change solutions; update its climate change policy to further align investments across its portfolio with the climate goals of the Paris Agreement; end its financial support to international transactions in the oil and gas sector involving foreign companies; and fully consider and evaluate greenhouse gas emissions and climate change considerations as a key aspect of its transaction due diligence.

In addition to responding to the findings of the legislative review, the government continues to develop policies to strengthen EDC's support of Canadian exporters while upholding Canadian values and human rights. Budget 2021 announced the government's intention to work with Export Development Canada to enhance supports to small and medium-sized exporters and to strengthen human rights considerations in export supports. The government may propose amendments to the Export Development Act.

Question No. 670—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the COVID-19 vaccine contracts that Canada has with seven vaccine manufacturers: (a) which of the contracts contain transparency clauses similar to the one found in the UK-AstraZeneca vaccine contract, section 17.13, which allow for the disclosure of information to government bodies, including Parliament, parliamentary committees and any parliamentary reporting requirements; and (b) what are the details of all such clauses, broken down by manufacturer?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, PSPC cannot disclose details of specific vaccine agreements unilaterally. This includes the confidentiality clauses since they are part of the agreements themselves. We continue to have discussions with suppliers about opportunities to share information publicly.

Question No. 671—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the COVID-19 vaccine contracts that the government has with seven vaccine manufacturers, including the recently signed contract with Pfizer for booster shots: (a) what is the cost per vaccine dose, broken down by contract and manufacturer; and (b) what specific remedies are available to the government when manufacturers do not meet their contractual obligations, and which, if any, of the remedies have been pursued, broken down by manufacturer?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, PSPC cannot disclose details of specific vaccine agreements unilaterally. This includes the confidentiality clauses, since they are part of the agreements themselves. We continue to have discussions with suppliers about opportunities to share information publicly.

Question No. 674—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to legal expenses incurred by the government that are related to lawsuits filed against the government from individuals claiming to have suffered from the Havana syndrome: what are the total legal expenses incurred to date, broken down by case?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to legal expenses incurred by the government that are related to lawsuits filed against the government from individuals claiming to have suffered from the Havana syndrome, to the extent that the information that has been requested is or may be protected by any legal privileges, including solicitor-client privilege, the federal Crown asserts those privileges. In this case, it has only waived solicitor-client privilege,

Routine Proceedings

and only to the extent of revealing the total legal costs, as defined below.

The total legal costs, actual and notional costs, associated with the lawsuits filed against the government from individuals claiming to have suffered from the Havana syndrome amount to approximately \$437,000. The services targeted here are litigation services provided, in these cases, by the Department of Justice, as well as litigation support services. Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals are salaried public servants and therefore no legal fees are incurred for their services. A "notional amount" can, however, be provided to account for the legal services they provide. The notional amount is calculated by multiplying the total hours recorded in the responsive files for the relevant period by the applicable approved internal legal services hourly rates. Actual costs represent file-related legal disbursements paid by the Department of Justice and then cost-recovered from client departments or agencies. The total amount mentioned in this response is based on information contained in Department of Justice systems, as of April 28, 2021.

Question No. 680—Ms. Candice Bergen:

With regard to the registration and deregistration of businesses in Canada since January 1, 2016: (a) how many businesses have deregistered, broken down by month and region or city; (b) of the businesses in (a), how many employees are listed as working at each business, broken down by region or city; (c) how many businesses have registered, broken down by month and region or city; and (d) of the businesses in (c), how many employees are listed as working at each business, broken down by region or city?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Innovation, Science and Economic Development undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine what would fall within the scope of information collected by federal sources and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. We concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question from federal sources is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information. In addition, some of the information requested would have required direct contact with provincial jurisdictions.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Question Nos. 663, 665, 666, 669, 672, 673, and 675 to 679 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 663—Mr. Earl Dreessen:

With regard to the government's response to question Q-488 on the Order Paper and the \$941,140.13 provided to China for the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives project: what is the itemized breakdown of the local projects in China that money was spent on, including, for each project, the (i) amount, (ii) project description, (iii) name of the local organization that proposed and implemented the project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 665—Mr. Earl Dreessen:

With regard to exemptions from the quarantine rules for individuals entering Canada, broken down by month since March 1, 2020: (a) how many individuals have received exemptions from the quarantine requirements, broken down by reason for the exemption (essential worker, amateur sports, etc.); and (b) how many individuals received exemptions from the quarantine requirements after receiving a ministerial exemption, such as a national interest designation, broken down by minister and type of designation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 666—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the government's use of Switch Health for post-arrival coronavirus tests for travellers: (a) what are the service standards in terms of distributing, picking up, and processing tests; (b) what are the service standards for responding to client inquiries or complaints; (c) in what percentage of cases did Switch Health meet or exceed service standards; (d) for cases where standards were not met, what was the reason given; (e) how many of the required post-arrival tests were never completed; (f) of the tests in (e), what is the breakdown by reason (Switch Health unable to provide service in Spanish, traveler refusal, etc.); (g) was there a competitive bid process for the contract awarded to Switch Health and, if so, who were the other bidders; and (h) what are the details of all meetings, including telephone or virtual, that Switch Health had with the government prior to the awarding of the contract, including the (i) date, (ii) names and titles of representatives from Switch Health, (iii) names and titles of government representatives, including any ministerial staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 669—Mr. Kenny Chiu:

With regard to the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention: (a) what national level research has been conducted on lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit and queer or questioning populations, people with disabilities, newcomers and refugees, youth, seniors, Indigenous Peoples, first responders since issuance of the framework; (b) where can the public access the findings of the research in (a); (c) is the framework being updated to account for the impact of COVID-19 on these populations; (d) what current support programs are being offered under the framework; and (e) what knowledge-sharing and outreach initiatives have been undertaken since the framework has been implemented?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 672—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to costs incurred by the government to scrap decommissioned warships, broken down by ship: (a) what was the total cost related to scrapping the (i) HMCS Fraser, (ii) HMCS Athabaskan, (iii) HMCS Protector, (iv) HMCS Preserver,

(v) MV Sun Sea, (vi) HMCS Cormorant; (b) for each total in (a), what is the itemized breakdown of expenses; (c) what are the details of all towing costs associated with the scrapping of ships in (a), including the locations where the ships were towed to and from, if applicable; and (d) what are the details, including totals, for all costs associated with asbestos removal from the ships in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 673—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to all monetary and non-monetary contracts, grants, agreements and arrangements entered into by the government with Huawei and its known affiliates, subsidiaries or parent companies since January 1, 2016: what are the details of such contracts, grants, agreements, or arrangements, broken down by (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) department, (iv) start and end date, (v) summary of terms, (vi) whether or not the item was made public through proactive disclosure, (vii) specific details of goods or services provided to the government as a result of the contract, grant, agreement or arrangement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 675—Mr. Earl Dreessen:

With regard to government-issued credit cards, broken down by department, agency, or ministerial office, where applicable: (a) how many credit cards have payments that are past due as of April 28, 2021; (b) what is the total value of the past due balances; (c) what is the number of credit cards and value of the past due balances in (a) and (b) that were assigned to ministers, parliamentary secretaries, or ministerial exempt staff; (d) how many instances have occurred since January 1, 2017, where government-issued credit cards were defaulted on; (e) what is the total value of the balances defaulted on in (d); (f) what is the total number of instances in (d) and amount in (e) where the government ended up using taxpayer funds to pay off the balances; and (g) what are the number of instances and amounts in (d), (e) and (f) for credit cards that were assigned to ministers, parliamentary secretaries, or ministerial exempt staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 676—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the renovation, redesign and refurbishing of ministers' or deputy ministers' offices since February 1, 2019: (a) what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and refurbishing for each ministerial office, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures; (b) what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and refurbishing for each deputy minister's office, broken down by (i) the total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures; and (c) what are the details of all projects related to (a) or (b), including the project description and date of completion?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 677—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and deliverables prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by Gartner since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such deliverables, broken down by firm, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 678—Ms. Candice Bergen:

With regard to sole-sourced contracts related to COVID-19 spending since November 25, 2020: (a) how many contracts have been sole-sourced; (b) what are the details of each sole-sourced contract, including the (i) date of the award, (ii) description of goods or services, including volume, (iii) final amount, (iv) vendor, (v) country of vendor; (c) how many sole-sourced contracts have been awarded to domestic-based companies; and (d) how many sole-sourced contracts have been awarded to foreign-based companies, broken down by country where the company is based?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 679—Ms. Candice Bergen:**

With regard to ministers and exempt staff members flying on government aircraft, including helicopters, since September 28, 2020: what are the details of all such flights, including (i) the date, (ii) the origin, (iii) the destination, (iv) the type of aircraft, (v) which ministers and exempt staff members were on board?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1635)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 10—BROADCASTING ACT

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, shall be disposed of as follows:

(a) the bill may be taken up at report stage immediately after the adoption of this order;

(b) not more than one hour shall be allotted to the consideration of the bill at report stage and, at the conclusion of the time provided at report stage, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment, provided that, if a recorded division is requested on any motion, it shall not be deferred, except pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8);

(c) a motion for third reading may be made immediately after the bill has been concurred in at report stage;

(d) when the bill is taken up at the third reading stage, a member of each recognized party and a member of the Green Party each be allowed to speak for not more than 10 minutes followed by five minutes for questions and comments and, at the conclusion of the time provided for debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary for the disposal of the third reading stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment provided that, if a recorded division is requested on any motion, it shall not be deferred; and

(e) the House shall not adjourn until the proceedings on the bill have been completed, except pursuant to a motion proposed by a minister of the Crown, provided that once proceedings have been completed, the House may then proceed to consider other business or, if it has already passed the ordinary hour of daily adjournment, the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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 Regina—Lewvan, The Economy; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if we really want to understand where we are, we have to look at where we started.

Bill C-10 came out of the work of the Yale commission, which worked on this for nearly a year and a half. The commission was created by my predecessors. It travelled across the country gathering input from experts and stakeholders, including groups representing people in music, visual arts, television and film.

The Yale commission received close to 2,000 briefs and submitted its report in early 2020. We took that input from the consultations and feedback from a group of leading Canadian experts, including the former director general of the CRTC, Ms. Yale, and started working on Bill C-10. We worked hard to do what the previous overhaul of the Broadcasting Act in the early 1990s did when the Conservatives modernized it. The act was created to protect Canadian artists, organizations and businesses from the American cultural invasion.

We all know that the American cultural invasion is powerful and that it can steamroll any culture on the planet. I have discussed these issues with ministers in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Many countries worldwide are currently dealing with the issue of cultural sovereignty.

This is the spirit in which we tabled Bill C-10. At the time, I was the first one to say that the bill could be enhanced, improved and amended. I would remind members that the last time the Broadcasting Act was amended, the government of the day overlooked one very important issue: the ownership of Canadian broadcasting companies. The act was amended in the early 1990s, and the Governor in Council issued an order in council a few years later, in 1997, to protect the ownership of Canadian broadcasting companies, because this had been overlooked.

All of this is to say that, when we propose a bill, we do our best to make sure that it represents the best of our intentions. I would like to remind all of the members in the House that Bill C-10 was praised by cultural organizations across the country. According to many, its passage was a historic event.

• (1640)

[English]

Not only was the tabling of the bill saluted from coast to coast to coast, but the National Assembly of Quebec voted unanimously in favour of Bill C-10. It said that we need Bill C-10 and that it is a good piece of legislation. Among other things, it would help the French language, French producers, French artists and French composers to better perform in this environment. Another feature of Bill C-10 is that it would also further help and support indigenous creators, indigenous artists and indigenous producers in ways the previous incarnation of the bill unfortunately did not do.

This bill is not about content moderation. The CRTC, in its decades of existence, has never said to Shaw, CBC or TVA that they can do one program but cannot do another program. The CRTC has never had that power.

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I heard one member talking about the sweeping powers of the CRTC. The CRTC is not above Canadian laws. It must comply with our bodies of laws and regulations, and it is a regulator. We have many regulators in different sectors, and the CRTC, from that point of view, is no different than existing regulators. What Bill C-10 wants to do is to ensure web giants pay their fair share.

As I have said many times in this House, as well as at the heritage committee, the independent, professional civil servants at Canadian Heritage estimate that, by asking web giants to pay their fair share, we would be adding revenues in excess of \$800 million a year for our creators, artists, independent producers and musicians. That figure is an estimate, not an exact figure, as we would have to adopt the bill and implement the regulations to know exactly how much it would be.

I want to point out that, initially, when the heritage committee started working on the bill, things were going really well. The committee was able to go through roughly 20 amendments at every committee meeting. What has been really challenging to understand is the Conservative Party.

By and large, we have four parties in this House that recognize the need to modernize the Broadcasting Act and agree on the goals. We do not agree on everything, but between the Greens, the NDP, the Bloc and us Liberals, I think there is vast agreement on what needs to be done.

Frankly, I am trying to understand the position of the Conservative Party on this, as it has been a moving target. Initially, the Conservatives criticized the bill for not going far enough because we were not going after YouTube or integrating these really important companies in the bill, so we changed it. Then, all of a sudden, they changed their minds. It was not good enough. Not only was it not good enough, but they disagreed with their initial position.

Then they started talking about this idea that somehow the bill would lead to censorship, which was proven wrong by the independent professional civil service of the justice ministry. The deputy minister came to testify at the heritage committee to that effect and produced analyses that showed Bill C-10 did not go against the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, there are elements within Bill C-10 and the CRTC's own laws that state that the CRTC has to abide by the Charter of Rights.

Because of that, the Conservatives claimed that it was an infringement on net neutrality. We tried to explain what net neutrality is and what it is not. Basically, net neutrality is about telecommunications. It is about the hardware and the ability of people to have access to networks. Bill C-10 does not do that. It is not about telecommunications at all.

I think we are now faced with the fact that, because of the Conservative Party, we have lost months of work on Bill C-10. For every month that passes, artists, creators, musicians and technicians in this country lose roughly \$70 million per month, so we must proceed with the adoption of Bill C-10. Artists, musicians and organizations across the country are asking us to do so.

• (1645)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his intervention today and for try-

ing to set the record straight with respect to what is happening with this bill. The reality of the situation is that, unfortunately, the Conservatives have attempted to hijack this bill in an effort to convince Canadians that the government is trying to limit free speech, but nothing could be further from the truth. This bill is about ensuring that Canadian content continues into the future.

I think of artists such as the musicians in The Tragically Hip, who came from my riding of Kingston and the Islands. It is quite possible that, in those early days, they may not have had the exposure they had without the requirements for Canadian content. This is really about helping to ensure that Canadian content and Canadian artists continue to have that level of exposure right from the infancy stages, before they are popular, when they really need it.

I am wondering if the minister could comment on how he sees this helping future artists as those in The Tragically Hip were helped.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands is absolutely right. That is exactly what Bill C-10 is about and exactly what it aims to do.

As we know, web giants are taking more and more of the share of how we listen to music, watch TV and watch movies. Unless they are brought into the Canadian regulatory framework, then the very reason why we created those modifications in the early nineties will disappear, and we will lose our cultural sovereignty. That is precisely why Bill C-10 was brought forward and why we want it to be adopted as quickly as possible.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage was right when he admitted this bill could be improved.

The last two days in committee, we rammed through everything. There were no amendments and no discussion. There was nothing. Forty per cent of this bill was never talked about in the heritage committee, yet now we have another gag order thanks to the Bloc's support of the government.

How can the minister of heritage stand here today and say that this bill is good for Canadians when over 40% of the bill was never even debated in committee?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, it is ironic that the Conservative Party would ask my colleague, of all its MPs, to ask me a question because he was one of the MPs who initially criticized the bill for not going far enough, saying that this bill needed to include companies like YouTube. When we did this, all of a sudden the Conservative Party changed its stance.

The Conservatives did not really want one of the wealthiest companies in the world to pay its fair share. YouTube is part of Google. It is one of the largest, one of the wealthiest, one of the most powerful companies in the world. I just cannot figure out what happened to the Conservative Party, which, instead of standing for our artists and our Canadian creators, decided to stand with Google and YouTube. Frankly, I just cannot understand it.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier the minister used a generic statement when he said that if we really want to understand where we are, we have to look at where we started.

I like this kind of statement. It reminds me that it took six years for us to even get Bill C-10. It also took 120 amendments. My Conservative colleague alluded to this, but it seems as though we have the Bloc Québécois to thank for this. The Liberals did not seem very enthusiastic about working on Bill C-10 until we intervened.

My question for the minister is the following: What inspired the Liberals' enthusiasm for working on Bill C-10?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, I think that my colleague, unlike some of his colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, has not followed the evolution of Bill C-10. I would like to remind him that Bill C-10 is based on a consultation and the ensuing report, which was released in early 2020.

If we do the calculations, 2020 to 2021 is not six years. It is a year and a few months. We acted promptly, swiftly and decisively.

I defended Bill C-10 on every forum, as did our government. I would remind my esteemed colleague that the Quebec National Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution supporting Bill C-10. In addition, several thousand artists, including Yvon Deschamps, Lise Dion and Claude Legault, signed a petition in support of Bill C-10. I think that our work is recognized and appreciated by the artistic community.

I will conclude by saying that I appreciate the Bloc Québécois's support, as well as the work done by the Bloc and other members on the committee. Unfortunately, I do not appreciate the work of the Conservative Party.

• (1650)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his remarks.

Obviously, we have often discussed the fact that we need to support the cultural sector, that the Broadcasting Act is outdated and archaic and that digital platforms need to be included. We agree on the principle that web giants should be co-operating to help protect our artists.

However, this afternoon, we are talking about this type of super-motion. What makes me uncomfortable is the Liberal government's management of its legislative agenda. The minister is telling us that the government acted swiftly, but now here we are in a mad rush at the end of the session. We get the feeling that this was not a priority, and now we are under a five-hour closure. We did not even get 10 hours.

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Then we were asked to add committee meetings. We agreed to hold five meetings instead of two in one week to try to move things along a little. Now, even with the closure and the extra committee meetings, the minister is back with another fast-track procedure. Why did he not plan the work schedule better?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I do not know if he has had the opportunity to speak with representatives of the cultural and arts sector in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada in recent weeks. All those I spoke to said that they wanted Bill C-10 to pass as soon as possible. That is what I was told by the Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, ADISQ, the Union des artistes and many others. Had it not been for the Conservatives' filibustering, I do not think we would be where we are now.

However, I must admit that I am somewhat surprised that the NDP is not prepared to support artists, and that it let them down because they are afraid of the Conservative Party. I do not understand the NDP's position. On the one hand, they say they are in favour of Bill C-10 and forcing web giants to contribute their fair share, but, on the other hand, when the time comes to support artists and take action, they run and hide. I am truly shocked.

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it funny for the minister to be asking what happened to the Conservatives. We always have stood up and always will stand up for free speech. We believe that citizens across the country should not be censored on what they put on social media, like Facebook and YouTube. We believe people have a right to their own personal thoughts and opinions, unlike three-quarters of the front benches of the Liberal Party who want a basic dictatorship. Conservatives will always stand up for free speech and Bill C-10 curtails that. We will stand with all Canadians and their right to have their own opinions and own independent thought process.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, I am not sure there was a question in there, but I will give it a shot. I would be curious to hear the hon. member on his party's stance regarding free speech when they were in power under the Harper government. At the time, I used to work for not-for-profit organizations. Organizations like mine, and so many others in this country working on environmental issues, women's rights issues and international development issues, were the target of the government because we did not agree with it. That is word for word. People can look it up.

I had a huge argument with the spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office at the time when it was prime minister Stephen Harper, at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. He said the reason they were doing this was because they wanted to shut us up because we disagreed with the government.

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Where was their priority and eagerness to defend freedom of speech when they were using all of the state's resources to go after non-governmental organizations and try to take away our funding because we disagreed with them? Where was their concern for freedom of speech two weeks ago when 81 members of this party voted—

• (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): My apologies, but I do have to curtail the minister's answer right now.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 41 minutes.

[Translation]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be speaking today. Earlier, I listened to the Minister of Heritage talk about Bill C-10, which he tabled, and I almost choked several times.

He began by pointing out that it was important to look back at the past to understand where we are now. I will give another version of the facts for everyone out there watching, and I would invite everyone to fact-check me by consulting the unedited transcriptions, the “blues”, of the various discussions at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. People will be able to check if what I am saying is accurate and well informed and if it reflects everything we have gone through during the saga of Bill C-10 leading up to the present day.

The minister was right to say that he had all the resources he needed to table Bill C-10 for more than a year and a half and garner a unanimous response from the outset. The minister is confusing things, talking about web giants and insinuating how he will handle them and make them pay their fair share. The ultimate goal was to produce an act that ensures a level playing field between digital broadcasters such as Disney Plus, Spotify and Netflix, and conventional broadcasters such as TVA, CBC/Radio-Canada, Global and CTV.

The minister even chose to ignore the important elements that everyone wanted to see, including copyright issues and CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate, explaining that he divided these challenges into three parts and was only introducing one in the House of Commons so that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage could work on it.

When he introduced the bill, the committee worked diligently and co-operatively to improve it. This bill was clearly imperfect even though the minister had had a lot of time to draft it with his experts. More than 120 amendments were proposed by all parties. Surprisingly, these amendments were moved not just by the Conservative Party, but also by the Green Party, which had been given authorization to move them, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP, Liberal members of the committee and even the government. In fact, the government and the Liberal Party moved almost 30 amendments, not to mention all the amendments to the amendments along the way, to try to address all the shortcomings of this bill.

As the minister pointed out, the committee's study of the bill was moving along relatively well, which I can vigorously and honestly confirm. We even worked with the minister and his staff, who were telling anyone who would listen that the Conservatives were slowing down the process. That was completely false. All the committee members even agreed to do a preliminary study and use that evidence in the committee's official study, to avoid holding up the work.

At no point in the legislative process was the bill delayed, despite what the minister and his aides implied. I am saying so in all honesty, and I challenge everyone to take the time to read all the speeches and everything leading up to that infamous Friday when the minister, surreptitiously and without warning, withdrew clause 4.1 that he was proposing to add to the Broadcasting Act. This made the bill altogether different by including social networks, which had originally been excluded.

• (1700)

Why do I say that? It is because, when we did our job in good faith as Parliamentarians, each party had the opportunity to call witnesses to testify about various aspects of Bill C-10. That gave us the opportunity to obtain as much information as possible to do the best we could, based on the knowledge of every member and staffer, to formulate proper opinions during our study of the bill in order to improve it. That is our job as legislators, of which I am extremely proud.

The problem is that the Minister of Canadian Heritage left social media out of the original version of Bill C-10. Furthermore, despite the minister's assertion from the get-go that it is a historic bill, to my knowledge, only one organization has said that. The other organizations highlighted the bill's good parts and said that it was indeed time to modernize the act and to align the way we deal with digital with the way we deal with what we call conventional broadcasters. However, I met with all the organizations the minister mentioned, and every one of them pointed out several frightening provisions in Bill C-10.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage said that the Conservatives delayed and filibustered. I am sorry, but it was not the Conservatives who did that. The Conservatives have merely given a voice to a number of organizations, individuals and experts who wanted to point out the flaws in Bill C-10. The minister can go ahead and play his partisan games in the run-up to an election to try to scare everyone into believing that the Conservatives do not support the cultural community. However, it is all complete and utter nonsense, pure theatrics, a show worthy of our Prime Minister, who is a great stage actor.

The heritage minister should stop with the games, because nobody is against culture. On the contrary, we are against censorship, against this attack and the way the minister undermined freedom of expression one Friday by removing section 4.1, which was supposed to be added to the Broadcasting Act.

That is when we began what could indeed be described as filibustering or slowing down the committee's work. We are talking about a maximum of three weeks during the six-plus years the Liberal government has been in power. Those three weeks have allegedly been catastrophic, but the Liberals are filibustering in many other committees with regard to the corruption scandals they were involved in, whether we are talking about the former justice minister, SNC-Lavalin, the WE Charity or the Standing Committee on Health, where we have been requesting access to the vaccine procurement reports. The Liberals have definitely done their share of filibustering.

Why have we been filibustering for approximately three weeks? The heritage minister was right. Let us give some background on all of this. It is important to understand it, so that people know how we got to where we are today, muzzled by the Liberals with the support of the Bloc Québécois.

By amending the bill one Friday afternoon, the heritage minister set off alarm bells all over the place. During the weekend, law experts and university professors sounded the alarm, telling us to look out because the government was doing something that would undermine freedom of expression.

What did the Conservatives do? We just asked to hear from the heritage minister again and get a legal opinion from the Minister of Justice stating that the rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms were not violated by the removal of clause 4.1.

In response, the Liberals objected incessantly for more than two weeks until the member for Mount Royal moved a new version of the motion asking for exactly the same thing we had proposed, which was to have the justice and heritage ministers come explain the situation and answer our questions, as well as an opportunity to hear the other side of the story from experts who had concerns about Bill C-10.

• (1705)

They ended up appearing, and we were finally able to put an end to the committee's three-week-long standstill. That is the truth about the delay that has the minister up in arms.

I have to wonder whether the minister really wants to pass Bill C-10, because the reality is that the work of the House will be over in just 10 days' time. When the bill is passed by the House at third reading, it will have to go to the Senate. The Senate will have to examine the bill, although 40% of the amendments will not even have been discussed by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. It is pretty preposterous to hear the minister lecturing us, given his behaviour.

Earlier, the minister said that some 30-odd organizations from across the country had highlighted the importance of the bill for the cultural community. They are right, it is an important bill for the cultural community, but that does not release us from the obligation to make sure we protect freedom of expression. I can already picture the minister pointing out that the Minister of Justice tabled his report with his experts. I am sorry, but what he tabled was an explanatory document, which was not in the motion we had presented.

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We did not get any answers to our questions, and people started to wake up. The committee heard from former CRTC officials including Timothy Denton, CRTC commissioner from 2009 to 2013, Konrad von Finckenstein, CRTC president from 2007 to 2012, Peter Menzies, the CRTC's vice-president of telecommunications from 2013 to 2018, Michel Morin, the CRTC's national commissioner from 2008 to 2012, and Philip Palmer, legal counsel at the Department of Justice and senior counsel at the Department of Communications from 1987 to 1994. The heritage minister never names them, but all those individuals said that what the minister was doing made no sense.

Peter Menzies went as far as to say that this was a full-blown assault on freedom of expression and the foundations of democracy. He said it is difficult to understand the level of hubris or incompetence, or both, that would lead someone to believe that such an encroachment on rights can be justified.

When the minister attacks the Conservatives, he is also attacking all those individuals, not to mention the thousands of Canadians who support us and have said they want us to keep up the pressure on the minister about his bill and his encroachment on their rights.

These are facts, and I have not even mentioned Michael Geist, who is very often referred to as a professor emeritus of law at the University of Ottawa. His expertise is so sought after that even the Liberal government supports his research in this field. He was one of the strongest critics of the Liberal government's attitude, and the Bloc Québécois's as well since it supported the Liberals' gag order. Imagine: a gag order that has not been used in 20 years, that the Conservative Party never used during its 10 years in power, a House of Commons gag order that the government imposed on a committee when the House leaders keep telling us that committees are independent every time we question them.

Given what the Liberals just did to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, they can never again say that a committee is independent. This is something unique. Even when people used this measure in the past, they granted a minimum of 10 hours to work on the document in question. All we were given was five hours.

This law professor, Michael Geist, is not alone. There are others from other universities. I do not have the documents with me, but I have quoted them several times. People can go and check.

I therefore want to reiterate that, when the minister attacks the Conservatives, he is attacking all those who spoke out via social media, press releases, written correspondence, speeches and interviews with the media and who said that what the minister was doing did not make sense.

Does this mean we are against culture? No, absolutely not.

Does it mean that the minister made a mistake with his bill? The answer is yes.

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If the work had been done properly to begin with, we would not be where we are today. It is because of all the delays that we are dealing with this mess, which will certainly not ensure a level playing field between digital broadcasters and conventional broadcasters.

• (1710)

My NDP colleague's question to the minister was entirely justified. That is what happened. Those are the facts.

Back when we started studying this bill, the government made a big show of saying that this was to be a partnership, so it is pretty funny that the opposition parties did not get so much as a phone call to let them know that clause 4.1 was being removed from the bill. That was the event that triggered this crisis.

No other conversations about collaboration raised problems when they were in the Liberal government's interest. I cannot talk about them because they happened in private, but I was involved in those conversations several times.

It is sad that things have come to this. It is sad that the minister is now stooping to partisan behaviour and attacking Conservatives over this file. As I said, we are just speaking on behalf of all these industry stakeholders, the ones who wanted to protect net neutrality and freedom of expression and avoid these flaws that will almost certainly be challenged in court.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission now has more powers, even though former CRTC commissioners and chairs say that giving the CRTC that kind of power is not a good idea. I am not kidding.

At the beginning of his speech the minister talked about \$70 million a month, which was an approximate amount, with the calculations planned for later. People deserve to be told the truth. The CRTC now has nine months to tell us on what percentage it will base the calculations, because no one knows. The only response from the minister is that if the CRTC uses the same calculations as conventional broadcasters, the amounts will be somewhere between \$800 million and \$1.1 billion, which leaves a margin of \$300 million. We do not know anything about it, however, and neither do we know whether the CRTC is going to use the same rules. Once the bill passes we will no longer have any control over this.

That is the current reality of this bill. Time allocation was imposed, and over the past week we have been forced to hold many votes on amendments without those watching us having access to the text of nearly 40% of them. Imagine that scenario, where the only thing the audience heard was the number of the amendment, preceded by the abbreviation of the party proposing it and followed by the question on whether members of the committee were for or against it. What transparency. The Liberals said that the people would have access to the text at the end, when it was all over. It will be too late by then and we will not be able to move forward.

The minister says that we delayed the process, but I would have him know that the committee agreed to hold as many meetings as the chair wanted. We even held meetings every day of the break week, when we were meant to be working in our ridings. Some

meetings were extended to four or five hours, on barely an hour's notice. That is the truth, but the minister never mentions that when he talks about his bill.

That really stings, because these kinds of politics hurt us all. The session is ending in a few days. We know full well that the Liberals will call an election before the House comes back. All the minister is trying to do here is play politics. He wants his bill to make it into the election platform, since he knows perfectly well that he will not get it passed in time.

The Bloc Québécois helped the Liberals out of some hot water. I do not recall ever seeing an opposition party support a government gag order. The Bloc members are proud of it. They are boasting about supporting a gag order. It is crazy to think about it.

At times, I found myself wondering what was going on. The minister was weaving a story that did not make sense and that was looking like a horror story for a while there. We have tried our best to do our jobs as legislators, but it has unfortunately been extremely difficult.

• (1715)

The minister, through his work, has attacked net neutrality. He has created a breach. It may not be a big breach, but it is a breach nonetheless. It will be challenged, that much is clear. On top of that, the CRTC is also being given increased powers. That is the reality.

If people listening right now think that my story is not true and that I lied, if they think, as the Prime Minister has implied in the House, that I misled people, I invite them to go back and look at the record, because it is all there.

People know that that is how it happened. They know that everyone started out in good faith, until that Friday when the Minister of Canadian Heritage removed clause 4.1 without any warning. Everyone knows what happens when something is done on a Friday. It means they want to slip it through quietly. After all the theatrics to try to make people believe we do not support the arts community, which is not the case, because it is censorship that we oppose, here is what the Liberal government did instead: It censored us by imposing time allocation.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us start at the beginning. On November 18, 2020, Bill C-10 had just been introduced when the member for Richmond—Arthabaska said this during oral question period: “There is nothing in it that would regulate social media or platforms like YouTube.” That seems pretty clear to me. The member himself was criticizing the government, saying that Bill C-10 did not go far enough.

I am somewhat surprised, not to mention amazed, to hear an experienced parliamentarian like the member opposite say that the minister did such and such a thing in committee. I would remind my colleague that the Minister of Canadian Heritage does not sit on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I was invited to testify on several occasions, and I went every time.

The member says that there were 120 amendments and that that means the bill is a mess. That is a great way to try to mislead people, because it is perfectly normal to have many amendments. I could cite Bill C-69, another bill the Conservative Party opposed.

Finally, the member says that he is speaking on behalf of many people. I would like him to say on whose behalf the Conservative Party was speaking when the member for Lethbridge said that artists were a bunch of outdated people living off government hand-outs. Her comments were widely panned. On whose behalf—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I do not know what to say to the minister, who is being particularly partisan with respect to Bill C-10. It is always the same thing, and there are always attacks. The few times that he tried to defend his Bill C-10, the media had a field day. This only exacerbated the lack of confidence and cynicism towards this bill.

I will repeat that he alone is to blame if we find ourselves in this situation with this bill. The minister missed the mark. He tried to change the bill. When quoting something I said in the House of Commons, he took it out of context. I was pointing out that he was suggesting to people that social networks would be subject to legislation, which was false. I never said that I agreed with what he was doing. I was quoting him because he was suggesting in his arguments that that was the case, when it was not. He is trying to say that is what I was saying, when instead I was correcting him.

I hear that, and it is always the same thing. He quoted the member, who later apologized, just like several members apologized for statements they made. This is all petty politics and we are tired of it.

Bill C-10 is a disaster, and he is going to move it forward by ramming closure down our throats—

• (1720)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska. I know that he has been very emotionally involved in the issue of freedom of expression on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in recent weeks.

After clause 4.1 was removed on that fateful Friday in late April, we were interrupted by the Conservatives, who saw a potential violation of freedom of expression, the important principle that all of us here respect and cherish. At the request of my Conservative colleagues, we invited experts to speak. The Conservatives called their own experts, and we heard from attorneys. The other parties called other experts with a completely different opinion. Some credible voices said that Bill C-10 did not infringe on freedom of expression and that it contained provisions protecting it.

My question to the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska is this: If this is not an ideological matter, what would the experts have had to say to finally convince the Conservatives that Bill C-10

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does not infringe on the freedom of expression of Quebeckers and Canadians?

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from my neighbouring riding of Drummond for his question. I appreciate him as a colleague, as he is well aware.

What he said is entirely true. Following the testimony of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Justice, we heard from experts with diametrically opposed opinions. I agree with him. It is true, and it is healthy in a democracy.

Among the experts who agreed with the Conservatives were law professors. I think that these people also deserve a voice in Canada's Parliament because of their vision, their advice and their warnings. It is appalling to see the minister attack these opinions. It is obvious that, if you do not think like a Liberal, you are not worth anything. That is not true, we are worth something. Our constituents are full-fledged citizens. These people deserve a voice, and it is thanks to these divergent voices that we can exchange ideas and improve bills.

The problem is when the minority government across the way operates in a dictatorial fashion and pays no mind to what is going on, which means that it can only get its bills passed under a gag order. Instead, it should try to understand these voices and see how it can improve its legislation.

I will say it again: If clause 4.1 had not been removed, we would not be in this situation today. We would not be engaged in these never-ending arguments that we have been having for some time—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have so many concerns with what happened in our committee. He was a member of the committee, as was I.

The Conservatives brought up concerns about freedom of expression. Does the member realize that the act itself has three cases in which it specifically names freedom of expression being protected? The bill itself already has a protection in it, and we approved at least four amendments, including a Conservative amendment, that would all have protected freedom of expression.

When the member says that freedom of expression is an issue and that he would like to continue to work for it, I ask the member this: Why did he vote against my motion to sit during the summer? We could have continued to work on this bill and could have continued to get it right.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I do not know exactly which motion the hon. member is talking about; there have been so many. I apologize for not being able to answer her question directly.

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However, I can confirm that the NDP and the Bloc Québécois were themselves at some point surprised by the removal of clause 4.1. Both parties supported our efforts to hear what the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Canadian Heritage had to say about the concerns about freedom of expression.

I presume that, when the hon. member mentions elements of the bill that supposedly protect freedom of expression, she is referring to clause 2.1, which addresses individuals. However, the issue we are debating, the issue that was raised by the legal experts, is content.

I myself asked the Minister of Justice if the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects individuals as well as content. He has always refused to answer that question—

• (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Simcoe—Grey.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was listening to the conversation, and what made me want to stand and ask a question is the partisanship of this bill. I can say quite definitely that, in my riding, this is probably the one bill that I got the most emails about, not necessarily even from my Conservative supporters. When I talk about the other parties here, these are real concerns. I am just wondering why the government, once again, is ramming through a bill that has this many concerns from this many parties.

What is the goal? Why would the government have that as its goal right now, near the end of the session?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

He is perfectly correct, many Canadians criticized this bill and had concerns about it. I am deeply convinced that even Liberal, New Democrat and Bloc members can confirm that many of their constituents have approached them about this.

That is why I am even more surprised at the minister's reaction. He is attacking us and trying to criticize the Conservatives when thousands of Canadians and Quebecers have expressed their dissatisfaction with the way he has approached and presented the bill. Yes, there are several concerns, because freedom of expression is a value near and dear to the hearts of all Canadians. Unfortunately, the minister decided to turn it into a partisan game on the eve of an election. That is unfortunate, because we should all stand up for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, allow me to go back in time a bit.

In 2019, when the Bloc Québécois was campaigning across Quebec, the 32 Bloc Québécois candidates running for election to the House and all of the others who ran in other ridings committed to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I think there is a problem with the interpretation.

It is working now. The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I will now get back to the premise of my speech, the 2019 campaign in which every Bloc Québécois candidate made a serious promise to voters, a commitment made solemnly and with conviction: Whenever we are in the House, we will make decisions, take a position and support bills and motions that defend Quebecers' interests and values.

Even today, it is still the question we ask ourselves when it comes time to choose which direction to take, either here or in committee. A time allocation motion, closure, a gag order, whatever we may call it, there really is no good word for it and we find it chilling, because freedom of speech, parliamentary privilege, is fundamental. It is something we deeply respect and will defend at all costs, like we did with this morning's motion, which just squeaked by.

The Bloc Québécois has fervently defended this idea since its inception, 30 years ago tomorrow. I think that we supported a time allocation motion more often in the past two weeks than in all the 30 years of my party's existence.

Sometimes, situations force us to step on people's toes to defend our values, and sometimes that is justifiable.

The parliamentary toolkit contains another tool that is just as questionable, in my opinion, and many of my colleagues probably agree with me. It is the filibustering of debates, either here in the House or in committee. The filibuster consists in droning on endlessly, taking up debate time to prevent a vote or to prevent something that is against our convictions from happening. At that point, the other move that is just as questionable, time allocation, becomes equally justifiable.

In recent months, we have supported time allocation for Bill C-6 and for medical assistance in dying, an extremely sensitive issue on which Quebec has reached a consensus. People were waiting for the bill. They were waiting for a decision from the House of Commons. They were enduring unbearable suffering and they wanted the freedom to decide when they could end it.

At that point, we asked ourselves the same question. We asked ourselves whether we were going to accept closure if it reflected the will, the values and the interests of Quebecers. Since it was a simple question, and the answer was yes, we believed we were duty bound to do whatever was necessary to have these bills and motions adopted.

Bill C-30 is also important for businesses. It is important for the economic recovery, since it will allow entrepreneurs in our regions to get back on their feet after the pandemic. Obviously, we would have preferred that the democratic process take its normal course but, when it is clear that someone is trying to delay the process by every means possible for reasons that are often purely ideological, in order to please their base or collect funds by plucking at the heartstrings of certain groups of Canadians, we believe that it is our duty to counter these manoeuvres using another parliamentary tool. We believe that, in those circumstances, it is reasonable.

That was the case with Bill C-10. How did we get here? My colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska talked about that earlier. It is true that, at first, when the bill was tabled, we found a lot of holes in it. There were more holes in it than there are in Swiss cheese, like in a brand new paint by numbers. It took six years' preparation to come up with a bill and there was still an enormous amount of work to do.

I do not want to lay blame on anyone, but I think that, from the moment the bill was introduced, the opposition parties were unanimous in thinking that there were too many things missing for it to be acceptable. The industry was happy because a bill was finally being introduced to amend the Broadcasting Act, which had already been obsolete for several years and which was enacted in 1991, at a time when we were recording songs broadcast over the radio on four-track cassettes.

● (1730)

Since we were considerably behind, it was not surprising that the industry applauded the tabling of a bill to review the Broadcasting Act. It should have been reviewed 20 years ago, it should have been reviewed 10 years ago; it should be reviewed on a regular basis.

We soon realized how much work there was to be done. In a way, when a member of the House decides to vote in favour of a bill so that it can be studied in committee, that member is making a commitment to say that certain elements of the bill are not very good and need to be worked on. That work falls to us. It is unfortunate, but we have to do it. We have to improve Bill C-10 because the cultural industry, our media and the field of broadcasting in Canada have drastically changed. Today's broadcasting industry is nothing like what it was in 1991, when the last version of the Broadcasting Act was passed. I was working in radio at the time. When I walk into a radio studio these days, in 2021, I am completely lost and I have to be shown around because I do not know what anything is. Everything is different today, except for the mike, which has not changed much.

When we agree to work on a bill in committee, we are committing to making improvements. That is how we ended up with more than 100 amendments. At first, there were about 120 amendments proposed by the NDP, the Green Party, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois.

Before proposing these amendments, we consulted people. We heard from people who were interested in sharing their concerns with us. A lot of people wanted to talk about the Broadcasting Act, because it affected a huge number of stakeholders, including community radio and television stations, broadcasters, cable companies,

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artists and online companies. A lot of people wanted to share their concerns and remind us to include certain things in the bill.

Independent broadcasters also depend on online companies, as well as conventional broadcasters, such as the traditional cable companies, to broadcast their content. In short, there were a lot of witnesses to listen to. We came to realize that this would be a monumental task. There is a reason there were 120 amendments: because there was a lot of work to do. We did it.

I met with representatives of the cultural industry. We exchanged many messages, emails and calls and held many meetings. These people represent more than 200,000 artists, creators, artisans, authors and other people who earn a living from the cultural industry, which has significant spinoffs. Canada's cultural industry generates billions of dollars in economic spinoffs. That is no trivial matter, and we cannot let an industry like that down. We love culture, the arts, our artists and our distinct culture, but we also like money. This is a profitable industry that does not cost us a fortune. Far from being a millstone dragging us down, we benefit from it. It sets us apart and identifies us. There were 120 amendments, but they were serious amendments. They were important. We worked hard, but then came the events of late April.

Did we do things the best way possible? In hindsight, that is a reasonable question. Was it right to eliminate clause 4.1? Maybe not. Is the result what the Conservatives say it is? It is not.

Bill C-10 contains provisions that clearly protect social media users. As important as it was to protect social media users, it was also important to regulate social media platforms, which play a role in broadcasting and are involved in broadcasting. Social media has an impact on the broadcasting system. YouTube is the largest online music broadcaster in Canada.

We would have had to tell Apple Music that it was going to be regulated, but that YouTube was not because it also has a social media service. That makes no sense. Apple Music would have been right to tell us off, saying that we had done a horrible job and that we needed to go back to the drawing board.

● (1735)

We had to be able to regulate social media for their broadcasting activities, while protecting their users. That is what is clearly stated in the bill, and that is what will come out of the revised Broadcasting Act in the end.

There was never any question of limiting Quebecers' and Canadians' freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is a value that Canadians of all stripes hold dear. Let us not compete to see who loves freedom of speech the most. It is fundamental for us, for Quebecers and for Canadians. Of that there is no doubt.

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What party in the House would have blindly voted for a bill that would actually limit freedom of expression? It does not make sense. It is merely a question of ideology. It is merely an attempt to fan the flames, to offend sensibilities. Perhaps it will pay off, I do not know.

When the problem arose in committee and the question was raised, the Conservatives said that we absolutely had to hear from the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Justice. These ministers had to issue a charter statement. They had to see what was going on. We needed a guarantee from the minister that the bill complied with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and if we were going to do that, we should hear from experts. The Conservatives wanted to invite experts back.

We were wasting time on a bill when we already did not have much time to spare. We wondered what we should do with that. Having reflected on it, I am convinced that what is in the bill will protect freedom of expression and social media users, in other words individuals, people. We decided that if there was any uncertainty, we needed to get to the bottom of it, and we had a duty to do so. It was early May, and we were running out of time, but no matter, we had to get it done, and that is what we did. We heard from the experts that the Conservatives wanted us to invite. We heard from law professors and people who believe that this bill goes against this provision of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and who claim it jeopardizes freedom of expression. I want to listen to all sides before I form an opinion.

However, we also heard from experts such as Pierre Trudel, a professor of law who is renowned across the country. He, too, is a leading authority, and he had a completely different opinion. We heard from Ms. Yale, the chair of the major study that resulted in the Yale report almost a year and a half ago. She also testified and shared her views. Ms. Yale also did not think there was a threat.

There is nothing wrong with expressing doubts and saying that some experts have a certain view. However, at some point, we must respect the democratic process. We listened to everyone and showed good will and good faith. Other experts expressed different views before the committee. Through a vote, the committee decided that we would finally move forward and that there was no threat. The democratic process can come down on either side and we must respect it. Our Conservative colleagues decided to continue filibustering the committee by giving interminable speeches, and we saw things get out of hand.

I was really disappointed by the comments made by the member for Lethbridge in the Lethbridge Herald. She described Quebec artists as being a niche group who are stuck in the 1990s and unable to adapt, so they have to make a living off government grants. I spent 30 years working in the media, in radio and in television, surrounded by artists, being part of their community. If I had had more hair to begin with, I think whatever is left would have fallen out. That took my breath away. I cannot believe that we did not hear a heartfelt apology in the House, either from the leader of the official opposition or from the member herself. I found her comments, which have been denounced by arts organizations, beyond sad and terribly unfortunate.

• (1740)

When we started studying Bill C-10, I decided that I would do exactly what the Bloc Québécois had promised to do during the 2019 election campaign in Quebec. My colleague from Jonquière once told me that if I really wanted to connect with and be attuned to my constituents' realities, I should lace up my shoes, hit the streets and listen to what my constituents want me to support. That is exactly what I did.

I have been in contact with the cultural sector from the beginning, especially in Quebec, but also, by extension, Canada, since the associations that represent the artists and the industry in Quebec also represent the industry across Canada.

We also listened to francophone communities outside Quebec, which were also needing the protections offered by this bill. We listened to them, we moved forward and we proposed amendments to protect francophone and Quebec culture, and most of these amendments were accepted.

We worked hard to improve this bill. As we were approaching the end of the road, or in this case, the end of the session, and we had made some major gains for the cultural sector, we knew that it was not the time to give up and call it a day because there would not be enough time.

This industry suffered during the pandemic. It has been waiting for a bill, a review of the Broadcasting Act, for far too long. Remember what things were like in 1991. We did not have high-speed Internet. We could not always connect. We had to listen to a sound like a fax machine for about seven minutes. When we managed to connect, we could not just download a photo. If we wanted to do that, we had to start the download the night before in order to see the photo in the morning. We were far from streaming music, downloading videos and watching shows online like we do today. The Broadcasting Act has been completely out of touch with reality for a long time.

As I was saying, we do not have much time left to finish working on this bill, which is so important for the cultural industry, the cultural community, broadcasters, independent broadcasters and creators, as well as for the unique identity that we have here with our culture. Whether we are talking about Quebec or English Canada, we are not the same as the United States and there are marked differences between our culture and American culture.

What should we do? Are we going to allow the web giants to rake in billions of dollars when we are not asking them for much? Are we going to say that it does not matter if they do not produce our shows, that it is a free market and that we should let them set up shop here with their billions of dollars and their means of production and let them do what they want? Come on. That is completely ludicrous.

The Yale report mentioned this last year, and it is just as relevant today: We must act quickly. When action is urgently needed, we must do what it takes to get results and achieve our goal.

The Bloc Québécois made an unusual but necessary decision in supporting time allocation for Bill C-10 in committee. It is a rare measure and I hope we will not have to take it again, but it was necessary. We made a commitment to work for Quebec, the cultural community and our media. We are also committed to keeping our culture alive. In Quebec, we have been in the habit of fighting for our culture for quite some time. That is perhaps the difference: We have been rolling up our sleeves for a longer time now. We will not give up the fight.

Contrary to what our Conservative colleagues think, this bill is essential and it is urgent. We owe it to our cultural community, as well as to Quebec and Canadian media.

• (1745)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the member on some aspects of Bill C-10, but what I really want to ask him about is democratic norms and democratic process.

It is fair to take the position that the member does on a bill, and we can have debate about the bill, but what ended up happening, as a result of decisions made by the government as well as by the Bloc, is that we had amendments that were put forward and not read at committee, no opportunity for subamendments, and then a vote on amendments that had not been read. There was no opportunity for further discussion or consultation on the particular implications of individual amendments.

Of course, it takes time at committee, but when we are talking about over a hundred amendments, each of those amendments matters. It matters for artists, it matters for freedoms and it matters for Canadian society as a whole. As someone who works in international human rights and foreign affairs, I just think it sends a terrible message to other countries, to developing democracies, about what democratic decision-making is supposed to look like.

Could the member share his reflections on whether he thinks this is an appropriate way to proceed? It is fine to agree or disagree with the bill, but is this an appropriate way to proceed in a democratic legislature? What message does this send to the rest of the world?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his question and comments.

As I mentioned in my speech earlier, for one thing, the end justifies the means, and for another, desperate times call for desperate measures. Our Conservative colleagues dug their heels in in committee, putting on an appalling show for the world about how democracy works. They filibustered in committee meetings for five weeks. Had they not done so, I do not think we would have had to resort to what I acknowledge is a somewhat extreme solution.

Now that the Liberals have imposed time allocation, we will have to vote for amendments all at once with no opportunity to explain or debate them. That is not what we wanted.

As I explained just now in my speech, there were essential amendments in this bill that should have been voted on and dis-

cussed beforehand. Unfortunately, we did not have time to discuss them. We opted for this solution in response to the filibustering.

To my knowledge, the colleague of the colleague in question rose on a point of order today calling on the Speaker of the House to rule on this situation. We will await his ruling. I must say, however, that I entirely agree on how things transpired at committee. It was unfortunate. Let us just say that it was not plan A, but something needed to be done.

• (1750)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. We agree that it is time to roll up our sleeves to preserve our culture and take care of our artists and artisans. We all agree on that.

I would like my colleague's assessment of the Liberal government's management of this bill, which is so important. Initially, this bill was botched. We are now at the end of a parliamentary session and the government is bullying everyone. It imposed time allocation in committee and not a time allocation of 10 hours, but of five hours. Last week, we agreed to schedule more committee meetings to be able to talk about other amendments and today this government introduced a supermotion to once again speed things up.

Have the Liberals not reached the 25th or 26th hour? If this bill is so important then why did they drop the ball so badly when they were managing the business of the House?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his question.

I want to remain focused on Bill C-10 and I would say that things could have been done far more effectively a long time ago.

If you ask me, there was a bit of foot dragging at several stages in the process. In terms of time allocation, my leader made a proposition on the May 16 edition of *Tout le monde en parle*, which nearly everyone in Quebec saw. The government has been slow to act. If it had accepted the Bloc Québécois's olive branch on May 16, or the day after the Bloc Québécois made its unusual proposal, we might have avoided several of these delays. There may be a domino effect here.

Indeed, Bill C-10 could have benefited from a little more of the government's attention from the beginning.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Drummond on his most courageous and relevant speech.

I support my colleague and all of his efforts throughout this adventure that was Bill C-10. I support all the artists on the ground, and I can say that they all agree that we did an enormous amount of work and that the legislation will probably never be perfect, but that we have come up with something that is really solid.

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I agree with my colleague that things could have gone better, that closure is not a great idea, but that it was the path we had to take because a great number of artists, creators, writers and playwrights are at home, in their offices, in front of their monitors laying the foundation for the creative industry of tomorrow and its entire economy.

In conclusion, I would like my colleague to share with us just one thing that he would like to say to all the fine people involved in this creative industry on the eve of the deadline for Bill C-10.

I want to tell all Canadians and all our colleagues listening that there is no reason to further starve creators, who are being severely impacted by the pandemic and who were impacted even before it started. Then—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who always speaks with tremendous passion and a great deal of emotion for the sector that she is part of, the cultural sector.

She asked me to say just one thing to the cultural sector, and that will be easy. I would just tell them that we will never abandon them.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to a bill that is important to me. It is not so much the bill itself, but what it will do and the sector it will affect. This bill could really change things in the future.

Before speaking about the principles and general thrust of Bill C-10, and as we are officially discussing at this time a supermotion to expedite the business and the course of events in the House, I would like to come back to the question I asked my colleague from Drummond a few minutes ago, that is, how did we get here?

How did we arrive at a bill that nevertheless affects our cultural sovereignty, our ability to produce Quebec and Canadian cultural content, and thus an entire industry representing billions of dollars, thousands of jobs and people affected in every region of Quebec and Canada, such a crucial and important industry that we had failed to address for a very long time?

Not only is the bill behind schedule, but so is the government in its management of government business in the House and in parliamentary committees. We have seen it all with Bill C-10. I have been doing this work for years, but some of these things are unprecedented, including the twists and turns, bad management, communication problems, breaks, questions, notices and many testimonies. I have seen contradictory things and rather odd processes, including this thing done by the Conservatives, which I have rarely seen: systematic filibustering in order to waste the committee's time, including on Conservative amendments. When a member proposes an amendment they usually want to see it passed because they think it will improve the bill. However, the Conservatives had the nerve to filibuster their own amendments. It is rather odd.

Things are coming to a close. Nobody wants an election, but everyone expects one. That means we need to get a move on because we might be on the campaign trail come August or September. That is up to the Liberals.

We could come back and work on the bill. There is a chance that could happen, but all signs point to the Liberals being in a hurry. Now they want to move so fast that they shut down a parliamentary committee. That is just the fourth time in more than 150 years this has happened. This time, they are not limiting debate to 10 hours but to five.

In order to make the best possible use of those five hours, the NDP and other parties agreed to schedule more meetings so the committee could meet more often than originally planned. Last week, instead of meeting twice, the committee met five times, if memory serves. Even so, here come the Liberals with their supermotion to expedite matters once again.

I can only conclude that the government dragged its feet. It said all kinds of things about how important culture and the cultural sector are, but none of that was true. Bill C-10 was full of holes, things were not clear, the Minister of Canadian Heritage himself was often unclear, and the government did not put Bill C-10 on the agenda early enough and often enough for it to make any headway.

It is all well and good to mollify artists and tell them we love them, that we support them, that this is important and the bill must be modernized, but now we have a bunch of amendments at the last minute that we did not have a chance to study, even though some of them would have been relevant and should have been included in Bill C-10.

This is the reality we often face at the end of a parliamentary session. It is too bad. If the Liberal government had been serious about culture and cultural sovereignty, it would have done this long before now, and not just because the Yale report was released in 2018. Bill C-10 could have been given more attention during House proceedings, but the Liberals chose not to do so.

Why did the Broadcasting Act need to be overhauled? It is because, over time and with changes and advances in technology, it has become completely outdated and obsolete.

● (1755)

In my opinion, it is important to remember that the traditional broadcasters are required by the CRTC to contribute to the production of cultural content, whether Quebec or Canadian, in French or in English. We will talk again about the importance of having works, films, and programs in French. The ecosystem of broadcasting content has changed a lot over the past few years.

One of the things the member for Drummond talked about was Internet access. Some people will remember that it was much harder to get online 10 or 15 years ago. Today, our system is completely imbalanced and unfair, which means the cultural sector is hitting a wall. This is putting the cultural sector in jeopardy. Year after year, cable companies are losing subscribers. Why? Because the technology has changed and the traditional broadcasters are being overtaken by digital broadcasters, who are becoming more prominent and taking up more space. That was the case before the pandemic, but the pandemic has shown us that platforms like Netflix, Disney+ and Crave have taken over.

Let me be clear: The big digital broadcasters, social media companies and web giants do not contribute to the collective investment that is needed to create Canadian or Quebec cultural content in French or English. That is the problem. That is what the Conservatives and Liberals have been dragging their feet on for years. The Broadcasting Act should have been amended a long time ago.

The NDP is obviously in favour of making new players contribute. They are not so new anymore, but they are big. Traditional broadcasters contribute money to a fund to create Quebec and Canadian cultural content, but that fund is getting smaller and smaller. These new digital players need to contribute so that the industry gets more resources to create new works that will tell our stories, the stories of what is happening in our communities, cities, regions and our villages.

This is so important to the NDP that it was one of the issues we campaigned. I will read an excerpt from our 2019 platform:

Most Canadians now get their news from Facebook, and Netflix is the largest broadcaster in the country - but these web giants don't pay the same taxes or contribute to funding Canadian content in the same way that traditional media do. Canadian film, television, and media is up against a tidal wave of well-funded American content - and the Liberals have refused to take action to level the playing field [this notion is very important].

That's why...we will step up to make sure that Netflix, Facebook, Google, and other digital media companies play by the same rules as Canadian broadcasters. That means paying taxes [which is not in Bill C-10. It is in the budget, but it seems we will have to wait until next year], supporting Canadian content in both official languages, and taking responsibility for what appears on their platforms, just like other media outlets....

New Democrats will make sure that Canadian talent can thrive on both digital and traditional platforms - here at home and around the world. We think that artists should be able to earn a decent living from their art, and that government has an important role to play in making sure that a diversity of Canadian voices tell our stories.

As members can see, we already knew that the act had to be modernized. Thirty years after it was passed, the act is outdated.

It is true that there is a real and well-founded appetite for such a long-awaited change in the cultural sector, whether it is television, film or music. YouTube is the platform most used for music, so it is really important to include social media platforms like YouTube on the list of entities that can be monitored and regulated.

• (1800)

However, we should not be regulating users, citizens who post their own videos on this platform. We need to target the professional use of this platform for commercial purposes.

I will come back to the questions that arose in the course of the Bill C-10 saga. To ensure the longevity of our cultural ecosystem,

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the NDP was obviously prepared to work in good faith to improve and enhance the bill, based on the premise that the old existing act had outlived its usefulness because it is jeopardizing this industry, our capabilities and some jobs.

What was the NDP looking for, exactly? We wanted a broadcasting system that remains essentially Canadian, with Quebec and Canadian ownership. We wanted Quebec and Canadian productions that are easily identifiable and accessible. We wanted local shows and content. That is something that we examined very closely.

We also wanted a broadcasting system that clearly recognizes the importance of the French language in this ecosystem. Unfortunately, the Liberal government had a hard time signing an agreement with Netflix a few years ago. We wanted to prevent that sort of thing from happening again, because we never got any real guarantees about the percentage of French-language content that would be produced under the agreement between the Liberals and Netflix.

We also wanted an equitable system without lowering our standards. Just because Canada is calling on web giants and digital broadcasters to participate financially should not mean that traditional broadcasters get a free pass or we will be no further ahead in terms of increased revenues for our artists and cultural production.

We wanted to ensure that there were indigenous language productions for indigenous peoples and for first nations. That was one thing we were watching for and wanted to find in Bill C-10. Those are the principles that guided us in this work.

Now we are at the end of the process with a flawed and yet well-intentioned bill. This may create a dilemma for us as members and parliamentarians. We wanted to take our time to do the work properly, plug the holes and ensure that the bill could not be challenged in court.

The government has to accept a lot of responsibility for the misunderstandings and legitimate concerns people had about their freedom of expression, a topic I will now get into.

Is freedom of expression being threatened? There was much talk of that, many people reacted, many people called and wrote in and there were articles and editorials on the topic. Experts are divided on the issue, but one group is smaller than the other. The member for Drummond talked about that earlier. In Quebec, we just have to look at Pierre Trudel and Monique Simard, who are strong voices and feel very strongly about this.

It is also important to know that there are already guarantees in three provisions in the act, in sections 2, 35 and 46, that protect citizens' and ordinary users' capacity to publish and broadcast content on social media.

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● (1805)

Obviously, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms still exists. We asked the Minister of Justice for a charter statement on two occasions, first before and then again after the removal of proposed section 4.1. In both cases, we were told that the bill was consistent with the charter.

To make sure that this important issue is properly dealt with and that we have all the possible guarantees, the NDP is also asking the government for a Supreme Court reference. That way, we would ensure our citizens' rights to freedom of expression are protected in the bill.

There are the sections of the bill, the overwhelming expert opinion and the two charter statements from the Minister of Justice. In addition, we are asking for a Supreme Court reference, to make sure that users cannot be regulated by the CRTC. That is very important: The CRTC will regulate broadcasting companies, not individuals.

I believe a member also mentioned it, but if I thought there was any possibility that my children or teenagers would be targeted by the CRTC or restricted in their freedom of expression on social media and online, I would be greatly concerned and I would not let that happen.

Why is it so important to take care of the cultural industry, our artists and our artisans? We may want to do it for economic reasons because this industry represents thousands of jobs and these sectors generally work well. Things were harder during the pandemic and it is more difficult for the cultural industry to get out of the crisis. What is more, things are not consistent across the cultural industry. Some sectors are doing well, while others are struggling. I am thinking of festivals, all the performing arts, the theatres and concerts. These sectors will need a little more time to get back on their feet. With regard to television and movies, activities continued, but we need to ensure that our system is sustainable so that we are able to continue creating our television shows and movies, telling our stories and hiring our local creators, artisans and technicians. There is therefore an economic argument because the cultural industry is an important economic driver.

However, the cultural sector is about more than just economics. It also brings us together as a society. It forges an identity, a vision of the world, and it also brings elements of beauty, tenderness and humanity into our lives. That is what makes the cultural sector different from any other economic sector. It changes who we are as human beings and how we see the world. The art that is produced says a lot about a society, whether we experience it through television, dance, paintings, performances, books or poems. Culture can change the world.

Allow me to read an excerpt of a poem written by Jacques Prévert.

The sun shines for all mankind, except of course for prisoners and miners,
and also for
those who scale the fish
those who eat the spoiled meat
those who turn out hairpin after hairpin
those who blow the glass bottles that others will drink from
those who slice their bread with pocketknives

those who vacation at their workbenches or their desks
those who never quite know what to say
those who milk your cows yet who never drink their milk
those you won't find anesthetized at the dentist's
those who cough out their lungs in the subway
those who down in various holes turn out the pens with which others
in the open air will write something to the effect that everything turns out for
the best
those who have too much to even begin to put into words
those whose labors are never over
those who haven't labors
those who look for labors
those who aren't looking for labors...
those who simply rot
those who enjoy the luxury of eating
those who travel beneath your wheels
those who stare at the Seine flowing by
those whom you hire, to whom you express your deepest thanks, whom you
are charitable toward, whom you deprive, whom you manipulate, whom you
step on, whom you crush
those from whom even fingerprints are taken...
those who scatter salt on the snow in all directions in order to collect a ridiculous salary
those whose life expectancy is a lot shorter than yours is
those who've never yet knelt down to pick up a dropped hairpin
those who die of boredom on a Sunday afternoon because they see Monday
morning coming
and also Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday
and Saturday too
and the next Sunday afternoon as well.

● (1815)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many years we have been waiting to modernize the legislation. This act would do a multitude of things, but it would ultimately protect the interests of local artists. At the end of the day, it is the best thing for our identity, for consumers and so forth.

The Conservatives seem to be focused on freedom of speech, which really has nothing to do with it. Their argument is completely bogus. Could my colleague provide his thoughts on why the Conservative Party members seem to be basing their decision on this legislation somehow limiting freedom of speech? Also, if it was up to the Conservatives, does he believe that this legislation would even pass?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his comment and question.

The Conservatives will have to speak for themselves. People have raised legitimate questions. As I said earlier, when the issue is freedom of expression, taking our time, doing the work, checking, listening, talking to experts and getting opinions from the right people is the right thing to do.

However, I have to say that the Minister of Canadian Heritage did such a poor job of justifying and explaining his Bill C-10 that the Conservatives saw a political weakness they could exploit. They jumped at the chance, hoping to score political points by occasionally manipulating the truth and the facts a little bit. The reason they were so aggressive is that the Liberals were so weak.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Quebec was on the committee when this bill was discussed, along with another member from the NDP: the member for Edmonton Strathcona.

This is an important bill. The member mentioned in his speech that there was good intention behind it. As legislators in this country, we all have good intentions, but this is the worst bill that I have seen in six years. I am embarrassed to put my name on the committee report when it is presented to the House. I have been a broadcaster for over 40 years. This bill is despicable, and the gag order put in by the Bloc and the Liberals is utterly ridiculous. We have seen this time and again. This bill should have been debated for over a year. The Conservatives put forward 40 amendments and there was no discussion. There were just the names of the amendments. There was never a discussion on them.

Could the hon. member from Quebec comment on 40 amendments that were never even talked about in committee?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comment and question.

I feel some of his frustration. The government handled the whole thing very poorly. I completely agree with his assertion that we should have spent the past year debating this bill. It is so important that the Liberals should have put it on the agenda much sooner, which would have enabled us to be much more efficient and systematic in our work on this bill.

However, I do not share my colleague's concerns right now. We cannot just ignore the fact that new digital broadcasters are excluded from Canada's and Quebec's cultural content production ecosystem. This is a step forward that takes us in the right direction as a society.

Even so, I think it is a terrible shame that 40 amendments got left on the table because the Liberals were unable to manage their agenda.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will express a concern similar to the one just raised by my colleague, who has worked tremendously hard fighting for the arts and artists in Quebec and throughout the country. I share his concerns about how the current government prorogued Parliament and scheduled things poorly. Now we are at the eleventh hour and having to debate things, which is placing us in a very bad situation.

In spite of that, I am wondering this: Could the member expand on the importance of having the bill amend the act moving forward? How may it help artists going forward?

• (1820)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very relevant comment and question.

Web giants do not pay tax in Canada, despite the Liberals' promises. We are told they will as of January, but we shall see. For

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the time being, they do not pay. Furthermore, they do not contribute to the production of content for television or film, nor to the music industry, which is very important. Having new players at the table and including them in the system so they do contribute would increase our ability to invest in the cultural sector, which will enable us to create and maintain good jobs and support homegrown creators. I think that is a priority.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with almost everything the member had to say.

I found it quite refreshing to hear the member's assessment of what the Conservatives are up to. He is basically saying that, given how this bill was rolled out, although we might disagree with the minister's approach to it, the Conservatives saw an opportunity to exploit it for political gain.

As I heard the member say that, I could not help but sit here and wonder if that is what we are here for. Is that the role of the opposition? Is the role of the opposition to look for the political opportunity to exploit a weakness so it can gain power? Is it not the role of the opposition to genuinely try to make legislation better for Canadians?

If we agree with the member's assessment of it, could he comment on whether that is the right way for an opposition to be functioning?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Yes, it is a shame to see these political games, but the reality here is that we have to win our seats and our ridings through elections. Unfortunately, there can be a right way to do it and a wrong way to do it.

Historically, the Conservatives have never been big supporters of the cultural industry or our artists. The cuts made by Stephen Harper's Conservative government in the mid-2000s speak volumes about the Conservative vision of free markets and their laissez-faire attitude towards foreign companies. It is a vision that sees our artists as millionaires who then get no help. We know very well that in small markets like Quebec or Canada, if there are no mechanisms like the Canada Media Fund, it is extremely difficult to protect one's culture, one's cultural sovereignty, and to have cultural content made by local people.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have just one question for my NDP colleague, with whom I once served on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

When a problem crops up, people often argue and point fingers. Earlier I heard the Liberal member try to blame the Conservatives, but he is forgetting to consider the source of the problem. If the problem had been addressed at its source, we would not be seeing any of these further problems.

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Does my colleague agree with my interpretation? If the Minister of Canadian Heritage had done his job from the beginning and taken his time introducing this bill, would we be in this position today?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, that is a bit of a softball question. I see exactly where my colleague is going with this. It is a fair question.

The minister mismanaged the bill and explained it poorly. He did not take the time to make the bill watertight. Once the genie of doubt is out of the bottle, it is very difficult to put him back in. This is why the NDP agreed to pause the committee to bring in the heritage and justice ministers and to ask for a second opinion from the Department of Justice.

Yes, the minister himself bears a lot of the responsibility for all of the mixed messages and disasters surrounding Bill C-10 so far, with the gag orders and today's supermotion.

• (1825)

[English]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Last week culminated in a devastating assault on democracy as MPs were forced to vote on amendments that were not made public and vote on sections of the bill without any discussion or debate. There was zero openness and zero accountability, and it was absolutely wrong.

How did we get there? Earlier in the spring the Liberals brought forward an amendment to their own bill, which removed a section that originally protected the content that individuals would post online. When that section was removed, of course it caused disarray at committee and a great discussion ensued.

That was the case because Canadians deserve to be protected. They deserve to have their voices contended for and their freedoms established. When that part of the bill was taken out, of course the Conservatives went to bat. The Liberals did not really like that very much, so they moved something called time allocation in the House of Commons, which limited debate at committee to five hours.

This meant that hundreds of pages of material was only given five hours of consideration, after which time members of the committee were forced to vote on the bill, including its amendments and subamendments. Again, those were not made public and no discussion was allowed.

It was not exactly democracy in its finest state. It was a sham, and not how good legislation is meant to be created in Canada. This is not democracy.

Once again, the bill is now in the House. Although the Liberals have not moved time allocation, they have moved to have our debating time restricted again.

From here the bill will go to the Senate where it will be discussed further. My genuine hope is that the Senate will have the opportunity to examine this bill and hear from witnesses. In particular, it is my hope that the witnesses it brings forward include creators from digital first platforms because those individuals have been left

out of the conversation despite being impacted to the greatest extent.

Let me back up and explain what this bill does for a moment. There are two things. The first is, as the government argues, it levels the playing field between large streaming companies and traditional broadcasters. The second thing this bill does in fact do, however, is censor the content we place online.

With regard to levelling the playing field, the minister claims this is about getting money from web giants, but if he is concerned about GST being paid, that is already taken care of because there is already an initiative starting in July that will require companies, such as Disney+, Netflix, Spotify, Crave, etc., to start paying GST, which takes care of levelling the playing field.

However, Bill C-10 goes far beyond just levelling the playing field. It is backed up by many lobby groups that are pushing for a 30% Canadian programming expenditure requirement as a share of revenue per year. What this will do is not simply increase the cost to these large streaming companies, it will actually pass that cost down to consumers. According to experts, costs are actually expected to rise by about 50%.

Canadians already pay some of the highest rates in the world, so with Bill C-10, they can expect to be taxed even more. This of course will have a huge impact on them with respect to money coming out of their wallets. Furthermore, the bill will impact the content Canadians can post and access, which brings me to my second point on censorship.

When I talk about censorship, I talk about the government getting involved with respect to what one can and cannot see and post online. I am talking about the government putting an Internet czar in place.

Peter Menzies, the former CRTC vice-chair, stated Bill C-10, “doesn’t just infringe on free expression, it constitutes a full-blown assault upon it and, through it, the foundations of democracy.” That deserves consideration. It is quite the statement.

Bill C-10 is in fact a direct attack on section 2(b) of our charter. Under this section, Canadians have the right to speak and to be heard. Much of that speaking takes place within our new form of the public square, the Internet.

• (1830)

The bill before us would infringe upon the ability Canadians have to post online and to express themselves freely. Furthermore, the bill would infringe upon the rights that viewers have to access that content online, which means that the right to speak and the right to be heard will be infringed upon if the bill passes.

Let us talk about viewers for a moment. Viewers go online in order to access the content they want. They go on YouTube perhaps looking for a video on how to fix a bicycle chain, or they may want to look up information having to do with the war of 1812. They are looking for content that is going to fit their needs.

However, if the bill is passed, they would go on YouTube, and the government would determine what that need might be. The government would dictate the type of material that they would be able to access. The government would dictate this based on how “Canadian” the material is.

The government would curate what we can and cannot see by bumping things up or down in the queue, which means that the content a viewer really needs to access might be pushed back to page 27 of a YouTube search whereas, normally, right now, according to the existing algorithms, that content would probably be found on page one. The government would actually infringe upon a viewer's ability and right to access that information, because it is going to curate and determine that, no, a viewer does not want what is on page 27, but rather what the government is putting on page one. It wrong. It is dictatorial. It is anti-democratic.

Canadians know what they like. They know what they want to watch, and they know how to find it. Platforms such as YouTube are curated in such a way as to point people to more of the content they desire. When a viewer searches for content, YouTube gives it, and then it might suggest more that is similar to it. However, that would not be the case going forward. Instead, the government would steer viewers in the direction that the government wants them to go, and it will do it through the power of its Internet czar.

I will talk about creators for a moment. They are amazing. In Canada, we are punching above our weight in terms of what creators are able to produce, and I am talking about individuals who are using non-traditional platforms in order to gain an audience. They share their talent, skill and ability with the world. Ninety per cent of watch time of Canadian content comes from viewers outside of Canada. That is amazing.

I think about Justin Bieber, and about how much popularity he has gained on the world stage. He started out on YouTube, a non-traditional platform. However, under Bill C-10, Justin Bieber probably would not have risen to the top, because the algorithms that the government would impose through its Internet czar would relegate him to the bottom. Why? Well, it is because his content just would not be Canadian enough to make the cut. Again, it is wrong.

Let us also talk about diversity. This government loves to celebrate diversity, but let us talk about the indigenous digital first creators or those who are members of minority groups. Instead of being able to make a name for themselves and follow the protocols that are already in existence, they would come under government scrutiny and, again, the Internet czar would determine whether or not their content can be accessed.

Now, members might ask who the Internet czar is. It is none other than the CRTC, which is the regulatory arm of the government. Who makes up the CRTC? I can tell members that the leadership of the CRTC is made up of six white men. It would be six white men who would be determining what type of content is Canadian and what content is not.

They would be determining whether or not indigenous first creators can be accessed or not. They would be determining whether visible minority content can be accessed or not. Six white men would be making those decisions on behalf of those individuals

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who are putting their content out online and on behalf of Canadians who wish to access that content.

I have not seen legislation this dictatorial since my time of first being elected in 2015. It is wrong and anti-democratic, and it is altogether harmful, not only to creators, but also to the millions of viewers who use platforms such as YouTube in order to access information and engage in the public square online.

It is wrong, and I would ask for Bill C-10 to be rescinded, at the bare minimum. When it gets to the Senate, I ask that, please do the due diligence; please research well; and please hear from witnesses who have not yet been heard from, namely the artists.

• (1835)

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not have as deep of experience as the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood does in media, but in my previous life I debated on ethnic TV and in the media. I actually championed the right for our Bloc Québécois members to be able to debate and articulate why Quebec should be independent, although, of course, I am a federalist.

I would like to hear from the member for Lethbridge what kind of control there could be, should any other province campaign to be independent because, obviously, then it would not be Canadian content.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, at the heart of the issue is censorship. It is the government determining what we can access online and what we cannot access, and what creators can post online and what they cannot post online. For the government to determine this does in fact mean it could swing things in its favour in curating that content, which is wrong. It should be left up to Canadians.

The Internet is this amazing free space where we are supposed to be able to access information, where we are supposed to be able to exchange ideas and where we are supposed to be able to engage in debate. For the government to dictate what can or cannot happen within that public space is a breach of section 2(b) of the charter. It is absolutely wrong and it is harmful.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for the member. I would like to quote from a recent article in Canadian news, where screenwriter and actor Sugith Varughese said, “I’ve gone before the committees in Ottawa speaking on behalf of the writers and the sneering contempt that the Conservative Party members have is insulting.”

In light of this comment and the comment the member made on several occasions, more recently in a local newspaper in her riding but in the House as well, I would like to ask her if her comments in the House and this recent news article could be considered as contempt as well and, if so, if she would like to apologize in the House for having made those comments on numerous occasions.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, I am so thankful the minister is here today, because unfortunately he has not taken time to listen to digital first creators, but I would like to speak on their behalf.

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Ms. Morghan Fortier is the CEO of Skyship Entertainment, an award-winning entertainment company owned and operated in Canada. It is one of Canada's top two YouTube creators. I do hope the minister will stay with me and actually hear this comment rather than leave.

Ms. Fortier wrote, “Despite our prominence we have been given zero opportunity to participate in any discussions regarding this legislation, and neither have any of our digital content contemporaries.” She is the first or second-largest YouTube creator, depending on the day, and she and her company were not consulted by the government. She goes on to say to the minister, so, again, I hope he is listening, “You have an opportunity to raise our traditional media companies to the standard of success our digital producers are experiencing. Instead you are choosing to antique digital companies. This is a step back, a step inward, and a step in the wrong direction.”

I hope the minister takes these words to heart.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague from Lethbridge speak for about 10 minutes. I will give her a chance. We can talk about content, but I do not think we will ever agree. As the old saying goes, if a lie is repeated often enough, people start to believe it. However, that is not what I want to talk about.

I want to talk about what she said in an interview she gave to the Lethbridge Herald, in the city she was elected to represent. Her comments were insulting and offensive to people in the cultural industry, who asked the member to apologize, as we have also asked her to do here in the House.

I am reaching out to the member for Lethbridge and giving her the opportunity to apologize to the members of the Quebec and Canadian cultural community for the derogatory comments she made about them.

• (1840)

[English]

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, again, I would present to the House, and I am so glad the member is listening, that there are a lot of deaf ears in this place and, for whatever reason, a refusal to listen to digital first creators. I am uncertain as to why that is the case, why this cohort has been ignored, has been erased, has had its voice squelched.

Why are we not listening to these individuals who are making a go for themselves on non-traditional platforms? Why are they being punished through Bill C-10 rather than being celebrated for the tremendous contributions they make to Canadian culture? It is as if we are pitting one group of artists against the other, and it is wrong. It is wrong for the government and it is wrong for the minister.

[Translation]

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to consideration of Government Business No. 10, I wish to give notice that 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.

The Deputy Speaker: The House acknowledges the notice that was given.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

[English]

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to the motion at hand, which concerns the government's desire to force through the disastrous bill, Bill C-10, to modernize the Broadcasting Act.

I will step back 40-plus years, when a young Kevin Waugh got into the broadcasting business. There were a lot of opportunities from coast to coast. I started as a midnight disc jockey in Yorkton. I came to Saskatoon. I worked at a radio station and did the summer news. Then I went over to Melfort to do farm news, which I knew very little about. Then I eventually went into sports and news. I was then hired at CTV Saskatoon where I spent nearly 40 years of my broadcasting career.

When the bill was introduced, I jumped at the chance to get involved. The broadcasting business has been talking about this for the last 30 years. We talked about the CRTC, broadcasters, stations going dark, layoffs in the industry. We talked about this for decades and it finally culminated in about the last five years. All of a sudden stations were going dark. Radio, TV, newspapers, everything in the business was turned upside down.

It was interesting in what the Canadian heritage minister said a couple of moments ago when he said that they missed something when they introduced the bill in 1990. For the minister, when we look back at the bill if it does get passed, we will look at you and your ministry and say a lot has been missed.

The Deputy Speaker: I ask the hon. member to direct his speech to the Chair and avoid those “you” and “your” references. I am sure he can do that as a capable broadcaster, as he has demonstrated.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I should know better, and so should the Minister of Canadian Heritage. He made the statement that they made one mistake back in 1990 or 1991 when there was no Internet, and now 30 years later we have this bill. It is garbage, really. I talked for two full days. We sat the last two days in committee and we did nothing. The committee chair asked if an amendment should pass but no one knew what it was. We did, but we could not share it with people, and people were watching on the Internet.

It is interesting that the minister would quote 1990, because in my era, people will quote 2021, the worst bill that ever came out of the House of Commons, Bill C-10.

I am going to highlight how really deeply disappointed I am in the Bloc members. They went along with the government. It has been talked about in committee, and we did get along. Then, it went off the rails on that Friday when 4.1 was eliminated. It also went off the rails when the minister himself could not articulate the bill on CTV on a Sunday morning with Evan Solomon. He could not articulate his own bill on national TV in a 15-minute interview. If the minister could not articulate it, how could we articulate it?

It was one of the darkest moments of Bill C-10, because the next day the Liberals had to step it back. All the things the minister said Sunday morning were taken back Monday by the government. However, I am disappointed today with the Bloc members because they put a gag on this.

This bill is 30 years overdue. We have talked about that in the House, but it is a huge bill going forward. However, it is not a good bill, and everybody has talked about that in the last two hours. We are going to pass a flawed bill, then what happens? Who did we miss? Who could we have been helped with decent legislation? Some groups out there today are really going to be affected by the bill if and when it gets passed.

We cannot even talk about it properly in this place, and that hurts. As broadcaster for over 40 years, we all had consultations with conventional broadcasters and creators. We all knew the Internet was a big juggernaut, and we have seen it. However, we did not do our due diligence in committee, and we are not doing our due diligence today in the House of Commons, which is sad. When I look at my broadcasting career, today, half of the people are now laid off, and we have not helped them at all with this bill.

I did my consultations, and Bell, Rogers, Corus, Shaw, radio stations are all affected. We buy one radio station, we try to buy another and then we do satellite radio. All that means is that there are fewer people being employed. We really did not peel the onion on this bill, and now it is the worst piece of legislation I have seen in six years.

As I said before in a question to the NDP, I did not want to put my name on this in committee and I do not want it on the bill when it does come out of the House of Commons. I am embarrassed with the bill. I am embarrassed, because I spent 40 years broadcasting, and now I cannot talk about something that my union members want me to talk about. They are losing their jobs every day, and we never talked about that. We got mired in the weeds, if one so calls it, about free speech. We got tangled up in creators. Quebec got tangled up in musicians and actors.

We have had 14 months of hell with COVID. We understand the issues Quebec is having. It is no different than Edmonton—Strathcona or Saskatoon—Grasswood. We also have musicians. We also have actors. We also have people who are starving from day to day, because they cannot perform. That happens.

Here we are with Bill C-10. As I have said time and time again, it was the government's decision to remove 4.1, and then we went at it. The Liberals claimed 2.1 was the key to success over 4.1. That remains to be seen.

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• (1845)

We all know, because we had the Minister of Justice at committee, that this bill is going to be challenged in the Supreme Court. Boy have we done our job. All we have done is taken a useless piece of legislation and given it to someone else to determine. Boy have I done my job. All of us should be ashamed of this bill, including the Minister of Canadian Heritage. That is where it starts. He should be embarrassed by this and the gag order from the Bloc to support it.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Lethbridge:

that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the words “notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practices of the House” and substituting the following:

Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be referred back to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for the purpose of reconsidering all its clauses with a view to protect individual users' content from being subject to broad and vague government powers to regulate their use of the internet, including on apps and social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook.

I never did have a chance to talk about the CRTC, so that will be for another day.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague, who was getting all worked up because the Bloc Québécois voted in favour of the government's time allocation motion. I am still shocked to see the Conservative members, particularly those from Quebec, ignoring the consensus.

In Quebec, most of the cultural and broadcasting industries are in favour of the bill. The only areas that are expressing reservations are in western Canada. I would like my colleague to tell me whether the problem we are seeing today is ideological and whether it shows that western Canada and Quebec are unable to come together on the same issue.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, this is a Canadian issue; this is not a Quebec issue. I can say to the hon. member from the Bloc that we talked to Mr. Péladeau, who owns several stations and media outlets in Quebec, and he is as disturbed about Bill C-10 as anyone in Quebec.

The member may have talked to certain groups that like this bill because they want the money to roll out right away, but this is a Canadian issue. Bill C-10 is disastrous. There are as many people in the province of Quebec who do not like this bill as there are in my own province of Saskatchewan.

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• (1855)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is someone who I worked with at the heritage committee and someone who I honestly believe is trying to get us a piece of broadcasting legislation that will help our broadcasters. That said, this is not the way I see all of the members of the Conservative Party, some of whom did filibuster. It could be why we did not see the member filibuster at committee.

The job is to get a good piece of legislation to modernize our Broadcasting Act. However, the member knows that I brought forward a motion to continue to work on this into the summer. He can pretend, like his colleague from Quebec, that he did not know, but he knows that I brought it forward to continue the work to make this bill the very best it could be. He voted against it. I am wondering why that is the case.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for all the work she has done on this bill. I am interested to find out if the NDP is going to support the Bloc and the Liberals on this gag bill, because that is what we are debating here tonight with the motion.

As far as the summers are concerned, I was not the only one who said no. The Liberals have mismanaged every committee this spring, as we have seen. It is not only the heritage committee. We can look at the national defence committee and the ethics committee too, which the Liberals have filibustered themselves. It is not really fair to point out the heritage committee as the one that should meet when others have been filibustered.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today from the opposite side of the aisle because although we are all here virtually, physically there is no one on the Liberal side. I am very happy to be here on the government side getting ready to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows full well that she cannot refer to individuals, nor to whether members of parties are here or not, even if she does not mention them by name.

I will let the member continue.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, everyone who is here virtually or physically is here, and I am very happy to state that. I am also really happy to be here physically on the government side to take this place.

My colleague, the Conservative member, has done such a fantastic job talking about Bill C-10 and what we can do to ensure that two things happen: that Canadian content is protected and that we have freedom of speech, with the ability to express ourselves online.

Can my colleague from Saskatchewan tell Canadians how we can protect both Canadian content and freedom of speech?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I would say to the House leader that freedom of speech is big in this country. It is democratic and it is fundamental to why we exist. We have seen some awful incidents in Canada in the last month and a half that show there is a lot of hate speech we need to talk about. We know as Canadians that it is not acceptable. On both sides of the House we know that.

I want to thank the hon. member for bringing this up, because what the Broadcasting Act should have looked at was conventional broadcasting and the Internet. We did neither.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be joining the debate on this bill once again, at a different stage. I am pleased that my colleague from Saskatoon—Grasswood has moved an amendment, so I am going to speak directly to it. It is about sending Bill C-10 back to committee.

Members know that he has had a 40-year career in broadcasting, which is probably longer than that of any other member in our caucus. We actually featured him in something called “member spotlight” at a caucus meeting, noting his 40-year career using different clips from different videos of his time in sports broadcasting and with CTV as well.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Saskatoon—University, another one of our colleagues from Saskatchewan who will be adding to this debate.

I first spoke to this bill on February 5. I warned Canadians then that the contents of the bill were going to attack free speech, were calling into question the difference between users and programming, and were trying to jam the Internet age into a broadcasting act that was meant for before the 1990s, for a totally different time before Internet, Wi-Fi, cellphones and everything else.

At the time, I brought up the example of content creators in my riding. A few of them run YouTube channels. They run very successful businesses. Since I am splitting my time with a member from Saskatchewan and the member who spoke before me is from Saskatchewan as well, I want to bring up one of my favourite Instagram TV shows. It is called *Leroy and Leroy*. I hope the members from Saskatchewan know these two. There is always something to do, and indeed there is. It is a fantastic online content.

One of the latest very funny videos has a sign in the middle of what seems to me like nowhere, and I apologize to all the members from the Saskatchewan caucus for saying this. It is a parking sign in the middle of nowhere, and these two gentlemen turn around and show us that there is nothing there. It is unclear why there is a sign that allows people to park. I assume they can park if they want to.

They are content creators, and they will fall within the ambit of Bill C-10 and its changes to the Broadcasting Act. All of their programming will. It is not them as users, but them as programming providers, as if they were the CBC, as if they were a show like *Kim's Convenience* or one equivalent to it. They are incredibly funny comedians. It is great content they are producing.

Every expert I have heard, including those from OpenMedia, Michael Geist, Peter Menzies and other former commissioners, has said the exact same thing: YouTube creators, people on IGTV and all others online who are running shops, creating content and trying to get noticed by perhaps one of the large broadcasters are going to fall within the ambit of this legislation. I warned Canadians on February 5 that this was going to happen, and now it is happening.

The minister completely botched the sale job on this legislation, from the time it was before the committee to the time it got to the committee. The member who spoke before me spoke about the fact that he was unable to explain in 15 minutes, on a national TV broadcast, what the bill was about because the bill is all over the place. As I said, the bill tries to jam together the Internet era, the different content creators and the total democracy that now exists. Anybody can create content and anybody can provide it. The middle man is gone now. Anybody can go out there and entertain others, make music for others, give acting classes or provide a how-to for fixing a Jeep. Everything is out there. However, now all of it will perhaps fall within the ambit of this piece of legislation.

We have gotten to the point now where the government is trying to ram it through the House of Commons before the June sitting days are done, because it has recognized that it has botched the management of the House calendar as well. This is entirely the Liberals' fault. There was no reason to rush this through. If they did not like the fact that members of Parliament wanted to provide amendments and hear from more witnesses at the committee, they should have allocated more time. The Liberals should have run the calendar appropriately to avoid situations like the one today. Now they find themselves trying to ram the bill through using undemocratic measures, hoisting it out of committee to ram it through half finished and sending it over to the Senate side. I shudder to think what senators will think of this bill, incomplete as it is.

There is a great Yiddish proverb for this, and members will know that I find Yiddish a charming language and use it very often. It goes, "From fortune to misfortune is but a step; from misfortune to fortune is a long way." In the case of the minister, every time he has spoken to the bill he has further confused Canadians or made them fear even more for their liberty of expression and for their ability to communicate with others freely and post their opinions and thoughts online without having the government potentially interfere with them through the CRTC.

• (1900)

It is an open question how the CRTC is going to apply and use these powers. It is that uncertainty that is driving so much fear and so much public attention to this bill. This is one of the bills on which I have received the most emails and correspondence and phone calls in my five and a half years in Parliament now.

The member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, who spoke before me, said this was the worst piece of legislation he has ever worked on. I disagree with him. There is a lot of competition for that title coming from the government side, so I am going to disagree with him.

The great misfortune of the minister is that he has been trying to sell a bill that does not match with his words. He has been talking about anti-hate speech legislation. He has been talking about taxing the big web giants and online content providers. As the member for

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Lethbridge, who spoke before me, mentioned, that is already covered. That is already coming in July. There is already legislation in the books. There is new legislation the minister is going to add, so he keeps confusing the issue, much to his own misfortune, and it is going to affect the fortunes of Canadians. It is going to affect small-time content creators like the creators of *Leroy and Leroy*, whom I mentioned, and budding comedians, musicians and artists out there who are just trying to provide a service and trying to advertise for themselves using social media platforms.

It is really unfortunate that we find ourselves in a situation now, in the end days of the session in June, where the government feels the urge to just ram this through, push it through as fast as it can with as few eyes as possible on it.

I am just aghast that the Bloc is helping the Liberals along, that the Bloc is helping the most centralizing, free-spending, abusing-of-federal-spending-power government there is and has been in the last 40 years. It is worse than the Chrétien government and worse than the Martin government in its centralization of power in Ottawa. The Bloc is supporting them.

• (1905)

[Translation]

I will repeat that.

It is shameful to see that the Bloc Québécois supports putting an end to the debate on Bill C-10, forcing a vote and sending the bill to the Senate. The Bloc is helping the most centralizing government we have had in the past 30 or 40 years, one that is worse than the Chrétien and Martin governments.

[English]

It is unbelievable. The separatists are helping the Liberals. I just cannot believe that we were brought to this situation, under the guise of getting through a piece of legislation that is so defective in its content.

I have always been a believer, and I have said it many times in this House, that when the government gets it wrong and it cannot be fixed at committee, we should just send it back and make the government redo the work. There is no harm in having the justice department and the heritage department sit down once again and draft a piece of legislation that this House could support. They could just send it back. There are thousands of civil servants whose sole job is to pre-draft legislation based on stakeholder consultation, based on the feedback that they are supposed to get. That is what they exist to do. Many of them are still working from home, so they could take on this task and bring it back in the fall session. Of course, if we do not have a fall session, they will not have it. Perhaps the government is thinking of toppling itself and ensuring that it can run in an election on the free-spending budget that it had in 2021.

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However, now we find ourselves again in a situation where, in the span of just a few days, we are going to rush a bill through to the Senate that is incomplete, that would attack freedom of speech and that would not protect content creators. It would protect them as users, but it would not protect any of their content. What is the point of saying “I have free speech” if I cannot say anything online lest I anger the CRTC, lest I anger people? I do not know who they are. I do not know what rules they create. The very basis of our democracy is supposed to be that we know what the rules are so we can abide by them. We do not know what the rules will be. We do not know what the CRTC will like. I truly hope, if future CRTC commissioners are listening, that they will spare *Leroy and Leroy*.

This is a great amendment from my colleague. We have to vote for the amendment and against Bill C-10.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have three questions for the member.

First, is it not true that the very day the Yale report was tabled, the Leader of the Opposition said that he would “throw it in the trash”, without even having a chance to read it?

Second, is it not also true that almost the minute Bill C-10 was tabled, the Conservative Party of Canada said it did not want this bill and it was going to vote it down?

Third, is it not true that the reason there is some controversy is that the Conservative Party created it by fundraising? No one else in this House did that, but you created a controversy, you fundraised on it, and now it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

• (1910)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. minister that he is to address all questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, is it not true that the minister's own government tabled Bill C-21, the so-called anti-gun bill? When going after lawful firearms owners, the government sent an email to fundraise off the bill and it has barely moved it forward since then.

Is it not true that the minister failed to explain the bill on national TV? Is it not true that the minister failed to carry out his basic duty to make sure he tabled a bill in the House of Commons in its correct format? Is it not true that there are many voices on the left, centre and right of the spectrum that have said the bill is defective? It is not a partisan issue. When we have OpenMedia, Michael Geist, Peter Menzies and Conservatives agreeing, we know we have a defective bill.

Is it not true that the minister failed in his responsibilities?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary Shepard for his speech, a few words of which he considerably delivered in what we know is his nearly impeccable French.

However, when my colleague said that it is shameful of the Bloc Québécois to support this government's time allocation motion, I

would refer him to the speech I delivered earlier this evening, which would help him understand our reasons for supporting this gag order.

My colleague also talked about the centralizing government, and several members, including the member for Carleton, accused the Bloc Québécois of being centralizing. My answer to that is that the Bloc Québécois would be happy to have Quebec's own version of the CRTC so that it could make its own decisions, but until then, we have to try to do our best with what we have, with is the CRTC and federal regulations.

In answer to the question he seemed to be raising, we are not ashamed at all. We—

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

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Drummond for his first comment.

Getting back to the issue of the closure being used right now to force the passage of this bill, the content of the bill is bad for both Quebec and Albertan artists. It will be a bad thing. Our goal here is not to pass a law that will seriously and negatively impact the industry and the people who work in it, like artists and musicians, in all of our ridings.

We are not here to adopt a bill that would receive a D and have it passed by the Senate. We must ensure that the bills we adopt deserve an A+ before being sent to the Senate.

[English]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to echo something that the member mentioned about having a lot of emails and phone calls. I have noticed them going up in my own office, being a neighbouring riding. I have been hearing the most from new Canadians and immigrants. Most of them have left countries where freedom of speech is not the liberty that we are supposed to enjoy in this amazing country we live in today, much like the member is an immigrant. I would like him to speak a little more about that.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, there are a lot of people I call new Canadians who come here from other countries where freedom of speech is not taken for granted because it is a very precious right and privilege. In this House, we should be the guarantors of people's constitutional, natural-born rights.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to enter into debate on this faulty bill. I really hope there is some soul-searching by opposition members before this bill is passed. This bill is ridiculous. The minister has done a terrible job explaining it. He cannot explain it because I do not think he fully understands what this bill would do to Canada.

I am first going to talk a bit about my fears about this bill. Central Canada or any governments that believe they can fix a problem with a solution often create more problems. This is what this bill would do. This bill is garbage. It has to be defeated. It has to go back to committee. I get that there is a gag order on it, and I get that the Liberals are trying to push it through, but opposition members have to start asking themselves why they are in Parliament if they do not stand up to a government that is threatening to take away our freedom to express our opinions online. This is dangerous material.

Governments will try to find a solution to a problem. We know that the CRTC needs updating, and we know that helping artists is a valuable inspirational goal. I get that, but it would question our existence as a country and whether we are truly free. If governments are there to tell us what to say, what we can post, what we can hear, what we can see, we are entering a dangerous stage in our country where I fear what this would lead to.

Failed regimes resort to censorship. This is what this bill is. It is telling the citizens of Canada what they can and cannot post, what will be shared and what, through the labyrinth of programs out there, will be heightened on search engines, on Facebook. This bill is something one would see from a failed regime. This is what we are seeing out of Ottawa lately. If we were to crack open a history book, we would see that failed regimes around the world follow a bit of a pattern, and we are seeing that with this bill. We are seeing it with other things that the Liberal government has done. In our history on this planet, a cornerstone of failed regimes is censorship. Another one would be printing money, and that is exactly what the government is doing. We have seen this story play out and it ends terribly for our society.

Maybe that is why the Bloc is supporting it. Maybe Bloc members are the smartest ones and are laughing to themselves as they support this centralizing of powers because they do not want Canada to exist anymore. That is probably why. If that is their political game in supporting this bill, and the Liberals are willing to take separatist support on this bill because it gets Canada closer to, unfortunately, breaking up, maybe that is why the Bloc is supporting it.

However, why are New Democrats supporting it? This is a troubling trend. I have had numerous calls at my office from people saying they are not supporters of mine but of the NDP, and asking what the heck is going on with Bill C-10. It is not too late for NDP members. Constituents should contact their MPs, if they are NDP members, and explain why they are passionate about this bill not proceeding. That is the only way we are going to slow this bill down.

There are elements of it that can be improved at committee. It can get to the stated goal. That is the thing; the stated goal that the Liberals put forward on this bill is nowhere near what it would actually do for the CRTC, such as where it is reporting: from reporting to Parliament, which means 338 representatives from all over Canada, to reporting to the minister's office.

• (1915)

Who would trust the minister? Who would trust the minister after the way he has bungled this rollout and explanation of a censorship bill? I feel sorry for him, but this has got to get scrapped for the

sake of our country. I am very hopeful that maybe the parties of other members here are whipping their support on this. I urge them to take a pause, because it is not too late to have those discussions in caucus.

Members can flesh out what would need to be changed for this to work. There is no need for this to be rushed forward in the dying days of this session before summer. There is nothing in here that requires urgency during the middle of a pandemic to force Canadians to change their ability and right to post what they want.

That is what creates fear for our country. There is this march toward centralized power in the Prime Minister's Office, because that is ultimately where the CRTC will report. It will report first to the minister, but we know that he serves at the pleasure of the Prime Minister. I do not believe the minister will stand up to, and not bend over backward for, the Prime Minister.

What does that mean for Canadians? It means that our rights to share our views and our beliefs will be censored in Canada. I cannot think of a more damaging thing for unity in this country than if Canadian citizens are not able to share their views. It is a fundamental freedom that we have cherished in this country. During a pandemic, the government decided that it would like to rush through a bill that would harm our ability to interact with other Canadians.

A lot of things on the Internet are silly and trivial, but there are some truths. We saw this at the G7 convention just recently. People on different social media platforms might have been embarrassed a bit by the Prime Minister talking about newspapers being used to wrap fish and some of the ridiculous comments he made.

Maybe in the future Canadians will not see that anymore. Maybe that is the point. Maybe that is what the government would like to do. It would like to stop the Internet's ability to share what is going on, be it a finance minister who wears no shoes at an international gathering and is mocked around the world, or someone who has embarrassed themselves by wearing blackface.

This bill gives power to the Prime Minister to stop those stories and stop people from being able to broadcast to anywhere in the world what they are seeing in their part of the country. That is the power of technology that has advanced in the last 20 or 30 years, which is our ability to tell our stories directly without going through the middleman of other broadcasters. The CRTC needs to be updated so that we can make sure that we have a modern act that would cover national broadcasts and make sure that we are modernizing our act to reflect the changes in the landscape. However, this bill does not do that.

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I would ask all members to please do a soul-searching exercise and reach out to their supporters and the constituents they represent. They should ask them if they want the government to have more control. That is what this bill would do. It would give the government more control. Those who would lose are Canadians and Canadian stories.

• (1920)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I read all 53 pages of Bill C-10, and when I listen to my colleagues in the official opposition, I have to wonder exactly which clauses indicate that our independent producers will be over-taxed or have the same obligations as the major broadcasters.

Even the preamble says that the CRTC will have to take into account the the variety of broadcasting undertakings and avoid imposing any obligations that could be harmful.

Which clauses are so frightening and need to be changed?

• (1925)

[English]

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, those would be sections 2.1 and 4.1. There are a lot of examples of improvements that need to be done, and if the committee had not been shut down, as a third-world dictatorship would shut down criticisms and government and committee work, maybe we could get to the actual improvements of this bill. Unfortunately there is a gag order out there. The committee was shut down, and now we are into time allocation so that this gets rammed through with all the errors that we have highlighted.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I found fascinating about this speech was when the member started to come up with excuses as to why the Bloc Québécois has chosen to support this. His default, and I think that this is indicative of what Conservatives do, was to say there must be something wrong with them and that it is because they want to leave Canada. He thinks this is all about their grand plan.

Is it possible that perhaps the Bloc just does not agree with him?

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, once again the member opposite is showing his hand a little too early on this one. We know that there are potential trade-offs and different arrangements with parties, and there might be something in the negotiation that the government did with that party to get them on board. I do not know. I hope they take this time right now to please think about the importance of decentralizing things in Canada, because the closer that we get to powers being concentrated in Ottawa the worse it is for all regions of this country. That is what this bill would do. It would centralize more power in the Prime Minister's Office. It would centralize more of our abilities in Ottawa versus in the regions, whether in Quebec, western Canada, the Arctic or Atlantic Canada. This bill needs to be reworked.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to be able to say that the member's speech was enlightening, but it was absurd, to be perfectly honest. I would like him to tell me exactly where in this legislation freedom of expression is put at risk, because it is not in the four places in the

act where it is explicitly protected. It is not in the place within the legislation where it is explicitly protected, and it is not within the amendments that the heritage committee approved, including Conservative amendments, to protect freedom of expression.

Would he be so kind as to read exactly where that happens, instead of just saying "some places"?

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, it is a bill that would change the way Canadians share their stories, and this is the problem. I would hope that other parliamentarians would take this time for soul searching and to ask what we are doing as parliamentarians to protect freedom of speech, because this is not it. The academic people in our country who have come out against this bill are not typical Conservatives. They are minds that are concerned with the concentration of powers in our country in a select few individuals and what that would mean to our country. I would ask members to please take this time to reconsider their position on this bill, because it would have a lasting effect on our country for many years.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time this evening with the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Canadians expect that legislation passed through the House has been subject to rigorous and fulsome debate, and that the members they elect to this chamber have had the opportunity to represent their voices and to be heard. It really is unfortunate that we find ourselves here once again with the Liberal government moving to shut down debate. The scary and concerning irony here is that the primary concern that has been raised on Bill C-10 is its implications for freedom of speech. The Liberal government's persistent steps to silence members of Parliament from defending free speech in this chamber certainly do not alleviate the concerns that Canadians have raised with the legislation before us, including many of my own constituents in Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Bringing forward legislation to modernize the Broadcasting Act is not without merit, and we have heard that this evening. In fact, this act has not been updated since its adoption in 1991. I was only a couple of years old in 1991, but we all know that the broadcasting landscape has changed drastically in the last three decades. There is no doubt that the Internet, technological advancements and evolving platforms certainly require some form of modernization. That is why Conservatives support creating a level playing field between large, foreign streaming services such as Amazon and Netflix and Canadian broadcasters, but Conservatives do not and certainly cannot support deeply flawed legislation that would compromise Canadians' fundamental rights and freedoms.

Bill C-10, in its current form, leaves the door open for a massive abuse of power and abuse of the rights of Canadians. This proposed legislation would allow the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, to regulate user-generated content uploaded to social media platforms. The CRTC's regulatory power would go beyond television, radio and digital platforms if this legislation passes. It would extend the CRTC's power to regulate the free speech of individual Canadians on social media.

This legislation at the outset started with clear exemptions for social media that, due to amendments brought forward by the Liberal members on the heritage committee, are no longer included. If the intention of this legislation was not to regulate individual Canadians or to leave the door open to the possibility of restricting Internet content, then what was the motivation to remove the exemptions?

The Minister of Heritage has failed to provide Canadians with a sufficient answer to that question. The minister has also failed to provide Canadians with clear guidelines on how this power would be used. Giving unelected bureaucrats the authority to censor the Internet and regulate what Canadians post on social media is a radical change.

In our modern digital world, social media plays many roles. Social media is a powerful tool. It is a tool to speak truth to power, to raise opposition, to bring attention to issues and so many more items. The freedom to do that should be unencumbered in a free and democratic society. Those actions should not be subject to abuses of power. Around the world, countries that do not share our values may see fit to enforce such restrictions or regulations, but to move in that direction and to enshrine this power grab is simply unacceptable.

As it is currently drafted, this legislation does not belong in a society that values freedoms. It really is shameful that Conservatives are the only ones in this chamber who are fighting this attack on free speech and opposing Bill C-10. However, to be clear, it is not just Conservatives who are deeply concerned by the implications of this legislation.

● (1930)

The former CRTC commissioner, Peter Menzies, has called the Liberals' Bill C-10 a, "full-blown assault upon...the foundations of democracy".

Timothy Denton, the former national commissioner of the CRTC has also said, "Forget about 'broadcasting': C-10 is clearly intended to allow speech control at the government's discretion".

Those powerful and informed criticisms are not to be taken lightly. Free speech is a fundamental Canadian right. Why even leave the door open for any sort of abuse? Many of my constituents in Battlefords—Lloydminster have expressed grave concerns to me about the bill. Many have questioned the Liberal government's intention with the bill.

It has been promoted by the Liberals as a levelling of the playing field between traditional and digital broadcasters, but a look at the details reveals that it goes far beyond that. Will the criticisms of my constituents ultimately be silenced if this legislation is passed?

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If those with any sort of following express discontentment with the Prime Minister's repeated attack on our energy sector, the government's failure to support our farmers and our farm families, or any other government policy, will they be subject to these regulations?

Ultimately, the question that gets raised in this debate is the question of whether this legislation is simply a tool to allow the Prime Minister to silence opposition and those who reject his agenda. If that is not the intention, why are we not taking the time to amend and draft the legislation so there is no question?

The concerns that have been raised about this legislation are very serious and the potential impact of this legislation's passage is wide-sweeping. Not only is it completely reasonable for Conservatives on this side of the House to want fulsome consideration of this legislation, I would suggest legislation of this magnitude demands it. That is not where we find ourselves.

The motion is not at the end of fulsome debate, extensive consultation and careful clause-by-clause consideration. In fact, we have not even considered the legislation at this stage, yet we find ourselves considering a motion this evening to limit and to once again shut down debate.

We find ourselves once again at odds with the Liberal government members as they act to silence the voices of those who disagree with them in the House of Commons, actions that will in turn give them the ability to silence the voices of those who disagree with them online.

Canadians can be confident that if this legislation is rammed through Parliament with the support of the NDP and the Bloc, Conservatives are committed to repealing it. However, I would sincerely hope that the Prime Minister and his government would recognize the need to withdraw this legislation and not to rush it.

Given this motion before us, it is clear that the Liberal government is doubling down on its efforts to ram this legislation through Parliament. The stifling of debate is becoming an all-too-common practice under the Liberal government.

First, the Liberals shut down debate on the legislation at committee, limiting the committee's ability to carefully consider every individual clause in this comprehensive bill and now without any debate, at report stage or third reading the Liberals are moving a motion to silence opposition to their flawed bill.

This motion pre-emptively shuts down debate on this legislation before this parliamentary stage, allowing only two hours of debate before sending it to the Senate. I urge my colleagues in the House to seriously consider the impact of this motion. I urge them to consider the serious concerns raised with the proposed legislation and I urge them to reject efforts to hurry it along without proper consideration.

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• (1935)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government cannot ram through this legislation. It is a minority government, which means that we need to get support from opposition parties in order to bring in time allocation.

The need for time allocation is there because the Conservatives, as the member just said, have absolutely no intention of passing the legislation, even though members of the Green Party, the NDP and the Bloc all support the legislation.

My question to the member is very specific. The Conservatives are trying to say this is an attack against freedom of speech. Could the member cite, specifically, where the attack on freedom of speech could be found in the legislation?

• (1940)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, it is really unfortunate that the member was throwing the Bloc under the bus in his question as siding with the government.

It is the government's fault we are in this position. The Prime Minister, who is riddled with scandal and ethic breaches, prorogued Parliament to hide a cover-up. We did not need to have two Speeches from the Throne in a minority Parliament. What I would suggest is that member should take that back to his caucus, the effects that proroguing Parliament on legislation.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, with respect to my Conservative colleague, I did not really hear an answer to the previous question.

I have reviewed this bill's progress through committee, and its report back to the House. There were amendments adopted to the legislation to ensure freedom of expression. There are sections in the parent act that specifically articulate freedom of expression. Even in the original Bill C-10 that was sent to committee, there were sections dealing with freedom of expression.

I will ask the member, again, if she could point to a specific section in this bill that has been reported back to the House that she has troubles with, that sort of backs up all of the points she made in her speech.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, I do not trust the Liberal government and neither do my constituents.

When the Liberals pull funny business, whether it is trying to cancel committees or whether it is extending sitting hours because they failed to work the parliamentary agenda, I do not understand why this falls on us. We are doing our job. The opposition is supposed to strengthen legislation. Iron sharpens iron. It is too bad that the Liberals will not take that advice.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am always amazed by the intransigence of my Conservative colleagues, and I would like to share a thought that my colleague might want to reflect on.

I have a feeling that, much like with Bill C-6, it is ideology that drives the Conservatives to be so vocal in their opposition to all these bills. I get the impression that they want to strengthen their base, which has a negative view of both the artists and the objectives of another bill like C-6.

Can my colleague comment on that?

[English]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, I did not understand the question from my colleague.

I will say again, like I said previously, our job as the opposition, including everybody on these benches, which includes Conservative members, NDP members, Bloc members, Green members and independent members, is to scrutinize legislation. It is the Liberal government's job to work with the opposition.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an absolute privilege to rise in debate today. I must say, without commenting on who is or is not in the House, that the government benches have not looked this good in years.

I am happy to speak on Bill C-10, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts. The idea or belief behind this act, and some of the goals that the minister espoused, are laudable. As the member for Saskatchewan said earlier, the Broadcasting Act absolutely does need to be updated, there is no doubt about that, but it infringes upon one of the most sacrosanct principles in our country, and that is our freedom of expression and freedom of speech. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are really the pillars of all the freedoms we enjoy today. I would like to talk a bit about how people have talked about the importance of freedom in the past.

One of my favourite books in the entire world is *The Republic* written by Plato, the musings of Socrates. Socrates said a couple of things that are critical to this debate. I own a couple of horses. I love horses and think they are beautiful. Socrates talked about a horse in particular and said that someone may have a beautiful, fantastic horse, but in the absence of any type of motivation or being pushed forward, it would lose its strength. Socrates likened himself to a fly that kept the horse swishing his tail, kept the horse moving and getting stronger. That is what the discussion is in many ways on the Internet. It is that fly that keeps people and discussions going, keeps pushing our discourse to be better.

Alexis de Tocqueville, one of my other favourite political philosophers, said, "The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens." This was de Tocqueville talking about the Internet 200 years before the Internet existed. He captured the very essence of our democracy. The foundation of our democracy is the citizens that underpin it. Never before has there been such a democratization of information and the ability to contribute.

When members of other parties chastise Conservatives and say our concerns are not legitimate, it goes to the very heart of who we are. In fact, the reason I am so passionate about this is because I want members of the Green Party, the NDP, the Bloc and the Liberal Party to always be able to express themselves. That starts to be limited and gets pulled away. Oftentimes when we lose our freedoms, it is not in one swift blow. It is often bit by bit. Conservatives stand as the guardians not just for our freedoms, but for everyone's freedoms, including members of all parties in this House.

There is no doubt that there have to be some reasonable restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of speech, but it is my contention that this legislation has gone too far. I have noticed there have been questions recently as to what specifically this bill would do to limit freedom of expression. Let me go through this and explain it specifically to members. This is not just bluster; there are legitimate concerns.

Bill C-10 defines undertakings for the transmission or retransmission of programs over the Internet for reception by the public by means of broadcasting apparatus. This means that we are now including the Internet in the Broadcasting Act. Conservatives are okay with the idea for massive followings with \$100 million in revenue or the Netflixes of the world. There is some discussion to be had there, there is no doubt, but for the individual provider, as it says in proposed subparagraphs 9.1(1)(i)(i) and 10(1)(i), among other things to adopt, "requiring social insight such as YouTube to take down content it considers offensive and discoverability regimes."

● (1945)

What that means is that within this bill, as it is currently written, there is the ability to push content up or down. What does that mean? That means a government, a bureaucracy, the CRTC can say, "This content, we believe, is more agreeable or more Canadian than this other content".

The reality is that the misnomer in this whole debate is that Canadian content producers are not doing well. The opposite could be true. Canadian content producers are some of the largest producers per capita of YouTube content in the entire world. Our content creators are doing a fabulous job, and we need to reward them for that, not penalize them.

We should not just be pushing people down randomly, and that takes the most positive view. I would certainly hope that, if this legislation ever came into place and the CRTC became responsible for the algorithms pushing content up or down, it would stay non-partisan.

However, sadly, colleagues and all Canadians have witnessed something I thought I would never see in my lifetime. We saw a case where there could have been interference with the independence of the judiciary. That was the SNC-Lavalin affair. What happened there was a potential direction of the Prime Minister's Office to an actual investigation of SNC-Lavalin for deferred prosecution.

This should never, ever happen. In fact, prior to this case, to me the independence of the judiciary was sacrosanct. I did not think that even the Liberal government would consider it, or that it would even be in the realm of possibilities, but we saw that it was.

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Seeing that is conceivable, is it then also conceivable that a government of the future could potentially put pressure on the CRTC to favour one particular political viewpoint? I would render to the House that, if in fact a government could potentially interfere with an independent legal investigation, it is completely possible that this could happen. That would be a limitation of our freedom of speech, which would be incredibly dangerous to our democracy. As I said, freedom of expression and freedom of speech are the underpinnings of all our freedoms. They are the shields that protect our freedoms, going forward.

When we get to this, the health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by the citizens. Those were de Tocqueville's words on the importance of democracy.

● (1950)

It is important that we hear from all the citizens, and that includes the House of Commons. Unfortunately, we have had a gag order put in place. The irony of all ironies is that we are here defending freedom of speech, and the government put a gag order on us defending freedom of speech, saying that there is not an issue of freedom of speech. The irony there is just too rich.

We need to go back. We need to peel back the boards here. We need to go right back to the studs and we need to look at this legislation and start over again. It is absolutely flawed. Anyone who heard the minister's interview on *The Evan Solomon Show* knows that there is a significant problem with this.

Long live freedom, and long live Canada, the greatest country in the world.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am starting to detect a pattern here, and I actually want to give credit to the NDP for starting this. There have been questions asked of several Conservative members back to back, which they completely avoided answering, so I would like to give this member the opportunity to answer that same question.

Can he point to the specific part in the legislation that would impact and restrict somebody's freedom of speech? If he could just tell us what clause of the legislation actually talks about that, I would love to hear it, or will he be the third Conservative in a row to dodge the question?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, that gives me a great opportunity to explain to the minister that he can check out Michael Geist's website if he has not figured this out already.

The offending sections are 9(1), 10(1) and the removal of section 4.1, which was originally put in there to protect social media and was taken out. That is available publicly. It is available on Michael Geist's website. Those are the exact sections. If the member needs more, I am happy for him to come to my office and I will explain it to him again.

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[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is fascinating to hear that the Conservative member did not need to read the bill after all. It is so much easier to just defer to Michael Geist. They are making speeches but, in the end, their understanding of the topic is limited to the spin and partisan arguments they were asked to propagate.

I have a simple proposition for my colleague. I would like to hear his thoughts on amendment CPC 9.3, put forward by his own party, which we debated and voted on in committee.

I will help him out a little. This amendment refers to clause 9.2 and deals with the topic he was just talking about. I would like to hear his thoughts on this amendment.

● (1955)

[English]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, this member does not take the viewpoint of professors and other thought leaders on this because clearly he knows it all, as his comments would allow one to believe.

However, this bill is an infringement on freedom of expression and freedom of speech, so I am standing up.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke today about how he really is worried about what I think he intended to mean was discoverability of content online. I wonder what he would say to the fact that right now Canadian content on, for example, Facebook, is being determined.

There are algorithms that determine what we as Canadians see. Do members know who is deciding what that is? It is Mark Zuckerberg who is deciding. I wonder if the member likes the idea of Mark Zuckerberg deciding which content to promote and which to reduce.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I like the ability of users to decide. Quite frankly, I hate the idea of Justin Trudeau deciding what I can and cannot—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I will interrupt the hon. member to remind him he is not to use the name of the Prime Minister or any other MP in the House.

The hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, my apologies. Thank you for your gracious correction.

I would not want the government to tell me, a government that has been involved in so many terrible wrongs, which have recently been in the news, and Canadians what we can and cannot see. That is something that happens in the Soviet Union. That is something that happens in Communist China. That is something that will hopefully never happen in Canada.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleague two young men who are very precious in my life who I would call very young digital first creators. They understand social media, the web

and all those things in amazing ways. They have concerns about this.

They are online. They compose music and have relationships through their apps all over the world, including Quebec, France, England and Australia. I want him to speak to that next generation, which is aware and very concerned about the fact their freedoms are being challenged here.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I have a five-year-old and a seven-year-old. I am in politics because I want a better future for them, and that better future comes from freedom.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the House this evening on a very important piece of legislation. I did get the opportunity, I think in second reading, to provide some thoughts on this legislation. When I reflect back to second reading, I can recall even some members of the Conservative Party somewhat implying in their comments that this is good legislation, and in fact, that there was a reflection of the time. I can remember participating in that.

It is important for us to recognize that things have changed a great deal. It has been many years since we have modernized or changed the legislation we are debating here this evening. It is really quite interesting and fascinating to listen to how the debate has evolved to this point. This—

● (2000)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know I raised this yesterday as well, but I am going to ask the hon. member to lower or raise his boom a bit. There is some popping noise, and it is very hard on the interpreter's ears.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have to be very sympathetic to our translators. They do a phenomenal job, ensuring all members can understand what is being said. I apologize for any popping noise that I might have caused.

In regard to the legislation, and as I was listening to the debate this evening, I was reflecting on a couple of points. One was the Conservatives' opposition to the legislation and the tactics they used to try to frustrate the House, and ultimately mislead Canadians on the second reading debate of the legislation. I can recall at least a good portion of that debate back then.

I realize I somewhat date myself as a parliamentarian now for about 30 years, both at the provincial and national level, but a lot of things have changed. When I was first elected, I had a Compaq computer. I think it was a 256 kB, and it had a five-and-a-half inch disk on which to back things up. To get on to the Internet in downtown Winnipeg, at the Manitoba legislature where my office was as an MLA, I would have phone into the Internet. I would get the long dial tone, a ding-ding sound and then I would be on it. It sure was slow as was the computer.

Things have changed. When I compare that to where we are at today, a couple of things that come to mind. We have underestimated for decades the impact the Internet has on society in many different ways. With regard to the legislation, for the first time we are taking steps forward to address that huge gap, those decades of doing nothing.

We have a Prime Minister who understands that technology has changed and he has mandated the Minister of Canadian Heritage to bring forward this legislation. Members within the Liberal caucus have been waiting very patiently for the legislation. We were glad to see it not only introduced, but get to second reading and then ultimately pass out of second reading. It has been long overdue.

Today, we have Wi-Fi. We can forget the telephone-dial-in type of Internet in downtown Winnipeg. We cannot even draw comparisons to the speed. I am learning this thing about music with the iPad and iPhone. It is called Apple Music, and I have acquired some music from that service. It has millions of songs. I suspect that if I were to start to listen to one song after another, I would be long gone before all the songs were played. In other words, any song one could possibly imagine can likely be found in its library. It is truly amazing what we can get on the Internet.

There are shows from the past like *The Andy Griffith Show*, or *Three's Company* or *WKRP in Cincinnati*. These are all shows from the past, and were fairly dominate outside of Canada. I remember *The Beachcombers* from British Columbia. There were many different kids' programs. I think of programs with great Canadian content. At one time, I suspect the rules sufficed, that they protected the industry, the consumers, our arts and culture and ensured we had a sense of Canadian identity.

● (2005)

As I have pointed out, over the decades, things have really changed. We can be very proud of some of the programs we have seen over the last number of years in particular.

I did not hear of *Schitt's Creek* until it won all those wonderful awards. A number of my caucus colleagues talked about the program, so I binge watched it. One gets a sense of pride that this is a first-class Canadian production. There is a very strong Canadians perspective to it.

When I think of programs of a Canadian nature, I think of *Coroner Gas* from Saskatchewan and some of the personalities in that show. I think of some of the music industry stars such as Celine Dion and Anne Murray, just to mention a couple with whom I am familiar, as I am not really the most musically inclined.

However, Canada is rich in our heritage and in the arts, and we need to do what we can to protect that into the future. In good part, Bill C-10 is all about that. It is the part that interests me. I am very much concerned about Canadian content going forward and the opportunities for future songwriters, scriptwriters, musicians, actors, performers and the people who manage the stages. A healthy, vibrant industry exists and it needs to be supported. One of the ways we can support that industry and protect, in good part, our Canadian identity going forward is to support Bill C-10.

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I find it amazing that the Conservatives have taken a hardened approach to it. I asked a question earlier about freedom of speech. I asked the member to be very specific, to provide me with a quote. A former member mentioned a couple of clauses, which I will have to take a look at, but the member I asked the question of did not even attempt to answer the question. I do not think she had any idea what it specifically was.

The Conservatives are very good at spinning things. I have been getting emails, as I am sure others have, about concerns with freedom of speech. It was even brought up at one of my virtual town hall meetings. A lot of Conservative spin out there is amplified for a wide variety of reasons. The skeptic side of me might say it has something to do with the Conservatives fundraising machine. Another reason might be that they are frustrated with other issues related to the pandemic, such as the government's performance in its work with other levels of government and Canadians and how reasonably well things have gone on that front, so they are trying to find something to complain about.

Based on today and what I heard coming out of committee, the Conservatives have definitely found something, and that is Bill C-10 and freedom of speech. I still do not understand the connection.

● (2010)

I do not remember the date, but the Prime Minister said:

Mr. Speaker, just as Canada's analysis confirms that Bill C-10 remains consistent with the charter's guarantee of freedom of expression, Bill C-10 aims to level the playing field between creators and web giants.

It requires big, powerful foreign streamers to provide information on their revenues in Canada, to financially contribute to Canadian stories and music, and to make it easier for individuals to discover our culture.

The bill explicitly says that obligations apply to web giants only: not to Canadian users. Web giants have gone unregulated for far too long. Our government has chosen action over reaction.

I appreciate that there have been some amendments, changes and modifications, but whether it is the Prime Minister or the Minister of Heritage, they have done a fantastic job representing what the legislation would do, considering the degree of support it is getting. I believe the National Assembly of Québec, listening to the minister, unanimously said that Bill C-10 was good legislation and it should be passed.

It surprises me that when Bill C-10 was in committee, the Conservative Party was determined to prevent it from moving out of committee. I genuinely believe that if it were up to the Conservative Party, Bill C-10 would never have left committee.

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Some members say that they feel ripped-off because they did not get the chance to talk to the amendments, because the government put time allocation on the amount of time the committee had for the bill. I would like to remind my Conservative friends that, as a minority government, for us to successfully put in any form of time allocation, we require at least one other opposition party to support that initiative. We cannot ram it through committee stage.

It seems to me that the Conservatives feel their rights have been walked on if the government brings in a motion for time allocation and gets passed. However, for the government to have the time allocation motion passed, it has to have an opposition party onside, and in this situation the Bloc Québécois provided the government the numbers necessary to ensure that Bill C-10 would get out of committee. If it were not for the desire to move this legislation forward and get the support to do so, it likely still would be in committee today.

Many members, including myself, would have thought the New Democrats would have supported that move. Those members are not what I would classify as naive. They understood what was taking place in committee. They seemed to understand what the Conservative Party was attempting to do with Bill C-10. However, we were able to move the bill out of the committee stage and get it to report stage and then third reading so we can get it passed. As I pointed out at the very beginning, this is critical legislation.

● (2015)

I have been in opposition in many governments for 20-plus years, and I have had the good fortune of being a part of a majority government. Typically, when we get to the month of June, hours are extended and we look at passing important legislation before the summer.

It is no different this time. We attempted to bring in extended hours and we were successful, but not because of the Conservatives. That is the reason why we are debating this legislation right now. We were able to get support, not from the Conservatives but from other opposition members, so that we could actually sit longer to debate the legislation we are debating right now.

Ironically, Conservative Party members would argue that they do not want extended hours. They did that. Let us remember that last Thursday the Conservatives tried to adjourn the House. They did not even want us to sit on Thursday. It is because the Conservative Party has no interest at all in seeing any legislation pass at this point. Conservative members will do what they can to filibuster and prevent the government from passing legislation. On the other hand, they will be critical of the government because they say we are trying to limit the amount of time in which they can speak to legislation. However, they were denying the opportunity to speak by having extended hours and by actually sitting as opposed to trying to adjourn debate for the day.

Just as the Conservative opposition continues to be a destructive force on the floor of the House of Commons, as it attempts to frustrate the government in trying to pass legislation such as our budget, the Liberal government will continue to be focused on Canadians and on ensuring, as much as possible, that we have legislation like our budget, Bill C-10, Bill C-6 and other progressive pieces of legislation that other progressive parties will see the merit of pass-

ing. This is as opposed to buying into what the Conservatives want, which is to prevent at all costs any legislation from passing in the House of Commons.

This legislation is good legislation. It is good for Canadians. It is good for the industry. I highly recommend that all members of the House support its passage.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be here in Canada, in our Canadian House of Commons and in our Canadian Parliament. We are not in the U.K. right now. We are not virtual. We are actually here, literally, in the House of Commons in Ottawa, where people throughout Canada elected Conservative members of Parliament to be.

We are so proud to be here to debate legislation that we believe is not good for the freedom of Canadians. The Internet should be a place where Canadians are able to share their thoughts and to view different thoughts and opinions.

Why do these Liberals think that a basic dictatorship, the one they admire in China, should be adhered to here in Canada where they could control what Canadians see, think or watch on the Internet? I would like to ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North, who is not here—

● (2020)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I would like to remind the hon. member that she is not to mention who is here and who is not. We are all here, and the hon. member is here virtually.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I like to think that I have contributed significantly over the years, at least in terms of the debate taking place physically on Parliament Hill. Nothing has changed from a virtual perspective, and I can in fact continue to contribute to that debate.

Whether I am doing it virtually or standing on the floor of the House of Commons, both should be respected for what they are and that is an important part of our institution. Both are equal in terms of the statements that are made, whether I make them here or on the floor of the House of Commons physically.

Having said that, there is no concern with regard to Canadians sharing their concerns on the Internet, and I will expand on that in the next question.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listen, I read and I try to take the time to put myself in others' shoes to understand what scares them and why they feel that way.

When reading the bill, I noticed that the programming promotes indigenous languages, French and even English as a minority language in Quebec. It makes more room for those who should have it and supports jobs for francophones and members of first nations. It does not infringe on the freedom of expression of anyone who wants to upload content who is not employed by a broadcaster.

After all is said and done, I am asking myself the following question: Could the problem with freedom of expression simply be related to the fact that the majority would, according to them, have less time because the minority would have more? Are they afraid of change because we are making more room for indigenous people and francophones?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am very proud that the Liberal Party of Canada, while in government, is the party to have brought in the Charter of Rights. I am very proud that my colleagues understand and value the importance of freedom of speech. Misinformation is being espoused by and fed, in part, by members of the Conservative Party.

After listening to members speak today and after reading some of the email correspondence going out, I do not believe for a moment that Canadians need to be concerned about how this bill is going to limit their individual rights or their freedom of speech. I do not know a clearer way of putting it. This is good, solid legislation.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am not sure about the Conservatives, but I think that everyone else here is in agreement. This is a 30-year-old bill that we are trying to bring up to date. It was brought in originally before the Internet and social media, yet the Liberal government has been in power now for almost six years.

Why did it leave this so late? Why did it do such a terrible job of explaining all of this to Canadians? Now we are trying to rush this through because it is an important bill. This is leading to all of these questions and has given the Conservatives an opportunity to say that it would inhibit freedom of speech, when it clearly does not.

After reading the bill and seeing the amendments put in by the Conservatives themselves, can the member say why they blew this so badly?

• (2025)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would like to address the issue of rushing this through. Members can look at the number of days that we have actually sat and the agenda we have had to deal with. Many pieces of legislation have dealt specifically with the coronavirus and the pandemic. Initially, there was a great deal of support from all sides of the House as we tried to pass legislation that was critically important to dealing with the pandemic. Today there is still critically important legislation to pass, such as Bill C-30.

Not a day went by that the government, while responsible for the agenda of the House of Commons, did not attempt to bring forward good, solid legislation to debate. We have attempted on several occasions to be able to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow another question.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North touched on what is going on in the House and the delay tactics. As a result of watching the

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interactions between parties over the last several months, I can honestly say that while I do not see eye to eye with the Bloc and the NDP all the time, I cannot think of a time when I have seen the Conservatives turn to tactics like this. The Conservatives are trying to exploit and hijack an issue for political gain, and every single party in the House has called them out for it.

Can the member comment on why he thinks it is that they are doing that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I must compliment the member for the fantastic job he has been doing on behalf of our caucus colleagues, and I appreciate the question.

I believe that the Conservative Party as a whole is playing a very destructive role as the official opposition. It is more interested in partisan politics and its electoral future than it is in things such as the pandemic and working together.

I have come to the conclusion that the Conservatives want to prevent legislation from passing, and I suspect that when they see other progressive parties looking to support some of this legislation to pass, it can be very frustrating to them because they are not getting their way. It should not be about their way. It should be about getting important legislation passed through the House so that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have time to allow for one brief question.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, when we look at the government legislation the Liberals have tabled here, quite often they leave it very broad. It is very vague, and it is very unclear what they are trying to accomplish with it. We are seeing that yet again with this bill. The original piece of legislation was very clear in some of its provisions, but the Liberals took those out.

How is the member so certain that this would do what we are hearing from many experts that it would do?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, looking at what the Conservatives are doing with regard to Bill C-6, the conversion therapy legislation, we see a lot of similarities. They take an issue and try to make that issue justify their pathetic behaviour inside the House and in committee, in terms of not allowing progressive parties in the House to see these important pieces of legislation advance. To them I say, “Shame.”

At the end of the day, the Conservatives have determined that they just do not want the legislation to pass, so they will come up with excuses to justify their behaviour, and that is unfortunate.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise today to speak to this very important piece of legislation.

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I want to start off by thanking you and the Chair occupants, who have been doing a phenomenal job during these virtual and hybrid sessions of Parliament we have been having. It has been remarkable to see the way you have been able to handle the technical difficulties of the members who are participating and give advice on where to hold the microphone when they are speaking. I think congratulations are in order to the Chair occupants and indeed all the staff who have really made this work.

I want to welcome new members to the Liberal Party. Last week the member for Fredericton decided to come and join the Liberal Party, and it looks as though tonight we may have some other members who are eying up the idea. I can assure them that we have a very strict vetting process. I encourage them to apply and go through that process. No promises can be made in advance, but we will certainly review those applications to see if they qualify to sit with the Liberal Party. We certainly do appreciate their interest in doing that.

When we talk about this bill, one of the first things that come to mind, which I have been hearing the Conservatives say time and again when they get up, is that there has not been enough time, that they have not debated it long enough and need more time. They are nodding in agreement right now. It is the same line that we have been hearing over and over.

Canadians should know that this bill occupied 28 meetings of the committee. To put that into context for members and the public, there have only been 44 meetings of the committee, so this bill has occupied more than half of the meetings of the committee. As well, 130 witnesses have come forward to speak to this bill. In total, 47 briefs have come forward for the committee to consider. Therefore, despite the fact that the Conservatives might not be happy with the way things came about, I certainly have a very difficult time believing them when they say there has not been enough time. On the contrary, indeed there have been tons of opportunities for this bill to be debated.

One has to wonder why the Conservatives are playing this game. I think they are starting to find themselves in a corner, especially tonight. I do not think the debate that has been going on tonight has been particularly helpful for the Conservative members, because time and again they have had members from all different parties ask them to tell them more about the legislation and where they find it to be offensive, to read the parts of the legislation that they have a problem with. Time and again they do not answer the question. They keep going back to how the minister did a horrible job on an interview here or there, or something like that, but they will not tell us which parts they are. To that point, earlier when I asked that of the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, and I will give him credit for trying to answer it, he threw out some random numbers and my staff went back and looked at exactly which clauses he referenced.

The first one was subclause 9(1). That subclause does not even exist. However, there is a subclause 9(9), which states, “Fees payable under this section and any interest in respect of them constitute a debt due to Her Majesty in right of Canada and may be recovered as such in any court of competent jurisdiction.” If that is what he finds offensive in this, it certainly has nothing to do with freedom of speech, so the member might want to go back and

check that section. Again, the section that he actually referenced does not exist.

He went on to another clause, clause 10. He mentioned a subclause, but all clause 10 talks about is regulations. It talks about “developing, financing, producing or promoting Canadian audio or audio-visual programs, including independent productions”. It goes on to talk about “supporting, promoting or training Canadian creators”. It talks about “supporting participation by persons, groups of persons or organizations representing the public interest in proceedings”. It talks about minimum expenditures, application of regulations, recipients.

● (2030)

It does not say anything about content, which is what the Conservatives have been harping on about being the offensive parts of this. Although I respect and admire the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for trying to answer that question, whereas the previous people who were asked that question completely diverted away from trying to answer it, what he read out either does not exist or has absolutely nothing to do with the Conservatives' stated concerns about this particular bill.

One of the other things that I find very troubling is the borderline conspiracy theories that seem to be developed by Conservatives over this bill. We heard the member for Saskatoon—University say that, in his opinion, the only reason the Bloc was supporting this bill was that, at the end of the day, Bloc members want Canada to separate and they see this as an opportunity to push Canada toward failure. A Conservative actually said that tonight. I am being generous by saying it is a borderline conspiracy theory, quite frankly.

The member then went on to talk about what the Prime Minister was going to censor from people and how this was going to become a quasi-communist state as a result of the Prime Minister interfering with what individual people can share on social media. Nothing could be further from the truth, nor can Conservatives point to anywhere in the legislation that talks about this. What has happened is that the Conservatives have seen an opportunity for political gain, to solidify their base, to fundraise, to rally the troops, and that is what they have jumped on.

One has to ask, is that the proper role of an opposition? Members of Her Majesty's opposition are coming into the House of Commons and suggesting that an issue exists when it really does not, and then when they float the idea and gain some momentum, they keep repeating it. I bet some of them are actually starting to even believe it at this point because of how much time and energy they have spent telling people that it is the truth, but it certainly is not. Nothing should be more telling for Canadians than the fact that the Liberals, the Bloc, the NDP and the Greens are all asking the Conservatives what part they are worried about, and nobody has an answer.

I said earlier that I quite often disagree with the Bloc, with the NDP and even with the Green Party from time to time, but 99% of the time when I disagree with them, it is based on policy. My fight is a policy issue, whether a certain objective should be advanced or not. The Conservatives come into the House and everything is about political opportunity, and they spend months and months on it. They do not worry about the Prime Minister's policies, just trash-talk him, call him a trust fund baby and everything else because that is what is going to get them votes. That might help their base, but it is certainly not doing their job.

Their job is to be the official opposition. They are supposed to come in here and from time to time say, "This is good legislation, and this is bad legislation, and it is bad because of this, this reason here", but not some trumped-up conspiracy, like the member for Saskatoon—University saying that Bloc members only support this bill because they see it as an opportunity for Canada to fail. It is some of the most ridiculous stuff I have heard, but then they fundraise off it and clearly mislead Canadians for political gain.

As much as I disagree with the Bloc, the NDP and the Greens from time to time, I do not see that kind of rhetoric coming from them. They fight with us on policy. They ask why we are not doing more on pharmacare. That is a good question. Let us work together to do that. They ask why we are not doing more for Canadian culture. That is a good question. Maybe we should look at doing that. That is what our job here is. Our job is not to come in here and look for opportunity for political gain.

● (2035)

They said it themselves. They keep going back to the minister having this—

Mr. Eric Duncan: Terrible interview.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: There they go again: a "terrible interview" with Evan Solomon. They are yelling it from across the way. What does that have to do with the legislation? He had a terrible interview, if we take them at their word, but what does that have to do with the legislation? They should be able to objectively look at the legislation themselves, come to conclusions and then, when I ask them what the offensive part is or to read off the offensive part to me, they should be able to do that, and none of them are able to do that. That is the problem with their approach.

I do want to take the opportunity to talk about the importance of this, because, as much as I would love to stand here and tell members about all the games Conservatives are up to, there is an underlying, more important issue here. That is the issue of Canadian content, keeping that Canadian content intact and keeping the federal responsibility to make sure that Canadian content and culture stay alive.

I would argue to the member for Saskatoon—University, who is on this wild conspiracy idea that the Bloc is using this as an opportunity to push separation in Canada, that perhaps the Bloc just sees a good bill here that would help to protect French culture in Quebec. I would argue that, perhaps, this is where they are coming from on this, and it makes sense.

Government Orders

I think back to the Canadian content rules. Yes, I am old enough to remember when we could only hear music on the radio, believe it or not. I can remember sitting there or driving in my car and hoping a song comes on and then maybe thinking I would go for a longer drive and maybe the song would come on. While I was sitting there listening, I was subjected to these great artists like The Tragically Hip, who came from Kingston.

I hate to think what the case would have been in the late eighties and early nineties when The Tragically Hip were trying to make their mark on the music scene and what the competition would have been like had they been drowned out by all this music and entertainment coming from south of the border. What would we be like today, representing our cultural identity, had we not had these rules around Canadian content?

While I was driving around hoping for that top-40 song that I wanted to hear so bad, maybe I was subjected to a Tragically Hip song that got me hooked on them, and maybe many Canadians were in the same situation. I can relate that to TV shows. I can relate that to so many Canadian artists. I think it is critically important at a time like this. When I drive to Ottawa and when I drive home, I usually listen to Apple Music. When I am in Kingston, I tend to listen to some of the radio stations a little more, because I am more interested in hearing what they are talking about and what the pulse of the community is.

The point is that more and more people are being driven away from the radio and TV giants toward the Internet, and when they do that, we need to figure out how we are going to promote that content on the Internet and how we are going to make sure that the next band like The Tragically Hip that is up and coming is still going to get exposure. I have news for members: My 17-year-old is not dialing in to an FM radio station in Kingston, unfortunately. He is getting all of his content off the Internet.

How are we supposed to encourage the future generations, like my 17-year-old, to make sure they are being exposed to Canadian content? We need to have legislation that supports it, and I believe that what is being put forward is exactly that. Was the handling of how messaging was delivered and how things rolled out the best? I do not know. I will let somebody else be the judge of that. I am here to legislate. I am here to look at policy. I am here to assess what is in the best interests, in my opinion, of my constituents, and I can tell members that a bill like this, which advances Canadian content and secures Canadian content for future generations, like my 17-year-old, to be exposed to, is critically important, because without that we run the risk of losing what is so uniquely Canadian about us, that Canadian culture and Canadian content.

● (2040)

There are tons and tons of content creators out there now. I watch them too, primarily through Facebook. I see the content that is created, and a lot of them are Canadian. Some suggest that the bill is going to impact their ability to deliver content, but show me where. Show me where the bill gets to that point. Nobody has been able to do that.

Government Orders

It is very important now more than ever that we look at this 30-year-old piece of legislation, bring it forward to adopt today's mediums and where people are going in their content and information, and then ensure that Canadian content can continue to stay alive. I encourage the Conservatives to really think about not just the political gain from this, but what it actually means to artists and to the people out there who will be the beneficiaries of having a system in place that promotes Canadian culture. Had Canada not done that decades ago, who knows where we would be now?

If we only ever look at issues as an opportunity for political gain, to bump our number by half a point in the polls, to try to edge out the other parties by a bit here and there, we completely lose sight of what our job is here. Our job here is to develop, scrutinize and create good policy that Canadians can be the beneficiaries of.

I do not think the Conservatives should be hijacking these issues, although to their credit, they have done a fairly good job of it. It might solidify their base and it might help them raise a little money, but it is certainly not in the best interests of Canadians.

● (2045)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in debate, the member opposite raised the relevance of the Liberal Party's vetting process for Canada, calling it rigorous. I will note that in 2019, the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler was green-lit by the party in spite of substantiated harassment allegations. To read from a CBC article, the allegations included “unwanted touching and lewd comments aimed at [a] female staffer.”

I am wondering if the member supports the decision of the Liberal Party to allow the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler to run as a Liberal after knowing about these substantiated harassments. Does he believe that the party's vetting process is, as he said, rigorous, in light of these findings? What material changes have been made to the party's vetting process since 2019, given that there were substantiated harassment allegations against a member who was allowed to run and the party had full knowledge of them?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, in the beginning of my speech, in jest I made reference to the fact that a few Conservative members were now sitting next to me on this side of the House. I was bringing that fact to light as we were enjoying each other's company here and were joking around. However, then I spent about 19 minutes talking passionately about the bill before the House right now.

I cannot believe the question I got had to do with a comment I made about a couple of Conservatives who had come over to sit with me and that the member completely lost the 19 minutes that followed.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague from Kingston and the Islands' opinion. I am on page 16 of Bill C-10, specifically subclause 8(10), lines 7 to 14 of the English version, which states the following:

(4) Regulations made under this section, other than regulations made under paragraph (1)(i) or (j), do not apply with respect to programs that are uploaded to an online undertaking that provides a social media service by a user of the service — if that user is not the provider of the service or the provider's affiliate, or the agent or

mandatary of either of them — for transmission over the Internet and reception by other users of the service.

My interpretation of that provision is that, if Videotron uploads content to YouTube, the company is subject to CRTC rules, but ordinary users who do likewise are not. I see no attack on freedom of expression there. Does my colleague interpret that provision the same way?

● (2050)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that it is a rhetorical question, because she answered the question with her question. However, I will highlight that the Bloc member has been able to reference a part of the bill that says what she is claiming and supports why she is voting for this bill. On the contrary, which I mentioned during my speech, the Conservatives are unable to do the same when it comes to what parts of the bill they think are offensive.

The member is absolutely correct. There is specific wording in the legislation to indicate that this is not about looking at user content. It is more about making sure that web giants are promoting Canadian content when and where available.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the member when he says that the Conservatives who have spoken in the House tonight do not seem to have read the legislation and basically seem to be trying to fundraise off an issue that should be about helping broadcasters. However, I do have to ask the member a question.

When the Liberals brought forward legislation in November of last year, they knew it was flawed. They knew it was not good legislation and that there would be an enormous amount of work at committee, which I took part in and was very happy to take part in. Why did they bring forward legislation that was so flawed and needed so much work that it opened the door for the Conservative Party to sow disinformation and sow deception about it? Why did they not just fix it in the initial stage?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, if the question is why did we let the Conservatives do this to us, maybe it is a good question. Maybe we hoped members would operate in good faith and that if there were genuine problems, we would push to advance those problems rather than exploiting them for personal gain.

To go back to the beginning of the question, we need to look no further than the speech given by the member for Lethbridge tonight. On a couple of occasions the member said “you”, and it was as if she was talking to people. Her speech tonight on the floor of the House of Commons will probably serve no other purpose than for her to clip it and use it as a fundraising tool.

This is what the issue has been all about for the Conservatives: hijack the issue, enrage Canadians, bring in some money in the process and solidify their base. That is exactly contrary to their job in the House of Commons, which is to help advance better legislation, not look for opportunities for political gain.

Government Orders

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I was really disappointed with this bill. I agree there were lots of flaws in it, and we worked really hard to fix it. However, I put forward 27 amendments, and there were some from the Canadian Media Producers Association that I was not even able to speak to in the committee process.

I agree with the hon. member that there has been a lot of bamboozling in this debate. I heard talk in the House of Commons about the movie *Canadian Bacon* and whether it is Canadian content because the word “Canadian” is in its title and John Candy acts in it. By the way, another great actor in it, Adrian Hough, is Canadian. That movie was produced by an American company owned by Michael Moore, who wrote and directed the movie. It also has Alan Alda and a whole bunch of other Americans in it.

This discussion about Canadian content and what constitutes Canadian content is something the Conservatives do not even seem to understand. They do not seem to understand that CBC News is not about Canadian content; it is about news. When it uses CNN as a source, that is not about Canadian content; it is about news content.

Would the hon. member not agree that there has been a lot of misinformation and misleading of the Canadian public about what Canadian content really is?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with that. The Conservatives have been banking on the fact that people are going to consume small tidbits of information and consume the idea that Liberals are trying to limit free speech. They are going to try to link it to some other things. They believe their base has preconceived notions about the Liberals, and then they are going to package it all up.

That is great form of campaigning, whether or not one agrees with it, but it is certainly not what we are supposed to be doing in the House. It is certainly not what we are supposed to be doing at committee. We are supposed to be trying to improve the legislation.

This goes back to my point from earlier. I admire this member. Let us look at the questions I was asked tonight on this. I was asked a real question from the NDP, a real question from the Bloc and a real question from the Green member. What did I get from the Conservatives? That right there should show us that we are passionate about the issue, whereas the Conservatives are only passionate about political gain.

• (2055)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that the hon. member and the hon. member for Winnipeg North have taken up full half-hour speaking slots this evening, shutting out other members from being able to speak.

We have not heard from other members of the Liberal Party. Is that because their side does not want other members to speak to this, to defend this attack on freedom, or is it because their freedom of expression has already been taken away by their House leader and the Prime Minister?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have now had the opportunity to ask me two questions and neither of them has had anything to do with the bill, whereas members from the

other three parties asked me questions this evening about the substance of the bill.

To the member's question, it is a clear indication of how things are run on the other side of the House when the member assumes that is the situation. We have also given up a number of spots tonight. If members noticed, about four Conservative members spoke back to back tonight. That is because nobody else on our side got up to speak. They have had the same amount of time or more to speak to this piece of legislation tonight.

It is really telling, when we go back and consider the questions that were asked of me tonight by the Conservatives, what their angle is on the bill.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

What could be more fitting for a bill that could limit the free speech of Canadians across the country and what they can see online, than a government trying to use tactics to limit debate in Parliament? I have heard, loud and clear, from my constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country, and we have heard, loud and clear, from experts from coast to coast to coast how poor Bill C-10 is.

Canadians do not want this deeply flawed, speech-limiting, on-line-viewing-limiting legislation. It is truly shocking that the government would attempt on more than one occasion to limit debate on a bill that has been so divisive. The government keeps raising the bar on what divides us. If the Liberals cannot even tolerate dissenting views in committee and in this House, how are Canadians supposed to expect them to act differently and respect their views online should this legislation come into force?

Back in May, I addressed this chamber through Statements by Members, outlining the overwhelming opposition to this troubling bill from my constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country. I outlined how hundreds, and by now hundreds more, have written me with their valid and real concerns. Residents in Kelowna—Lake Country have strong reservations about the government's attempted overreach to regulate individual Canadian Internet users and what they can hear and see online, concerns shared by University of Ottawa professor Michael Geist. Dr. Geist is not just some newcomer to the field. He is the Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law. Not only could he be considered an expert, he is a vocal and non-partisan critic who has been fighting for the rights of Canadians by speaking out against this dangerous legislation.

Government Orders

Dr. Geist has outlined how, despite the empty words on the part of government claiming otherwise, this legislation, “represent[s] an exceptionally heavy-handed regulatory approach where a government-appointed regulator decides what individual user generated content is prioritized”. Dr. Geist has also called the recent manoeuvring by the Liberals at the heritage committee to effectively cover this legislation in a dark cloud of secrecy “disturbing”, when the committee began to vote on undisclosed amendments without any debate or discussion.

All of this came on the heels of the Liberals' teaming up with the Bloc earlier this month to severely limit debate by using an archaic parliamentary process, manoeuvres that have not been seen in over 20 years in this House. The Liberals may claim that this legislation is to modernize the Broadcasting Act, but that has not stopped them from using procedures to ram Bill C-10 through Parliament without proper debate or discussion. We heard in debate today, from my colleague the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, how 40% of Bill C-10 was not even discussed or debated at the heritage committee with respect to other recommendations.

The voices of my constituents will not be silenced. Residents of my riding in Kelowna—Lake Country from all walks of life have written to me ever since the introduction of this draconian bill, stating, “Censoring free speech or shutting down debate is not acceptable.”

Another wrote that, “People should be able to speak freely on all platforms”.

One wrote that, “It is shocking that the current government has the audacity to even propose something as limiting to free speech as Bill C-10”.

Further comments were also expressed: “We must not tolerate this kind of censorship of free speech in a free country”; and, “Bill C-10 is the most appalling assault on free speech we have seen from any democratic government”.

I agree with my constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country, and that is why I am here today.

This legislation is an unacceptable attempt by the Liberals to target the freedoms of individual Internet users in Canada. It raises significant concerns about the ability to preserve net neutrality, which is an important principle that ensures free flow of content and that no content on the Internet is favoured over another. Net neutrality is basically the principle that Internet service providers should enable access to all content and applications, regardless of their source and without favouring or blocking particular products or websites.

● (2100)

The bill before us would give the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, CRTC, absolute control with no clear parameters. Furthermore, this legislation would give sweeping powers to the CRTC to regulate the Internet, including individual users with no clear guidelines for how that power would be used.

What are Canadian creators saying about this proposed legislation?

Well, J.J. McCullough, a well-known Canadian YouTuber, recently wrote an opinion piece in *The Washington Post*. Mr. McCullough has nearly 300,000 followers on YouTube and, by his own research, he says that this makes him the “1,483rd most popular Canadian YouTuber”. I would say that provides a pretty clear picture of the success that Canadian content creators have online. He goes on to note that there are “...well over 100 Canadian YouTubers with subscriber counts surpassing 3 million — a combined audience larger than the population of Indonesia”. He mentions how well Canadian YouTubers have done without this legislation. Mr. McCullough also notes with real concern that “If Bill C-10 passes, satisfying the needs of audiences — the formula that has produced countless Canadian YouTube success stories...may soon take a back seat to satisfying government regulators”.

His trepidation is justified, as the Liberals rejected an exemption to individual users who upload videos to social media and even took it a step further by promising to introduce a new amendment to regulate apps. We have also heard that digital first creators have not been consulted. It is smoke and mirrors to say that Bill C-10 is about charging big Internet companies to get tax dollars.

On Bill C-10, Conservatives propose to protect individual users and small players in the market by exempting streaming services and social media users with lower revenues. The Liberals rejected this common-sense compromise. The minister ignores these concerns despite the stated purpose of the bill being to promote Canadian content and support, not burden, Canadian creators. However, if history is any indication, the minister does not care about factual and thoughtful points such as these. His party only cares about shutting down debate so its members do not have to listen to the mounting evidence against this proposed legislation.

It is not just the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country, Canadian content creators or Dr. Geist who are speaking out against Bill C-10. A former commissioner of the CRTC has said in an interview that Bill C-10 “...doesn’t just infringe on free expression, it constitutes a full-blown assault upon it and, through it, the foundations of democracy”. This was from a former CRTC commissioner, and if anyone can speak on how the CRTC could interpret its new powers, he would be the one to ask.

The government claims that Bill C-10 is a priority and that is why it is using the tactics that it has chosen to employ. My Conservative colleagues and I will not apologize for doing whatever is necessary to defend the right to free speech and free viewing of the content of Canadians.

Government Orders

I think it is important that we examine exactly what has taken place in this Parliament leading up to this moment. We must not forget that it was the Liberals who prorogued Parliament to escape scrutiny for their ethical scandals. When it is something they want, they will ram it through in any way they can using procedures like the one we recently saw around Bill C-10, which we have not seen used in the House for over 20 years. There were amendments at committee that were never even read and debated. The Liberals had four years as a majority government and have been in power in this Parliament for almost two more.

We will be back here in September as, after all, the Liberals definitely do not want an election, right? So, I will not apologize for standing up for Kelowna—Lake Country and I will not apologize for standing for free speech and for net neutrality. This is deeply flawed legislation that should be deeply troubling, and it is troubling to the core to each and every one of us to consider here today.

• (2105)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was a teacher in a previous life. One of the classes I taught was called “Methodology of Intellectual Work”. In that class, I taught my students how to avoid misinformation.

There are three ways to avoid misinformation: First, we must go straight to the source. Second, we must cross-reference information. Third, we must be careful not to consistently seek out information that will reinforce the way we view a situation.

The examples we were given do not meet any of these three criteria. People are quoting other people, but these quotes are inaccurate and do not come directly from a reliable source. Some fear that users will have to pay a tax, but subclause 2(2.1) very clearly indicates that this is not the case.

What reliable sources are the Conservatives using?

[English]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, I quoted several people who are experts in their field and, as I mentioned, a former head of the CRTC. I do not know how much more relevant we can get than that, considering that this bill gives a lot of authority to the CRTC without laying out what all those parameters are and that is part of the big concern with this bill. It has not laid out specifically what all of those parameters will be, so that is one of the biggest concerns with this bill.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parent act, the Broadcasting Act, has three sections that specifically articulate freedom of expression. The version of Bill C-10 that was passed by the House at second reading specifically had a section that protected anyone who is uploading programs for transmission over the Internet. Then when the bill was at committee, there were four specific amendments adopted to ensure freedom of expression; one from the Liberals, two from the Green Party and one from the Conservatives.

With all of those sections that are specifically articulating freedom of expression, why are they all together not enough for the member to be satisfied that it is, in fact, protected?

• (2110)

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, as we know what even led us to this point was proposed section 4.1 being taken out originally, which started all of the concern. Of course, we had the heritage minister give this whole pretzel of information that was more confusing every time he spoke. I know there has been a number of amendments and recommendations, but as I said earlier in my speech, all of the recommendations did not even get discussed or fully debated at the committee. There were a number of other potentially very good recommendations. Sometimes it is not what is in there, it is what is missing. That is a big part of what has brought us here to our discussion today.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's interventions here in the chamber. They are always well said and well researched. She mentioned the process in response to the last question, about the committee work about what has been done or, as a matter of fact, what has not been done in terms of accountability.

Michael Geist is one of the experts. I know many of us have quoted him in this House. Thankfully, he has been following and live tweeting, and raising awareness to Canadians about this. I want to read a quote and have the member comment about the committee process. If the government and the opposition parties, the NDP and the Bloc, are so supportive of this, why is this the case? He wrote, “The committee just passed a Liberal amendment to Bill C-10 that has never been made public. Committee is just reading amendment numbers with no information [being] provided. Chair says he cannot given any details. Literally secret law making.”

If the government is so proud of the legislation and the amendments, can the member comment about why this is happening in committee then?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely part of the concern. All parliamentarians were not privy to all of that information, and the general public is not. As I mentioned earlier in my speech, a lot of the people who have been reaching out to me from the public have been doing their own research and following this. We have to know that people are well versed and well researched. They are not people who are what some of the other members might say are part of our base. These are everyday people from all walks of life who are as concerned about this as we are and part of it is because of this code of silence and non-transparency.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of the free-speaking riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Government Orders

When I spoke on Bill C-10 last December, I called this bill a fraud, an attack on freedom of expression, and a particular danger to the rights of Canadians speaking minority language. Since debate at second reading, this bill has become so much worse. The bill was already an assault on freedom of expression, but the process to ram this bill through Parliament is an assault on the foundation of parliamentary democracy. Undemocratic means have undemocratic ends. In the end, what we have is a bill so flawed, so regressive, so illiberal, the government must cut off all debate.

When I spoke against the Internet censorship bill at second reading, I highlighted how this bill is an offence against Canadian values. It is an attack on freedom. It is an attack on truth. It is an attack on multicultural heritage. Even before this bill was made worse in committee, it was an affront to freedom of expression. By removing the clause protecting social media, the Liberal government has made the violation so clear that every Canadian is now aware of the threat to their freedom.

This bill offends Canadians' sense of honesty by perpetuating a fraud and claiming video delivered over the Internet is the same as a video delivered by broadcast. Internet video streaming has more in common with video rental stores, movie theatres or book stores than they do with broadcasters. Internet video streaming, movie theatres and book stores sell a product to Canadians. Broadcasters turn Canadians into the product and sell them to advertisers.

One business model sells the work of cultural expression to Canadians. The other business model uses works of cultural expression to sell Canadians to big business. Broadcasters sell Canadians to advertisers using publicly owned airwaves and regulated cable monopolies. The federal government has the authority under the Constitution to regulate broadcasters. Movie theatres, video rental stores and book stores fall under provincial jurisdiction, even if they are foreign owned.

The bill is unconstitutional even before it attacks the charter. Canadians are already fed up with Super Bowl commercials being substituted. How do Liberals think they are going to like the idea of their favourite YouTube streaming video being substituted by some CRTC-approved Canadian video? They would never try this with books or movies.

Canadians are not forced to buy a Canadian book to read *A Game of Thrones*. Canadians are not forced to watch a Marvel movie filmed in Vancouver to attend a foreign film festival. If the Liberals tried this with books or theatres, it would be clear that this was wrong. However, the problem with this bill is the violation to freedom is more subtle, at least it was until the government removed section 4.1. That is when it stopped being a subtle attack on a freedom of expression and became a full on assault.

The government will claim it has no interest in censoring Canadians' cat videos, but that is not the concern. The concern being expressed, since the removal of section 4.1, is not that the CRTC will take down YouTube posts, it is that YouTube would take down or de-prioritize videos in order to comply with regulations. A counter argument that we should not worry about cabinet putting its thumbs on the CRTC scales because of the regulatory system takes a hit when one considers that Bill C-10 streamlines the process of cabinet giving directives to the CRTC.

That is not to say the Prime Minister would go around ordering YouTube posts to be taken down. It is just the limitations on what any future cabinet could do is reduced. Deleting parliamentary committee oversight of cabinet directives to CRTC may not be Orwellian, but it is what an Orwellian-minded government would also do.

● (2115)

I do appreciate the attention being drawn to regulations because that is where the original threat to freedom of expression lies. Compliance with these regulations comes with a relatively fixed costs. For Netflix that cost can be spread out over seven million Canadian households, but for a smaller streaming service, that cost may be spread over 700,000, 70,000 or 7,000 households.

As the popularity of the type of expression decreases, the cost to receive it increases. The only cost to receive any broadcast expression is the cost of a receiving device, but streamers charge end users. The whole point of having that freedom is not to protect the majority or popular expression, but the minority or unpopular expressions. This is not to say that web giants cannot be regulated, but fundamentally they are not broadcasters and cannot be regulated as such without impacting freedom of expression.

As I said earlier, Internet streaming services are more akin to movie theatres and bookstores, both of which are currently restricted under provincial registration. Is that closure a limitation of freedom of expression? It sure is. Is that reasonable in a free and democratic society during a pandemic? Ultimately that will be for the courts to decide, but at least there is a public purpose other than to grab some cash for the well-connected.

The point is that movies, bookstores and Internet streamers can be regulated, but it has to be in the public interest and by the appropriate level of government. Just as we have regulations that say someone cannot build a bookstore made out of dry kindling, someone cannot build a digital service that threatens to burn down democracy and not expect some public interest.

Any opposition to Bill C-10 is being framed as opposition to Canadian culture or logically extending to opposition of the Canadian content system. It only furthers the attempt to force a new digital world into an old analog paradigm, which also cuts off discussion on how to update the Canadian content system to the digital world. The whole idea of needing a system to feature Canadian artists to Canadians comes from a time when we were culturally insecure, but we are not that country any more.

We are the most diverse country in the world. We import culture and we brag about it. We are a proud, confident country. We do not live next door to the United States on the Internet. We live next door to everyone online. Canadians are amazing and our artists are awe-inspiring.

At the end of the day, cutting through the government rhetoric about Bill C-10, it is not about protecting culture or online harms. It is about money and rent-seeking. The government needs money and needs industry interest groups with euphemistic names to say nice things about them in French.

Until now the cost of this rent-seeking was largely borne by advertisers or CRTC-inflated cable bills. The government likes to claim that it will go on to fund artists, but it really ends at the money going to producers and their lobbyists.

The difference now is that the costs will not be paid by web giants, but by consumers. The methods to collect the money are media fund levies, regulatory compliance costs, a new digital service tax and HST on top of all of it. Together this adds up to a massive regressive excise tax. There is an HST credit to offset the regressive nature of that tax, but there is no rebate for the GST or the Canadian content media levy.

The government is not forcing web giants to pay. It is forcing low-income Canadians to pay and to pay the most. It does not have to be this way. We can regulate online businesses in the interest of public safety, and we can do it without threatening freedom of expression.

• (2120)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I honestly do not know where to begin. I am trying to find something relevant, interesting and enlightening in my colleague's speech, but honestly, I cannot find any such thing.

For months, I have had the so-called “pleasure” of working on Bill C-10 at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Now I wonder, because I am hearing falsehoods. It is said that if a lie is repeated often enough, people will start to believe it. An argument can even be built on a false foundation.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks we can do to protect Quebec and Canadian culture and all its diversity. I am talking about protecting indigenous content, francophone content in Quebec, but also outside Quebec, in francophone communities across Canada. How does my colleague plan to protect this identity in a bill that is essential and that is recognized as such by every industry player? How does she think we can get there, when what I am hearing does not make much sense?

I would like her response and her idea of what exactly should be done to protect the Canadian broadcasting system, which needs protecting and should have been protected long, long ago.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I do not think Canadian broadcasting needs to be protected. It is great on its own.

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Let us take culture. There is not just culture in one part of the country or another part of the country. For example, Letterkenny Road on the edges of our riding inspired what started off as a YouTube show and then eventually went on to TV, but that may never have passed the sniff test with the CRTC or the censorship czar. It is the freedom of every pocket of culture to put forth what they want.

As I discussed earlier, when there is a small group of people speaking a certain language, which may not have the ability to spread the costs, it is going to be pounded on it from government across many hundreds of thousands, those few people who have the language to listen to are going to have to pay a whole lot more for it.

• (2125)

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight we have listened, and we have seen and heard that we need a good bill, not that we have a good bill, but that we need a good bill. We are here to hold the government to account, and I wonder if my hon. colleague could tell us how the government has prorogued and has filibustered committees. Again, we are here to hold the government to account and get a good bill for Canadians. I wonder if she could comment on that.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, it is not about how fast we can get a bill through, and if the Liberals had not prorogued and stalled and shut down Parliament to begin with a year ago and then slowly, and bit by bit, allowed us to talk, and then mismanaged the whole order and business of the government and the bills, we would not be under the gun to rush through a bill that is no good. Just because it has been before Canadians for a long time, does not mean it has been perfected. If anything, the more it is out there, the more we learn that it is flawed.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a short question for my colleague, which will give her the opportunity to explain herself, as she just gave an answer that took me completely aback.

She said that the broadcasting system does not need to be protected. I would like to give her the opportunity to correct what she said.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the broadcasters need to be protected. Broadcasters that are truly at the top of their game do not need protection, and I believe that we will go forward and onward with that.

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Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise for the second time in the chamber to debate Bill C-10. I had the opportunity to debate it back in December at second reading.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Carleton.

Bill C-10 will be remembered as an iconic piece of legislation if it is passed, but not for the reasons the government would want. We have seen over the course of the last seven months a terrible rollout, terrible communication and a terrible committee process. As a result, we are in the House of Commons in person and virtually across the country going until midnight or later because of the desperation of the government trying to ram this legislation through.

I will state tonight that on all the issues we have dealt with on Parliament Hill, in the House of Commons, I have heard from constituents the most on this issue and a lack of trust for the government's actions on Bill C-10. The actions that we have seen take place at committee over the course of the last couple of weeks has only exacerbated those concerns even more.

Comments were made earlier about how the Minister of Canadian Heritage had handled this portfolio. I listened with interest earlier tonight when he spoke about how proud he was of this bill, how proud he was of the consultations that were held not only by himself, but by his predecessor to bring forward this legislation. We should ask why we find ourselves in this situation. There will be university professors teaching political science students in years to come, using Bill C-10 as an example of what not to do to build public confidence on an issue and have a bill successfully pass through Parliament.

If the consultations by the previous minister and the current minister were so well done, why did the government introduce a bill that, when it got to committee, and at one point I lost track, over 100 amendments were proposed, many from the industry and stakeholders. If they consulted and listened so well, why were they not included in the first place? The minister was on CTV's *Question Period*, as a prime example, and CBC's *Power & Politics*. His interviews were absolutely disastrous.

People ask why that matters in terms of legislation and policy. If the minister responsible for the bill cannot even give a decent performance in defending the merits of the bill, certain sections and concerns, that should tell us something. Not only were those media appearances terrible in explaining and trying to justify Bill C-10, on Monday morning the Prime Minister's Office had to issue retractions, saying that he did not mean that and it needed to be clarified. When that happens, it shows us what is happening with Bill C-10.

We are here tonight, and it is an absolute embarrassment for the government. I listened with interest to my other opposition colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. They said that the government had done a terrible job with the legislation, that it did not consult properly, that it should have done it sooner, but they would back the government up to ensure the bill was passed. It does not matter how bad the bill is or what is not in it, they want to pass the bill to say they checked off a box.

Many of my colleagues spoke tonight about problems and concerns with the legislation. I want to elaborate and be specific. I

want to take part of my time tonight to focus on an organization that is not very popular in the country these days, and for good reason: the CRTC.

In this updated legislation, the government and opposition parties have ganged up to take out the part that regulates individual content. The CRTC would have the power to take down content by individuals, and we would have no way of knowing if there were other amendments.

I want to thank a Canadian who I did not know of, but we have heard a lot about him in the debate on Bill C-10, and that is Michael Geist. I am kind of jealous of him. He has about 87,000 followers on Twitter now and has been an eminent voice, talking about the concerns with Bill C-10. If the government is so proud of its work and the bill before us, I want to read two tweets from Mr. Geist. He is a law professor and Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa. I would suggest he is an expert who is probably pretty well versed on this subject.

• (2130)

He has been following committees for weeks and weeks on end, many of those committee meetings being filibustered by the government. He has said two things.

He said, "The committee just passed a Liberal amendment to Bill C-10 that has never been made public. Committee is just reading amendment numbers with no information provided. Chair says he cannot given any details. Literally secret law making."

He followed that up in frustration right afterward, "Having spent hours watching Bill C-10 committee hearings, I'm out. MPs are voting on amendments that have never been made public, no experts to ask, no discussion, no debate. This is what Liberals, NDP and Bloc voted for. This is not how laws are supposed to be made in Canada."

I will agree with the NDP and the Bloc Québécois. The government has had six years to get this right. There is not an MP in the House who believes the Broadcasting Act of 1991 is still relevant in today's day and age. Back in the day when that law was passed, I was four years old. I was not watching it too attentively when it was passed under a previous government. To show members how outdated it is, I will do this again. Bryan Adams was topping the charts. Whitney Houston, Madonna, Boyz II Men and Vanilla Ice were some of the other names and, as my colleague from Kingston and the Islands says, we could only listen to them by radio back in 1991.

There is no denying that we need to update the Broadcasting Act, but I go back to the arguments that are technical and important. If this bill is so well-organized and if this bill is so wonderful, why has the government resorted to shutting down committee, ramming the legislation through and putting in amendments when we do not even know what they are. The government was mocking us earlier when we were raising our concerns and frustrations about the bill and the process. I have specified the role of the CRTC and I will get into that in a moment. However, it is hard to know what is in the final bill, because there is a gag order by the minister. I do not even know what the status of some of those parts and pieces are. That speaks volumes to this.

I want to take some time to speak about the CRTC. I have seen this before, and there is a perfect example. My colleague from Carleton is in the chamber and will speak to this after me. He asked the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry a couple of weeks ago about the recent CRTC decision by the chair, Ian Scott, on wholesale internet rates in the country. The CRTC reversed its commitment to lower ISP rates around the country. It was a huge controversy with huge frustration.

I have heard it from small Internet service providers in my riding. I want to give credit to Birket Foster of Storm Internet in Chesterville who has spoken about this. The CRTC is singlehandedly spiking the cost of Internet affordability in the country. I asked the minister about it. He said that was the CRTC and that he was working hard and trying, but it was the CRTC. The same thing is going to happen with this legislation.

We see vague definitions like Internet regulation, what it means for users and all this chaos and confusion. The government is handing over, it is kicking the can down the road to the arm's-length CRTC to make decisions based on vague wording and poor legislation. Then what happens is that the Liberals will say that it is not them, that it is the independent CRTC. I have said this before in the chamber and I will say it again. It is our job to get the details right. We all support Canadian content. With the Internet and the tools available to us, we do not need to protect Canadian content as much as we need to let it flourish.

I believe in our Canadian artists. We have seen examples through YouTube. We have seen numerous creators across the country use those platforms, make a living and elevate Canadian content. My constituents do not want to search something on YouTube based on what the government thinks they should see. They want to do it based on algorithms that show what other Canadians and other people who are interested in like-minded subjects see. We have seen the success that this can happen.

The government's approach is wrong. The Liberals know it is wrong. That is why they are going through a secretive committee process and trying to ram this through before the summer. Canadians are getting more and more concerned by the day on this.

I appreciate the opportunity to, once again, put on the record my strong opposition to the bill and to this process.

• (2135)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to give a quick recap, about four minutes ago the member

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said that everything would happen at arm's length from the government, that the CRTC would be regulating stuff. Then as he was wrapping up his speech, he said that he did not want the government to control what people were seeing.

That is the problem with the Conservative messaging on this. It is all over the place. I have a lot of respect for the member and the work he does in the House, but the reality is that we have a bill before us that is geared toward protecting and helping Canadian content flourish, just as it did when he and I were much younger in the early nineties. The Conservatives' approach to this is much like their approach to just about everything else they talk about, which is to leave it alone and let it sort itself out. That is what they are suggesting through this.

They are saying that we should let Canadian content be found by people, but what we know and what has been proven by the current legislation, which really has helped Canadian content and Canadian culture after its birth, is that it did wonders with respect to promoting Canadian culture, ensuring Canadian content got into the public so we could enjoy it. Otherwise it could have been drowned out by some of the influences from south of the border, for example.

• (2140)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and fellow eastern Ontarian is a former mayor and we have worked together doing previous work.

The people who will probably be the most happy with this legislation are the lawyers, who will get rich off this in the coming years through CRTC decisions.

I have spoken in the House on numerous pieces of legislation. In this case, the government does not properly define and give definition and angling. It kicks the can down the road to the CRTC to interpret. It is going to end up in numerous court cases, costing millions of dollars for lawyers from all over the country, contesting this back and forth for years to come. Lawyers will be better off with this legislation and process than Canadians artists are.

There is not one member in the House who does not support Canadian content, but it is how we do it. The Internet is different than TV and radio. It is an opportunity unlike we have ever seen before. Artists need to flourish in the country, not be held back by an arm's length, through the direction of whatever means, six men and women on the CRTC board. We need that freedom. That freedom has worked in the past and it can again.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my Conservative colleagues seem to be forgetting something.

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To refresh their memory, I would like to go back to an extensive study that I happened to read in the early 2000s. This study attempted to show the difference between Canadian and American culture.

When an English-speaking Canadian was asked what the difference is between them and an American, they responded that Canada has a public health care system and prefers multiculturalism to the melting pot.

When a francophone is asked the same question, they will talk about language and culture. It is true that there is not a big difference between the cultural products consumed by an English-speaking Canadian and an American, but, for a Quebecker, there is a fundamental difference. Bill C-10 makes it possible to protect Quebec's distinct culture, among other things, because that is what people in the cultural sector are asking for.

I am astounded that no Conservative realizes that.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, to assure the member, when we talk about Canadian content, that includes anglophone and francophone content in every part and every region of the country.

I have to give the members of the Bloc Québécois a bit of a shot. At different times today, and over the course of the last few weeks, they have criticized the process and said that the government really bungled this, that it did not consult properly and that there were a lot of things they would do differently. However, we are going through a process at committee where there are secret amendments, we do not know the details of them and we cannot discuss them. It is absolute chaos, there is total uncertainty, and they are trying to ram this bill through. Again, I would go back for the sake of a checkmark.

This legislation is not the way things should be done. I believe artists are embarrassed about the way that it has rolled out over the course of the last few months. With all due respect, the Bloc Québécois members have aided this process, not helped to make this bill any better.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 2(b) or not 2(b): That is the question. Section 2(b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is at stake. It reads:

freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression...freedom of the press and other media of communication.

Section 2(b) of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees us all the liberty to express ourselves without reserve and without coercion from the state. That is a core principle of our constitutional heritage. Although it was embedded in the charter in '82, it goes back hundreds of years through the English liberty this parliamentary system transmitted from one generation to the next.

A great English author, Orwell, said, "If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear."

This bill seeks to take away that right and those freedoms. Do not take my word for it. I can quote directly from one of at least two former commissioners of the regulatory body that would be empowered under this bill to control Internet content. Peter Men-

zies described the bill as an assault on freedom of expression. Another former CRTC member explained that it would allow political appointees to determine what we see and say on the Internet.

There is a lot we do not know about this bill, first because numerous of its amendments were voted before they were even made public at committee. In my 17 years here, I have never seen that happen before. Second, we do not know things about this bill because the minister cannot answer basic questions. For example, the bill supposedly protects Canadian content, but the minister cannot tell us what Canadian content is. He was questioned by our terrific critic about numerous things. She asked whether he understood whether they were Canadian content or not, and he could not answer.

We do not know what will be promoted or demoted online under the rubric of Canadian content because no one in Parliament seems able to define it. I have a very simple definition. If it is made by a Canadian and it is posted online, it is Canadian content. Unfortunately, that definition does not work for the Liberal government. If it did, we would not need the bill. We would just let people continue to post the things they want and watch the things they want in freedom and peace.

The Liberals want a series of bureaucrats, unnamed, unelected and unknown, to decide what Canadian content is heard and what is not. For example, when the CBC runs an effectively plagiarized news story one can get on CNN from Washington with a Washington-based reporter, that is exclusively about American politics and does not even say the word Canada, it will be considered Canadian content. Why is this? It is because it was paid for, tragically, by Canadian tax dollars. Other than that, there is literally nothing Canadian about it.

Another example is a community association in a Canadian neighbourhood telling us about a local food drive. It is in a Canadian neighbourhood. It has a Canadian author of a Canadian story, is a Canadian initiative in a Canadian city and is read almost exclusively by Canadian readers, yet it would not be considered, presumably, Canadian content and therefore would be demoted.

That is just the daily pedestrian content we get online. What about the more contentious stuff? The government is going to decide what kinds of political views are Canadian. Of course, endorsing the Prime Minister's leftist ideology will be a prerequisite of Canadiana. We can be sure of that. Liberal Party members have effectively been saying for generations that they and only they represent Canadian values, therefore only the values they espouse would be considered Canadian for the purpose of this act.

• (2145)

Furthermore, not only can the Liberals not tell us what content would be acceptable and what would not, but they cannot tell us who would be subjected to the bill. Originally, they had an explicit exemption for users: the everyday Joe and Jane who post stuff online. It is called user-generated content. The justice department said, “Don’t worry, the bill won’t affect any of them, because there’s a very specific exemption that excludes them.” However, the Liberals showed up at committee and, all of a sudden and just like that, the exemption was removed. Now everyday Joe and Jane who are posting online are regulated.

In effect, the minister said, “No, we won’t bother them. We’ll only bother people who have large social media followings.” I think he said on television that it was something like 100,000 followers. Well, I have 100,000 subscribers on my YouTube page, so presumably I would be subject to this regulation. We would have some sort of bureaucrat over at the CRTC judging whether my political views were Canadian enough to be seen by Canadian eyes. Those things not considered Canadian enough would presumably be filtered, demoted or eliminated altogether from the Internet. The platforms on which we make our political statements would obviously be concerned about the penalties they could face if they end up on the wrong side of a bureaucrat or a politician; therefore, they would begin self-censorship and proactively and organically censor things they thought the government might not want people to see.

Is it not interesting that the Liberals are in such a rush to get the bill passed before the election? Is there content they do not want Canadians to see before voting? That is the only explanation for the sudden rush. The Liberals have been in power for half a decade now, and this was never a priority before. All of a sudden, they need to ram it through by changing rules, voting on things we have not seen and curtailing committee hearings in a way that has never been done in parliamentary history, because it has to be a law and these bureaucrats must have these powers before the fall when the Prime Minister wants to call a snap election.

What is most amazing of all is that at least 95% of artists are against the bill. If we look online at the artists I have referred to, the actual producers of artistic material and the ones who are competing in the open and free market, they are not in need of a subsidy, because people actually want to watch and consume what they produce. The lobbyists, on the other hand, who are often quoted by the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Liberals, are all in favour of the bill. They want to shut out the competition because they have had oligopolistic powers for years. The broadcasting corporation loves the bill because it would allow the restoration of its oligopolistic power. It is a great corporatist power grab, with big government and big corporations working together as they always do.

This reminds of Frédéric Bastiat talking about the French economy. There were all these controls to protect every interest group from competition. He effectively said, “I think we should take this to the logical end and I want to ban windows, because that will double the business for the candlemakers. Without windows, there would be no light indoors during the day and one would need more candles to keep the place illuminated. Let us shut out the sun to ban competition with candles and create more jobs for the candlemakers.” Of course, he meant it in jest, but he was trying to demonstrate

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the absurdity of trying to bring about prosperity by banning competition. In fact, we have better prosperity and greater light of day when the windows are open so the light can come in and everybody can see and choose for themselves.

What is the government so afraid of? Is it that people might say and see things online that the government does not want to be said and seen? Why not allow the free exchange of ideas to determine which ones rise to the top? Sure, there is a clash. Democracy is always messy. “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others”, as Churchill said. It is through that clash of ideas that the best ones emerge and we as a people move forward; however, only if we stand true to our constitutional heritage, 2(b), and uphold that freedom will we achieve that great success.

• (2150)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague mused about what Canadian values are. He was concerned that only leftist values would count, supposedly because the Liberal Party has been saying for years that it is the only party that properly represents Canadians and so on. I would refer him to clause 2 of the bill, where it states on page 6 that programming would have to be “varied and comprehensive, providing a balance of information, enlightenment and entertainment for people of all ages, interests and tastes”.

Subclause 2(4) of the bill goes on to set out the new provisions of subparagraph 3(1)(i)(ii) of the act as follows: “...are in the unique position of being able to provide varied programming to meet the needs of specific audiences”.

Specific audiences include the left, the centre, the right; it is all about freedom of expression, the freedom that is valued by all Quebecers and all Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, who decides? That is the question. She says that the act will ensure there is a balance. All right, but who will decide what that balance is? There will be an official who says that a balance means 50% of one opinion and 50% of another, and that there is not enough room for a third opinion.

Who will decide what is a different opinion?

There are millions of opinions. It is not possible for a government agency to decide on an appropriate proportion of diverse opinions. It is the people who watch with their eyes, speak with their mouths and decide for themselves. I find it astounding that the Bloc wants to give a federal government in Ottawa the power to decide instead of giving that power to Quebecers.

We support the freedom of every Quebecer.

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● (2155)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if one is to believe what the member is saying and that this bill is only intended for the Prime Minister to be able to sit there, pull some levers and control who gets to see what, how can the member explain the fact that the Bloc, the NDP and the Green Party all support it?

If what he is saying is actually correct, why is virtually every MP here supporting this except the Conservatives? Have they suddenly decided to go along with this grand plan that the member is suggesting through his borderline conspiracy theories?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, why do the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberals all support the bill? It is simple: They are all the same. They all believe in putting the state above the citizen. That is the core of their ideology. They believe in worshipping at the altar of the state, that big government should decide and the people should just follow. All of them bought into that notion.

They have always believed it but they heard, in the words of the finance minister a “political opportunity” in COVID. It was a political opportunity that saw the Prime Minister attempt to give himself the power to raise any tax to any level without parliamentary approval for two years after the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The Liberals attempted to grab unprecedented spending powers and yes, they have now tried to grab people's freedom of expression. All the leftist authoritarian parties believe in that ideology and that is exactly why they support this bill.

That is the easiest question I will ever answer in this place.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the main things for my colleagues has been the issue of trust and how much it has been broken by this bill. We have heard from members of the House from all parties that many of their constituents are concerned about this bill. Many of my ethnic, new Canadian and immigrant populations are most concerned. They come from countries where they do not have the liberty of freedom of expression or freedom of speech. This bill concerns them because they ask why they left countries like that to come here when it is the same thing.

Can the hon. member please elaborate on what he is hearing from his constituents?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is the same as what he has been hearing. The member has been championing the rights of all Canadians.

The Toronto Star went looking for support for this bill and talked to a group of Canadians of African origin who said that under the old CRTC rules they could not get their voices heard. Only with the freedom of the Internet have they been able to speak up.

We want to preserve that freedom for people of all backgrounds, of all races, from all places. That is what freedom means.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that the debate on Bill C-10 went completely off the rails tonight. The Conservative Party

is giving us a demonstration, and a fine one, unfortunately, that it has become the party of conspiracy theories.

To hear the Conservatives tell it, Bill C-10 will take away every liberty we enjoy in Canada. The CRTC, one regulator among many in Canada, will be above all the laws and will be able to decide all sorts of things. The House will please forgive me for saying so, but it really feels like we are in a bad B movie. In a country like Canada, we might show a bad B movie on the big screen or on Netflix, but it would still remain a bad B movie.

Several members from various parties of the House have shown numerous times how many sections of the bill exclude individuals and protect freedom of expression, freedom of creation and journalistic freedom. Despite that, when the Conservative Party decides it has stumbled upon a fundraising gold mine, misleading people is no big deal.

The previous member talked about something absurd. What I personally find absurd is that we are allowing there to be two regimes: one that imposes rules on broadcasters, on independent Canadian producers and on all the companies that already exist, and another regime that imposes no rules on the web giants, on the world's biggest and wealthiest companies.

The Conservatives do not see that as a big deal; so be it. The Conservatives do not want those companies to invest in Canadian artists and talent. They want those companies to make money here but without paying their fair share. For a party that claims to be there for the people, for the middle class, for small and medium-sized businesses, I find this to be a complete aberration.

We have heard all kinds of arguments, including that emerging artists, those who are prominent on platforms like YouTube, were not consulted and no one spoke with them.

The Conservative Party claims to stand up for the French language, so I would refer it to the French-language article that appeared in the newspaper *Le Devoir* two weeks ago, on May 26, for which several vloggers were interviewed. Fred Bastien, a vlogger with 34,000 subscribers, talked about something that really bothers him. If nothing is done to make French content discoverable, he believes it will get lost in a North American ocean of people who essentially speak English. In his opinion, Bill C-10 absolutely must get passed.

I could quote the great Canadian artist, Damhnait Doyle.

● (2200)

[English]

She was recently interviewed as well, and I think what she said is important. She said:

We are forgetting what happened 50 years ago. Fifty years ago, Canadians could not get played on the radio. It was all American music, it was all British music until the government stepped in and made sure that Canadians were played on Canadian radio. If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't have the Tragically Hip, we would not have Sarah McLachlan.

This is exactly what we are trying to do. Unless we modernize the Broadcasting Act, it is all going to be about American artists. Some Canadian artists will manage to emerge, but the vast majority of them will be forgotten. It is the same for French artists. It is the same for indigenous artists, who are just starting to emerge. We are going to quash their ability to do that. For those who are already successful on platforms like YouTube, Bill C-10 would not change anything.

I would like to quote Jean Yoon, Umma of the amazing *Kim's Convenience* series on CBC. She says, "My impetus as an artist has always been the creation of original Canadian work, from a culturally diverse perspective. That is always my preference as an actor in terms of film and television, to work on Canadian shows." What she says next is really important. "A nation that doesn't tell its own story doesn't know who it is."

That is really what is at stake. It is our cultural sovereignty, our capacity to continue telling Canadian stories. I watch American shows.

[Translation]

I really enjoy Scandinavian and South Korean series, but I think that as a country we have an interest from a cultural, artistic and certainly an economic perspective to continue to have the capacity to tell our own stories, to ensure that our creators are suitably compensated for the content that they broadcast on these platforms. That is what Bill C-10 does.

The CRTC, contrary to what we have heard several times this evening, has never moderated content. It has never told a radio or television station that it can broadcast one program but not another. The CRTC will not acquire that power through Bill C-10. We are told that experts say that if Bill C-10 is adopted it will be the end of the world as we know it. Some Conservative MPs have even compared what Canada is doing to China and various dictatorships.

I would honestly and sincerely invite those members to go and see how things work in a dictatorship. To say that Canada is a dictatorship is ridiculous. It is pathetic and it misleads Canadians. It is completely false. The CRTC is not above our laws. The CRTC needs to follow the laws of Canada. Some parts of Bill C-10 specify that the CRTC must respect freedom of expression and freedom of creation.

The law governing the CRTC specifies what the CRTC needs to do. As a regulator, the CRTC has some wiggle room, as do all regulators, but the CRTC must act within the limits of Canada's laws and regulations. The CRTC is not a state within a state. It is not a state that is above the state. That is absolutely ridiculous. I think that what we are seeing tonight is all the contempt that the Conservative Party has for our artists and Canada's arts.

The member spoke earlier about the excellent heritage critic, the member for Lethbridge, who had to publicly apologize for saying

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that artists, particularly those from Quebec, are outdated, stuck in the 1990s and out of touch with today's reality.

I think it is great that young entrepreneurs are able to succeed on YouTube. That is wonderful. Are the member and the Conservative Party telling us that that is what art is in Canada, succeeding on YouTube or nothing? That is not diversity. So much the better if some people are doing it.

I have had discussions with my counterparts in France, Germany, Ukraine and Scandinavian countries, and their governments are doing the same thing. They look at Bill C-10 and say that is an excellent idea. They want to do that too. These are not Anglo-Saxon countries, except for Canada where obviously there is French and English, as well as indigenous languages. If we do not protect our linguistic and cultural minorities, Canada will become nothing less than a branch of the United States and Hollywood. I think it is great that major American productions are filmed here. It is great, but it is not Canadian artistic creation. It boosts the economy and puts people to work. It is great. However, the arts in Canada, support for the arts, the development of the arts and Canadian artistic creation represent much more than foreign productions that come here because we have skilled labour and it costs less.

Bill C-10 is a bill for our artists. Our artists asked for it. Thousands of people were consulted on this bill. I have talked to more than 4,000 people over the past few months about Bill C-10 and the Yale commission received 2,000 briefs.

● (2205)

The idea that the Liberal Party let the cat out of the bag with respect to Bill C-10 is false. The Conservatives have always opposed the bill. Even when the Yale report was released, they said that they opposed it. The report was over 200 pages long. Barely one hour after it was released, the then leader of the opposition said he would throw it in the garbage.

As soon as Bill C-10 was introduced, the Conservative Party demanded that it be withdrawn immediately. The more things change, the more they stay the same. The Conservative Party's contempt for the arts sector is long-standing. We saw it under the Harper government. Members will recall when he said that everyone knows that artists and all those people go to cocktail parties.

I have news for the Conservative Party. Canadian artists earn \$24,000 on average. They are far from being ultrarich jet-setters. Some are wealthy, and I congratulate them, but that is not the reality of most artists. That is why government support is important.

Rather than talking about these grand conspiracy theories that we have heard about tonight, the Conservatives should be honest with Canadians and with the cultural and arts sectors. They should admit that they do not believe in those sectors.

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As I mentioned earlier, I spoke with more than 4,000 people. If there was one thing I did not hear once, it was the idea that the Conservative Party was there for them. I heard that about all the other parties. Out of over 4,000 people, no one told me that the Conservative Party was there to support them. I will not repeat in the House what I heard, but it was at the opposite end of the spectrum.

• (2210)

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to reassure the minister, the Conservatives enthusiastically support Canadian creators. We want them to succeed, and they are succeeding spectacularly. As the lead policy adviser of Ryerson University's audience lab reminded us, about 160,000 Canadian creators of varied ethnicities, genders and abilities lead the YouTube genre and generate millions and even billions of views.

Why would the minister give literally a blank legislative cheque to the unelected CRTC to meddle in these creators' success?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, there we have it again: It is all about YouTube. If people perform on YouTube, we consider them to be artists. If they are not performing on YouTube, we think what they are doing is simply no good and does not deserve our time of day, nor support from the state. For those who are already successful on YouTube, Bill C-10 would not change anything. Hopefully for them, they will continue to be successful.

What we want with Bill C-10 is for the web giants to pay their fair share. That is all we are asking. I thought if there was one thing the Conservative Party would be in favour of, it would be for everybody to pay their fair share, but it seems that no, they have decided to side with some of the wealthiest and most powerful companies in the world instead of supporting our artists.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is calling the Conservatives all kinds of things, claiming that they are attacking the cultural community and that he has never heard anyone think like the Conservatives.

I do not know if he listened to all the discussions in committee. Just look at the British Columbia Library Trustees Association, University of Ottawa law professor Michael Geist, University of Calgary law professor Emily Laidlaw, Carleton University professor Dwayne Winseck, Quebec artists like Mike Ward, former CRTC commissioner Timothy Denton, Konrad von Finckenstein, Peter Menzies, Michel Morin, and Philip Palmer, not to mention the thousands of Canadians who wrote in and urged us to make sure that the Liberals' Bill C-10 would not overlook them. The minister is making a big fuss and claiming that the Conservatives are attacking the cultural community.

We are not attacking the cultural community. We want to prevent freedom of expression from being restricted. Furthermore, we are speaking on behalf of thousands of Canadians across the country.

Does the minister think that these Canadians have the same right—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, when the topic of freedom of expression was debated in committee, the majority of the expert witnesses said that Bill C-10 was compliant and that it did not violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I have already said this publicly, and the member for Richmond—Arthabaska knows this: There are some people who should not be subject to any rules on the Internet. I recognize that. That is not the position of the majority of the parties in the House, it is not the position of the majority of the members in the House and it is not the position of the majority of Canadians. Study after study has shown that the majority of Canadians, nearly 80%, believe that the web giants should contribute their fair share.

There are some Canadians who disagree. We have seen this with the Conservative Party, but that is not what the majority of Canadians think and it is certainly not what the majority of—

• (2215)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, going back to some of the discussion earlier this evening around this bill, I, as well as members from the Bloc and the NDP, have continually been asking the Conservatives to specifically reference and cite the actual part of this bill that is of concern to them. None of them are willing to do that. It leads me to believe that this is just hyped-up rage that they have created over this issue for political gain.

Does the minister have any indication of what part of the bill specifically they are referring to when they go on with their talking points about all these concerns that they have about the bill?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Kingston and the Islands is bang on. All evening I have been asking myself about all these conspiracy theories we are hearing and the idea that we are creating a monster that is going to be bigger than the government. According to what we have heard tonight, Canada is about to overtake the Internet, nothing less than that.

Can they give us any concrete element of evidence? Can they point to anything in the bill about how this would happen? They cannot because—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I was disappointed at committee during important amendments that I wanted to speak to and debate, and hearing endless talking points about YouTube creators in this country. I looked up the top 100 YouTube creators in this country and could not tell them apart from American content.

However, when I talked to APTN about the importance of having their voices integrated into the Internet through these platforms, that was key. It is about building indigenous languages. It is about Canadian voices and bringing forward Canadian voices.

I would like to ask the minister about his comments on the importance of revitalizing indigenous language and indigenous culture in this country, and understanding indigenous cultures.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, that was a really important question. In fact, the member is correct. APTN and many other indigenous organizations that are involved in artistic creation in the production sector are supporting Bill C-10 for the very reasons he outlined. Basically, if we read the Broadcasting Act as it stands now, we are asking for broadcasters to invest in indigenous productions if they can. It is sort of an option. We want to make it mandatory to invest a certain percentage of the revenue that is generated in Canada into indigenous productions.

We have just invested \$40 million in the last budget for an indigenous screen office, for the first time ever in this country.

That is a really important question that goes to the heart of Bill C-10.

• (2220)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can reference one specific part of this bill that I have a great issue with. It is the fact that the government removed the provisions under proposed section 4.1, which specifically protect users of social media platforms, creators or influencers from being regulated by the government.

Tonight, in rhetoric through the debate, we just had the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith talk about how the top 100 YouTube accounts from Canada look a little too American for him. We had the Minister of Canadian Heritage earlier tonight asking my colleague from Lethbridge to apologize for her comments on this bill. This is the exact type of rhetoric that we need to protect content creators from, this interference on determining what is Canadian and what is not.

If the minister is sure that social media users would be protected under this bill, why did he remove the one provision in the bill that actually protected them from his control?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. It is very clear in the bill that a person who uses a social media service will be excluded. Companies like YouTube, the largest broadcaster of music in this country, are not being excluded from doing their fair share. If that is what the member wants and if that is what the Conservatives want, then we do not agree with them. The majority of parties in this House and the majority of members in this House do not agree with them.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and, from what I am seeing from the current government, possibly a privilege to be able to rise and speak to Bill C-10. I rise representing the good people of North Okanagan—Shuswap.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

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Bill C-10 is the Liberal government's attempt to have the online streaming giants contribute their fair share to Canadian content and the retention of Canadian culture, but it has gone terribly wrong. World wars have been fought to protect our rights and freedom of speech, and we must never let those rights and freedoms be eroded. Freedom of expression must always be protected.

How did this bill go so terribly wrong? When the minister and the current government introduced Bill C-10 last November, the Minister of Canadian Heritage told the House that the bill's amendments to the Broadcasting Act were aimed at benefiting Canadian artists and musicians by forcing web giants to increase investments in Canadian content. That is something I think we all agree on. This initial commitment seemed reasonable, especially considering the need for our Broadcasting Act to be modernized in light of the major changes in where and how we now source music, television and film entertainment.

A couple of weeks later, the minister told the House that Bill C-10 was aimed at film, television and music-streaming services, like Netflix and Spotify, and that the government was committed to introducing another bill aimed at social media platforms, like Facebook and so on. At that time, the minister also stated that user-generated content would not be subject to new regulations.

Despite these assurances, the bill's progression took a sudden turn on April 23, when the Liberal members at committee suddenly amended the bill to extend its powers to the regulation of user-generated content on social media platforms. A bill originally presented as essential to protecting and ensuring continued Canadian content suddenly became a government bill seeking to regulate what Canadians say and share on social media. Smart phone apps were also added to the purview of the proposed regulations.

These amendments prompted strong reactions from my Conservative colleagues and me, but they also sparked a strong reaction from social media experts and Canadians. I have heard more from my constituents in North Okanagan—Shuswap about their concerns regarding the freedoms they could lose through this amendment and this bill than about any other topic in recent history. That is how concerned Canadians are for their freedom of expression.

What we see all around the world, and here in Canada today, is that social media has rapidly become the central platform used by citizens to express their rejections or protests against injustices, including those of government. The proposals of Bill C-10 open the door for the federal government and its regulatory agency, the CRTC, to undermine our ability to continue exercising our critical democratic freedom of expression. After 14 months of living with pandemic restrictions, many Canadians isolated at home and relying on social media for information, connectivity and entertainment, I strongly question why the government has chosen this time to radically change how Canadians can use social media.

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I would also like to speak tonight about unintended consequences. It is something we have seen far too much of recently from the government, the unintended consequences of poorly drafted legislation. The case I want to tie into this debate tonight is the poorly drafted legislation in the government's Cannabis Act, Bill C-45, and how it is now having an impact on my constituents in North Okanagan—Shuswap.

• (2225)

I have now heard from constituents who are no longer able to get residential home insurance. Why? Because of poorly crafted and passed legislation. It has been disastrous for these constituents.

One man living on disability and trying to do things by the book was paying \$1,000 for his home insurance. That bill then went up to \$4,000 per year, then \$5,500, then \$6,500 and now more than \$7,000 per year for a man living on disability. Why? Because he grows cannabis under a medical licence, but he grows more than four plants. Four plants is the maximum allowed under the government legislation. His insurance company has basically raised his rates to the point where he has to almost mortgage his insurance payments because the legislation has made it too costly for him to get insurance and pay for it up front.

He is not the only one. Another couple contacted me. They each have medical cannabis licences. Because the two of them grow more than the four permitted plants, they cannot find insurance.

This is just one example of how the government has failed to look at unintended consequences.

I will also tie in some of the experiences I have had on other committees in dealing with unexplained, non-scientific decisions of the government. It may seem unrelated to this, but I am trying to point out that this legislation is poorly drafted and should be taken back or at least have the proper time spent at committee to correct it.

Tying this to the fisheries committee, there was a regulation regarding the prawn harvesters in B.C., that had been in place for about 50 years. Everyone was operating under those rules. All of a sudden, the government decided it was going to reinterpret those regulations. Basically, it was going to shut down a huge portion of the spot prawn harvesters in British Columbia, simply by a reinterpretation of the regulation that had been in place for 50 years. There was no explanation, no working with the stakeholders to try to figure this out for the future. It threw the whole system into disarray because of unintended consequences of an decision that had not been researched or had any background.

I sat in on the heritage committee last week when it was going through the amendments, those that could be talked about. I tried to bring forward some of these issues about unintended consequences and the Liberal members on the committee tried to shut me down. They tried to censor what should have been my freedom of expression at that committee, pointing out the errors that the government continued to make. The member for Calgary Nose Hill was also in the committee at that time and witnessed how that took place. She may tie that session at the committee into her speech momentarily.

It was interesting to see how quickly the government seemed to want to censor Canadians, especially us parliamentarians by shutting down the debate at the committee stage of this bill to the point where amendments could not even be read aloud by the chair. They simply had to be listed by number and then voted on. Nobody could discuss what the amendment would do, the benefits or disadvantages of it, none of that. All of this was shut down by the government, trying to censor debate on this bill. Now the Liberals have limited the time we will have to debate it in the House, and it is a shame. Something as serious as freedom of expression deserves full and uncensored debate.

• (2230)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have read and reread the bill, which repeatedly states that users will not be subject to the same rules as broadcasters. They will be able to upload whatever they want, so I am trying to understand the line. If there is really something dangerous here, I will be the first to fight it, but I have read and reread that all these threats the Conservatives are talking about will not apply to users. Would the member please tell me which clause he is talking about, and would he please specify the page and the line?

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, it was the removal of section 4.1, which protected user-generated content. That was in there. There was very little debate about the potential risks of the bill when that was in it. Why did the government remove that and then, after the Canadian public and Conservative members of Parliament raised alarms over that, start to backtrack? Obviously, it was a wrong move. Why?

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the fear of freedom of expression being constrained, so I just wanted to check with him. I am sure he has read the Bill C-10 legislation, but I am not sure if he has read the act itself. The act still says, in section 2(3), “This Act shall be construed and applied in a manner that is consistent with the freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence enjoyed by broadcasting undertakings.”

In subsection 35(2), it states, “This Part shall be interpreted and applied so as to protect and enhance the freedom of expression and the journalistic, creative and programming independence enjoyed by the Corporation in the pursuit of its objects and in the exercise of its powers.”

Then it says, again, “The Corporation shall, in the pursuit of its objects and in the exercise of its powers, enjoy freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence.”

Does the member know that is in the act, and it is still in the act?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, there were so many amendments put forward at the end of committee stage that were not even debated. We do not even know what those amendments were, because members were not been able to speak about them. I was there when there was and attempt to pass an amendment from our Conservative colleague that would have limited the restrictions on undertakings with more than \$50 million a year or less than 250,000 subscribers. The members on the committee voted against it. We were trying to protect the small users. They denied it.

• (2235)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my hon. colleague and a number of Conservative colleagues say how terrible it is to force closure on the opposition and pass Bill C-10 under time allocation.

I would just like to remind my Conservative colleagues that one government used closure more than any other government in the history of their country, of Canada, and that was Stephen Harper's government. During his final term in office, a majority government from 2011 to 2015, he beat Jean Chrétien's record for 1997 to 2000, which had broken Brian Mulroney's record for 1988 to 1993.

Here is my question for my hon. colleague: Why was it okay for them to do it then and even break the all-time record for closure motions, but it is not okay now?

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, the best example of time allocation by the Liberal government was about a year ago when it decided to prorogue Parliament because it did not like what was happening within the ethics committee and the discovery of the WE scandal. That, to me, was the grandest, most absurd application of time allocation that anyone in Canada has ever experienced.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that less than 10 years ago the only way to get around if people did not own a car and they wanted something outside of public transit, was a taxi. Then all of a sudden, something called Uber came along and it disrupted the taxi industry, so there was a large change in the market. The taxi industry reacted. Its members lobbied municipal, provincial and even the federal government to try and ensure that the status quo was protected.

We always want to ensure that people have jobs. When there are major disruptions in technology or industry, it should happen with order and discipline. However, Uber was always going to enter the market. It was a fact and it brought wealth and jobs, and it took away the gatekeepers of the taxi industry, the taxi licences and made that profession more accessible to many other people.

What we are hearing tonight is the federal Liberal government wanting to take away the ability of YouTubers, Facebookers, Instagramers, influencers to make a living, uninterrupted and unmitigated by the federal government, in favour of the cable companies, what I like to call the cultural industry.

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I was out with a friend and we were talking about watching a show. She wanted to know what I had watched recently that was good. We were talking about where a show was streamed, and they asked if cable was even a thing any more. Cable has been disrupted because of streaming services. Newspapers have been disrupted because of digital technology. The market has been disrupted. Rather than recognizing that reality and recognizing the new wealth and new voices that have come into play, the new platforms that have come into play, the Liberal government is trying to save the status quo for the benefit of the gatekeeper and to control the voices of Canadians. That is just the reality of it. That is what is happening here tonight.

We are in the House of Commons tonight debating this late at night because we do not want the bill to pass. The bill puts Canada in the dark ages. It silences. It has the power to silence the voices of many Canadians and it is obvious that the government is trying to do that with Bill C-10. We are fighting it with every action we possibly can because of the impact it is going to have on free speech as well as an entire industry in Canada.

I will give a brief history of time. Canada has always been preoccupied with ensuring that it is culturally distinct from the United States, because of the influence the American entertainment has had on Canada. Certainly when I was born in the early 1980s, when we only had radio and television and a certain type of content producers, that was the thing. We wanted to ensure Canadian voices were heard on the radio and TV. That is when existing Canadian content creation laws and programs came to be. It was to ensure that when a Canadian content creator, or specifically a French language content creator, was trying to put something into the market, it could compete with the Americans.

The Uber-style disruption in the market of cable television and things like that has levelled the playing field with zero dollars of government interference. It levelled the playing field. Voices that could never have the reach all of a sudden have a reach.

I want to give a shout-out to my cousin and her account Coupon Cutie on TikTok. She has 250,000 followers on TikTok where she teaches Canadians how to coupon. She wanted me to tell the Liberal Party that she does them a favour because she helps Canadians spend money, which the Liberals then spend on nothing. A shout-out for the Prime Minister from my cousin. She is equally as feisty as I am. She would not have had a voice. She would not have been able to go to Bell Media and get that type of a platform because she lives in rural Manitoba. She is a young woman.

These are the types of voices that are excluded by the big lobbying industries. The lobbyists and the telcos, the same people that jacked cellphone rates in Canada, the same people that protect our market such that we cannot have the same rates as Americans do, are the ones who gate-keep on the news on what content can be created. Of course, they do not want the government or my cousin and other people to have this type of reach because it challenges their artificial hold on the market.

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● (2240)

Now the government wants to put these other voices to the side for the benefit of these big lobbyist groups. Does anyone think my cousin has a lobbyist? Does anyone think she could afford a \$500-an-hour GRPR specialist to come and advocate for her? No, and she should not have to.

Why is this bill in front of Parliament? I am just going to call a spade a spade. This is about votes, and it is about votes in Quebec. It is. I fully believe that Quebec content and French-language content should be at the forefront of things we do in Canada. It is important for the French language to have a prominent place in the content that Canadians consume. All these platforms have done that.

Earlier today, a member of Parliament, in questions and comments, said that they had looked at the top 100 YouTube accounts and they kind of look American. They thought we should ensure that Canadian voices are heard. What does that mean?

What that is code for, and what the Liberals are doing, is that they want to be able to pick and choose who has a say. That is what it is. Members of the Liberal Party will want me to point to one area of the bill that I would like to see changed. There was a provision in the bill that specifically excluded individual social media accounts from the bill. What did the Liberals do? They removed it from the bill.

Over and over again the Liberals are saying that nobody can tell them what is wrong with the bill, but there it is. When I asked the minister why he did not include that, and why did he remove it, he could not answer. This bill is to the benefit of really rich and entrenched lobbyists who benefit from funding programs that are 40 years old, instead of people who have intersectional voices and people who have not had platforms.

Anybody in Canada could pick up their phone and have a voice. What the federal Liberal government wants to do is to give the regulator, the CRTC, the ability to say who gets to be seen, who gets to be seen in the Facebook algorithm or the YouTube algorithm or maybe at all. That is what this bill does.

The other thing Liberals are saying tonight is that it does not do that. I encourage people to go to the Toronto Star. On the weekend there was an article that asked if the CRTC was too cosy with the big telco companies. The Toronto Star was saying this. Of course they are, because the big telco companies benefit from the monopoly that is entrenched in Canada's regulations.

We are so archaic. We are so behind in Canada. Instead of further entrenching the status quo, we should be unleashing the ability of Canadians to create content. Frankly, at this point in time and at this juncture in our nation, why are gate keeping content creation funds through the government bureaucracy? We could do quadratic financing, a fancy way of crowd sourcing content creation funds for anybody in Canada.

Why are we still so focussed on that with CBC or the big telcos? It is actually, in some ways, racist, misogynistic and not inclusive. The Liberals are entrenching a system of gatekeepers. The CRTC is run by six old white guys. I am tired of this.

If this bill was so great for social media users and would not influence individual social media users, then why did the Liberals remove that position? This bill has to be stopped. Individual Canadians, regardless of how they vote, know that no politician in this place should be putting a chill on freedom of speech and content creation in an industry that is being disrupted the way that this bill is.

The Liberals are moving everything. They are trying to ram this bill through the House of Commons against the advice of experts at a speed we have never seen them move at in this Parliament. It is because they are preparing for an election, and they want to appease their masters that gatekeep these industries. That is to the detriment of French language creators in Quebec. It is to the detriment of every person who has a platform in Canada.

Enough with the censorship and enough on freedom of speech. Bill C-10 needs to be stopped. It needs to be repealed. The leader of my party has said that if we formed a government, we would repeal it, but I would like to stop it here tonight. I appeal to all of my colleagues of all political stripes to wake up and understand that this bill is not in the best interests of any Canadian.

● (2245)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is on the member's cousin and what is preventing her from sharing her stories and getting her content out there as a content creator.

We heard about the fact that the CRTC is six white men who are making decisions about what the CRTC deems as Canadian content, but when her family member puts content out on the Internet, does the member know who is now deciding who gets to see that content?

It is one white man. It is Mark Zuckerberg, or whoever is doing the algorithms. To say that it is not equal is an embarrassment to Canadian stories. I want to see Canadian content. I want to see Canadian content makers. Canadians deserve better than that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, my colleague should understand that AI algorithms within social media platforms are not run by Mark Zuckerberg. That is just preposterous. Algorithms are built based on user-generated data. We could have a whole conversation here about data ownership policies, which are non-existent in this country.

In terms of the member's question, it is patently preposterous to the level of American senators asking Mark Zuckerberg about what an email is. It just belies such a lack of understanding on how this works. It is actually the opposite of what she said. AI-generated algorithms in social media platforms, for the most part, are feeding content to an individual end users based on their needs and wants, which is the perfect medium for social media and for Canadian content to be distributed around the world.

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Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would hate for my former education in computer engineering to come shining through, but the member is incorrect.

AI algorithms are not solely based on what the user wants, and I think that was the NDP member's point. They are also driven by what the individuals who control the lever want to push forward, and quite often that has to do with who is paying them to advertise. It would be a great world if AI-generated content was based solely from what the user wanted, but that is not the reality. The reality is that a lot of that is being driven by what the controller wants the user to see.

What the member from the NDP was trying to point out was that we have Conservatives standing up in this House saying that the federal government, the Prime Minister, is going to sit there with levers controlling who gets to see what. All the member from the NDP was trying to say is that it is already happening, and it is happening, in Facebook's case, by Mark Zuckerberg.

• (2250)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, what the bill would do is make the lever of control that guy who just spoke up, and that should send chills through the heart of every Canadian. Do they really want that guy and Liberal hand-picked appointees telling them what they want to watch? No. Again, it is the propping up of a system that is 40 years old, a system that has completely disrupted this.

Who is the lever on this? It is big lobbyists. It is big culture. It is all of these people who can afford to pay to maintain a monopoly as opposed to individual end users, and the Liberals have actually removed protection for them from the bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the issue we are debating is fascinating, but its premise is flawed since freedom of expression is not being infringed upon.

Our understanding of the principle of discoverability of Canadian content is being skewed by a lot of rhetoric, semantic manipulation, or what have you.

Experts appeared before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to defend every opinion. Some said that the bill would infringe on freedom of expression, others said the opposite. It seems that my Conservative colleagues really did not want to hear the other version or show the slightest open-mindedness, unlike the other members of the committee, who welcomed the experts of both parties with openness.

I would like to ask my colleague if, in all honesty, she thinks there would have been an opportunity for the Conservatives to hear another version than the one that had been whispered in their ears by those who claim there is indeed an infringement on freedom of expression, even though that is not the case.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, we are sitting here talking about who should control the levers on content viewing in a disrupted industry. What would have been a much better piece of legislation would have been frameworks to prevent big data

companies from using algorithms that could be racist or sexist. We could actually open up those algorithms so they learn based on a user's wants and needs rather than what the companies are assuming around it.

Instead, what we have here is 10 times worse because it is actually entrenching the federal government's ability to downgrade content or remove content based on their whims. We have the Minister of Canadian Heritage, like the Orwellian minister of truth, literally telling my colleague, who is a critic on this bill, that she should apologize for criticizing the bill during debate before it passes. To me, that tells me all we need to know, which is that this bill is flawed, the government wants to use it to control speech and it is something that should be fought vigorously every step of the way.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been in the House for some time listening to the debate tonight, so it is an honour to finally stand and speak.

This past year, we have seen the very best and the very worst of government in our system of democracy. When all parties were working together as the committee of the whole to address the COVID-19 crisis, we saw how well the government could work together. I am going to talk about some of the ways it worked well before I get negative and talk about the ways it has not been working.

I want to make it clear it is not that all opposition party members supported everything the government did during the COVID period. I, for one, have stood in this House many times repeatedly challenging the government to do better, particularly when it came to protecting Canadians from COVID-19 and all of the detritus that came with it. I stood in the House to make sure there were public health rules in place, that there was sick leave, that Canadians could stay home if they needed to, that there were things in place to help fight the virus in Canada and around the world without having to choose between their own well-being and the health of others. I will keep doing that. I will keep standing in this House of Commons as an opposition member to urge the government to do a better job taking care of Canadians. I will stand in this House and get it to close loopholes in its legislation.

There is a company in my riding, Cessco Fabrication. I have brought up probably a dozen times in the House that the government's wage subsidy program is being used to pay for scab labour so that this company does not have to negotiate with its workers. I have brought it up time and time again, and I will continue to do that.

It is really important that I push for students, seniors and people with living with disabilities.

One thing members have heard me say so many times is that if we do not vaccinate people around the world, none of us is safe, and that I am disappointed in the government's response to that.

Government Orders

The government itself adopted many of the opposition solutions that were offered. The government did bring forward the 75% wage support, the CERB was \$2,000 a month and there was limited support for students and paid sick leave. This is how the government should work. The government should propose and opposition members should make it better. I am proud, as a new parliamentarian, that I was able to do that. I am honoured to have been part of that effort.

However, this has not been the case with Bill C-10. In fact, the entire process, including the debate this evening, is an example of the worst forms of democracy and government. It started with an extremely flawed bill that the minister himself could not explain. When the bill was tabled in November, it was immediately apparent to everyone, the government included, that it was a flawed piece of legislation. The Yale commission clearly identified Canadians' concerns with how web giants were dominating our broadcasting and culture, but were excluded from the current Broadcasting Act and, thus not subject to oversight, not held to the same standards as Canadian companies and, worse yet, not contributing taxes or funds to the Media Fund. The bill, as it was tabled, ignored all of those issues and I stood with my colleagues in the NDP and said on the day that bill was tabled that this was going to be problem and we needed to fix this.

Facebook, YouTube, companies that make billions of dollars in revenue from Canadians and Canadian content were excluded from the bill. For anyone who was worried about what that proposed section 4.1 was, it was excluding social media. It was letting Facebook and YouTube off the hook. It was saying that they could use Canadian content and they did not have to pay for it. It was selling out our cultural sector. We needed to fix that legislation.

I was worried because we know that Facebook has lobbied the minister and the department over 100 times. Their incessant lobbying seemed to pay off. Representatives met over and over again and then, all of a sudden, they were not in the bill. The minister floundered in responses to questions about the bill and the lobbying. He was unable to answer questions about his own bill to Canadians, unable to answer questions about its application in committee and unable to defend its rationale from critics.

• (2255)

The result was a committee review process that at the very best of times was disorganized and at the worst was completely dysfunctional. I know that because I was there. I was on that committee.

Immediately, 121 amendments to the bill were filed. The minister has said that perhaps this is a normal number of amendments for a bill of such of complexity and the breadth and depth of this legislation means it is not surprising, but what was surprising was the number of government amendments filed. The government knew this legislation was flawed, so it was a clear indication the bill was not ready when it was tabled and that the minister was not ready to endorse and oversee it.

Still, and this is the most important point, Canadians need a broadcasting act. We have heard it time and time again in this House from everybody but the Conservative Party. We have a 30-year-old Broadcasting Act. It is well overdue for us to have legisla-

tion in this country that will fix the holes in the Broadcasting Act. Canada desperately needs an updated Broadcasting Act.

Canadian broadcasters, media companies, producers, filmmakers, writers and artists all need an updated Broadcasting Act. Canadians who value Canadian news and Canadian content need and want a broadcasting act as well. It was absolutely vital that we roll up our sleeves in committee and we fix this bill to create a broadcasting act that would work for Canadians. It was an excruciating process, because instead of working with my colleagues, many of whom I admire and who worked very hard in this committee, politics kept getting in the way.

Again, this is what I mean when I say the worst of government and democracy. The Conservatives saw a weak minister with a flawed bill, and rather than roll up their sleeves and do the work that needed to be done so we could fix this legislation, they smelled blood in the water and attacked. They took advantage of the committee process and the flaws in the bill to spread disinformation about the bill far and wide, and then they filibustered the committee so we could not even get to the amendments that would fix it. We could not even fix the things they raised as concerns because they would not stop filibustering the committee to allow us to do that.

All across Canada we were hearing the most outrageous accusations about the bill. I had one constituent tell me he had read that individual Canadians' tweets would not post until they had been reviewed for Canadian content by the CRTC. The things that were being told to Canadians by the Conservatives were absolutely outrageous.

I listened to the member for Lethbridge yell "freedom" so many times that I was in a panel with her and I thought maybe I was on a panel with *Braveheart*. All this did was waste time and confuse Canadians, and with a minister who could not adequately explain his bill, the disinformation campaign found oxygen it never should have had.

It brought us here to this evening to the last-second attempt to rush this bill through before the session ends. The government had six years to update the Broadcasting Act, and in the end, it served up a flawed bill that took so much work for us to fix.

As a member of the heritage committee, I worked very hard with my fellow members to close the Liberal loopholes and fix problems in the legislation. I voted in favour of a Conservative motion for a second charter review to ensure the Broadcasting Act would not infringe on personal freedoms of expression, and that review was done.

I supported a motion to force the ministers of justice and heritage to appear at committee to address concerns over freedom of expression. I proposed that the committee meet more often and for longer hours. I proposed to extend the deadline so more work could be done. I voted against closing debate and I even put forward a motion asking the committee to debate the bill through the summer months so we could get this work done. All the parties voted against that.

● (2300)

In the end, the Liberals closed the committee debate and we were forced to vote on amendments without even discussing them. It is not my idea of good government.

I fully welcome the attention that Bill C-10 has aroused in Canadians. The Broadcasting Act affects us all on a daily basis, and I am heartened to see so many Canadians engaged in the legislative process. It is true that many Canadians are profoundly misinformed about the bill, which is, of course, in no way their fault. I would say it falls very much on the shoulders of some of our members of Parliament who have taken great joy and have done an awful lot of fundraising off the idea, the misinformation that they are spreading and the fear that they are sowing among Canadians.

The issues addressed in Bill C-10 are complex and every country in the world is grappling with those issues right now, attempting to find a way to protect their own citizens, their own content, their own identity and their own media platforms from web giants that do not have to follow the same rules as everyone else, web giants that pull in hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue without giving anything back and companies that leave a swath of local and national media and entertainment venues languishing in their wake.

While I am dismayed by the disinformation permeating the debate on this bill, some of it coming from the web giants themselves in an attempt to resist and avoid regulation, I will vote for Bill C-10 because I worked so hard to fix this legislation. I worked so hard to make sure that people's freedom of expression was protected and that in the end web giants were held to account and that they were contributing to our broadcasting sector.

I have said it before and I will say it again: It is vital that we modernize the Broadcasting Act. The current version of the act was updated in 1991, before the Internet and before streaming services. The Broadcasting Act cannot, as it stands, address the new landscape. It cannot protect Canadians or Canadian content and it must be updated.

For me and my fellow New Democrats, the goal has always been to make sure that we had a bill that would make web giants like Facebook, YouTube and Netflix follow the same rules as Canadian companies and contribute to Canadian content just like Canadian companies are required to do. We have fought both to protect freedom of expression and to ensure that web giants are on an even playing field with Canadian companies. Canadian media and content are under extreme pressure and the web giants have a competitive advantage right now. That competitive advantage must end with this legislation.

Thanks in part to the amendments offered by all parties, Bill C-10 now would utterly protect individual rights to freedom of ex-

pression on all platforms. The CRTC powers are limited by this bill to broadcasters and the bill specifically excludes individuals from regulation. Users who upload content to social media services would not be subject to the act. In fact, the bill now contains four sections specifically exempting individuals from the act, and this bill would protect Canadian culture and heritage.

Arts and culture are at the heart of who we are. They are what make us Canadians. It is how we listen to and understand each other better. It is how we connect across the vast distances in our country and it is how we celebrate our identities. It is how we share our incredible stories with each other, in both official languages and with the entire world. We must protect our heritage and support a strong, independent arts and culture industry. Without that protection, Canadian talent will not thrive. We need Canadians to succeed on both digital and traditional platforms. Here at home and around the world, Canadian artists should be able to earn a decent living from their art, and this bill has an important role to play in making sure that the wide range of Canadian voices with stories to tell are those stories that we see on platforms.

When Bill C-10 is enacted, the next step is to increase the funding for CBC and Radio-Canada to help reverse the damage done by decades of funding cuts and unequal rules that have favoured foreign competition.

● (2305)

Our public broadcaster has a remarkable legacy of connecting all points of our country, and it needs a stronger future to help make sure Canadians have access to accurate, relevant information no matter where they live and no matter what language they speak.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the member for Edmonton Strathcona this evening was like taking a deep breath of fresh air. Certainly, she hit all of the points with respect to this legislation, and I would agree that perhaps the manner in which the bill was rolled out could have been done differently. I am sure hindsight is 20/20 for everybody, and people look back and say maybe we should have done this instead of that, but really, at the end of the day I look across the aisle at the Conservatives, and I ask myself if that is what their job is. Is their job to, as she put it, smell the blood and attack for political gain?

Can she comment on whether that is what the official opposition is here to do? Are they here to look for weaknesses to exploit for political gain, or are they here to actually help craft and make the legislation better, as she was clearly trying to do in her role on the committee?

Government Orders

• (2310)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, my thoughts on this are that, realistically, we or the government needed to bring forward legislation that would be strong so that the Conservatives would not smell that blood and would not feel like this was an awesome opportunity for them to fundraise with. One of the things I find shocking is the disinformation that we have heard from members in the House during the debate today and how few members from the Conservative Party have clearly even read the act, let alone the legislation. We are not seeing an opposition doing anything more than yelling “freedom” at the top of its lungs, without giving any ability to fix the legislation or work with us to make it happen.

To sit in a committee and be filibustered for months is maybe something that older politicians or older parliamentarians know how to do. It drives me crazy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona on her speech.

We have the pleasure of serving together on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. She and I have managed to move the bill forward and improve it, sometimes with opposing views, sometimes converging views, sometimes through excellent co-operation. It needed a little help to become a good bill.

Over the past few weeks, after the removal of clause 4.1, which actually had been strengthened with other provisions to ensure that social media users were protected, we have seen a slew of Conservative Party pundits suddenly take an interest in Bill C-10, although we have been working on it for months now. This is a complex bill that takes time to understand. It must be properly analyzed, and it is important to have a good grasp of the subject. Nevertheless, over the past few weeks, we have had a number of experts come to us to give their opinions and tell us that we have done our job all wrong.

I would like the member for Edmonton Strathcona to comment on this. How should we take this wave of insults from colleagues?

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to me that we are told that there are experts. I have a letter here that was written by 14 lawyers who have said that Bill C-10 would do none of the things that we have been accused of doing to it. We have gone through the legislation tooth and nail, and I have a document here that outlines every single time freedom of expression is protected. I could tell members exactly where in the act and where in the bill; if they want me to name it, I can. I know that is not the case with most of the members in the House this evening, but I can certainly tell them exactly how freedom of expression is protected, and I am deeply offended that any member of this House would think that my priority would not be to ensure that Canadians' freedom of expression is protected at all cost.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague for Edmonton Strathcona. I believe her heart is in the right place and I always enjoy listening to her speeches.

We are talking about the amendment. I am wondering how she felt about the amendment put forward that says to delete all words after “notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House” and substituting the following: “Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be referred back to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage....”

I believe that the member is very studious. Does she think there should be a bit more conversation around Bill C-10? I have heard a lot from constituents in Regina—Lewvan and from across not only Saskatchewan, but western Canada, who have some concerns. I believe that the member is honest and forthright and that she takes those concerns seriously.

Would it not be right to have a bit more conversation around this bill? I know my colleague for Saskatoon—Grasswood said 40% of the amendments were not even discussed at the committee. Could there be some more work for the committee to do?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I would flag for the member, and I am not sure if he knows this, is that I put forward a motion in committee asking that we work through the summer so that we could get this legislation right. The members of the Conservative Party voted against that. If they had voted for that motion, we would have had the time. We would have been able to sit through the summer and look at this legislation. The fact is that the Conservatives filibustered so we could not fix the legislation, then the Conservatives did not want to waste their summer fixing the legislation afterward. In fact, it was on both sides of the equation.

I have done everything I can with members of the Bloc, members of the Liberal Party and members of the Conservative Party to fix this legislation. What have the Conservatives done?

• (2315)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her speech and for her hard work on this bill. She knows that I put a lot of time and effort into this bill as well. I would like to thank her for supporting one of my amendments, which was to level the playing field between independent producers and broadcasting undertakings. This is something that has been adopted in the U.K. and in France. It is a market-based solution to a market imbalance problem.

Why does the member think the Conservatives, who claim to be the ones who fight for the little guy against the big companies, would vote against that amendment? We did not get a chance to debate it because we spent so much time listening to filibusters for hours on end. We did not get to talk about these amendments, but this was an important amendment that I discussed with the Canadian Media Producers Association. It was very important to them to create a better balance between the large companies and the small producers. I would like her comments on that.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for the work he did on the committee. He brought forward a number of amendments. Many of them were very similar to amendments that I had brought forward. I want to thank him for the excellent work that he did.

The reason the Conservatives did not want to stand up for the little guy is because they do not care about the little guy. They never have. This has never been their priority. Their priority is to fundraise off this legislation. It was never to get good legislation that would ensure that diverse voices were heard and that diverse Canadian stories from areas outside of Toronto were heard. I want to hear stories from local media and from rural communities in Alberta. They do not care about that. That was never anything they were worried about. That was never anything they were fighting for.

I honour my colleague for the work that he did to raise that awareness, but I can tell members that was not what we saw in the committee from others.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Edmonton Strathcona for her amazing work on this bill. When I look at how the discourse around Bill C-10 has been so poisoned, I draw a parallel to the subject of climate change. We can look at Conservative discourse on climate change over the last decade. There was also a recent Angus Reid poll from April that showed only 41% of Conservative voters believed climate change was a threat compared with 90% and above for all of the other parties. The Conservative Party bears a lot of responsibility for that number because of the way it has spoken on this important subject.

Does my colleague see a parallel with the Conservative discourse on Bill C-10? The Conservatives bear responsibility for how poisoned it has become and the incredible amount of misinformation. Does my colleague see any of those parallels or have any thoughts on that particular comparison?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, that was an excellent question. My thanks to my colleague for all of the work that he has done to bring some rationality to the debate we have had in the House this evening. When we see these divisive black-and-white politics, nothing gets done. Nothing gets fixed. We do not make the best legislation that we can.

I see I am out of time. I have lots to say about this, but I am happy to chat with my colleague about that later.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am splitting my time tonight with my hon. colleague for Langley—Aldergrove.

It is my honour to address the House this evening and to address another faulty bill being pushed through Parliament by the Liberal government: Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts. To begin, let us look at the title of this bill, which says “to make related and consequential amendments”. They are consequential in that they have consequences.

In this case, it is safe to say that this bill, if passed as written and subsequently amended at committee by the government, will have serious consequences for Canadians. We could have a discussion about net neutrality, which Canadians have enjoyed largely in their online consumption choices these past decades. This bill would, in fact, seek to upend the very nature of what Canadians can do on the web. Of course that is not the intent. No, it could not be. It has merely been written that way, and amended and partially changed

through a process Canadians became aware of through the efforts of stalwart parliamentarians: my colleagues in the Conservative Party in the House of Commons and the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. They identified the intrusion in not only the use of the Internet for uploads and downloads, and the overreach in regulating this activity, but the consequences it would have on the very notion of freedom of speech, one of the rights Canadians have enjoyed—

• (2320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is a point of order.

The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is giving a great speech, but unfortunately I would like to question if we still have quorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, we have quorum online. There are 63 members present.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe that if you were to go back and look at the rules that were set out with regard to the hybrid session, there is no indication that people must have their cameras on to be considered to be in the House.

Unless there are strict rules with respect to that, I would submit that all of the people who are currently online, as you have indicated, are in fact considered to be seated in the House of Commons right now.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, there were only five people who had their cameras on that we counted. I believe your ruling was wrong.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I did not make a ruling. I have just been told by the table officers that at the moment they have more than 20 members who have been accounted for.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, being a relatively new MP in the House of Commons, what I recall is that when quorum is called is the time period we attribute it to.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, as members know, when quorum is called by a member as he just did, quite often prior to the hybrid version of sitting if there were not enough members, provided that the members entered the chamber, then quorum would be considered to have been reached and the meeting would continue. Even if one could argue that having their camera turned off meant that they were not here, which I submitted to you previously was not the case, the fact that they have now restored their cameras to being on would definitely cover the matter as it normally would during any regular sitting of the House.

Government Orders

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, there are members with their cameras on, but they are not in the shot of the camera. They are clearly not present in debate, so I think you also need to rule on whether or not they count for quorum, because their cameras are on, but they are clearly not in their chair, they are clearly not in the video and they have not come back during this discussion.

• (2325)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I figured I would just point out that while there may be members who are not in their camera shot, they could very well be listening and taking notes on another part of their desk.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have been reassured there is quorum. The moment the hon. member asked, obviously people started coming in and started turning on their cameras.

I will allow the hon. member for Calgary Centre to resume his speech.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, we were talking about the very notion of the freedom of speech Canadians enjoy, one of the rights Canadians have enjoyed since being introduced by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in 1960 and embedded in Canada's Constitution in 1982. Freedom of expression in Canada is protected as a fundamental freedom by section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The charter also permits the government to enforce reasonable limits.

I would say from experience that a large amount of Canadian communication between parties, individuals, businesses and organizations of all types, even governments and their agencies, happens via the Internet. Where does the problem arise in this legislation? Bill C-10 creates a new category of web media called "online undertakings" and gives the CRTC the same power to regulate them that it has for TV and radio stations. What is an online undertaking? Whatever one uploads onto the web is an online undertaking, such as videos, podcasts, music and websites. It is a huge regulatory stretch. However, Canadians should not fret as the CRTC will not act in the way the legislation is written, or so it has said.

Let us look back at that notion of freedom of expression and how we as legislators are supposed to ensure the legislation we consider abides by this fundamental piece of protection embodied in our constitutional bill of rights and freedoms. The Department of Justice Act requires the justice minister to provide a charter statement for every government bill that explains whether it respects the charter. The charter statement for Bill C-10 directly cites the social media exemption in its assessment that the bill respects this part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Then, poof, at committee the Liberals removed the cited exemption from the legislation. When my Conservative colleagues rightly asked for a new assessment based on the new wording of the legislation, the Liberals decided to shut down debate at the committee.

At this point, I think Canadians would ask where the Minister of Justice is on this issue and why he will not seek and provide the legislative charter statement from his department. I have watched the Minister of Justice and let me illustrate how he operates in my opinion.

Regarding Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), admittedly no bill is perfect, yet this bill passed through committee here in the House of Commons and members from all parties voted in a free vote to pass the legislation. The legislation passed with the input of witnesses who wanted to respect the rights of disadvantaged Canadians and it worked through this House. The minister, despite that democratic process, manipulated the legislation with an amendment at the Senate and forced an amended bill back to this House, a bill that disrespects the input he received through witnesses and parliamentarians in the process. It was pure manipulation.

Regarding Bill C-15, an act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, after one hour of debate on a bill that my indigenous constituents are asking for clarity with respect to the defined terms in Canadian law and how it affects them, the Minister of Justice shut down debate, saying it had been debated enough.

Perhaps it is unparliamentary to state openly here that the minister's remarks are completely disingenuous. I have watched him during question period while he brazenly denies that his judicial appointments have nothing to do with Liberal Party lists. That is disingenuous. I know why Canadians are losing faith in governments.

Now we have this, the refusal to provide an updated charter statement. Shame on the minister.

Coming back to the bill, if passed, Canadian content uploaders will be subject to CRTC oversight. Yes, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission will be looking at uploads all day long. That is in fact who is writing the bill and in fact the government organization trying to gain some relevance with it, but Canadians do not have to worry because it will not enforce the law as it is written.

Let me quote Timothy Denton, a former national commissioner of the CRTC, who now serves as the chairman of the Internet Society of Canada, who stated:

...their fundamental [principle here] is...that freedom of speech through video or audio should be in the hands of the CRTC — including Canadians' freedom to use the internet to reach audiences and markets as they see fit.... The freedom to communicate across the internet is to be determined by political appointees, on the basis of no other criterion than what is conducive to broadcasting policy — and, presumably, the good of our domestic industry. As always, the interests of the beneficiaries of regulation are heard first, best, and last. Consumers and individual freedoms count for little when the regulated sector beats its drums.

• (2330)

Finally, let me congratulate the government on this one step. We have been through 15 months of an unprecedented time in our modern history, with lockdowns, economic dislocation and devastation, and literally a pandemic. The press does not cover what happens in the House and the myriad mistakes the government has made because governments make mistakes in unforeseen, unprecedented times. Canadians have given the government some benefit of the doubt about these mistakes and so do all people of goodwill, but it is our job in opposition to do our utmost for the country in oversight and to provide solutions to make our outcomes better.

I thank all my colleagues for the work in helping Canadians during these unprecedented times. I should thank the Liberal government for providing a coalescing issue that has Canadians from all backgrounds and political beliefs in my riding united in reaching out to make sure the bill does not pass. The bill and the government's responses to reasonable amendments to protect Canadians' rights show its ambivalence to Canadians and their rights.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague is very thoughtful and careful in his language, but he spoke about amendments that have been put forward to make the bill better. I wonder what he can say about an amendment that the Conservative Party put forward. It says:

That Bill C-10, in Clause 7, be amended by adding after line 19 on page 8 the following:

9.2 An online undertaking that provides a social media service is deemed not to exercise programming control over programs uploaded by any user of the social media service who is not the provider of the service or the provider's affiliate, or the agent or mandatary of either of them.

It seems quite clear to me that this was an excellent amendment. I voted for it and it passed. It was a Conservative amendment. I am wondering why he thinks it does not protect freedom of expression.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona is always great with her questions, and I am pleased that she knows some of these amendments very well.

The issue we have is the blanket clause, whereby we are going to subject Canadians to some regulations by the CRTC when they upload videos. All kinds of amendments have been put forward at committee by my colleagues to make sure that this does not cover everyday Canadians and is only counting, as the government seems to indicate, certain web giants that have a large economic footprint, ensuring they are going to be regulated. However, the writing indicates very clearly that this applies to all Canadians. That is why we are trying to make it very clear in the amendments that they are not included. That clarity is required, and I have not seen that clarity in any of the other amendments to this point in time.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a simple question for my hon. colleague. The minister could not answer it earlier. Why did the minister remove section 4.1, the safeguard to protect user-generated content?

• (2335)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I wish I knew. I wish I had a response, but I do not know why amendments 2.1 and 4.1 were not considered together to provide clarity on how changes would affect Canadian Internet users going forward.

Government Orders

I can speculate what the answer might be, but I am not going to put words in the mouth of the minister, who chose not to answer this question. However, I will put it back to the minister the next time we get to hear from him why he chose this path.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, I have heard a lot about free speech from the Conservatives and I would like to ask if they think that social media platforms are a place of free speech.

I will point to a situation on May 5, Red Dress Day, to commemorate missing and murdered indigenous women and girls across this country. Hundreds if not thousands of posts were removed by Instagram and Facebook from people who were expressing their sorrow, rage and loss of family, friends and loved ones to this tragedy in our country.

Does the member think this is freedom of speech? When these platforms are removing this kind of content in this country are they a democratic space?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question, and I thoroughly agree with my colleague.

We have to look at who is actually policing the web. Whether the government is policing it or it is policed through algorithms, somebody is limiting our freedom of expression, and that limit to freedom of expression should not be compounded by this legislation. We acknowledge that there are all kinds of tools used by social media giants that we have to get in check, but putting more checks in the hands of the government, which is usually a pretty inefficient operator, does not seem to be a very viable solution to the lack of democratic representation that my colleague seems to think is being constrained on the Internet right now.

As I said, I agree with him in several respects regarding content that was somewhat censored and not put up in the proper way. We do need to find a way through that, but I would say that going to government for a solution so that it can be the arbiter is not the solution.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I guess it should not have come as a complete surprise that the Liberal government would make strategic procedural moves to limit my freedom of speech as a member of Parliament wishing to speak up on exactly that topic: freedom of speech. I have heard from so many of my constituents that they were shocked at the government's attempt to limit their freedom by regulating the Internet, which, until now, has been a new-found tool of freedom of expression. People are starting to understand what the term "net neutrality" means and they want it protected. They are also starting to wake up to the prospect that their government wants to regulate this forum, the new public square.

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The government members say they want to level the playing field. Canada's Conservatives support competition between large foreign streaming services and Canada's broadcasters, and we champion Canadian arts and culture, but a Conservative government would do so without compromising Canadians' fundamental rights and freedoms. We are calling on the Liberals to withdraw Bill C-10 or to amend it to protect freedom. If this is not done, a Conservative government would stand up for Canadians and repeal this deeply flawed legislation. While the NDP and the Bloc may be willing to look the other way on the freedom of expression, Canada's Conservatives will not.

What went wrong? The deeply flawed draft legislation, Bill C-10, became even more problematic after the Liberals had their way at committee. We have heard them say in this chamber on many occasions that user-generated content would not be regulated under the legislation, and they refer us to proposed subsection 2(2.1), which specifically exempts users from the new limiting regulations. However, proposed section 4.1 would have exempted social media sites like YouTube and TikTok, which consist of only user-uploaded programs, except that in committee the Liberals voted down this very important freedom of speech protector, even though their original draft legislation contained it.

Where does that leave us? Well, people using the Internet, speakers, are exempted, but the platforms they use are not, so the freedom really becomes illusory. That is what people are upset about with Bill C-10, and that is why Conservatives are fighting hard against it.

We have heard the Liberals say also that they just want big tech to be paying its fair share. In principle, we support that. The Conservative members of the heritage committee proposed an amendment to Bill C-10 that would have limited these limiting regulations to online undertakings with revenue of more than \$50 million a year and 250,000 or more subscribers in Canada. If that amendment had passed, Bill C-10 would apply only to large streaming services, but the Liberals rejected it. I do not know why. This is a common-sense compromise put forward by the Conservatives to save the initial intent and the integrity of this legislation while still protecting Canadians' freedom of expression.

We have heard quite a bit about this. The idea of the CRTC regulating traditional media for Canadian content is deeply entrenched and widely accepted in Canadian culture, so why not the Internet too, which arguably is becoming the new preferred media? At first blush, that may make sense, but here is the problem. The legislation would regulate Canadian content by means of discoverability regulations that would require social media sites like YouTube to change their algorithms to determine which videos are more or less Canadian, all depending on a bureaucrat's opinion as to what is sufficiently Canadian.

We say, let the market decide. This is not what the Internet is, and it is not what Canadians want. We are hearing "hands off". We are hearing about the democratization of the freedom of speech. The Internet is a new invention and it has given people, anybody with a computer, anybody with an iPad, anybody with a smart phone, the ability to publish on the Internet and to be heard, and it has led to the success of many, many artists, including Canadian artists.

Does that mean that the Internet and the contents posted on it should not be regulated at all? Of course not. The Internet is subject to all laws of general application, such as laws against promoting hatred and laws against inciting violence. There are laws for the protection of children, and there are laws against slander and libel, just to name a few.

● (2340)

Our freedom of speech, as protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is not unlimited. As my law professor explained on the first day of constitutional law, freedom of expression does not give a person the right to yell "fire" in a crowded movie theatre. Section 2(b) of the charter says everyone has the fundamental freedom of expression, but section 1 of the charter says that those rights and freedoms are subject to "such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society."

Until the Liberals started talking about Bill C-10, that is what everyone understood to be the nature of this new medium called the Internet. The laws of general application should apply. Every other free and democratic country in the world understands that to be the case, and only Canada would go so far as to tell user-content social media platforms what to promote and what to demote. Therein lies our contention with Bill C-10.

We do not stand alone. This is what Peter Menzies, the former commissioner of the CRTC, had to say about Bill C-10 in its current state:

It's difficult to contemplate the levels of moral hubris, incompetence or both that would lead people to believe such an infringement of rights is justifiable.

University of Ottawa professor Michael Geist stated:

In a free, democratic society we don't subject basic speech to regulation in this way. Of course there are limits to what people can say, but the idea that a broadcast regulator has any role to play in basic speech is, I think, anathema to free and democratic society where freedom of expression is viewed as one of the foundational freedoms.

With the support of experts such as these, the Conservative Party has been promoting its opposition to Bill C-10 aggressively and, I might say, effectively. What is the government's response? It is to shut down debate. Last week, with the help of the Bloc and the NDP, the Liberal government shut down debate at committee, and now it wants to shut down debate in Parliament. One has to love the irony of that. Here we are debating free speech and the government is aggressively shutting down parliamentarians' right to be the voice for their constituents: Canadians who have come to appreciate the freedom, flexibility and effectiveness of having their voices heard on this 21st-century platform. Social media platforms are the new public square, and free speech on those platforms in the form of user-generated content must not fall under the regulatory purview of the CRTC.

Only the Conservative Party is standing up to protect this fundamental right that all Canadians enjoy. The government has misled Canadians about this bill. Exempting user content was a key part of Bill C-10's limitations. It was something we accepted and that helped get it through the parliamentary reading stages and committee without more dissent, but removing that exception at the very last minute makes Bill C-10 unacceptable. It is the most breathtaking power grab over online speech we have ever seen in Canada. The Liberal government wants to limit our rights to fight against that, and that is why Conservatives are standing up.

● (2345)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the concern I have is that it is as if we are talking past each other about Canadian content. Canadian content is terribly important. Canadian artists want this legislation passed.

I have some concerns with the legislation, but it certainly is not the case that Canadian content is something the market decides, as the hon. member just said. Canadian content is about creators and protecting the efforts of Canadian writers, actors and all aspects of our creative class, and they need to be protected. I would ask the hon. member this: How does the market decide that?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the Internet has been a powerful tool for up-and-coming artists. I was talking to a high school class just the other day in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove. The students were talking about some of their friends who are budding musicians and have found success on the Internet. That is the democratization of the Internet. It is such a powerful tool. We do not need to regulate it.

I would say that Canadian artists are the best in the world. We should get out of their way and let them be successful. Art has always been about marketing.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was listening intently to my colleague and he referenced Michael Geist, one of the leading thinkers of free speech in our country and a very independent voice on this bill.

I wonder if the member could elaborate a bit on what Michael Geist has said about Bill C-10 and maybe some of the pitfalls the government has fallen into while trying to reduce free speech for Canadians across the country.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, Michael Geist is indeed a champion for free speech, particularly on the Internet. Being a law professor, he is an expert in that field and deals exactly with that area of the law. I have a great deal of respect for him and for the work he has done. He is a champion to whom we should be listening. He is a promoter of allowing the Internet to develop in a way that enhances people's ability to promote their thoughts, ideas and expressions and, in this case, also their art and their music.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, I find it very rich to listen to Conservatives talk about free speech and about the rights of parliamentarians when they are the only party that has blocked the Green Party from having our fair share of questions in the House of Commons. We are the only members of Parliament who get a question every second week, after they evicted one of their members for taking donations from a white supremacy group.

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I would like to ask the hon. member if he has read the Broadcasting Act, which states:

This Act shall be construed and applied in a manner that is consistent with the freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence enjoyed by broadcasting undertakings.

This is right at the very beginning of the act, and this constrains the CRTC to ensure Canadians have freedom of expression. I am wondering if he has actually read the Broadcasting Act as well as the legislation.

● (2350)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the Green Party is representing its constituents very well and effectively in Canada's Parliament.

Bill C-10 was better before, because it was more effectively protecting individual users and their content. With the amendment that removed section 4.1, it took a lot of that freedom away. A lot of the benefits of this act have been destroyed because of that, and we would be better if that were put back in. The freedoms the minister keeps talking about are illusory. It is one thing to say content providers, people who add content to YouTube and platforms like that, are not being regulated, but if the platform is being regulated, then that freedom is illusory.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, tonight I will be splitting my time with the member for Regina—Lewvan.

On February 5, I spoke to Bill C-10 before it was referred to the heritage committee on February 16. Here I am speaking to Bill C-10 again, a few months later, now that the bill has returned from committee. Most times when a bill returns from committee, we see a couple of amendments here and there to fine-tune it before passing it along to the Senate, but with Bill C-10, it is not a few changes here and there. This bill is completely different than its previous form.

What is even more abnormal about this is the fact that so many of the amendments came from the Liberals, the ones who introduced the bill in the first place. The government owes it to Canadians to explain why so many amendments were introduced after the fact and why it is pulling every trick in the book to try to push legislation through without proper debate and while ignoring legitimate concerns.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage is using tactics to make people believe that Conservatives are anticulture and standing in the way of Bill C-10, when in fact, many experts who testified at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage agree this bill is flawed and needs further review.

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Protecting Canadian content is important for Canadians, but what good do rules around Canadian content do, if Canadian content is not properly defined. The minister recently demonstrated in committee that even he does not know what classic Canadian movies actually count as protected Canadian content under this legislation.

Over the past month I have received countless emails and phone calls from constituents in fear of the government's legislation. They want to know what they can do to stop it. One man even said to me that this legislation embodies the same police-state-like control he emigrated to Canada to escape.

The question I get most often is, "Why?" Why does this legislation contain an amendment giving the CRTC this much power. Why is the government trying to push this through so quickly? Why does the government think it has a mandate to police the Internet?

Conservatives recognize that the Broadcasting Act is in need of updates. No one is arguing against that. When Conservatives raise legitimate questions about user-generated content being affected by this legislation, instead of providing answers, the minister diminishes our concern and proceeds with his carefully scripted paragraph about why the Broadcasting Act needs to be updated, even though we are already agreeing that it needs to be done.

I have to point out the irony in the fact that we are being censored here in the House of Commons on a debate regarding censorship. Instead of allowing Bill C-10 to go through full and proper review, the Liberals moved a time allocation motion to shut down debate on Bill C-10 early, and effectively censored our debate on censorship.

Here we are, around midnight, mid-June, speaking for the last time to a bill that would have the power to limit our freedoms and could change the way Canadians are able to use the Internet. The government imposing time allocation on this bill, which is fundamentally flawed, is wrong because it attacks freedom of expression. The minister is attacking our freedom of expression as parliamentarians, who are just trying to do their jobs. Instead of telling us Conservatives that we are preventing work from moving forward and that we are anticulture, the government members should be explaining to Canadians how they can possibly justify this time allocation motion, when the committee still has many amendments to review. This is deeply concerning to not only me, but also to many Canadians.

I also want to talk about the precedent legislation like this could create for the future. In a society that values freedom of speech and freedom of expression, Bill C-10 would leave the door open to a massive abuse of power concerning the rights of Canadians.

● (2355)

It is not enough for the minister to stand in the House of Commons and claim this bill is not meant to target ordinary Canadians. Words spoken by the minister mean nothing if they do not coincide with the wording of the actual legislation.

The amendment regarding user-generated content aside, Bill C-10 creates a regulatory mess of a streaming and broadcasting industry in Canada. There are real harms that could come with this

legislation as it currently stands. This bill is far broader than many Canadians realize, and certainly broader than the minister has claimed. This has led to a lack of understanding of the consequences of the bill as it relates to the general public.

With so many amendments being brought forward in such a short timeframe, it is hard for the public to keep up and stay informed. One thing we must always remember as parliamentarians is that we work for the people. It is our duty to keep our constituents informed and to seek their input on legislative matters. With this amendment being added, and this legislation being rushed through the legislative process so quickly, I fear many members will not have adequate time to properly inform and consult their constituents on this issue.

It is with extreme disappointment that I am speaking on this legislation tonight, knowing that so many voices have been silenced and important dialogue on this bill will not be heard. The government claims that limitations are integrated into this bill, so that it is not too overreaching.

The minister said in the House of Commons, "user-generated content, news content and video games would not be subject to the new regulations. Furthermore, entities would need to reach a significant economic threshold before any regulation could be imposed."

This claim made by the minister is false, as there is no specific economic threshold that is established by the bill, which means that all Internet streaming services carried in Canada, whether domestic or foreign owned, are subject to Canadian regulation. That would mean if someone has Canadian subscribers, this law would, regardless of where the service provider is located, apply to them.

The limitations the minister is referring to are that the bill gives the CRTC the power to exempt services from regulation. It also leaves it entirely up to the CRTC to establish thresholds for regulations once the bill is enacted. This is dangerous, and while I have confidence in the work that the good people working for the CRTC do, it is our duty to legislate, not the CRTC's, and that means properly defining the term "significant economic threshold".

Bill C-10 now has over 120 amendments, of which about a quarter were put forward by the government itself, even though it wrote the bill. My Conservative colleagues at the heritage committee did everything they could to fix the problems with Bill C-10 in the time they had. My colleagues say that in review stage, the work at committee was going well and progress was being made. That is until the Liberals decided to bring forward an amendment to include social media.

This amendment was so large it changed the scope of the bill entirely. It was at that point people, including experts, former CRTC commissioners and thousands of Canadians across the country, starting raising objections.

As I wrap up my speech, I am thinking of all the flaws contained in this bill and worry for the future of freedom of expression. While I do not suspect this bill was brought forward with malicious intentions, the wording in this legislation could set a terrible precedent.

• (2400)

It is okay for the government to admit when it is wrong and when it has gone too far. Now is the time for the government to acknowledge that it needs to take a step back, re-evaluate and correct the course.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to come back to the bottom of page 2 and the top of page 3 of the bill, where it says, “A person who uses a social media service to upload programs for transmission over the Internet...does not, by the fact of that use, carry on a broadcasting undertaking for the purposes of this Act.” Therefore, users can upload content without being subject to this legislation.

From what my colleagues are saying, one might think that eliminating a clause from the bill invalidates it. There have been almost 120 amendments.

Did the Conservatives believe that this clause carried so much weight that 120 amendments to improve the bill still do not make it an adequate bill? What would it take to satisfy the Conservative Party?

[English]

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I am not disputing that there are many good points to this bill and many parts of the amendments brought forward do help give a better explanation as to what is going on. There are a lot of unknowns with the bill where it is not clear and concise as to what the regulators would or would not be able to enforce.

The CRTC could potentially have quite wide-sweeping powers. That is why we are very concerned. There is not a clear definition as to how much the CRTC can be regulated. What kind of rules will there be for content providers that the CRTC may have in the future? That is what we are protecting. We are making sure that there are not these things in the legislation that can allow for many different types of content to be censored. The way it is written, it does allow that, and that is what we are opposing.

• (2405)

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on an excellent speech at midnight. I represent a very ethnically diverse riding, and I have heard my constituents talk about how they have left behind censorship, as we talked about, in their home countries. They have come to Canada looking for a free country where they can express their views and explore the mediums that are available.

Could the member speak to how this bill would impact those rights and how are Conservatives trying to address that?

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, in my speech, that is exactly what I did talk about. One of the residents in my riding, an immigrant, was persecuted in another country and did not have the ability to have free speech. That is why we want to make sure that

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we do not have that kind of censorship here, regardless of what kind of cultural background one comes from.

Many people come to Canada to make sure they have their rights and freedoms protected. That is why we are very concerned about this bill and are making sure that the censorship is not allowed.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, just to reiterate, if the hon. member read the Broadcasting Act, he would know that freedom of speech and freedom of expression are actually already established in the act. There was a lot of filibustering. We heard a lot of endless repetition in committee. We did not get a chance to discuss some very important amendments.

One of those amendments was about levelling the playing field with independent producers in the large companies that they have to negotiate contracts with. It was a market-based solution to a market imbalance. It is a system that they have in the U.K. and in France. I have heard that the Conservatives support the small producers and want to see freedom of expression.

Why would the Conservatives not support this amendment that I put forward? I sent the explanation to members of the committee, and I wonder why the Conservatives would not defend the little guy in this situation.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, the whole point is that we are trying to make sure we are protecting the little guy. We want to make sure that we are here protecting everyday Canadians, whether they are producing their own content or downloading their own content. We want to make sure that their freedoms and expression are not censored.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I stand today, and I hope my colleagues will indulge me for a moment.

This is the first time I have been on my feet in this place since a tragic accident in Saskatchewan where we lost a member of the RCMP, Constable Shelby Patton, who was killed in the line of duty. I send my deepest sympathies to his family, friends, colleagues and all of his brothers and sisters in the RCMP. Our hearts are with them at this very difficult time.

Constable Patton was killed in the line of duty at a traffic stop at Wolseley, Saskatchewan, and the people who committed this crime have been captured. Our hearts go out to the family of the slain hero and RCMP officer. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone involved.

Moving on to Bill C-10, I think about everyone who enforces the rule of law in Canada and how everyone is able to express their opinions and say what they want. The member for Calgary Skyview just said that a lot of people from around the world see Canada as a beacon: A place where they can come without fear of censorship or of not being able to express themselves. I think this country should always be known as a beacon of that light and freedom. This is why we on the Conservative side are trying to fight so hard to make sure that Bill C-10 is right.

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My colleague and friend for Yellowhead talked about some of the things in the bill that need to be reviewed. The Broadcasting Act has not been reviewed in 30 years, and a lot has changed in this country over that time. Conservatives are not disagreeing with renewing and reviewing legislation to make sure that it is up to date and current with the times—

● (2410)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): My apologies, but I had a point of order from the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. The member is not responding.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, apparently there was a disconnect with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, but hopefully he can tune in and hear the rest of my speech.

On the Conservative side, we are trying to make sure that the legislation is right going forward. As I said before I was interrupted, we do have some agreement. The legislation does need to be renewed as it is 30 years old—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize.

Could the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan put his mike on mute?

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I had a point of order that we were frozen for a while and I missed a substantial piece.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Well, it must have been the hon. member alone, because we did not have anybody else complaining about it.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, at this hour, there may be issues with the ability to connect, but hopefully everyone can hear my speech now—

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, all of us who are online were locked out of the member's speech. We have not heard anything since the hon. member stood to speak.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): So it was frozen for everybody online.

The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I would like to confirm that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith is absolutely correct that all of us were cut off. I spoke with IT, and they were aware of it as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member for Don Valley West.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I can confirm and support the members that all of our screens were frozen for about four or five minutes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are going to give the opportunity to the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan to start from the beginning.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I will start from the beginning because I do not think we can pay honour to our fallen RCMP officer enough. For colleagues who missed it, this is the first time I have been on my feet since an RCMP officer in Saskatchewan was run over and killed in the line of duty. My thoughts and prayers are with Constable Shelby Patton's family.

I know his brothers and sisters are thinking about him. When one member is lost, the whole team is affected across the country. On behalf of the constituents of Regina—Lewvan, all Conservatives and all members in the House, our thoughts and prayers are with the Patton family. God bless them, and hopefully they can get through this very difficult time.

Moving on to Bill C-10, the bill talks about how we have to really make sure the rule of law is in place in our country. The member for Calgary Skyview brought up some very good points when asking the member for Yellowhead a question. There is a very diverse community in Calgary Skyview and the member talked about how many people have come to Canada because they see it as a beacon of light, a beacon of freedom, where people are not afraid to express themselves. They are not afraid to get in trouble with their government if they say something. We should always strive to be that beacon of freedom in Canada, where people are allowed to express themselves and have the freedom to put whatever they want online, where people can have independent thoughts without fear of government reprisal. A lot of the speeches on this side of the House have covered that topic again and again.

Our colleagues on the opposition and on the government side have asked why we are so against this bill. One of the fundamental beliefs in the Conservative Party of Canada is the belief in the freedom of speech. I have given a first reading speech on Bill C-10 as well. It is a 30-year-old piece of legislation, so there are some things that need to be renewed. Members on all sides of the House agree legislation does have to be renewed and reviewed in a timely manner. There are some areas where we agree.

One of the things that just came forward is that in the updated legislation, the Liberals have taken out the part that would regulate individual content and now the CRTC would have the power to take down content from individuals. We have no way of knowing if any of the amendments that were passed address this issue because there was a gag order put on the amendments and we do not know what is involved with them all.

Like my colleague, the member for Yellowhead, said, there are 120 amendments to this piece of legislation and a quarter of those were brought forward by the government that introduced the bill in the first place.

We are rushing through this and the government has brought in time allocation so we cannot study this bill to its final conclusion. I was in the legislature of Saskatchewan for eight years and have been here for two years. I do not remember seeing any piece of legislation in my 10 years that had 120 amendments to it. On its own, that shows there were some issues early and often with this piece of legislation.

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Talking about time allocation and the duty of this House, I know my colleagues and friends from across the way, as well as the member for Kingston and the Islands and a few other of my Liberal colleagues, talk about us playing political games. They say that Conservatives are trying to waste time and are using stall tactics.

As this bill has to do with freedom of speech, we did a little run down of what has been going on in a few of the other committees lately. At the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the Liberals have been filibustering for 73 hours and for more than four months. At the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, the Liberals have been filibustering for 43 hours. That is a long time. At the Standing Committee on Finance, the Liberals have been filibustering for 35 hours. At the Standing Committee on National Defence, in its study looking into sexual misconduct in the military, the Liberals have filibustered for more than 16 hours and the Chair suspended unilaterally more than 23 times. That is impressive.

• (2415)

I know my colleagues in the Bloc bring up Mr. Harper and the disdain for Parliament. I do not know if Mr. Harper's government had a chair who unilaterally closed down debate 23 times.

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was filibustered for 10 hours over three months, February, March and April, to prevent a study into Canada taking from the COVAX vaccine supplies.

This august House is where we are supposed to have debate and be able to talk about different ideas, whether it be Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, NDP. Right now, we are going through a time when the government continues to say the opposition is holding up debate, when we can clearly see, in committees, that the Liberals are trying to stifle any dissent among opposition parties on what kind of bills they are trying to bring forward. I have not even mentioned that the government prorogued Parliament for months because of the WE scandal.

Now, we are here talking about Bill C-10, about stifling debate, and I have given 12 examples of how the government has stifled discussion and debate in committees and in the House of Commons, in Parliament.

When we talk about this, why are Conservatives so against Bill C-10? It is because we are hearing it from our constituents. People are scared. They see Bill C-10 as a very slippery slope of what could be in the future. Many people have come to my office wondering what their kids are going to be able to put on the Internet to express themselves in five years. Are they going to be able to have any free, independent thoughts? Are they going to be able to criticize the government, or is someone in the CRTC, the czar, going to be watching content on YouTube or Facebook or Twitter or Instagram or TikTok? Are they going to get a knock on the door or a call to take down their content because it does not agree with the government's position? That is what people are actually calling about and what their concern is.

People can groan and say, "Oh my, how is that possible?" We are here to represent the people of our ridings, not to carry the water for the government. That is another thing. The government members are acting like it is up to the opposition side to pass bills. We listen

to the Minister of Finance saying it is time for the opposition to help them pass bills. When has it been the government asking this and saying it is the fault of the opposition that it is not getting its legislation through? That is like a teenager who went out partying the night before blaming her friends for not getting her homework done. It is not our responsibility to make sure that the government implements its agenda. It has never been the opposition's responsibility and it never will be. It is time that the government took responsibility for its own actions.

Possibly, the Liberals are not getting their legislative agenda through because they prorogued Parliament, because they filibustered committees again and again, and that is why legislation never got to third reading and never got to this House. At some point in time, a member of the government will have to stand up and say that maybe they are responsible for the games they are playing now with time allocation, especially in committee, where it has not been done in 20 years. That could be a fact as to why the Liberals are not getting their agenda through.

Finally, one other thing that makes people concerned about Liberals bringing forward legislation that would regulate their free speech is the fact that even if it is not going to be this bill, people just do not trust the current government. Members may not believe this, and I was shocked myself when I found out, but since 2015 there have been over 35 failed Liberal promises. If they wonder why people do not trust the government, it is because it does not keep its word.

This is from a long-serving Liberal in Saskatchewan, and this is really when we get into the psyche of a Liberal politician. I will never forget this. He said, "You know what it means when you break your promise? It means you won." That is unbelievable, because if they win they are able to break their promises. It is something that will stick with me for as long as I serve in this chamber.

When it comes to Bill C-10, the Conservatives will continue to stand up for the average Canadians to make sure their voices are heard.

• (2420)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talks about filibustering and antics in the House. I wonder where he was two Fridays ago when the Conservatives put up every roadblock they could to prevent us from getting to debate the bill on the ban on conversion therapy. They literally blew apart an entire Friday with their antics.

Last Thursday, the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes stood over there and for an hour and 45 minutes talked about train robberies in the 1800s.

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The Conservatives are applauding it, Madam Speaker. They are applauding the fact that he filibustered for an hour and 45 minutes in the House to prevent us from getting legislation through and the member wonders why the government has to bring in program motions like this?

● (2425)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, seeing as there is no relevance to that question, I will continue with my speech.

Included in the Liberal broken promises was the running of modest short-term deficits of less than \$10 billion in each of the next two years; increased funding to Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board, with a new investment totalling \$25 million. If Liberals had done that, maybe we would not be talking about this bill.

The Liberals said they would respect legal traditions and perspectives on environmental stewardship and reduce Canada's federal debt-to-GDP ratio each year. The Liberals blew past that one. They said that access to information applied to the Prime Minister's Office and ministers' offices as well as administering institutions that supported Parliament and the courts. They did not even come close to keeping that promise.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, when I was a kid, my grandfather used to say there was something screwy going on when a situation did not seem quite right. Well, there is something screwy going on today, because I am hearing the Conservatives blather on about freedom of expression.

Where is that freedom of expression when it is time to protect a woman's right to make choices about her own body? Where is that freedom of expression when we are talking about Bill C-6 and people with a different sexual orientation?

The Conservatives seem to have a flexible interpretation of freedom of expression. I am not sure if my colleague would agree with that.

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, I am proud to be a Conservative and to sit on the Conservative side of the House, because it is the party that believes in freedom, the freedom of expression, the freedom of choice, the freedom to be whatever one can be. We will ensure the country stays on track and each generation has the same opportunity to succeed as the one before.

That is a ridiculous question because this party will always choose freedom and respect for individuals.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke a lot about filibustering. I sat on the committee and listened to the Conservatives filibuster over and over again. At one of the meetings, the heavy hitters of the Conservative Party, the filibuster specialists, came to the meeting to share their filibustering with us.

I know that is their right and that is what they are able to do, but the concern I had is that the filibustering that happened meant the committee could not debate the amendments in public. We could not get to those amendments, the ones we wanted to talk about in public, amendments from the Conservatives, the Bloc, the NDP and

the government that were so important to make this bill better. The Conservatives did not let us talk about them in committee.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I know the member for Edmonton Strathcona has worked hard on this file. A bill that is brought forward that 120 needs amendments as proposed by parties on all sides is a flawed bill and more work needs to be done it. The member is making my point that having a bill that is flawed, with 120 amendments proposed, should not be passed. We should continue to debate it for at least another session or two.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

I would like to present today's speech based on the perspective I bring from my previous profession as an artist.

Being a professional artist, whether a composer or writer, is an extremely difficult vocation to pursue, attain and sustain. There is a huge gap between those who have talent but have not been able to get their big break, and those who have found stardom. Secure gigs as staff writers or contracts to long-term projects are limited and competitive, and most artists pursue other careers to pay their bills.

As a composer, I have been around creative people most of my life. Artists are dreamers with a lot of discipline with their art and tireless hope to find their rainbow's end. They give their best performances whether for a three-member audience at an open mike or at an outdoor concert with hundreds of listeners. Artists do not tire of doing their best and following their dreams, because they are driven by the love of creating and the dream of sharing their work with a captive audience. For most artists, it is a labour of love.

A talented artist gets their big break when they are discovered by a large enough following that will help their career become sustainable. That is why songwriters want their music to eventually make its way to radio, television and film, and writers want their stories on TV and the big screen. However, anyone who has navigated the entertainment industry knows that there are gatekeepers who ensure media platforms give precedence to major players and minimal opportunity to the small players. They also base their content on market reach and capital.

At the end of the day, we call them the arts, but they are a business that uses the arts for capital. I am speaking neither for nor against this. There is room for commerce and art to contribute to economic prosperity together. What I am concerned about is the inequity of opportunity when industry gatekeepers determine the culture of a nation because of their mass reach. It is not a level playing field for artists who have a lot of talent and simply want to express themselves without having to succumb to the matrix for marketability that large corporations define.

Broadcasters and artists continue to have a symbiotic relationship, but not all artists are welcome to participate in this symbiotic relationship. Having CanCon regulation is a good thing to the extent that it safeguards Canadian content, but in practice CanCon is applied by corporations to Canadians who have already found their success to a large degree and who fit the marketability matrix. Fortunately, with or without CanCon, Canadian artists are still rising to the top and I am pleased by the diversity of content that broadcasters are tapping into today. There has been progress.

The digital world turned the entertainment industry upside down. It allowed independents to enter the arena without having to pass through gatekeepers. With fewer CD and DVD sales, big-name entertainment corporations and independents turned to download sales, but download sales were hurt by pirated content. With the shift to online streaming, the revenue source for creative content producers has become fluid with the prominence of Internet usage. Now Canadian broadcasters are also threatened by foreign players, as foreign content enters the Canadian digital market.

In response, the government may have thought to update the Broadcasting Act by increasing discoverability for artists and leveling the competition for broadcasters, and voila: here is Bill C-10. Originally, Bill C-10 was supposed to level the playing field by regulating large online streaming services, such as Disney+, Netflix and Amazon, to meet Canadian content requirements, just as for Canadian radio and television stations.

Through the Broadcasting Act, the CRTC is given power to issue broadcast licences to allow radio and TV stations to operate, and to regulate broadcasting while meeting conditions on the kinds of programming they can air and community standards. A portion of their programs, often 20% to 40%, is allotted to be Canadian content, and broadcasters can also be mandated to pay licence fees and contributions to the Canada media fund: a federal agency that subsidizes Canadian television and film.

The update that Bill C-10 proposes is a new category of web media called “online undertakings”, which would give the CRTC the same power to regulate the web that it has for traditional TV and radio stations without having to apply for licences. It seems simple and straightforward, but there is a glitch that could turn this seemingly benevolent piece of legislation into a Trojan horse.

Bill C-10 defines web media as “an undertaking for the transmission or retransmission of programs over the Internet for reception by the public by means of broadcasting receiving apparatus”. This definition is so vague that it could include everything from Amazon Prime to anyone with a website or a podcast. Programs under the Broadcasting Act are defined to include images, audio or a combination, of which written text is not predominant. This would refer to podcasts, photos, videos and memes, but not the written content on news articles and posts. It could include everything from a multimillion dollar film produced for Netflix to a 15-second pet video on TikTok.

• (2430)

I was shocked to learn that, while Conservative heritage committee members proposed an amendment to Bill C-10 to set some safeguards to limit regulations to online undertakings with more than \$50 million a year in revenue and 250,000 subscribers in

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Canada, which would apply only to large streaming services, the Liberals rejected it. That means that not only was the government aiming at big companies but also that broadcasting is now being used to control everyday Canadians.

Section 2.1 and section 4.1 were two exemptions in Bill C-10 for social media. Section 2.1 refers to users who upload onto social media platforms. Thus, the user would not be subject to conditions like Canadian content requirements or contributions to the Canada Media Fund, which the CRTC would impose.

That exemption remains on Bill C-10, but section 4.1 was taken out of the bill. It dealt with the programs that users upload on social media, indicating that the CRTC and the Broadcasting Act could not regulate programs that only consist of user-uploaded programs, but the Liberals removed that section in the bill.

In summary, section 2.1 regulates speakers, while section 4.1 regulates speech. With the deletion of 4.1, the CRTC can regulate the content uploaded on social media and also regulate the social media platforms that allow users to publish content, just as it regulates content licensed on regular traditional stations.

The Liberals keep telling Conservatives that 2.1 will safeguard users, but the absence of 4.1 removes a safeguard from content. Bill C-10 has expanded the powers of the CRTC and the Broadcasting Act to provide grounds for the CRTC to adopt regulations requiring social media sites such as YouTube to remove content it considers offensive and discoverability regulations that would make them alter the algorithms to determine which videos are seen, more or less. Violations for these regulations could be very high for the individual and the corporation. These are the details of concern. I take issue on the infringement of personal freedoms and freedom of expression of Canadians. Even the B.C. Library Trustees Association is saying it needs clause 4.1 back. These are librarians and libraries.

As I mentioned earlier in my speech, the gap between artists and their audience is discoverability, but if the discoverability is regulated through controlled algorithms, then it creates yet another barrier for artists. Why should the CRTC define what listeners should discover instead of allowing audiences to determine that for themselves? Why is the government trying to bring a barrier between artists and their audiences?

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The minister keeps saying they want Canadians to tell their stories, but why is there a gap in the bill that would allow someone or an entity to determine which stories are to be discoverable? Artists have already faced an industry that was dominated by large companies to determine what was worthy of discovering and promoting through broadcasting giants, so why should the CRTC be given access to gatekeep discoverability?

The minister says he wants to protect the languages of minorities, but the minister should know that much of ethnic programming is created by underfunded, independent producers who never see any advertising money because it goes straight to the network. Where is the support these independent grassroots producers need? Again, the small players are left behind.

The minister says artists have said Conservatives are not supportive of them, but who is the minister speaking with? I do not think he has the numbers of small players on speed dial. Were they consulted for this bill? If any artist thinks that Conservatives are not supportive of artists, it is because the Liberals have created this wedge by refusing to reinstate 4.1. They are forcing Conservatives to bow for democracy, and we are the only ones who seem to be doing that. The Liberals have created a custody battle that I do not want to be a part of.

I want to support content, and I want to support our broadcasters, but why does it have to be a battle between choosing between them and democracy? We put forward a motion at committee calling for new charter statements to be provided, but the Liberals voted to shut it down.

I cannot help but wonder if the Liberals have an agenda for omitting 4.1. Artists who are still striving to find a rainbow are discriminated against and exploited. They face financial instability for following their hearts. Most will never get fully compensated for the investments they have made in their careers.

If the Liberals had simply fixed 4.1, I would not have my suspicions. The fact that they have not done something so simple with something that was originally there, makes me come to the conclusion that they are playing political games against Conservatives, at the expense of struggling artists.

• (2435)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I get a real kick out of it when Conservatives come into the House and try to talk about the algorithms of Facebook and YouTube and the various other platforms out there. Algorithms are proprietary software that belong to the organizations or the businesses that are using them such as Facebook and YouTube.

To suggest that they know how an algorithm will be altered implies that they know how it currently runs, but the reality is that nobody does because we do not know how the algorithms are built to encourage people to look at certain content. Unless the member is saying that she does, in which case I would love for her to enlighten the House with that information.

Ms. Nelly Shin: Madam Speaker, I would like to refer back to the whole concept of regulating. Regulations mean that they are imposing on the entity or the corporation they are regulating to respond in the way that they are being asked to. Of course, regardless

of whether the algorithm is being controlled by that web giant or a platform like Facebook, or not, if the CRTC tells them to do certain things with algorithms, they they will.

• (2440)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, how is this possible?

At the beginning of her speech, my colleague said that she was an artist, a composer, so how can she not automatically be excited about the idea of promoting the talents of Canadian and Quebec artists? That is the purpose of Bill C-10. The bill is designed to ensure that multinational digital corporations, the web giants, are subject to the same regulations that the traditional Canadian broadcasters have almost always been subject to. Bill C-10 is good for artists and good for the cultural community.

I sincerely wonder why my hon. colleague does not support and embrace this bill, like the majority of Canadian artists do.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, a very short answer.

Ms. Nelly Shin: Madam Speaker, I am very thrilled that the member has raised that issue because those are very important, but the dilemma I have with the bill is not that those things are not good, it is the fact of why are we having to fight for democracy when the bill should strictly be about things like that and helping artists—

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise during Adjournment Proceedings this morning, as it is 12:45 a.m., to talk about a question I asked the parliamentary secretary for finance about the reopening and how the country can start to have a reopening plan. Although he is quick-witted and really slick at spinning, he was more condescending than willing to answer my question. That is why I am now basically asking for a redo to ask another member of the Liberal Party about the plan to reopen.

It is not just Conservatives like me who are asking this question. The business council of business groups across Canada openly called for a reopening plan from the Prime Minister. There were 61 business groups across Canada that called for a plan to reopen the economy. It hinged on a few different ideas they had, but they stated:

...your government should collaborate with officials in the United States and other countries in setting benchmarks that would enable the easing of border restrictions and travel quarantines.

A clear and predictable plan for a gradual and safe return to a more normal life would instill public confidence while demonstrating concern for the physical, mental and economic health of Canadians. As business and community leaders we stand ready to work with you to ensure a safe and sustainable recovery.

Now I think everyone is beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. When we brought a Conservative motion, I talked about having a reopening plan from the Government of Canada, and about the vacuum of leadership the current Prime Minister and the Liberal government have shown with respect to that. People are asking where the Prime Minister is and where the plan is to reopen.

I know we want to do it safely, but I would say to look no further than my home province of Saskatchewan, where I am ecstatic to say that if we reach our targets on June 20 we will have restrictions lifted by July 11. That means by July 11 in Saskatchewan we will have all restrictions lifted. There will be a return to normal life. That is really what all Canadians are hoping for. That is the question I want to talk about today. I hope everyone can have a Saskatchewan summer, where they can visit with their loved ones, have backyard barbecues and go to see the Riders win games at the Mosaic Stadium and Rider Nation can once again come together.

That is why I was asking the parliamentary secretary for finance when the federal government will take its leadership role. When will it bring a reopening plan? We know the CDC in America said if people have two doses they do not have to wear masks anymore or worry as much about social distancing. Is that what we are going to do in Canada? Have the Liberals had those conversations? What will happen when people get the second dose, when it is time to get their jab? I think that is what people are starting to ask and wonder about, what they are going to see when these vaccinations roll out, which are months behind.

Obviously, we know that the Liberals have failed on the vaccine rollout, but even a broken clock is right twice a day, so eventually we will get the vaccines and will have those two doses. What will that look like for individuals with respect to international travel and travelling to and from our friends across the border? Outfitters are asking this. Hotels are asking this. I spoke with the Regina Hotel Association. It cannot go another summer without clients. It would rather see clients in the door than programs and government cheques in the mail.

That is the question we are asking the government tonight.

• (2445)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the member opposite this early morning on such an important issue. It goes without saying that this period has been long and extremely challenging for Canadians. The COVID-19 pandemic has cost us dearly, with the loss of life and livelihoods. None of us has been untouched.

Now, with vaccination campaigns ramping up around the country, there is a sense of hope growing that we are nearing the end of this difficult experience. Like all Canadians, I look forward to putting the pandemic behind us, rebuilding the economy and returning to the activities that we enjoyed before COVID-19.

We have every reason to be hopeful, but we must also be vigilant. We are at a critical point in the pandemic, and we must temper

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our hope with caution as we begin to gradually ease restrictions. We need to stay the course with proven public health measures that have served us well so far. Canadians need to keep doing their part to protect themselves and each other. This means continuing to wear masks and limiting our interactions with other people. We also need to scale up testing and screening to identify new cases.

The Government of Canada is working with its partners in industry and the non-profit sector to increase testing and screening capacity across Canada to slow the spread of COVID-19. Rapid tests are an important front-line tool in the fight against COVID-19 that complement the use of polymerase chain reaction or PCR lab tests. A number of pilot projects have shown that rapid testing can help identify and stop the spread of COVID-19 in essential workplaces and congregate living settings. The Government of Canada is also committed to leading by example. We are currently working to expand rapid screening for essential workers in federal departments and agencies.

From the beginning, working closely with our partners has also been a key part of our public health approach in the fight against COVID-19. These partnerships, especially with the provinces and territories, continue to be essential as we prepare to restart the economy while keeping Canadians safe.

Last July, the government announced a \$19 billion agreement with the provinces and territories. The safe restart agreement is designed to protect the health of Canadians, get people safely back to work and prepare for potential surges. Canadians are counting on us to see them safely through this final lap of the pandemic. We are determined to do just that, with careful planning, cautious action and a healthy respect for this dangerous virus.

At this point, we all know what to do to keep each other safe. I know we can do it for as long as it takes to see this pandemic through to the end.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that response, but Canadians are doing whatever they are asked to keep each other safe.

I have one quick question for the parliamentary secretary. It is okay for the Prime Minister to fly across the world. It is okay for the Prime Minister to have masks and to hang out with his friends at the G7 without social distancing. It is okay for the Prime Minister to fly home and skip the quarantine hotel that every other Canadian has to use.

Why is there one set of rules for the Prime Minister and one set of rules for average Canadians? Could the parliamentary secretary answer that.

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• (2450)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has followed all public health rules. We know that with this pandemic, it has been a long road, but we are closer than we have ever been to turning the corner.

We have been waiting and preparing for this day for a very long time. We have invested to support provinces and territories in the fight against COVID through the safe restart agreements. We continue to work with the provinces and territories as well as industry and the non-profit sector to help keep people at work and safe with rapid testing.

Even as we look ahead to a more hopeful future, our focus continues to be the health and safety of Canadians. We must continue to practice public health measures and, for now, many restrictions must remain in place. If we move too quickly, we risk losing the progress that we have made.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada is complicit in torture. As the strong, proud and ready member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke representing Garrison Petawawa, I refuse to be complicit, as do the soldiers who recorded it. I rise to defend the honour and reputations of the women and the men who serve as members of the Canadian Armed Forces, particularly when the Prime Minister and his party refuse to support soldiers in uniform. The reputation of Canada has been maligned by the government.

On June 4, I once again asked the Prime Minister why his party has taken the position to condone torture. I specifically asked why soldiers were instructed to ignore evidence of war crimes other than to protect the Prime Minister's decision to ignore the evidence. By ignoring very disturbing evidence of war crimes, then responding with a cover-up, the Prime Minister and the Liberals become a party to the crime. Responding on behalf of the Prime Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence does a disservice to all women and men in uniform and all Canadians with her cover-up comments.

This is about rape, torture and execution. Let us recap the story for Canadians so far. According to a Canadian Armed Forces briefing note, Canadian soldiers reported the presence of videos being circulated among troops they were tasked to provide training to showing evidence of war crimes being committed by the trainees. The graphic images included raping a girl to death, torturing and executing a line of bound prisoners by beating them to death with what appeared to be iron rods or rebar, executing prisoners lined up by shooting, and executing a man by hanging him from the barrel of a battle tank. At least seven Canadian, non-commissioned soldiers saw the footage. To their credit, they immediately reported the situation to their superiors.

The government claimed ignorance. The fact that the Prime Minister expects Canadians to believe he or the Minister of National Defence were not informed about the torture videos is a slap and a grope to Canadian democracy. That claim has about as much truth to it as the Prime Minister not knowing the Kielburgers from the WE Charity corruption scandal were paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Prime Minister's family members.

Canadians subsequently learned the commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command responsible for overseeing all military missions briefed the chief of the defence staff over two years ago. The tone for accountability is set at the top. There is zero leadership from the Prime Minister and less from the Minister of National Defence.

It would now appear that the commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command responsible for overseeing all military missions briefed the former chief of the defence staff as recently as June 2 at the Hylands Golf and Country Club in Ottawa, an exclusive golf venue for the Canadian military. The same leadership vacuum that allows for the toxic masculinity of a broken Prime Minister gives the signal that sexual harassment, torture, rape and execution will be ignored or, worse, tolerated.

Canada has become, under the government's watch, an international laggard when it comes to denouncing torture and cruel treatment.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our military has consistently contributed to international operations to deter terrorism, to defend human rights and to act as a force for good in the world. That reputation will only be maintained by our willingness to continually question our own practices and fully support those who raise concerns. Through Operation Impact, we are participating in the Global Coalition Against Daesh and we are working with our allies and partners to make the Middle East more stable and more secure.

• (2455)

[Translation]

The work of the Canadian Armed Forces supports Canada's Middle East strategy. As part of this extensive effort, CAF members have helped rebuild local military capacity in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. This is non-combat work. It is vitally important because it lays the foundation for a better future for the regions and all those who live there.

The partner forces that we train with currently go through a stringent vetting process.

[English]

The intent of this process is to reduce the risk of training forces that have committed or are deemed likely to commit violations of the law of armed conflict.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

The law of armed conflict is a guiding principle in our efforts to counter Daesh, and, as the Minister of National Defence said, we were troubled to learn about the concerns raised by CAF members about members of the Iraqi security forces potentially sharing videos that depicted violations of the law of armed conflict.

[English]

CAF members deployed on Operation Impact received significant training on the law of armed conflict, including how to prevent suspected incidents or abuses. Like all CAF members, they are also required to report up the chain of command any violations of the law of armed conflict that do occur. The matter that the hon. member opposite mentions is now under investigation by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service.

These reports of abuse date back to the fall of 2018, and the Canadian Armed Forces is no longer working with the Iraqi security forces that were involved. The Canadian Armed Forces initially ceased participating in this type of training in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The training was subsequently deemed as no longer required by the combined joint task force Operation Inherent Resolve because the Iraqi security forces met the original aims of these training efforts. As such, tactical training in this capacity did not resume.

Finally, on behalf of our government, I would like to thank the soldiers who first raised these issues and have continued to raise these concerns. They have our gratitude and our full support.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, how can Canada credibly promote human rights? The communists are laughing at Canada right now while innocent Canadians rot in a foreign prison, forgotten by their government.

The Prime Minister and his party like to lecture others. All Canada and Canadians ever hear from the government, be it on indigenous children, boil water advisories, torture, sexual harassment in the military, the environment or corruption in government, is denial, followed by a long round of meaningless virtue signalling. Canadians expect better of their elected representatives, and being accountable in question period would be a good start.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Speaker, the military training missions the Canadian Armed Forces have undertaken as part of Operation Impact are a vital part of our whole-of-government approach to increasing security and stability in the Middle East. The groups that our military train are subject to a rigorous vetting process intended to prevent CAF members from working with forces that have committed or might in the future commit violations of the law of armed conflict.

• (2500)

[Translation]

The reports filed by CAF members in Iraq in 2018 are troubling, and we are treating the situation with the seriousness it deserves. This matter is now under investigation by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service.

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, from mid-April through the end of May, Alberta saw the highest rate of infection in North America from COVID-19. Fourteen separate outbreaks at oil sands work camps made the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, home to a mere 70,000 people, the epicentre of COVID infections in Canada.

Jason Kenney blames the high infection rate on indigenous people's vaccine hesitancy despite the very obvious fact that the COVID infections were spreading from the oil camps that his government deemed essential. Kenney's racist scapegoating did, however, bring attention to indigenous communities in Alberta and across Canada and to the challenges that these communities face in a global pandemic. Without adequate housing, health care and other basic infrastructure, the threat this virus and all infectious diseases pose to indigenous communities is acute.

I want to thank the government for its targeted vaccine distribution to indigenous communities and for getting COVID-19 emergency support to them during this crisis. It was useful during an emergency, in this emergency, not the emergency that we are currently seeing in northern Ontario. However, it does beg the question: Why does it take an emergency as serious as a global pandemic for the government to do the right thing?

Kenney's scapegoating of indigenous communities in Wood Buffalo was disgusting, but it was built upon Canada's legacy of genocide against indigenous people and on the current government's continual refusal to meet its obligations.

A shockwave went through the country just a couple of weeks ago when the unmarked burials of 215 children were discovered at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. These children, as young as three years old, died in a genocide. They died in a system designed to kill the Indian in the child, the very definition of a genocide, an attempt to destroy the identity, language, culture and familial connections that define a people and hold them together. These children died along with thousands of other children across 100 residential schools because they were an inconvenience to European settlers and they were in the way.

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Now, as hundreds more unmarked burials of children are found at sites, the shock will subside but the shame will continue. Of the 94 calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, how many has the government enacted? Five and a half years ago, the Prime Minister promised to implement all the recommendations. Five and a half years ago, even the government's own website, which has the most glowing account of the government's response that one could possibly find anywhere, clearly demonstrates the government's failure.

Addressing the genocide of the past, not even providing for the smallest ask of the TRC for support so that indigenous communities could find their children's unmarked burials is one type of failure. However, continuing that genocidal legacy by taking residential school survivors to court, by fighting indigenous children seeking their basic rights in court is a failure of a whole other level. That is shameful.

A few months ago, we learned that the government spent over \$3 million to fight the release of documents from St. Anne's residential school in Ontario, more than was requested to find burials. It spent \$3 million of Canadians' money to keep residential school survivors and their family members from learning the truth about St. Anne's.

That was today. When will this genocide end?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by recognizing that I am on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation from my home in the riding of Oakville North—Burlington. I would also like to thank my hon. colleague from Edmonton Strathcona for raising the issue of vaccine distribution in hard hit areas of Alberta.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented crisis in Canada, especially for indigenous peoples and I want to applaud indigenous peoples across our country who stepped up for vaccines and continue to step up for vaccines.

In response to the pandemic, Indigenous Services Canada has formed COVID-19 vaccine planning groups with representation from federal, provincial, territorial, and indigenous partners to co-develop approaches to support access to COVID-19 vaccines for first nations, Inuit and Métis, including youth and indigenous peoples living in urban settings.

As of June 7, we are aware of 687 indigenous communities with vaccinations under way. A total of 540,581 doses have been administered. Based on Statistics Canada 2020 population projections, over 61% of eligible individuals in first nations communities as well as over 72% of eligible individuals living in the territories have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Of this group, over 36% of individuals 12 years and up have received their second dose.

In my province of Ontario, the Canadian Armed Forces are supporting vaccine rollout for indigenous communities through Operation Vector. They are distributing COVID-19 vaccines in various communities of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. This is in response to a request for assistance from the Government of Ontario and Orange

partners with the delivery of the first doses of the vaccine to community members aged 12 to 17.

In addition as part of Operation Laser, Canadian Rangers are currently activated in Attawapiskat First Nation, Fort Albany First Nation, Kashechewan First Nation and Long Lake #58 First Nation in Ontario to provide assistance with COVID-19 response efforts in those communities.

We are currently working with communities to determine how many additional doses are needed to ensure a 70% immunization rate among the 12 to 17 age group on reserve.

Last week, the Government of Alberta also announced that people who had received their first dose of vaccine in April are now eligible to book their appointments for the second dose. This is very encouraging.

Throughout the pandemic, indigenous leaders in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo have demonstrated exceptional leadership and care for the community. They continue to guide vaccination rollout and uptake. Because of this, Alberta first nations continue to report high numbers of vaccinations in their communities and more urban clinics are being planned.

I share the member's concerns which is why I reached out to her to arrange a briefing on the topic. As she knows, the federal government is responsible for vaccine procurement and the provinces for vaccine distribution. As the member was informed during a briefing, Indigenous Services Canada is working with first nations located around the municipality of Wood Buffalo, including the Athabasca Tribal Council and Alberta Health Services to facilitate supports and vaccine distribution where needed, including with friendship centres and urban indigenous health clinics.

We will continue to support indigenous communities across the country, including Kashechewan First Nation, to bring an end to the pandemic and ensure the safety and well-being of indigenous peoples across the country.

• (2505)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I do not think the parliamentary secretary listened to what I had said. However, I will ask again.

Canadian governments have discriminated against indigenous children for decades. Indigenous children have been denied the social, educational and medical support that they need, support that non-indigenous children readily receive.

Today, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and other parties representing indigenous children are back in Federal Court fighting for their basic rights, fighting the government, and yet today, the member stands and talks about what is happening in different communities.

Will the government stop suing children? Will the government stop taking indigenous children to court and actually stop wasting millions of dollars that could be used to make sure that there is care for indigenous children?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, perhaps I misunderstood adjournment proceedings, because I thought it was to expand on a question that the member had already asked during question period, which was about vaccines.

Our government has been clear. Our goal is comprehensive, fair and equitable compensation for further healing for those impacted by the historic inequities in first nations child welfare.

Adjournment Proceedings

We maintain that there are substantive, unresolved questions on the CHRT's jurisdiction. We remain committed to finding a fair way forward on compensation for first nations children who may be outside of the CHRT's process.

● (2510)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Monday, June 14, 2021, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:10 a.m.)

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