



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

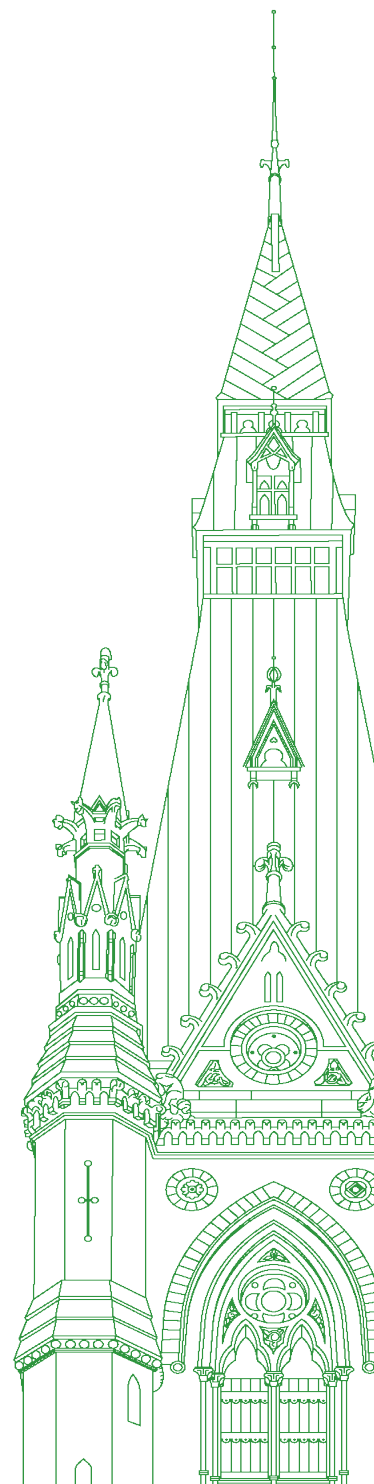
# House of Commons Debates

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Thursday, June 17, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 17, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)  
[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, in relation to its study on the protection of privacy and reputation on platforms such as Pornhub.

I would like to thank the analysts and the clerk for their diligence and support to our committee during this horrific testimony and challenging report.

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

\* \* \*

### WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

**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 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2019-20 progress report on Canada's national action plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution on women, peace and security.

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### 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 13 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following three reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the 20th report, entitled "Access to Safe Drinking Water in First Nations Communities"; the 21st report, entitled "Follow-up Audit on Rail Safety"; and the 22nd report, entitled "Investing in Canada Plan".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these three reports.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, entitled "From Mineral Exploration to Advanced Manufacturing: Developing Value Chains for Critical Minerals in Canada".

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

I want to take the opportunity, as this will be the last opportunity to do this in this session, to thank my fellow committee members for their spirit of co-operation on a regular basis. I am proud to say we have a very good working relationship in our committee.

I want to give particular thanks to the staff, who make the committee run so smoothly: the translators, our clerk, and in particular our analysts, who have the challenging task of distilling a whole lot of information on complicated issues from a variety of sources, MPs and witnesses alike. They do a remarkably great job, and I just want to acknowledge that.

### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

The 10th report is entitled "Eliminating Sexual Misconduct Within the Canadian Armed Forces". Certainly, the disturbing testimony the committee heard from survivors shows that we have yet to hold people accountable at the highest levels. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to its 10th report.

*Routine Proceedings*

The 11th report is on supplementary estimates (A), 2021-22. The committee has considered the estimates referred by the House and reports the same.

I want to thank our analysts, the clerk, all the translators and the committee members, who have worked so hard this session.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, entitled “Systemic Racism in Policing in Canada”.

Sometimes, committees actually do what they are uniquely able to do: receive evidence, hear witnesses, ask questions, minimize partisanship, work hard and produce a very useful report on one of Canada's premier institutions, the RCMP.

While I have the floor, I want to thank our clerk and our analysts for the professional way in which they have navigated the committee through a series of chaotic events. They have brought order out of chaos.

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

• (1010)

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is one the most tolerant and welcoming countries on earth. Canada is rightfully known as a place that accepts and affirms the equal rights, freedoms, opportunities, security, dignity and sanctity of all people of all ethnicities, faiths, sexual orientations, backgrounds and personal identities. These are the values and aspirations of the vast majority of Canadians.

Canada is not perfect. Racism and racists exist in Canada. Heinous crimes of murder and violent attacks involving race and religious-based hate have been carried out in Canada. Action must be taken to protect innocent, vulnerable Canadians and to enact consequences when racism has made it out in discrimination, violence, incitement of harm or criminal activity.

Racism exists in recent and long-standing systemic legacies like residential schools and forced relocations. Racism can be found in institutional structures that fail to root out racist elements within their ranks. It would be wrong to describe the RCMP or all its individual officers and staff as inherently racist or holding racist beliefs, or to blame all societal challenges on one institution. It is also true that various failures to respond effectively to the needs and realities of indigenous and racialized communities have led to a lack of trust and can be tied to biased outcomes.

These challenges must be met with practical policy changes that solve institutional problems. It is crucial that individuals face consequences for their actions. Defunding or arbitrarily dismantling institutions is not a solution, but is evidence of allowing frustration to triumph over real reform.

Conservatives of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security believe that some of the recommendations of the main report fall short of compelling meaningful action, go beyond

the scope of the study or serve ideological objectives that we cannot endorse.

For those reasons, we are tabling a supplementary report that focuses on practical solutions.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to present a supplementary opinion to the report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security entitled “Systemic Racism in Policing in Canada”.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

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

Accordingly, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are coming to a greater understanding of the role that the RCMP and policing in general have and continue to play in perpetuating systemic racism against indigenous and Black communities. It has become unmistakably clear that the RCMP needs transformational change. It needs to evolve from a paramilitary national police force with a colonial legacy into a modern, bias-free national police service with civilian oversight and accountability.

New Democrats fully support the recommendations laid out in the public safety committee's report on systemic racism in Canadian policing, but make the following additional recommendations.

First, the depot in Regina should be closed. For generations, it has indoctrinated new recruits into the paramilitary culture and structure. It needs to be replaced with a national police college built from the ground up that provides professional education and training in de-escalation, implicit bias, gender-based violence, cultural awareness and the history of colonialism.

Second, the government should consult with indigenous communities on whether they want a separate indigenous police college to provide training for indigenous police services rooted in cultural knowledge and history. The federal government should provide any required funding and resources for this.

Third, the government should introduce measures to immediately and automatically expunge all criminal records of convictions and findings of guilt for the simple possession of small amounts of cannabis, which we know disproportionately burdens Black, indigenous and other racialized Canadians.

Fourth, we should empower mental health professionals to be the first responders whenever possible, since for many the police embody the systemic racism that has permeated our system.

While we fully support the recommendations in this report, the transformation that is needed will simply not be possible unless the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety take full responsibility for making that change happen with a whole-of-government approach.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I also ask for unanimous consent to give a supplementary opinion to the report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security that was just tabled.

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

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

I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1015)

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois would like to thank all the witnesses and groups who participated in this important study on discrimination by police forces. It is important to us that significant action be taken so that everyone can live in a society where they feel safe.

We believe that Canada's treatment of first nations and the Inuit is the epitome of a racist system that discriminates against first nations. Despite the progress society has made over time to address discrimination and racism, a number of recent tragedies remind us that we still have a long way to go before all people can live in a society free from discrimination based on race, gender, language or ethnicity. This report by the Standing Committee on Public Safety is one small step toward that goal.

[English]

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

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, entitled "Modernizing the Employment Insurance Program".

I would like to sincerely thank all members of the committee for their excellent work on this report and also congratulate and thank the team from the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament for their professionalism and patience in supporting the committee.

[Translation]

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

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House to give a short speech about the report that was just introduced.

### *Routine Proceedings*

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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[English]

### CANADA POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-312, An Act relating to cash contributions by Canada and to criteria and conditions in respect of post-secondary education.

She said: Mr. Speaker, post-secondary education advances our social, cultural and economic well-being and determines our ability to innovate, respond to change and maintain a vibrant and stable democracy. Post-secondary educational excellence and accessibility are the single most important driver of a growing economy and a better Canada.

Access to and the quality of our post-secondary institutions are being eroded due to the ever-increasing cost of tuition, the increased commercialization of everything from food services to research, and cutbacks to programs and other care services. Currently, federal support for post-secondary education is rolled into the Canada social transfer. This bill separates post-secondary education funding to provinces from other social transfer funding, creates a framework for post-secondary education funding, and ties that funding to meeting quality and accessibility standards, including limiting short-term, casual and contract academic labour and ensuring reasonable access for qualified persons regardless of their ability to pay.

Since I was elected to represent Edmonton Strathcona, a riding with so many incredible post-secondary institutions, I have been fighting for students, professors, researchers and everyone who recognizes the incomparable value of quality, accessible post-secondary education in our country. This bill is the next step in that fight.

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

*Routine Proceedings*

● (1020)

**The Speaker:** I just want to say that we have quite a number of private members' bills, and one of the key requests is that it be succinct. I just want to point that out before we continue.

\* \* \*

**BANNING SYMBOLS OF HATE ACT**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-313, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (banning symbols of hate).

He said: Mr. Speaker, my thanks are to Nick Milanovic, Isabelle D'Souza and Mark Rowlinson for their expert help on this bill. My thoughts today are with the Afzaal family, victims of a hate killing last week in London, Ontario. I thank the member for London—Fanshawe for seconding this bill.

We have seen, tragically, a marked increase in hate in our society: Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, misogyny. We see racism against Black and indigenous people and rising anti-Asian racism, yet the symbols of hate are freely displayed and freely sold across our country.

It is time to ban these symbols of hate by amending our Criminal Code. This is what this important bill does. It makes it a criminal offence to display or sell reprehensible hate symbols, like the Nazi flag, freely sold in Canada, which is a disgusting symbol of genocidal hatred, anti-Semitism and racism. There should be no place for such flags and emblems representing hate in Canada. They should not be sold. They should not be displayed.

It is time to stop being soft on hate. I hope all MPs will support the bill, the banning symbols of hate act, for speedy passage.

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

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**UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT**

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-314, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to introduce a bill entitled, an act respecting Ukrainian heritage month.

If passed, the bill would designate the month of September, every year, as Ukrainian heritage month across Canada. I would like to thank the MP for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for seconding the bill. I hope that all MPs in the House will support the bill.

The first Ukrainian immigrants, Vasyl Eleniak and Ivan Pylypiw, arrived in Canada on September 7, 1891, almost 130 years ago. Ukrainian immigrants began arriving in Canada in larger numbers in the years that followed.

Today, Canada is home to more than 1.3 million Ukrainian Canadians. Ukrainian Canadians have left and continue to leave a historic mark on our country. Their contributions span communities across Canada, and are reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life. Canada has welcomed and supported the Ukrainian Canadian community in many ways. Canada was the first western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991. Canada

has recognized that the Holodomor was a genocide. Canada has opposed and continues to oppose Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and continues to support Ukraine in its fight for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukrainian heritage month would provide a special opportunity to celebrate with Canadians of all backgrounds our Ukrainian heritage, the role that Canada has played in welcoming generations of Ukrainians and supporting Ukrainian Canadians, and the significant contributions of Ukrainian Canadians to our political, economic, social and cultural life across Canada.

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

\* \* \*

● (1025)

**CANADA-TAIWAN RELATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT**

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-315, An Act respecting a framework to strengthen Canada-Taiwan relations.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to introduce the Canada-Taiwan relations framework act.

Canada does not have a formal relationship with Taiwan and that complicates our interactions. As such, the legislation seeks to establish an orderly mechanism by which to conduct relations by establishing a framework for strengthening Canada-Taiwan relations, including in respect of economic, cultural and legal affairs.

Taiwan is one of Canada's largest trading partners. We have strong people-to-people links and share common values. It is a vibrant democracy and one of the world's top 20 economies. It is time that Canada's relations with Taiwan reflect the reality that Taiwan is today. This legislation is an important step towards that.

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

\* \* \*

**ADDRESSING THE CONTINUING VICTIMIZATION OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS' FAMILIES ACT**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-316, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Prisons and Reformatories Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House and introduce my private member's bill, McCann's law. In 2010, Lyle and Marie McCann of St. Albert, Alberta, left their home on a trip to British Columbia. Shortly after their departure, they were murdered, although their remains have never been found. With a body of overwhelming evidence, their killer was found and convicted of manslaughter. He is eligible for parole this year, despite never having admitted to his crime, nor providing the family of the victims the closure of knowing the whereabouts of their loved ones. The fact that a killer can walk free on our streets while a family is denied the closure of a funeral is an injustice.

Bret McCann, the son of Lyle and Marie McCann had this to say: "By withholding where he left their bodies, [my parents' killer] is able to continuously revictimize our family. And without a proper funeral and memorial, our family is unable to fully grieve and reach a measure of closure".

This legislation would correct that injustice by introducing new consequences at sentencing and parole hearings for refusing to provide material evidence on the location of victims' remains. This will give the authorities the tools and discretion to introduce justice for families of victims. It is time to put the rights of victims and their families, not criminals, first.

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

\* \* \*

## PETITIONS

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Mr. Speaker, on Vancouver Island, people are very concerned about the loss of endangered, old-growth ecosystems. In British Columbia, we are down to the last 3% of these magnificent forests.

The petitioners call on the federal government to work with the province and first nations to immediately halt the 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 in partnership with first nations to ensure Canada's forest industry is sustainable and based on the harvesting of second and third growth forests, something that many petitioners agree with; ban the export of raw logs and maximize resource use for local jobs; and ban the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production.

**The Speaker:** Once again, I want to remind the hon. members to be as concise as possible.

Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

• (1030)

### TRAVEL ADVISERS

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present three petitions to the House on behalf of more than 24,000 independent travel advisers, 12,000 of which are sole proprietors and the majority of which are women who were most impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions. They lost incomes that they earned the year prior to COVID. They have lost their incomes for the year during COVID, and they will likely lose

## Routine Proceedings

numerous amounts of income as our economy slowly begins to reopen.

They ask for programs from the Government of Canada to recognize these realities and make sure that they are compensated fairly and adequately, unlike the programs that have been provided so far.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of my Yellowhead constituents who are concerned about fraudulent charges by cable companies. They are calling on the government to (a) form a government body separate from cable companies to investigate consumer complaints; (b) have a system in place for consumers to take their concerns to that is not affiliated with the cable companies; and (c) stop the cable companies' monopoly on charges and fees that they cannot prove the consumers ordered and have them accept responsibility for fraudulent charges on consumer accounts or billing errors by their own administration or a third party.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition that calls upon the government to recognize the inadequacies of its response to the Government of Israel's multiple violations of international law and Palestinians' human rights, including forced evictions, settlement buildings, unequal treatment, a tax on journalists, bombing of humanitarian and medical facilities, and the killing of civilians.

The petitioners call on the government to demand that the Government of Israel end evictions of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah and West Bank, end apartheid on the Palestinian people, and implement a fair government and system for all people within its jurisdictions.

The petitioners also call on the government to apply to Israel the same diplomatic tools that Canada has used in condemning activities in the Xinjiang autonomous region and in sanctioning Russian officials involved in the annexation of Crimea.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

GOVERNOR GENERAL

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition on behalf of nearly 8,000 petitioners who are calling on the Government of Canada to immediately amend the Governor General's Act so that only governors general who have held office for a minimum of five years are eligible for a pension and to withdraw the lifetime pension and hospitality budget of any former governor general who has not held office for at least five consecutive years.

This petition is tabled on behalf of all of the workers who leave their jobs and are not entitled to employment insurance.

[English]

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table a petition from small business owners from Vancouver Island. They cite that during the pandemic their revenues were catastrophically impacted as a result of closures, capacity limits and social restrictions. They cite the importance of the wage subsidy, the rent assistance program, the Canadian emergency business account and the highly affected sectors credit availability programs as critical to saving jobs, but many of these businesses have remained ineligible.

The petitioners are calling on the government to adjust eligibility for these programs to include owners of both new and newly expanded businesses who can demonstrate that their project was non-reversible at the outset of the pandemic, to implement an alternative method for determining the wage subsidy and rent program rates for these businesses, and to back pay them to March 15, 2020, for both the wage subsidy and rent program so that these businesses can survive.

\* \* \*

**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.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—CENSURE OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC)** moved:

That, given that the Minister of National Defence has clearly lost the respect of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, including those at the highest ranks, for, amongst other things,

(i) misleading Canadians on the withdrawal of fighter jets in the fight against ISIS,

(ii) misleading Canadians about his service record,

(iii) presiding over the wrongful accusation and dismissal of Vice-Admiral Norman,

(iv) engaging in a cover-up of sexual misconduct allegations in the Canadian Armed Forces,

the House formally censure the Minister of National Defence to express the disappointment of the House of Commons in his conduct.

**The Speaker:** Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending June 23, 2021, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of supply bills. In view of recent practices, do the hon. members agree that the bill be distributed now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1035)

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC)** Mr. Speaker, I hope this is the final time I will have to address the House virtually. I look forward to being in Ottawa next week and hope very much that we will be back to normal sessions come the fall.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

I just have to say that this is a rare measure that we are requesting of all members of the House of Commons to censure the Minister of National Defence. The last time anyone was censured in the House was back in 2002, and it has come to this point, because the Minister of National Defence has refused to do the honourable thing and resign, and the Prime Minister has refused to do the right thing and fire the Minister of National Defence. Essentially, that leaves it up to us in the House of Commons to censure the minister going forward, until the voters of Vancouver South have an opportunity to express their displeasure in the upcoming federal election.

I also just want to say to the Speaker, who has stepped into the chair, knowing that he has announced that he will not be running in the next federal election, how much I have appreciated his strength in the chair and his friendship over the years as we served together. I wish him all the best in his future endeavours, enjoying more time with his family.

When we look at this motion, we have to look at the litany of misleading comments made by the Minister of National Defence over his tenure since 2015. I think all of us are all too familiar with the travesty of the wrongful accusations and the decision by the minister to go on a witch hunt to stop the procurement of the *Asterix* for the Royal Canadian Navy, and how he threw retired Vice-Admiral Mark Norman under the bus. We know that through 2017 and into 2018, this escalated to a ridiculous level and ended up in the courts. The case, of course, was thrown out by the judge, because there just was not any evidence for it. It was an unnecessary attack on the honourable service and great reputation of a strong military leader, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman.



However, we have to go back to the very beginning of the minister's tenure and look at what happened with his politically motivated withdrawal of our CF-18s from the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The minister was over there meeting with the Government of Iraq, as well as Kurdish officials in Erbil, and he told CBC on December 21, 2015, that he had not had one discussion about withdrawing our CF-18s from the fight. However, an access to information request on the record of a wire message in reference to the Minister of National Defence's meeting with the Iraqi minister of defence on December 20, 2015, just the day before he made that statement, says, "the Iraqi Minister of Defence was clearly focused on Canada's decision to withdraw its CF18 fighter jets from the coalition air strikes, asking [our Minister of National Defence] to reconsider this decision on numerous occasions". That was the very first step in the minister's very misleading comments to the media and to Canadians.

We should not be surprised, because we also know that the minister, back in July 2015 when he was running to be a member of Parliament for the first time, claimed on a local B.C. program, *Conversations That Matter*, that he was the architect of Operation Medusa in Afghanistan. He reiterated that in April 2017, when he was at a conference in New Delhi on conflict prevention and peace keeping in a changing world. He again said that he was the architect of Operation Medusa.

• (1040)

Of course, he was a major back then and had numerous members in the command chain above him who were making the decisions, and there is no doubt that he provided great input and intelligence into how Operation Medusa was conducted, but to claim that he was more than the team is something that is not well regarded within the Canadian Armed Forces or by veterans across this country, and the minister had to apologize.

We also saw the minister take a shot at me back in 2017 over the cuts to tax-free allowances for forces members serving in Operation Impact while stationed in Kuwait at Camp Arifjan at that time. He claimed that it was the Conservative government that had taken away the tax-free allowance. I was able to get up on a question of privilege to point out that the initial assessments were made under the current Liberal government, and those cuts were made by this minister to hardship pay that was in effect back in 2014-15. Again, there was a finding that he misled the House.

Now, the most egregious of all of this, and the one that is really rocking our Canadian Armed Forces right now, is, of course, the crisis of sexual misconduct. I will point out and ask the question: What do the Somalia affair, the decade of darkness and the crisis of sexual misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces today have in common? It all comes down to weak Liberal leadership.

We know that when the news broke that retired General Jonathan Vance, the former chief of the defence staff, had issues of sexual misconduct raised in March 2018, the Minister of National Defence said at committee on February 19 of this year that he was "as shocked as everyone else at the allegations that were made public two weeks ago". He was surprised to learn about these allegations, but then at the defence committee on March 3, 2021, the former ombudsman for national defence and the Canadian Armed Forces,

### *Business of Supply*

Gary Walbourne, said at committee that "I personally met with [the minister] to address an allegation of inappropriate sexual behaviour within the senior ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces, specifically, against the chief of the defence staff, and to discuss my concerns about this allegation. This meeting happened on March 1, 2018." That was three years before the story became news, when the minister was briefed by Gary Walbourne.

Gary Walbourne went on to say at committee that:

I did tell the minister what the allegation was. I reached into my pocket to show him the evidence I was holding, and he pushed back from the table and said, "No." I don't think we exchanged another word.

The minister refused the evidence, and we know that, at the defence committee on March 12, 2021, he then admitted that, "I did meet with Mr. Walbourne". The ombudsman brought up the concerns, but "He did not give me any details", is what the minister was claiming. Yet, if we look at all of the information that flowed between the minister's chief of staff, Zita Astravas at the time, up into the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office on March 2, 2018, it all talked about this being a matter of sexual misconduct, which they actually described as "sexual harassment". Elder Marques, Michael Wernick and Katie Telford, the chief of staff to the Prime Minister, all knew that this was an issue of sexual misconduct.

Therefore, as the minister continues to dodge this and refuses to do the honourable thing and resign, and as long as the Prime Minister continues to back this inept behaviour by the Minister of National Defence and refuses to fire him, it falls upon us as the House of Commons to censure this minister since he has consistently and repeatedly misled the House.

I call upon all members of the House of Commons in all parties to censure this minister for his continued casual relationship with the truth.

• (1045)

**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, personally, I find it somewhat disgraceful that the opposition Conservative Party would bring a motion of character assassination against someone who I would suggest is a hero.

I will give a specific quote and ask the member to provide his thoughts. Brigadier-General David Fraser, who was in charge of NATO's regional command in south Afghanistan in 2006, said that—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will just interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary momentarily. I just wonder if he could move his microphone out slightly from his mouth. We are getting a lot of popping noise and so on, on the audio.

While I am at it, I will ask the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman when he comes back for his response to the parliamentary secretary's question, to do the same, to just move the microphone. We will cover both of those off at this time.

Let us go back to the hon. parliamentary secretary to finish his question.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, my apologies to our interpreters.

I want to give a specific quote from Brigadier General David Fraser, who was in charge of NATO's regional command in south Afghanistan in 2006. He wrote:

I must say that Major Sajjan is one of the most remarkable people I have worked with, and his contribution to the success of the mission and the safety of Canadian soldiers was nothing short of remarkable.

Further, it goes on to say:

I rate him as one of the best intelligence officers I have ever worked with—fearless, smart, and personable, and I would not hesitate to have him on my staff at any time in the future.

This is an incredible individual. Why are the Conservatives continuing their attack on character assassination of such individuals who have a proven record, as this minister has?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North knows that I am not attacking the minister's service in uniform. As I said in my speech, he had an incredible service, including in Operation Medusa and the intelligence that he collected.

What we are talking about is his lack of action and lack of leadership as the Minister of National Defence over the past six years while he has been in the job. Due to his lack of leadership, because he set such a low bar, leading by example, we have a crisis today with so many of our leaders in the Canadian Armed Forces. We are on our seventh vice-chief of defence staff because of the inept behaviour of the minister over the last six years, and two chiefs of the defence staff who are being investigated for sexual misconduct. This is a direct reflection of the leadership of this minister. That is why he has to go or we have to censure him.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to acknowledge the farewell speech you gave on Tuesday and to tell you that I hope I will still have the chance to work with you on the all-party caucus on the environment until 2023.

That being said, the minister is being criticized for a lot of things, but with regard to the allegations of sexual misconduct against General Vance, he said that the nature of the accusations was not really important and what mattered was the action that was being taken.

However, in 2015, the Deschamps report did recommend actions but when Ms. Deschamps testified in 2021, she said that very little had been done.

In my colleague's view, did the Liberals not deliberately turn a blind eye in this file on allegations of sexual misconduct?

• (1050)

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member wholeheartedly. The most egregious thing that has happened under the leadership of this Minister of National Defence is that he has failed to move to protect the women and men who serve in uniform. Therefore, we have this crisis of sexual misconduct. The minister sat for six years on Justice Deschamps' report on how to stomp out sexual misconduct. The minister continues to kick the can down the

road. He dithers and delays in making any future decisions on how we are to go about stomping out sexual misconduct.

That is why we Conservatives have said that we need to have an independent investigation now. We need to freeze all promotions and salary increases until we figure out a way forward and ensure that there is more representation by women and under-represented minorities within the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, would the Conservatives agree with me that an intelligence officer who worked with local Afghan authorities in a leadership role, as was claimed by the Minister of National Defence during his tours in the field, should have known about the alleged torture of prisoners transferred to the Afghan authorities?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has consistently denied having any knowledge of that. We are questioning whether he has been misleading Canadians on sexual misconduct and concerning fighter jets and procurement of supply ships, so I guess it is reasonable to also question whether he was aware of what was happening during the transfer of prisoners in Afghanistan.

It comes down to the nature and conduct of this minister, which is unbecoming of a parliamentarian, a veteran, as well as a Minister of National Defence. That is why we need to censure him.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I take no pleasure in rising in the House today. First, I must mention that the Minister of National Defence and I have something in common: We each served honourably in the Canadian Forces for over twenty years. We both rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and commanded infantry units. These are the things we have in common. The minister served our country particularly well in the various missions he participated in around the world. I thank him for his service.

However, on October 19, 2015, in the federal election, we chose two different paths. I chose to run as a Conservative Party candidate, while the Minister of National Defence chose to run for the Liberal Party.

Let me remind members what the Liberal Party represents for the Canadian Forces. Let us recall the 10 years of darkness of the Chrétien era, marked by the purchase of used submarines and the cancellation of helicopter contracts, a time when our soldiers did not even have combat boots. That is the path and the party that the minister chose.

From that day on, he and I were no longer soldiers. We were now former military members who had become members of Parliament in the House of Commons, a political office. That is when the minister's problems began.

The first step was in 2015. During the election campaign, a tragedy struck hearts around the world. The body of a little boy washed up on a beach in Italy. He was a Syrian refugee trying to flee Syria, which was under the grip of ISIS. Many refugees were seeking asylum. The Liberals opened up many new spots, and we were all for that. We needed to do something to help those refugees.

However, our country was also engaged in combat. Our armed forces and our air force were in Iraq and Syria fighting the enemy, ISIS. What did this government decide to do when it took office? It pulled our CF-18s out of the bombing campaign against ISIS. It stopped fighting the enemy, the enemy that caused the little boy to wash up on the beach and the Syrian refugees to flee in search of asylum. We could never understand that.

When we say that the minister is hiding the truth or misleading Canadians, we are talking about decisions. When we questioned him at length about the reasons behind the decision to pull our CF-18s out, the minister said that Iraq had agreed to it. Later, in an interview with an Iraqi minister, we learned that that was not true. Iraq was very disappointed with Canada's decision.

The next step was a pivotal point in the career of a very talented military member, Vice-Admiral Norman, who was commander of the Royal Canadian Navy at the time. When he heard that the incoming Liberal government wanted to cancel the *Asterix* contract that had been awarded by the Conservative government, that was the last straw. Vice-Admiral Norman, a man who worked for his troops, the men and women of the Royal Canadian Navy, knew full well that the Conservative government decision to award the *Asterix* contract to Davie shipyard was the best solution to fix the problems in the navy.

We knew that the first decision of the Prime Minister and cabinet was to do everything in their power to cancel that contract. Vice-Admiral Norman did everything he could to prevent that from happening, and he paid the political price with his career. All he wanted to do was give the Royal Canadian Navy the tools it needed to do its job properly.

What did the Minister of National Defence do to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces were operating effectively around the world? That is the duty of a defence minister. It is about ensuring that his troops have the necessary tools to do their job. Instead, the minister contributed to the problem. He helped ensure that Vice-Admiral Norman became persona non grata. He ended up facing serious charges and the RCMP landed on his doorstep. It is appalling.

• (1055)

This man was expected to be the next chief of the defence staff. He was going to be the commander of the Canadian Armed Forces. Instead, he was forced to retire. The government made sure of that by paying Vice-Admiral Norman's legal costs, which remain secret, so that he would just retire and stay quiet and so the whole thing would go away.

Is that the leadership we expect from a minister? Do we expect the minister to always say yes to the Prime Minister's nefarious decisions? A minister must be able to stand up and say that something

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will not work, that we cannot do that. However, the minister said nothing.

In 2018, the Canadian Armed Forces ombudsman went to the office of the Minister of National Defence to tell him that there was a problem with the chief of the defence staff, General Vance. What did the minister do? He told the ombudsman that he did not want to know about it. The ombudsman was completely taken aback.

The Canadian Armed Forces ombudsman told the minister that a victim had made allegations of sexual misconduct against the chief of the defence staff and that these allegations were not about 30-year-old incidents or incidents involving one too many beers, but were rather very serious allegations about recent incidents. What did the minister do? He did nothing. We learned about this three years later. We just learned about it.

In 2018, during his tenure, the minister chose to hide the information. It gets worse. When the Conservatives were in power, they commissioned a report from Justice Marie Deschamps. She presented her report in 2015, in which she described attitude problems and sexual misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces. What did the Minister of National Defence do with that report? Absolutely nothing.

The full report contained 10 recommendations that the minister could have implemented. He had access to all of the resources and tools he needed to protect women in the Canadian Armed Forces. He could have instituted a process to streamline complaints. That was not done, and we do not know why. We are asking questions, but we will never know.

Why were Justice Deschamps' recommendations never implemented? Was it because, again, the report had been commissioned by the Conservatives? Was it because people did not want these recommendations to be implemented? Was it because people did not want anyone to know? We have no idea.

When all these problems are added together, the situation looks very serious. The Canadian Armed Forces are in turmoil. The head of the armed forces, the former chief of defence staff, is under investigation. The new chief of defence staff, who was in the position for one month, is under investigation. Generals are stepping down. Discipline and sound operations management within the Canadian Forces are evaporating. The soldiers and officers have no one to lead them. What is going on?

On top of that, there is the case of Major-General Dany Fortin, a man I have known for a long time, a great soldier. He was put in charge of Canada's vaccine rollout, and he did an outstanding job. However, a complaint was filed against him. We do not know when or where it came from. Major-General Fortin was not informed of it. The decision was made to push him aside. The story went public, and he ended up getting all sorts of negative attention from the media, the public and the government without knowing what was happening or why. Today, this man is being forced to take legal action against the government and the Prime Minister to defend his reputation. Is that any way to treat the best members of the Canadian Armed Forces?

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Major-General Dany Fortin was brought in, in a public way, to help the country get out of the COVID-19 crisis, and how was he treated? He was not informed or even given a chance to explain a situation that may not even be true. We do not know. That is how the defence minister and this government operate, and that is why we can no longer trust the Minister of National Defence.

I would like to remind the House that this has nothing to do with the soldier that the minister used to be. He served his country with distinction. However, he became a member of Parliament and a minister on October 19, 2015, and it has been a catastrophe ever since.

• (1100)

**Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, having also served our country, I too want to thank my colleague for his service in the Canadian Armed Forces, and the minister. We are more or less on the same wavelength when it comes to understanding the issues raised in today's motion.

I would like to ask my colleague about Vice-Admiral Norman, who, as we all know, was tasked by the Conservative government, specifically Minister MacKay, at the time, to manage the Davie project. That matter was the subject of an investigation. The mandate was given in 2015, and the Norman affair blew up in 2017. It took the Conservatives about two years to react because they themselves knew that they had given him a legitimate mandate through Parliament, where we now sit. I would like to know the reason behind the two years of silence on the matter.

Regarding sexual misconduct, the Deschamps report was tabled in 2015, and various committees, including the Standing Committee on National Defence, studied it.

Why did the government not institute mechanisms to bring about positive change and transformation, instead of imputing motives?

That could have fixed the problem.

The other issue was the withdrawal of the CF-18s. The Canadian Armed Forces succeeded in liberating Mosul anyway. I knew that, and so did the Conservatives, so which is it? A success or a failure?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for all his questions. I will take the time to answer at least one or two of them.

With respect to Vice-Admiral Norman, it all started in 2014 and 2015, and we started debating it in 2017. Why was nothing done in the meantime? Because we only learned of the problem on the day the information got out. Ever since that time, we have been asking questions about this matter. We did not wait two years to do so, quite the contrary. As is the case with many files, we could not know everything there was to know. The Liberals have been in government since 2015. Therefore, we did not know any more about it than my colleague, since we did not have access to the documents and communications. As soon as we learned of the matter, we started asking questions.

Regarding the Deschamps report, we will never understand why the government did not implement Marie Deschamps' recommendations as soon as it took office. If it had, things might be different today.

[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, what I find a bit rich is the degree to which the Conservative opposition party is trying to make this issue about General Vance. In 2015, the current leader of the official opposition was made aware of the rumour. It was serious enough that he asked his staff to notify the Prime Minister's chief of staff, who then took the matter to the Privy Council Office for review.

Does the member not see any hypocrisy here? Why did the Conservative Party fail so many years ago on one of the same issues that it is trying to hold this government to account for? There seems to be a lot of hypocrisy there.

• (1105)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The minister was appointed on November 4, 2015. He is the one who made all the wrong decisions or who covered up all the decisions that were made and that I mentioned in my speech. I think there are enough of them for members to understand that the minister no longer deserves to remain in cabinet. Had Vice-Admiral Norman not suffered the fate the government had in store for him, he might have taken over from General Vance in 2018, and there would not have been all these problems with sexual misconduct and all the other issues with this file, not to mention the lack of strength we are seeing in the Canadian Forces.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I have a very simple question for him.

The Liberals and the Liberal government are very good at accusing the opposition of delaying the proceedings and making Parliament dysfunctional. I would like him to comment on the Liberals' filibustering at the Standing Committee on National Defence to try to protect their defence minister, who no longer deserves to be in his position. Sometimes the Liberals are the ones filibustering.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Yes, there was some filibustering at the Standing Committee on National Defence, in a bid to cover up what happened, once again. Who are the victims in all that? The victims are the women of the Canadian Armed Forces, who are once again looking at the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister and wondering whether these men deserve their loyalty. The main challenge facing the Canadian Armed Forces is trust in their leader. There is no trust at the moment, and that is the biggest problem.

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the motion the Leader of the Opposition has put forward. He presents this motion in an attempt to wage personal and partisan attacks rather than focusing on our members who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. He is a veteran. I am a veteran, and I expect better.

I will not, and I repeat, will not gloss over the fact the defence team is going through a very difficult time right now, particularly those who are survivors of sexual harassment, assault and abuse of power. As the largest and most diverse employer in Canada, the defence team is a microcosm of our Canadian society. We see the same problems reflected in our organizations that we see play out in other areas of our society.

We have had to reckon with inequality, systemic racism, sexual misconduct and abuse of power. It is uncomfortable. It is painful, and it is inconsistent with our ideals as Canadians and as human beings.

The experiences we have heard over the past few months from those who have experienced sexual harassment and assault in the Canadian Armed Forces is appalling. To every member of the Canadian Armed Forces, and to every person in the Department of National Defence who has been affected by sexual harassment and violence, I am truly sorry. Whether it was recently, 10 years ago, 20 years ago or 30 years ago, we were not there to support them.

As somebody who has put on the uniform, I know the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence need to do better. We all need to do better. I know our current reporting systems are not enough. Too often, people do not feel able to report misconduct out of fear of reprisal and retribution. This has to change, and this will change.

It is why I asked Madam Louise Arbour, former Supreme Court justice, to lead an independent external comprehensive review of our institutional policies and culture. Over the coming months, we expect Madam Arbour to provide concrete recommendations on how the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence can set up an independent external reporting system for defence team members that meets the needs of those who have been impacted by sexual misconduct.

We know we have a lot more to do to regain our members' trust. We are committed to making a lasting change, one that sheds the toxic and outdated values, practices and policies that harmed our people.

This motion from the Leader of the Opposition is not about supporting our members. In fact, the opposition had the opportunity time and time again in this very Parliament to be part of the solution. Instead, opposition members have consistently chosen to obstruct the progress.

In the past weeks, the Leader of the Opposition and his party voted against almost a quarter of a billion dollars to help eliminate sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces in budget 2021. They voted against supporting peer-to-peer services. They voted against increasing access to the sexual misconduct response centre

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for members of the Canadian Armed Forces. In fact, the leader of the official opposition and his party voted against our commitment to implement new external oversight mechanisms to bring greater independence to the processes of reporting and adjudicating sexual misconduct within the military.

This is staggering hypocrisy from the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative Party, which should not be unexpected from the Conservatives. They have done this at every turn. If the Conservatives want to talk about fighter jets, let us talk about the Conservative record on fighter jets.

After years of cuts from the Conservatives, our air force could not generate enough aircraft to answer our NATO and NORAD commitments at the same time. We are committed to procuring 88 advanced fighter jets to show our friends and allies we will be there for them when we are called upon, and we have stepped up. How they chose the number of 65, I do not know, but I am going to guess they needed to cut. They needed to balance their budget.

● (1110)

When it comes to our contribution in the fight against Daesh, our work alongside our coalition partners has reached success. I will not be apologetic for our government's stance and the operations we have conducted with our allies. By increasing our ground presence, along with that of our partners and allies, the coalitions worked to reduce Daesh's territorial control by over 98% on the ground.

When the Conservatives sat back, Liberals stepped forward. We worked with the U.S., NATO, regional partners and allies to increase peace and stability in the region. Just a few months ago, we announced that we would extend our work in the Middle East by deploying up to 850 Canadian Armed Forces personnel to support the global coalition, the NATO mission in Iraq and capacity-building activities in Jordan and Lebanon because we know this is a regional issue. Canada will remain a reliable partner in multinational operations around the world.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to claim a cover-up, he should look no further than himself. We want to talk about preventing things from happening. We learned from media reports that the leader of the official opposition himself was aware of allegations of sexual misconduct regarding General Vance prior to his appointment as chief of the defence staff, an allegation from the general's time in Gagetown, as it was reported. It was an allegation that the leader of the official opposition said that he had investigated.

The former national security advisor, Richard Fadden, said to a parliamentary committee that this is not true. Let me quote Mr. Fadden. Speaking of when General Vance was stationed in Naples, he said, "I did a bit of an inquiry into what was happening with a lady who subsequently became his wife. That was the extent of the involvement."

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After this non-investigation, it seems that the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service received political pressure to stop its investigation into Vance, an investigation that just happen to end right before his swearing in as chief of the defence staff under the Conservative government.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to say that he passed along sexual misconduct allegations by General Vance in July 15. He continues to claim that those were looked into, despite evidence to the contrary. I ask this House, how can the Leader of the Opposition's story be credible if General Vance was appointed after no investigation of the knowledge that the leader had? Almost immediately after the allegations were made, pressure was brought to bear and the investigation was suddenly dropped.

Unlike the Conservatives, I know how important our people in the Canadian Armed Forces are. That is why they are at the very centre of our defence policy. Chapter number one states that.

Women are working tirelessly to create a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion for all members, to ensure that the organization is truly as diverse as the Canada it serves, and to be the employer of choice for Canadians of every background, not just for the few that some members want. Our defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged", commits to promoting diversity and inclusion as core institutional values.

We have taken a number of steps to increase representation of women and other unrepresented populations at all levels of the organization. Right now, Lieutenant-General Carignan is the chief of professional conduct and culture at the organization. She and her team will unify and coordinate the ongoing and evolving efforts to create positive and lasting change across the defence team.

At NATO's Allied Joint Forces Command Naples, we have Lieutenant-General Joe Paul, a member of the Huron-Wendat First Nation as deputy command. While he is there, he will help to prepare, plan and conduct military operations in order to preserve the peace, security, and territorial integrity of all NATO alliance members. This sends a powerful message to the indigenous community of our alliance.

Over the coming weeks, Lieutenant-General Fran Allen will become Canada's first female vice-chief of the defence staff. All these members are deserving of these important roles, and they help build a senior leadership that is more representative of the Canadians they serve each and every day.

We have also integrated gender-based analysis plus across all our policies, programs and services to remove barriers to inclusion and better support our personnel. We are addressing all forms of hateful conduct in our organizations with anti-racism and anti-harassment efforts. This is why last year I created an advisory panel on systemic racism and discrimination with Captain Door Gibson, Sergeant Derek Montour, Major Sandra Perron and Major-General Ed Fitch, who are all retired.

• (1115)

They have lived experiences of facing discrimination, anti-Semitism and anti-indigenous prejudice, and they are working to help build a Canadian Armed Forces and Department of National

Defence that are more welcoming and inclusive for our members. Their recommendations will make sure that people within the military, including instructors, are better supported and free from discrimination, racism and harmful behaviour, whether they are women; Black, indigenous and people of colour; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, two-spirited, LGBTQ members of the community; or part of a religious minority.

Along with the anti-racism secretariat, this work will help the defence team eliminate all forms of racism, prejudice, bias, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and white supremacy from within our organization.

Where the previous government did little to improve things for those who wear the uniform, and removed the training, the sharp training that was there, we have taken action. In 2019, we received royal assent for Bill C-77, historic legislation to evolve the military justice system by aligning it with the civilian justice system in important ways, while remaining responsive to the unique needs of our Canadian Armed Forces. The act enshrines victims' rights into the code of service discipline. We are working with our members so the regulations for that bill meet the needs of the survivors, rather than the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence.

Earlier this month, we tabled a third independent review of the National Defence Act by former Supreme Court justice Morris Fish. This is one of the most comprehensive independent reviews of the military justice system in a decade. Justice Fish's recommendations provide one of the largest overhauls of the National Defence Act and the Canadian military justice system in recent memory.

I have accepted the 107 recommendations in principle. As we speak, we have already begun to implement 36 of those recommendations to further improve the military justice system to bring greater confidence to our members, who wear the maple leaf on their shoulder.

All this work is in addition to the independent external comprehensive review that former Justice Louise Arbour is leading to help us build on and refine our efforts to address and prevent sexual misconduct in our organizations. Over the coming months, Madam Arbour will provide concrete recommendations for how the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence could set up an independent external reporting system for defence team members that meets the needs of those who have been impacted by sexual misconduct.

This system needs to be focused on those who have been impacted by misconduct, be responsive to their needs and be outside the chain of command and the Department of National Defence. Any less cannot be accepted, and any less will not be accepted.

Madam Arbour and her team will provide significant direction on how we must evolve to support affected people, and how we can ensure that every incident is handled appropriately. Part of this work also includes looking into the current structures in the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defence and the sexual misconduct response centre to see how we could strengthen them to provide greater confidence to those who need support.

We will also examine the performance evaluation promotion system in the Canadian Armed Forces with a focus on how leaders are selected and trained. This review will also look at the military justice system's policies, procedures and practices to see how we could make this system more responsive to the needs of those who have experienced misconduct while holding perpetrators accountable. As Madam Arbour does this important work, she will be able to provide interim recommendations to the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence, and we commit to acting upon it immediately.

As we continue our work with the defence team, we have created a new organization of professional conduct and culture under the leadership of its chief, General Carignan. This will be responsible for carrying out and creating the conditions for cultural transformation by unifying, integrating, and coordinating the ongoing efforts across the Department of National Defence.

Their goal is to ensure that our actions and behaviour reflect the very best parts of our organizations of Canadian society. Their efforts will closely align with the work being carried out by the external review and will be informed by best practices, as well as experts, advocates and those who have lived experiences, inside and outside our institutions, at all levels.

We are dedicated to creating lasting cultural change across the defence team, change that is enduring and that meets the needs of those who have experienced sexual harassment and violence. The motion that the Leader of the Opposition has put forward does nothing to help those in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is more focused on personal attacks and petty games, something that I have unfortunately been far too accustomed to. That is okay.

• (1120)

It is disappointing, though, but it comes as no surprise from a party that is focused more on fanning the flames of division, a party that refused to acknowledge structural racism, like the Leader of the Opposition did in September of last year, or in the midst of a pandemic when Dr. Theresa Tam, who is Canada's chief public health officer, had her loyalty to our country questioned, because of her name and the colour of her skin, by a Conservative MP. It is a party that voted against a motion to condemn Islamophobia.

The Leader of the Opposition based his entire leadership campaign around the slogan "Take Back Canada". From whom?

This motion is below the dignity of the House, but it is clear that is exactly the type of divisive and dog-whistle politics on which the Conservative opposition depends.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to explain why he has

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always said that politicians should not get involved in the complaint against General Vance, when he personally handled Major-General Fortin's case.

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Speaker, I will be very clear on this. No politician should ever be involved in or interfere with any investigation. I know this as a former police officer. Never once did I interfere in an investigation. The decisions that are made when it comes to the personnel within the Canadian Armed Forces are made by the chief of the defence staff, and in this case the acting chief of the defence staff.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the minister, and I will get right to the point. I understand that he might be feeling bitter about being the subject of a Conservative motion, since the Conservatives are the ones who made all kinds of cuts to defence and veterans affairs.

However, the point of today's motion does not seem to be a partisan one. The point seems to be to restore trust in the institution. A minister's job is to lead an institution, and although I am well aware that it is a thankless job, that means the minister must be beyond reproach. This is not the first time that there have been doubts about the minister's actions and words.

I understand that the government is trying to remain in power and trigger an election to snuff out the scandal, just like it did last summer when it prorogued Parliament.

However, with all due respect, does the minister not think that the best solution right now would be to step down from his position to restore trust in the institution? When there are too many doubts, they start to get in the way.

• (1125)

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to serving our Canadian Armed Forces members, the women and men who have served, I have always been there to support them. Through the lived experience, I will never cut and run; I will always be there to support them.

I was given the tremendous privilege of becoming Minister of National Defence. I fought to become the member of Parliament for Vancouver South, but I was given this privilege. From the lived experience, from day one, my focus has always been to serve our members. Even though I served and have a microcosm of experience, it is my responsibility to serve them.

When it comes to the culture change, something that is very important, actions have been taken, whether by SMRC, or doing the gender-based analysis plus or putting support where it is needed to ensure our victims are supported through Bill C-77.

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I admit that when it comes to doing more, we should do more, and we will.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is this. In 2015, under Stephen Harper and Jason Kenney, the chief of the defence staff was put in place, so the Conservatives did not do what they needed to do to take care of women in the military.

We now have a government that has had six years to fix this problem, this broken system, and it has not not done that.

A survivor, who is not a constituent, called my office because she did not know where to go. What does the minister suggest I say to her when government after government has been failing the women in our military?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Speaker, I would tell that survivor that she will be heard and she will be supported.

As I stated, we know we have a lot more work to do. The efforts that had been taken, where we thought we were moving in that direction, have not been enough. Based on the analysis originally, we needed to look deeper. We needed to make even greater changes. The external review that Justice Morris Fish was going to do was going to help us create a greater independence, which he now has recommended. We are going to be working toward that.

It is difficult, but we must keep working toward creating that culture change, even though it does not happen overnight, and to regain that trust. That work is ongoing. It started back in 2015, but we need to continue with it.

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only one who is making this issue personal is the minister himself. He is putting his personal reputation, his pride and his desire to be right ahead certainly of Parliament, but, more important, ahead of the interests of our men and women in uniform. The fact is that because this has been mishandled so badly, the men and women in uniform do not trust the minister again.

If he were to put his name forward as a minister of defence to lead the men and women in the military and if the men and women in the military were casting a vote, does he think he would get even a slight majority of them wanting him to stay on? I do not think he would. They cannot trust him to clean up the military, to deal with the sexual misconduct and to lead them.

I would ask him to not make this personal, but to put our military before his own ego and his own desire to be right, and to double down, as he likes to say. Does he think he even has the support of the military?

• (1130)

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Speaker, I am not here to protect my pride; I am here to continually serve. That is what I have always done. When it comes to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, they will judge me for what has taken place.

One thing I will always do, and have always done, is keep fighting for our people. It is something I did when I served and it is something I have done even since I became the defence minister, and this is why.

When we put our defence policy together, it was not just about debating the number of dollars we were going to spend. The changes that we needed to make started from focusing on our people, not having to fight women in court when we settled with Heyder and Beattie. It was about ensuring we created the independence. This type of systemic change takes significant effort, but we will not stop.

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. minister why he thinks that systemic cultural change is so important for the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her tireless service in the Canadian Armed Forces and for her advocacy now.

Systemic changes are absolutely necessary. The Canadian Armed Forces and any security organization of our country need to reflect the population they serve. When people step up, they deserve to have an inclusive environment so they can reach their full potential.

When we tackle these problems, our Canadian Armed Forces will be a much greater organization, because we will have increased the pool of talent, with more women and greater diversity. We have seen the impact that this has on operations. Therefore, it makes us better and it creates greater trust. That is why it is so important to ensure we take on these challenges.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister's speech. He went on at length about what the Liberals had spent on the defence department and how they had acquired planes, jets and so on. With the morale that has been developing because of his actions and inaction in his role, how can he expect to have personnel to man this equipment and fly these planes when the minister has failed to maintain the trust of our men and women in uniform?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we have the trust of our personnel, that they and that their families are valued is the focus of our defence policy. We are changing policies so when our members deploy, they are given tax-free status and do not have to fight for this ever again. We are ensuring that we work toward a harassment-free workplace, and picking the right leadership.

When I first became defence minister, though I hate using these types of numbers, we had six female general officers. We now have 15. Creating a pipeline for more gender equality and more diversity is important. Ensuring that when women put the uniform on, they have the pride and the trust of their government and country is important. That is exactly what our government has delivered. However, we know we have a lot more work to do to deal with misconduct and to regain that trust.



[Translation]

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verch  res.

It is with great frustration that I rise today to speak to the motion that was introduced on this Conservative Party opposition day:

That, given that the Minister of National Defence has clearly lost the respect of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, including those at the highest ranks, for, amongst other things, (i) misleading Canadians on the withdrawal of fighter jets in the fight against ISIS, (ii) misleading Canadians about his service record, (iii) presiding over the wrongful accusation and dismissal of Vice-Admiral Norman, (iv) engaging in a cover-up of sexual misconduct allegations in the Canadian Armed Forces, the House formally censure the Minister of National Defence to express the disappointment of the House of Commons in his conduct.

It is no secret that the Bloc Qu  b  cois will vote in favour of the motion. The Bloc Qu  b  cois has already asked for the resignation of the Minister of National Defence because of his ongoing failure to address sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. I was with our leader, the member for Beloeil—Chambly, and my colleague from Riv  re-du-Nord at the press conference where we asked for his resignation.

The censure proposed by the motion does not get rid of this minister, who did not take sexual misconduct allegations in the Canadian Armed Forces seriously. As set out in the motion, the minister committed a number of mistakes, although the most serious is protecting General Vance and attempting to cover up his bungling, including failing to implement the recommendations of the 2015 Deschamps report.

As the critic for status of women and gender equality, I will start by addressing these issues in my speech. I am very sensitive to these issues, and I will speak with due respect for the victims who testified at the Standing Committee on National Defence and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I will then address a few other scandals that have rocked the Canadian Armed Forces. I will close with some suggestions to help improve trust in the armed forces.

First, while the Minister of National Defence was supposed to implement the 2015 Deschamps report, it appears that he has done nothing and that he even tried to bury General Vance's file. I cannot believe that I am still here going over the entire unfortunate story.

Former justice Marie Deschamps released a scathing report on March 27, 2015, concerning what she considered widespread sexual misconduct in the armed forces and the sexist culture that turned a blind eye to such misconduct. The report had been commissioned in the wake of accusations against Warrant Officer Andr   Gagnon, who sexually assaulted a subordinate, Corporal St  phanie Raymond, in December 2011. Corporal Raymond appeared before the committee, testifying to the harm she has suffered.

Corporal Raymond filed a complaint against Warrant Officer Gagnon in 2012, but her chain of command turned against her, and she was eventually dismissed for misconduct in 2013. Warrant Officer Gagnon was acquitted in 2014, but, in 2021, after Corporal Raymond appealed the ruling, he finally pleaded guilty.

Corporal Raymond's situation, and the accusations she brought against the armed forces, led to former justice Marie Deschamps'

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report. The report contained 10 recommendations, the most important of which was to make the complaint reporting system independent of the armed forces and of the Department of National Defence. That was in 2015, and, although we are now in 2021, nothing has been done.

When she testified before the Standing Committee on National Defence in February 2021, Marie Deschamps said that very little had been done since the release of her report in 2015 and that little had really changed. She repeated these statements before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women last March.

I will nevertheless take the time to point out that these allegations are not new, and that they began under the Conservative government, since it was in April 2015 that Jonathan Vance was named as the future chief of the defence staff. Allegations of sexual misconduct had been raised against him shortly before his appointment. A few months later, in July 2015, the former minister of veterans affairs and current leader of the opposition asked his chief of staff to talk to Ray Novak about another allegation against General Vance. This allegation involved an inappropriate relationship.

General Vance denied all misconduct, and the investigations went nowhere, since there was no evidence. The military police apparently also investigated the case. On July 17, 2015, General Vance was appointed chief of the defence staff, and one of his first policies was to roll out Operation Honour, which sought to put an end to sexual misconduct. That takes guts.

How is it possible that General Vance, who was the subject of very serious allegations, was appointed, given his role and his mandate as chief of the defence staff, as the person in charge of doing something against sexual misconduct?

In fact, the very same day that General Vance became chief of the defence staff, the military police decided to drop the investigation against the man who had now become their boss. That is quite the coincidence.

● (1135)

The operation, which was abandoned by the current chief of defence staff, had moderate impact, but it obviously had no effect on the senior officers who were above all that. In short, the Conservatives decided to appoint someone against whom accusations had been made when he was the boss of the Canadian Armed Forces, when they knew that his mandate would be to address sexual misconduct in the forces.

Now let us look at some of the allegations under the Liberal government.

On March 1, 2018, then ombudsman Gary Walbourne met privately with the Minister of National Defence. Walbourne attempted to discuss a case of sexual misconduct involving Vance. The victim did not want to go any further in the process because she was afraid of reprisals, preventing the ombudsman from going forward. However, the ombudsman, who had credible evidence against Vance, wanted to show it to the minister, who categorically refused to even look at it.

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The ombudsman wanted the minister to intervene to protect the victim, since she was Vance's subordinate and he could wipe out her career with the snap of a finger. The minister was unreceptive and hostile. Apparently, he categorically refused to look at Walbourne's evidence and left the meeting abruptly. The minister then referred the case to the Privy Council Office. After that, Walbourne tried to talk to the minister 12 times, but the minister refused to meet with him, and Walbourne retired a few months later.

The Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office exchanged emails about the situation. After that, the situation deteriorated and other facts came to light. The scandal was made public in February 2021, when Global News reported accusations of misconduct against Vance, including his relationship with a subordinate and obscene emails exchanged in 2012 with a much younger servicewoman. The woman who had been in a relationship with Vance publicly stated that she had been threatened by Vance on several occasions. Vance believed himself to be untouchable. He said that he controlled the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service.

The standing committee on national defence decided to investigate the allegations against Vance. The Minister of Defence appeared before the committee a few times and contradicted himself. Moreover, the Liberals did not hesitate to obstruct the investigation to prevent Liberal employees Zita Astravas and Elder Marques from being called to testify. I was personally there when I was a substitute member of the committee. It was a sad time.

From Elder Marques' testimony, we know that everyone around the Prime Minister was aware of the situation, but the Prime Minister himself continues to deny any knowledge of it. When other employees were called by the House, the Liberals sent the Minister of Defence instead. They said that they did not want their employees to testify.

The Liberals willingly turned a blind eye to the allegations. The Liberals decided to ignore the issue, while the minister flatly refused to meet with the former ombudsman 12 times and would not even look at the evidence, claiming he did not want to interfere in the investigation.

The Prime Minister's entourage knew that there had been allegations against Vance, even if the Prime Minister himself did not have all the details. Everyone around him suspected that these allegations involved sexual misconduct. There were actually emails that mentioned sexual misconduct directly. The Minister of Defence even said that the nature of the accusations against Vance did not matter and what mattered was to take action. Well, the Liberals did absolutely nothing. They did not even implement Justice Deschamps's main recommendation, namely to make the complaint process completely independent of the military to receive all complaints of sexual misconduct.

The facts speak for themselves. As of today, four generals have had complaints of misconduct brought against them. In 2021, six years after Justice Deschamps's report was released, the Liberals decided to appoint former justice Louise Arbour to conduct another investigation into how to improve the system. That should have been done in 2015, not in 2021. The minister never took the situation seriously. Only when he had his back to the wall did he decide to do something, but only to save his own skin, after pressure from

the opposition parties in the House and the committee investigations.

To add insult to injury, the second-in-command of the Canadian Armed Forces, Lieutenant-General Mike Rouleau, decided to play golf with former general Vance, despite the fact that Vance is under investigation by the military police and the military police is under Lieutenant-General Rouleau's command. This incident led to Rouleau's resignation and brought to light the federal government's failure to implement an independent system to handle cases of sexual misconduct. The Liberals have done nothing since 2015 and that inaction has consequences, as this incident shows.

Since my time is running out, I will not have time to talk about everything I would have liked to address in my speech. I have been studying this case in the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and the Standing Committee on National Defence for months now. There is so much going on.

In closing, the Liberals claim that they are unaware of the nature of the allegations against Vance, with the Minister of Defence even saying that the nature of the allegations does not matter. All these events have further eroded the public's and women's confidence and harmed diversity, in particular. We must consider the victims. The Liberals and their Minister of Defence failed to act to restore confidence in the armed forces.

● (1140)

One last thing: We may think none of this really touches us, but the father of a former military member recently admitted to me that his daughter had to resign when she became pregnant. Her superior officer, with whom she had had a relationship, asked her to have an abortion to keep the matter quiet. She refused, and was asked to resign. This is still happening in 2021. We must act for the sake of the victims.

● (1145)

[English]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member did a pretty good job of showing that the far more serious allegations related to General Vance were from his appointment, and that there were rumours at the time among the Conservatives.

As to the present Minister of National Defence, there was an email, and for privacy reasons no one was allowed to know what was in it. It was dealt with within 24 hours, which was very fast action by the minister. It was investigated as far as it could go at that time, because for privacy the person did not want the information to get out.

I am glad the member mentioned that we should be concentrating on the victims. That is what the Liberals have done 90% of the time at committee. Because the member is on the status of women committee, which had good witnesses, I would like her to suggest what needs to be done to change the culture. At committee, we found that was probably the biggest problem facing the military.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, I am shocked to hear that 90% of the time the Liberals acted out of respect for the victims in committee. Where have they been over the past six years? We are being asked to take action. We are being schooled in confidentiality.

If the Liberals had simply reread Justice Deschamps's report, we would not be where we are today, and we would not be discussing something that was debated yet again in the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and the Standing Committee on National Defence in 2021.

I invite my colleague to reread the report, since it contains concrete suggestions.

**Ms. Monique Pauz   (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Shefford for her excellent speech. I always learn something when she speaks in the House.

Does she not get the feeling that the Liberals and the Conservatives are very alike in that they do not care about what happens to the victims? The Conservatives did the same thing in the case of General Vance: They denied that there had been any allegations of a sexual nature.

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Repentigny for her comments.

That is what we heard from the victims. I am thinking in particular about Ms. Raymond, who testified before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. She still does not understand why she had to fight to have her case dealt with outside the Canadian Armed Forces. She managed to win because she was heard before an external tribunal.

The recommendation was made in 2015. Ms. Raymond is well aware that the Deschamps report led to the story covered by *L'actualit  * and various Quebec journalists.

The victims are asking for concrete measures, and they are well aware of what was in the Deschamps report.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinong  , BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Shefford on her speech.

I would like her to tell me what she thinks about the fact that the minister is holding on to his position. What message does that send to women who want to pursue a career in the Canadian Armed Forces?

Personally, I feel that the message being sent is that women who want to pursue a military career must be willing to take risks with their safety, given all the incidents of sexual misconduct. It makes no sense. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this.

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinong   for his question.

I cannot for the life of me understand why the Minister of National Defence still has his job. I did not even have enough time in my speech to talk about all the other reasons nobody can possibly have confidence in him anymore.

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During my studies, I had a chance to interview military personnel. I went to Jonqu  re and I talked to people at CFB Bagotville, which is an important institution. If we want to see more women and more diversity in the armed forces, we absolutely have to send a strong message.

The government calls itself feminist. How can it possibly allow a defence minister who tolerated such allegations to keep his job? That is unacceptable, there is no excuse for it, and it is high time the minister resigned. That is what my colleagues on the Standing Committee on National Defence and I demanded a few weeks ago.

• (1150)

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verch  res, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague from Shefford for her excellent speech and for agreeing to split her time with me.

Today, we are discussing a motion moved by the Conservative Party, which reads as follows:

That, given that the Minister of National Defence has clearly lost the respect of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, including those at the highest ranks, for, amongst other things,

- (i) misleading Canadians on the withdrawal of fighter jets in the fight against ISIS,
- (ii) misleading Canadians about his service record,
- (iii) presiding over the wrongful accusation and dismissal of Vice-Admiral Norman,
- (iv) engaging in a cover-up of sexual misconduct allegations in the Canadian Armed Forces,

the House formally censure the Minister of National Defence to express the disappointment of the House of Commons in his conduct.

I do not think anyone in the House will be surprised to learn that we will vote in favour of this motion, in light of its troubling elements. The facts have accumulated over time, which has led to a loss of confidence. That is why the Bloc Qu  b  cois is calling for the resignation of the Minister of National Defence.

We look at all these things that have happened, but the last straw was the whole issue of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. The situation has completely deteriorated and the minister has mismanaged it from the start.

As we know, General Vance was forced to retire and it was not until after he retired that we finally learned about the allegations of sexual misconduct that were made against him, which triggered an investigation by the Standing Committee on National Defence, as well as a study by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. When two committees look into an issue at the same time, it is obviously a big deal.

Shortly thereafter we also learned that General Vance's replacement, Admiral McDonald, also had to step down, also because of allegations of sexual misconduct.

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This has been going on at the upper echelons of the military for some time and it is troubling since the current Minister of National Defence was notified of the problem by Gary Walbourne, who was national defence and armed forces ombudsman at the time, but has since retired. He went to the minister to advise him of a major complaint against the chief of the defence staff, General Vance. It was serious.

The minister told him he did not want to know about it, that he did not want anyone to talk to him about it, that he did not want to see the evidence and that the ombudsman should instead go talk to the appropriate authorities. In fact, the minister refused to look at what the ombudsman wanted to show him and then refused to meet with him again thereafter. The minister adopted this culture of wilful ignorance, choosing to turn a blind eye and act like nothing happened.

Unfortunately, even though some people on his staff appear to have passed the information along, it is hard to know who was aware of what and when. There are different, contradictory versions of events. When asked, the minister initially said that he was not aware. That is completely untrue, however, because we have now learned that he was aware. He met with the ombudsman, who wanted to talk to him about the situation.

Then, the minister started saying that he was not aware of the nature of the complaint in question. However, once again, Mr. Walbourne said that he very clearly told the minister about the nature of the complaint. Furthermore, media reports revealed that the public servants had emailed each other, proving that the minister was aware of the nature of the complaint, in spite of what he had been claiming. Worse yet, the minister then claimed that the nature of the complaint was not ultimately an important factor.

• (1155)

That is how he chose to handle it. Rather than apologizing and telling us that he did not give us the right information and that he tried to hide the fact that he did not take the action he should have, he decided to minimize the situation and tried to convince us that, ultimately, it was not that important.

It is especially disappointing to see a minister behave like that, particularly because of the message that it sends to the Canadian Armed Forces. The message is that this is not serious, not important. The government is going to close its eyes to complaints. The government is going to say that it does not want anything to do with this sort of thing and that it does not want to get involved because politicians should not interfere with investigations. That is the minister's position.

Nevertheless, we asked the former ombudsman if it would have constituted interference to meet with him to look at the evidence. At that time, there was not even an investigation under way. He said that it would not. The ombudsman that replaced him and who is in office today told us that it would not be interfering at all and that is exactly what he would have done.

We asked the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service or CFNIS if it would have constituted interference for the minister to do his job by simply looking at the evidence and agreeing to meet with the ombudsman. He said no, not at all. We also asked the CF-

NIS whether it would have constituted interference for the minister to request an investigation. Once again, the CFNIS said no and added that that would only be the case if the minister sought to undermine the investigation. However, it must be said that the minister did basically undermine the investigation by not asking the CFNIS to investigate and by refusing to obtain the information. However, there was no investigation. It was easier that way.

We then learned that the information did make the rounds. The Privy Council Office was informed of the situation. One of the Prime Minister's advisers, Elder Marques, was apparently informed of the situation and was asked to investigate, at least to some extent. The Prime Minister's chief of staff was also informed of the situation. However, one after the other, they all claimed at the beginning, when speaking with the Prime Minister, that they did not know and his staff did not know. We were getting different versions all the time, and information was coming out in dribs and drabs. Unfortunately, we are up against a government and a party that are trying to undermine the work of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

I have been a member of that committee for months, and our work has been stalled for months now. Every time a witness is called or a witness expresses a desire to appear, the government and Liberal members filibuster. As a result, nothing is moving forward and nothing is getting done. The filibustering is only getting worse. It has been about three or four weeks since we have been able to have a single meeting where we have intelligent discussions and actually do any work. We are just wasting time. This is especially frustrating because this government prides itself on being a democratic government when, really, it is just undermining the committee's work.

Why did he decide to hinder the work of the committee? That is the question. Why does he absolutely not want us to know what happened? Since the witnesses kept contradicting each other, after we heard the last one, we decided to invite more. We asked for the Minister of National Defence's chief of staff so that he could give us his version of the facts, but that was blocked. We cannot speak to him. On one occasion, the minister even showed up in place of his chief of staff to tell us what he would have said. That is something. He knew what the other guy was going to say. Why are the Liberals so scared of what he might tell us?

For now, what we have observed is that the Minister of National Defence was not up to the task. He did not do his job, and, because of that, to protect itself and to prevent things from going smoothly, the Liberal Party has been systematically obstructing the investigation. The Liberal members of the committee are preventing us from doing our job. If I were a citizen and I saw that, I would be really angry and frustrated. In addition, what message does this send to people who work in the Canadian Armed Forces?

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• (1200)

What message does this send to women? The message is that, when things like this happen, when a minister is not up to the task and when there are unacceptable situations in the Canadian Armed Forces, the Standing Committee on National Defence will be prevented from doing its job because the government wants to protect its friends, and because it wants to protect those who did not do what they should have done. That is what is really going on.

We have a minister who is not up to the task. Rather than do his job, when he could have implemented the recommendations of the 2015 Deschamps report, the minister decided to go back to square one instead. I do not even know if he read the Deschamps report, which contained good recommendations and indicated that the situation in the armed forces was hard to believe. He decided to go back to square one and commission another report that they also may not look at in order to stall.

For example, he allowed Mr. Vance to take charge of Operation Honour, when, in the end, he was setting the wolf loose on the sheep. He gave him a raise. Worse than that, we found out that, in the meantime, the second in command of the armed forces, Lieutenant-General Mike Rouleau, who is also vice chief of the defence staff and head of the military police, went to play golf with the retired General Vance.

All this shows just how much the minister's inaction created a climate of impunity in the armed forces, and that is totally unacceptable.

[*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.):** Madam Speaker, I am disappointed the Bloc members have decided to support the Conservative Party on the motion. Would the Bloc members apply the same principles to the behaviour of the leader of the official opposition, given that he had the opportunity to deal with this matter when he was part of the Stephen Harper cabinet? That government's failure is what ultimately advanced General Vance. Does he believe there should be any consequences today because of the inaction of the leader of the official opposition or does he believe he did the right thing back then?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I think my colleague has asked a very good question. As he pointed out, the Conservatives initially appointed General Vance. However, the Liberals are the ones who failed to act when allegations about him surfaced.

Nevertheless, if there was a need to delve further, if the Conservatives failed to act, I think that the same steps should be taken, that is, that their conduct should be investigated as long as there would not be filibustering at committee to prevent light being shed on these matters.

However, at this time, we are dealing with the current government. Who is in power now? Who has the means to change things at this time? It is the Liberals, and they are the ones preventing change from happening.

[*English*]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his intervention today. I appreciate the work he has done at the national defence committee and having to sit through the ongoing, needless filibustering and obstruction by the Liberals. They continue their cheap political grandstanding. It has been very disheartening. It very much undermines the trust of the women and men who serve in uniform in our parliamentary institutions to watch the Liberals keep a minister in place who continues to lose their respect and now see parliamentarians from the Liberal side trying to hide that and being complicit in the cover-up of the minister failing to act upon the sexual misconduct allegations against General Vance three years ago.

We have a parliamentary democracy that hinges upon ministerial accountability. In light of the fact the minister has not done the honourable thing and resigned, does the member believe the Prime Minister should fire the Minister of National Defence?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I think it is a good question.

In my opinion, in the circumstances, there comes a point where the minister should realize that he is not up to the task. He should realize that he is not fit for the office he holds. He should realize that, ultimately, his very presence undermines public confidence in the institution.

In my opinion, if he does not have the good judgment to resign, the Prime Minister should help him step aside.

• (1205)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. All of this business with the Minister of National Defence seems like one big cover-up operation.

Unfortunately, we are not talking about a military operation on the ground. We are talking about an operation to save the minister's skin and his ministerial position.

I think the member said it well. The trust has been broken, and the victims of this cover-up operation are the people who serve in our armed forces, and in particular women.

What does my colleague think about that?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We saw a prime example of that late last week when the military's second-in-command, who also oversees the military police, played golf with the man who is currently under investigation. That right there is telling. There is a culture of impunity in the armed forces, at least among senior officers, who think that they are above the law.

Because a minister did not do his job and is not up to the task, the members of the armed forces feel like nothing will change. The minister must be replaced.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

I am honoured today to speak to this motion. I am the granddaughter of Bert McCoy. He was a gunner in the Royal Canadian Air Force who always lived a very large life, including being shot down over Belgium during the Second World War. He spent two years in the underground trying to fight his way back to my grandmother and my mother in Canada. An interesting part about this story is that he had to escape from some German soldiers, and speaking French saved his life. I sometimes think that the reason I fight so hard for Franco-Albertans is that French saved the life of my grandfather.

He was a magnificent man, and I am proud to stand today in his honour, but I have to say that how we protect and stand up for the women and men who defend this country defines us as parliamentarians. It is one of our most fundamental duties.

We ask members of the armed forces to risk their lives, to be away from loved ones, and to defend all of us and others around the world. There can be no more important thing than those women and men knowing that we have their backs. Women and men have lost confidence that this minister has their backs. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces have heard the minister mislead them. They have heard the minister mislead parliamentarians, the media and Canadians.

I do not want to be harsh on any member of the House. I understand that we all have very difficult jobs, and I honestly believe that almost all members want to do what is best for Canadians, but the minister has acted in a way that requires a response.

In 2016, the minister quashed an inquiry into Canadian transfers of detainees to local custody in Afghanistan, where they faced torture. An inquiry would have revealed why the transfers were not stopped and why these war crimes were never reported. In making this decision, the minister was in an apparent conflict of interest. He served as an intelligence officer in Afghanistan at the time of the transfers and would have had knowledge of the torture of detainees. No public inquiry was ever conducted into Canada's role and responsibility with regard to the transfer of Afghan detainees. More recently, the minister turned a blind eye to evidence of war crimes committed by Iraqi troops being trained by Canadians as part of Operation Impact.

In 2017, the minister claimed to be the architect of Operation Medusa. This was not true. He exaggerated his role, which of course is an affront to those members who fought in Afghanistan. Honour means telling the truth. Honour means not taking credit for the work done by others. The minister stole honour that was not his.

Despite the minister's poor record, this is not just an issue with the Minister of National Defence. The focus on the Minister of National Defence is necessary, and I will support this motion, but I want to outline why I believe the inexcusable actions by the government, in relation to its support for members of the Canadian Armed Forces, are not the issue of just one minister. In fact, this is

not the issue of just one party. There is an insidious and dangerous reality that goes farther than one minister.

The Prime Minister has failed the women and men in uniform. The Liberal government has failed the women and men in uniform. There is a pattern of looking the other way. There is a pattern of not doing the work that needs to be done to meet our international obligations to report war crimes and torture. As always, the failures of many do not affect the government. They affect our brave service-women and men in this country, and they affect those who need our help around the world.

One of the most shocking failures was the inability to protect women in the military from sexual harassment and violence.

● (1210)

The government has been in power for six years, and in those six years there have been 581 sexual assaults in the military, with 221 incidents of sexual harassment logged. This abject failure to protect women is a stain on our country.

Women are tired of being told to be patient. They are tired of being told their concerns have been heard and then nothing changes. As important as the Liberals say the issue is, the Prime Minister did not even include an explicit mention of dealing with sexual misconduct in the 2015, 2019 or 2021 mandate letters to the minister.

The Prime Minister did not care.

I spoke earlier today about a survivor who called my office because she did not trust her member of Parliament. She did not know where to turn, so she phoned my office. I spoke to her for over an hour about her concerns that her anonymity and safety would be compromised, and that for her having a career in the Canadian Armed Forces was now impossible.

This is a woman who has served our country, and she does not even feel safe telling the government about the concerns she has as a survivor of sexual harassment within the military. I did not know what to say to her. I did not know how to help her. I did not know how to relieve her concerns. I did not know what to do, because I do not have confidence that the government cares about sexual harassment survivors. I do not have confidence that the Conservative government, when it was in power, had the best interests of women in our military at heart.

Can members imagine being a survivor, and being brave and strong enough to come forward with that story of survival, and then finding out that General Vance was golfing with the people who were investigating him? The old boys' club nonsense that she is trying to stop and prevent, because she wants to make our military better, results in them going for a golf game. How old boys' club is that? How inexcusable.

These women do not get action. They get another inquiry. The minister must answer for this, but more importantly the Prime Minister must answer for this.

As I said, my confidence in the government has failed, but I do not believe the Conservative government acted better. I am sad to say the Conservative government under Stephen Harper, with Jason Kenney as the minister of defence, bears the same guilt. Jason Kenney knew General Vance was accused of sexual harassment, and unbelievably he appointed the general to lead Operation Honour. In what world is it reasonable to have somebody accused or suspected of sexual harassment be in charge of the investigation into sexual harassment? The absurdity is shocking to me.

While I am disappointed in the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence and the Liberal government, I find it incredibly rich that the Conservatives have the gall to stand in this place and not acknowledge the role their government has played in harming the women of our Canadian Armed Forces.

There is enough blame to go around. Government after government has failed women in this country. They have created a toxic work environment where women cannot work safely in our military. Is anyone surprised that enrolment is low? Can anyone be surprised that women do not flock to participate in our military?

In conclusion, I will support this motion because the minister needs to answer for his actions, but I want to reiterate that the Prime Minister, the minister, the government and the opposition bear the burden of knowing they have not protected women in this country.

• (1215)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I agree with a lot of what the member had to say today, in particular when she said there is a lot of blame to go around. We are dealing with systemic issues within the military, especially given the actions we have seen lately, and these are things that need to be dealt with. We need to get to the bottom of these things. We need to start change within the culture of the military.

Is today a productive day to do that? Would it not have been a more productive day to have a motion that challenged the government to develop policy to deal with these issues, as opposed to spending another day on personal attacks on one particular individual? Would she not have rather had a meaningful, serious debate about policy that could shape and change the culture of the military?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, I have a few problems with this. First of all, all attempts to get the government to take meaningful action have been stalled, whether it is at committee or in the House. It has had six years and has chosen not to take the necessary steps that would protect women in the military.

Do I think the Conservative opposition is acting in a partisan manner today with this opposition day motion? Absolutely. This is not going to help women in the Canadian military. That said, the minister does need to answer for his actions. The government has had a long time to fix this and has chosen not to do so.

The member can talk about what we could have done, but he is in government. I can tell him an awful lot of things that he and his party could have done.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Defence, since day one of the last

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Parliament, has had a rocky road, with a lot of scandals, issues and problems, and they seem to be piling up. So far, neither he nor the Prime Minister has done anything about it. I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona to comment on that.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, I wish I did not have to say this, but very often we hear the right words from the Liberals and we do not see action. They are incredibly good at saying words that Canadians and I want to hear. They say they are going to take action and do what needs to be done, but then we do not get that. We get study after study. There are so many times I have stood in the House over the last year and a half and wondered whether the government knows it is the government. Does it not know that it has the ability to do these things? Does it not know the tools that it has at its disposal?

I agree with the member that if the Liberals really want to make changes for women in the military, they have all the tools they need to make them happen.

• (1220)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her insightful speech.

We have a number of urgent and important matters to take care of right now, so I want to ask my colleague how she feels about the fact that we are still debating something that seems obvious to everyone. Everyone has read and heard all the arguments.

What does my colleague think about the government's slow pace and indifference to this matter, which needs to be dealt with once and for all so that we can move on?

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, I will reiterate that we have a report that outlines what needs to be done to protect women in the military. We know the next steps to be taken. We know exactly what could be done right now, this moment, to protect women in the military, and none of it is being done.

We are standing in this place with an urgency to pass legislation on climate change, broadcasting and so many other things, as if there are not two years left in the mandate of the government. I believe we still have two years left to do this work. I feel that the constant failure to plan and do the work puts so much of the important work of the House at risk. We are very quickly getting to the summer, and we are having a debate that we should have talked about six years ago, to be perfectly honest.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona for her interventions, which are always extremely relevant, heartfelt and full of humanity.

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To quote Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, something is rotten in the state of Denmark. I get the impression that something is rotten in the office of the Minister of National Defence. He has abandoned the men and women of the armed forces time and again. He has engaged in cover-ups, tried to ignore the facts, and tried to sweep things under the rug, and he misled the parliamentary committee when he was answering questions. The members of the armed forces deserve much better than that. They are courageous men and women. They take risks. They are prepared to make sacrifices, and they keep us and our country safe.

In my opinion, the men and women who serve in the armed forces must be respected. They deserve better. The Minister of National Defence abandoned them and chose to turn a blind eye to serious allegations, including allegations of sexual misconduct, and other problems, such as the things that happened in Iraq. He always tried to cover up instead. It seems that the minister's modus operandi is to avoid fixing the problem, look away or sweep problems under the rug. For him, it is out of sight, out of mind. However, that is not how it works.

The Minister of National Defence, protected by the Prime Minister and by the entire Liberal government, let down all the women who serve in the armed forces, first and foremost. That is unfortunate, because it blatantly contradicts the Liberal rhetoric about how they are a feminist government that cares deeply about the plight of women and their advancement to achieve real equality.

On several occasions, the minister, protected by the Prime Minister, failed the test. The people who work in the armed forces have a unique calling. We should be grateful to them. Personally, I am grateful for my grandfather, Urgel Boulerice, who served in the armed forces in World War II. It makes me think about my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, who spoke of her grandfather. Her story was very interesting. These people have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. The Liberal government failed to meet its obligations.

We are dealing with a deleterious climate, a culture of impunity and a toxic culture. Despite all the reports and recommendations, the Liberal government, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence were unable to ensure a safe and healthy work environment. All workers in Canada have the right to a safe and healthy work environment, including those who serve in our armed forces.

I have not met many military personnel, since there is no military base in my region. In my riding, Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, there is a legion, and I have met with its members a few times. I am not as close to the issue as some of my colleagues. However, I spent three days on a frigate between Halifax, Nova Scotia, and St. John's, Newfoundland. For three days, I lived with sailors on the HMCS *Ville de Québec*, which, I must say, is a very nice name. I met extremely dedicated professional men and women who want to do their job well and who have absolutely unbelievable stories to tell, including about counter-piracy operations off the coast of East Africa. I salute their work and their bravery. If I mention this, it is because I am trying to address this situation as a matter of women's and workers' rights.

• (1225)

I want to take a step back and ask everyone here a question. For us, as members of Parliament, what does it mean to engage in politics? We must listen to people. We must connect with people. We must listen to their problems and try to find solutions. When Yann Martel spoke at an NDP convention, he said that politics requires empathy, the ability to stand in someone else's shoes to better understand their life.

I must admit that I have had a privileged life and that there are some hardships that I cannot understand. I am not a part of a minority, I have not been excluded, I have not faced discrimination, and I have not been the victim of racism or sexism. I think it is essential to be able to stand in someone else's shoes and demonstrate humanity, solidarity and friendship.

I want to take some time to read a poem from Jacques Prévert that puts us in that frame of mind. I think this kind of point of view is worthwhile and plainly relevant to this discussion. It will take two minutes, and then I will get back to the topic at hand. Here it is:



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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 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 labours are never over  
 those who haven't labours  
 those who look for labours  
 those who aren't looking for labours  
 those who water your horses  
 those who watch their own dogs dying  
 those who daily bread is available on a more or less weekly schedule  
 those who go to church to keep warm in their winter  
 those whom Swiss Guards send outdoors to keep warm  
 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 whom you order to break ranks at random and shoot down quite methodically  
 those who go on forced marches beneath the Arch of Triumph  
 those who don't know how to fall in with the custom of the country any place on earth  
 those who never ever see the sea  
 those who always smell of fresh linen because they weave the sheets you lie on  
 those without running water  
 those whose goal is eternally the blue horizon  
 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.

I think this tells us that we must be able to see those with different lives and different challenges who are suffering. Right now, in the Canadian Armed Forces, there are people who are struggling and who are suffering. That is why there have been allegations of misconduct and investigations. Unfortunately, the Minister of Defence, instead of trying to put himself in the shoes of those who are struggling and suffering, preferred to try to bury the situation time and again.

He did that in the case of the investigation into the allegations of sexual misconduct, but that was not the first time. There are things that trouble me immensely about the current Minister of Defence's instincts. Remember that, before this whole unbelievable story, there were videos of Iraqi military personnel committing crimes against Iraqi women, including sexual assault, rape and maybe even murder. What was the Minister of Defence's response? He told us not to watch the videos.

In 2016, after becoming Minister of Defence, he decided to set aside an investigation into the transfer of prisoners in Afghanistan when they were handed over to local authorities who were known to routinely practise torture. This is a complete violation of all of our international commitments and the Geneva Conventions. We should not be transferring prisoners if we think they are going to be mistreated or tortured.

There is overwhelming proof that the minister is incompetent, and that he is not deserving of our confidence or of that of the House. For these reasons, the NDP is asking for his resignation.

• (1230)

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his speech and his reference to philosophical texts that help us reflect on Parliament's ultimate goal, which is to serve our population and our citizens, as well as the members of our armed forces, who are crucial to Canada's safety and peace.

Does my colleague have a quick solution to suggest to the current government, other than the resignation of the Minister of National Defence, which we all want? We need a quick solution to reassure women who want to make a career in the armed forces. What would my colleague suggest?

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. Unfortunately, I think we have had the answers for a long time, and that is the problem. I think the solutions are there. During the five years of Operation Honour, which was supposed to change the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces, 581 sexual assaults and 220 incidents of sexual harassment were reported in the military.

The Deschamps report was tabled and made public on April 30, 2015. A few months later, the Liberals won a majority government. We already knew what Justice Deschamps' recommendations were at that time. She had reached her conclusions and proposed practical solutions. However, six years later, nothing has been done and the same culture still exists. However, the answers to the problem are set out in Justice Deschamps' report.

[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.):** Madam Speaker, again, I am disappointed that we seem to see the alliance of the opposition parties taking this approach.

Given that the current leader of the Conservative Party was very much aware of allegations and completely failed to do his job back then, I am wondering if the member would say that it is his position or his party's position that there should be a consequence for the current leader of the official opposition for not acting when he should have acted. Does he believe that to be the case, or should the leader of the official opposition be given a pass?

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● (1235)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I am always really pleased to disappoint a Liberal. It makes my day. Honestly, I have seen better attacks. We could talk about many Conservatives, including Jason Kenney, who are responsible for a whole bunch of bad decisions.

I would just like to tell the parliamentary secretary that he often accuses the opposition of slowing down the work, filibustering and making Parliament dysfunctional. That is the Liberals' rhetoric right now. However, I would like to remind him that the Liberals are the ones obstructing the work of the Standing Committee on National Defence to hide the truth, prevent witnesses from appearing and prevent us from getting to the bottom of what happened in the defence minister's office. They are trying to protect their friends. That is the good old Liberal culture. Sometimes those who delay the work are those who have things to hide.

*[English]*

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, for his wonderful remarks and very powerful speech.

In listening to the member's speech and others, I am trying to imagine how it must feel to be a member of the armed forces who has been a victim of sexual assault or harassment and to see the Liberals filibustering the defence committee when the committee members are trying to get answers. Could the member reflect on what message he feels these actions send to people who have been victimized by these kinds of offences?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for his excellent question. Again, let us put ourselves in the shoes of people who are suffering and who were victims of sexual misconduct, harassment and assault, people who are now watching the Liberals and the defence minister attempt to cover it all up. Those people must feel frustrated and abandoned. Unfortunately, the Liberals have abandoned the men and especially the women of the Canadian Armed Forces.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill. As the strong, proud and ready member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I am honoured to represent Garrison Petawawa.

Today's motion is about the legacy of the Canadian Armed Forces during the current defence minister's tenure. He needs to step aside, since he is not prepared to admit each time he failed to uphold his oath of office to the Canadian people. He was under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister. There is no room in the Prime Minister's Office or the Department of National Defence for sexism, misogyny, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, discrimination, harassment or any other conduct that prevents the institution and the whole of government from being a truly welcoming and inclusive organization.

Canadians understand that a culture change, starting with the Prime Minister, is required to remove his culture of toxic masculinity behaviour to create an environment where everyone is respected, valued and can feel safe to contribute to the best of their abilities. As the member of Parliament for Garrison Petawawa, I know that respect is precious. If the Minister of National Defence has any respect for the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, he would have resigned a long time ago.

I have worked very hard to earn the respect of our women and men in uniform. They are heroes. This was in the 2018 briefing note to the chain of command, up to the Minister of National Defence, the individual at the top who claims ignorance of war crimes:

We remain uncertain whether appropriate action was effectively taken...I am an ethical man and I believe in our moral doctrine and the LOAC (Law of Armed Conflict). I am bothered by the fact that my assigned duties allowed me to train and enable people who in my mind were criminals.

These soldiers are also my constituents. I have a direct responsibility in calling out this dereliction of duty on the part of the Prime Minister. I acknowledge the trust they placed in me when they acted with a conscience. I will always have the backs of the women and men in uniform.

On behalf of the people of Canada and on behalf of our Conservative government-in-waiting, I thank the soldiers who first raised the issue of war crimes, and then continue to raise these concerns. They have the gratitude and full support of the Conservatives, even if the Liberal Party continues to slough them off and act vindictively towards the soldiers who reported what they saw.

It is obvious to those who care about things like international treaties and the law of armed conflict that the Minister of National Defence has many lessons to learn. He needs to take lessons from the official opposition when it comes to serving his country. The minister claims no politician should ever start investigations. How quickly he forgot his own advice when it came to an hon. naval officer, like Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. What the Prime Minister ordered, however, was not an investigation against Mark Norman, it was a witch hunt that ended badly for the Prime Minister and his minister.

While I am proud and ready to defend the honour and reputations of the women and men who serve as the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, I cannot say the same about the current Minister of National Defence. The reputation has been maligned by the government of our country. The lack of leadership and direction from the Prime Minister has created many casualties.

First is the Minister of National Defence. The motion put forward by the leader of my party says it all. Seeing the Minister of National Defence reduced to repeating mindless talking points is sad, when he had a strong role model sitting next to him, the former minister of justice, the MP for Vancouver Granville. As a principled woman, she knew when it was time to stand up and act honourably.

The next casualties of the Prime Minister's lack of leadership are the women in uniform who have been victims of sexual misconduct under his watch, and the double standard on the way women and men are treated by the so-called, let me grope for his self-label, "feminist Prime Minister".

• (1240)

Let us talk about the female officer who was charged, convicted, fined and removed from her post. Her treatment was in direct contrast to the treatment afforded to Lieutenant-General Christopher Coates who, while serving as deputy commander of NORAD, had a consensual relationship with a civilian woman serving with the U.S. military in Colorado Springs.

He was allowed to continue his post before being transferred home last summer to take over the military's joint operations command. Coates was due to be transferred to the senior NATO post in Naples, Italy, until news of the affair became public. Now, ignoring the family relationship between Coates and DND deputy minister Jody Thomas, this example of the double standard women in uniform face every day from the government is appalling. We can add that to the casualty list on sexual misconduct.

The Prime Minister's own chief of staff, Katie Telford, did nothing to rein in the problem of the Prime Minister's toxic masculinity and seriously address the problem of the sexual misconduct crisis in the military. That makes her part of the problem and she should have resigned her position when her complicity was exposed.

The next casualties of the lack of leadership and direction by the Prime Minister and his Minister of National Defence are all the serving women in the Canadian Armed Forces. From the highest-ranking general to those who are still around, to the newly enlisted, who should be eager to serve their country, but who are now demoralized by the actions of the Prime Minister.

There are also fine individuals like Mark Norman and former armed forces ombudsman, Gary Walbourne. I am a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence. We invited Gary to come to our committee. He stated for the record he met the defence minister in 2018 to discuss an allegation of sexual misconduct against former chief of the defence staff, Jonathan Vance.

When he offered to show the minister proof of the allegation, former armed forces ombudsman Walbourne stated the government pushed him away and refused to review the evidence. "The only thing I ever wanted the minister to do was his job," he is quoted as saying at the time that this happened. He then observed that "doing nothing wasn't the response I was looking for". Doing nothing is the legacy of the defence minister and the government. This is now a government-wide scandal.

The next casualties in the DND scandal are the MP for Kanata—Carleton and the MP for Ottawa West—Nepean. The endless filibustering of the Standing Committee on National Defence will not go unnoticed by voters. They also had a role model like the member who had also left the Liberal caucus who used to sit beside them in the government caucus. To retired general Andrew Leslie, the former member of Parliament for Orléans, who resigned rather than being reduced to a mindless government cheerleader, I thank him for his service to this country.

The last point I will now deal with is the myth that some elements of the bought media repeat is that the military fared okay while the member for Vancouver South has been sitting in the defence minister's chair. Under the defence minister's time, though the government may have committed spending more money on the mil-

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itary in real dollars, it is all promised spending. The devil is always in the details. My constituents clearly remember the decade of darkness when Liberals slashed budgets, starting with disbanding the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

For spending to actually happen, soldiers have to rely on a future elected Conservative government. Of the purchases that have actually been delivered so far, they are mired in controversy. Who is Adam Coates again? By all tests, the Minister of National Defence has failed Canadians.

• (1245)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her service and for representing the brave men and women in uniform in her community.

The question I have for her is about the culture of cover-up and why it is so important that the minister does resign. We have seen it with the SNC-Lavalin case. We have seen it with the WE scandal. Even before the last election, with CUSMA, we knew it was going to be a \$1.5-billion hit to the auto industry, but the Liberals kept that away from Canadians before the election. They knew about this sexual scandal in the military before the election and now we are seeing it repeated with the Winnipeg lab cover-up.

Could she explain to Canadians that it is absolutely necessary that the Liberal minister resign, not only for his behaviour, but for keeping this information away from Canadians before the last election?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, definitely the culture of cover-up is something that has to be dealt with, together with corruption overall.

It started from the very beginning, with the purchase and procurement of the *Asterix*. There was government intervention trying to stop what was going forward. It was not stopped in its tracks at that time. Then there was the sexual misconduct and Operation Honour. They took the "honour" out of Operation Honour by allowing sexual misconduct to go unchecked for years, and now we have many women and men who are broken by what happened to them.

This goes all the way to the cover-up on the vaccines, and now the Winnipeg lab. Heaven only knows what occurred as a consequence of their covering up what happened at the lab, with the scientists who were fired.

**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 am wondering if the member could reflect on the fact that the current Leader of the Opposition, her leader, was made aware of misconduct rumours back in 2015. The Conservative government was very much aware, yet it went ahead and posted General Vance to a higher position. I am wondering if the member would say that the leader of the official opposition should also have to pay some consequence for his lack of action, or does she believe that he should be given a pass?

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**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, as soon as our current leader learned about allegations against the former chief of the defence staff, he reported it and it was investigated, unlike what happened with the current government.

• (1250)

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, many of my colleagues have spoken to this issue so far, and the Bloc Québécois will definitely be voting in favour of this motion.

However, instead of censuring the Minister of National Defence, why not demand his resignation?

Does my colleague think the Minister of National Defence should resign immediately?

[English]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question that my colleague asked. We are hoping that the minister will finally conduct an act of honour and do so on his own. However, right now, it is the Prime Minister who is ultimately responsible, and he has presided over this culture of cover-up and corruption.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's remarks. I have a similar question to the last one, and perhaps it is rhetorical, but does she feel that there is any way the Prime Minister can continue to have confidence in his defence minister, when it seems that his defence minister has lost the confidence of the men and women in the armed forces?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, all we have to do is look at the Prime Minister's own past misconduct. He dismissed an allegation of his groping with "she experienced it differently". Then there was the bullying on the floor here during a vote, hitting an opposition member in the chest.

Where the honour and dismissing have to come from is from the top, and that begins with the Prime Minister, who has dishonoured our entire country.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canada's military is in crisis on the defence minister's watch. An institution that has been revered for over a hundred years, Canada's military has liberated occupied nations, fought for democracy, freedom and peace, and brought honour and respect to our country and Canadian citizens. Now it is facing some of the darkest days in its history.

Canada's military is entrusted with protecting and preserving Canadian values, but it must also embody them. However, serious abuse of power, sexual misconduct and discrimination at the highest levels in Canada's military continue unchecked, and the defence minister and the Prime Minister have failed to act. That is why today's opposition day motion calls on the House of Commons to censure the Minister of Defence, and why it is so important.

Members of the government will cry that today's motion amounts to nothing more than petty partisan politics. That, in itself, is evidence that the current government understands neither its sworn obligation, nor the dire situation that Canada's military is in.

Members of Parliament are elected to govern, and governing is much more than merely passing laws. Governing, at its most fundamental, is about ensuring that those entrusted with leading the country embody the values of honesty and integrity that Canadians expect, and are held to account when they have broken that most sacred trust.

In his direction to ministers in 2015, the Prime Minister charged them with "[c]reating the culture of integrity and accountability that allows [them] to earn and keep the trust of Canadians". The Prime Minister went on to say, "Whether a Minister has discharged responsibilities appropriately is a matter of political judgment by Parliament." Therefore, any attempt to characterize today's opposition day motion as partisan or petty politics must be vehemently rejected. It is the role of Parliament to judge a minister, and not one we take lightly. Today, this House of Commons is fulfilling that most difficult and serious responsibility.

The defence minister has not acted with integrity and accountability. Instead, he has consistently misrepresented the facts, refused to answer direct questions, failed to implement important changes to improve the military's culture and turned a blind eye to serious allegations.

In 2018, allegations of serious misconduct were made against the former chief of the defence staff, General Vance. For three years, the defence minister knew, and key officials in the Prime Minister's Office, the Privy Council and the minister's office knew, and they all did nothing. No one else would have known, if two parliamentary committees, the defence committee and the status of women committee, had not decided to study this serious military misconduct.

What Canadians have learned through the testimony at those committees and in the media has simply shaken us to our core: hours and hours of jarring testimony detailing accounts of abusive power, misogyny, rape, sexual harassment and discrimination.

• (1255)

We heard testimony of investigations that were never carried out or were covered up, evidence that was lost or tampered with, and serious crimes that were pleaded down to an administrative slap on the wrist, purged from the records and simply forgotten. We heard from victims who were threatened into silence and themselves blamed for what had happened to them. They told us how their careers were destroyed and they were drummed out of the military. Perhaps most tragically, we heard from victims who believe they will never be able to get justice for what happened to them.

To quote retired Colonel Bernie Boland, "The entire institutional weight, influence, power, intellect and knowledge is directed against [victims] rather than what it's purportedly supposed to be.... Equal justice for all is not being applied here at all."

All of this, in Canada's military? How could this possibly happen in a country like Canada, where justice, accountability and the rule of law are our foundation?

The former chief of the defence staff, General Vance, the highest military officer; then his replacement, Admiral McDonald; Vice-Admiral Edmundson; General Fortin; General Rouleau; and Vice-Admiral Baines are all either under police investigation or have had to step aside for questionable conduct. Even more general and flag officers are complicit, through their actions or their silence.

The failure of Canada's military starts at the top of the chain of command, and the top is the defence minister. Under the National Defence Act, the defence minister is responsible for the management and direction of the Canadian Forces, and it is his duty to hold those at the most senior levels to the highest standards. A military has great power. It is the one group of people in Canadian society entrusted with the ability to bear arms and to commit acts of violence on behalf of the country. In a democracy, citizens need to know that the military is held in check by our elected officials.

The minister had a responsibility to take swift and immediate action regarding the allegations against Vance, but for three years he did nothing. While he may not have conducted the investigation himself, it was up to him to ensure that one was done. As elected officials, our loyalty is to country first, before party and before individuals; we are here to act in the best interest of the country.

That is what we also ask of our military, and Lieutenant-Commander Trotter risked his personal well-being to do what is right. He said, "as an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces I swore an oath to Queen and country to fulfill my duties, and there's the old adage of service before self. There may be blowback. There may be career implications". He further stated, "My personal conviction as an officer of the Canadian Armed Forces is that I will put the service and my service members above my own needs and safety."

Canadians rely on ministers to do the same, to put this country and Parliament before themselves and to accept responsibility when they fail to do so. However, after months of questions in the House and numerous appearances at committee, not once has the defence minister accepted any responsibility. Not once has he said he should have done something differently and, most important, not once has he committed to holding accountable those who have failed in their duty. Lasting change will only come when those who have failed are held accountable.

Governing does not mean to delegate and disappear. It means ensuring that government departments and public servants deliver the services Canadians need, to the standards they expect and in a manner that brings honour and pride to Canada as a nation. When it comes to the conduct at the highest level of the Canadian Armed Forces, the defence minister and the Prime Minister say it is not up to them.

If the defence minister and the Prime Minister are not responsible, then who is? The defence minister has clearly shown that he will not accept responsibility. He will not act honourably, admit he has failed in his duties and resign, and the Prime Minister will not hold him accountable and fire him. Rather than standing up for women, the Prime Minister has reinforced an entrenched and toxic

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military culture. His inaction has emboldened the old boys' club and denied women the opportunity to be believed.

• (1300)

Women in the military have earned the right to serve equally with respect. All men and women in uniform have sworn to give their lives for their country. In return, their elected officials must vigorously ensure they are protected by Canadian values.

Service to country is who I am at my core. My father was a major-general who served in the military. I followed him, like many others, in uniform and was honoured to wear the Canadian flag on my sleeve.

The defence minister has lost the trust and confidence of the military and Canadians. The crisis in Canada's military will not end until the defence minister is censured. I implore all of my colleagues in the House to support this motion and censure the defence minister.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the issue of service before self is an interesting one. I think what we are getting here today is not being done in the service of Canada, but in the service of the Conservative Party. It is looking for somebody to beat up on, which is a very political act.

There have been misdeeds in the Canadian military, but this is not new. This was going on well before the member and I, and others, were elected in 2015. As she noted, some of this came to light through the work of committees. Where were those committees and where was the leadership of the government to permit that kind of activity and questioning the first time that General Vance's name and questions came up? Where were the committees then?

What should we prescribe as a process going forward to ensure that committees, ministers and MPs will be properly aligned to make sure this will be dealt with and dealt with effectively so that it does not happen anymore?

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Madam Speaker, that is a very disheartening question from my hon. colleague. If the Minister of National Defence, on his watch, is not accountable for the conduct and behaviour of all the men and women in uniform, then who is?

There can be no change if those who have failed are not held accountable. Regardless of what has occurred over the last 100 years, what is important is whether the minister can make a change in the military if he has lost the trust and confidence of the men and women in uniform and Canadians to fulfill that role.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I honour my colleague for the efforts she makes at committee, where I have spent time with her, and in the House to fight for women in the military. The work she does is incredibly important, as is how she raises her voice for this issue.

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The motion brought forward by the opposition focuses on the Minister of National Defence. While I will support it, I wonder if the member could comment on my belief that it is not just the Minister of National Defence, but also the Prime Minister. It goes much higher than the minister. Who should be held responsible for this? Could she comment on that?

• (1305)

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has done incredible work. It is an honour and a privilege to stand beside her as we fight for something that truly matters and is at the foundation of our country.

There is no question that as we, in our Canadian democracy, have a government and a cabinet, the Prime Minister has an incredible role. The fact that a minister has been allowed to be derelict in his duties, while his fellow members of cabinet and the Prime Minister have stood idly by, is another failing of the government. It is not petty partisan politics. They are entrusted with governing and representing the values of Canadians. When they fail to do so, we have to be open and committed to vigorously holding them accountable.

It is not only the defence minister who is accountable. It is the Prime Minister and cabinet as well.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her service in uniform to this country and for her leadership in Parliament. She has been doing incredible work on this issue at the status of women and national defence committees in trying to right the ship and change the culture.

My hon. colleague has served, so she has witnessed first-hand the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces, which was described by Justice Deschamps as toxic masculinity. What do we need to do to change it?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill has 10 seconds or less.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Madam Speaker, that is not a question that can be answered in 10 seconds or less.

I thank my hon. colleague for his incredible work and his appreciative tone for those who have served.

What do we need to do? We need leadership that fulfills the roles and responsibilities of the Code of Service Discipline and fulfills the honour and integrity of the office they hold. That is not limited to those in uniform. It also applies to the defence minister, the Prime Minister and cabinet. Until individual—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council.

**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, unfortunately, what we have been listening to is very much political parti-

sanship. The Conservatives, in particular, have spared no expense in looking into individuals and attacking their character. We have seen that virtually since 2015, and nothing has changed. Even during the pandemic, the Conservative Party remains focused not so much on policy, but on character assassination. I am disappointed once again, but not surprised, by the behaviour of the official opposition.

I was in opposition for many years, as I said before. Never before have I seen an opposition party attack personalities to the degree that this party has in opposition, even at a time when Canadians want us to work together. It is also disappointing to see the Bloc and the NDP join forces with the official opposition. I refer to it as "the unholy alliance". By joining forces, they are trying to give a false impression to undermine the public's trust in our institutions.

I served in the Canadian Forces, albeit for a short period of time of just over three years. I enjoyed every day that I served in the forces posted out in Alberta. This is a government that has demonstrated a very strong, powerful commitment to the Canadian Forces. We have seen legislation, we have seen budget initiatives and we have seen a Minister of National Defence, who I would argue is second to no other in recent memory, commit to building a stronger, healthier Canadian Forces.

For those who have been following the debate on the floor of the House of Commons or in the committees, I will note what the unholy alliance of opposition parties is trying to accomplish. I suggest that the opposition, collectively, is feeling frustrated, and has joined forces to do what the Conservatives have been doing since 2015. It is quite upsetting that they have chosen the Minister of National Defence once again.

I remember when Jason Kenney heckled across the chamber to say he needed translation for English. That is where things started getting pretty rough for the opposition, and Jason did not want to back down. He wanted to take his shots at the Minister of National Defence.

As my colleague put in a question, this issue is not new. Sexual harassment and abuse of power are very serious issues in the forces. This was true back in the eighties, when I was there. I suspect members will find that they predate that time, and I suspect that they will likely continue. However, there are things we can do to minimize them and hopefully get them out of the system.

We have a Minister of National Defence who understands the members of the forces, so when the Conservatives attack his character, I take exception to it. Virtually from day one they have been attacking this particular minister on a personal level. I note Jason Kenney again, and what I would suggest to be racial comments from him.

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● (1310)

Prior to being the Minister of National Defence, he was a detective with the Vancouver Police Department. Prior to that, which is how most know him quite well, he had a role in our Canadian Forces. I will expand on that a little later. He was the first Sikh Minister of National Defence and was also in command of a Canadian Army Reserve regiment. Those are just some of things people will find about the minister if they do a very basic google search. To say that he should be relieved of his responsibilities or should step down is just silly.

When I look at what we have been able to accomplish through the leadership of the minister, the investments today and the commitments for tomorrow for members of our Canadian Forces, I will compare that any day to what Stephen Harper and the Conservatives did.

I made reference to the fact that sexual harassment did exist. There is an imbalance. There is the shame and the exploitation. They are very real. The Minister of National Defence has been very clear that we are committed to making the much-needed institutional and cultural changes that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces need, and we continue to make that commitment.

We have invested in the health, safety and well-being of all our defence team members. We have committed well over \$200 million in the most recent budget toward eliminating sexual misconduct. The minister has indicated that we will look for ways in the coming days to ensure there is an independent system established to deal with this issue. The minister has been very clear to those who want to listen and do not have the selective hearing my Conservative friends across the way do that he has absolutely no tolerance, zero tolerance, for any form of sexual misconduct and that we acknowledge the courage of those who have come forward.

Those are not my words. That is the sentiment of the Minister of National Defence and he has made that very clear not only to members of the Canadian Forces, but all Canadians. That is the reality. We have invested money, we have a process system that will ultimately see some tangible results, but that is not good enough for the Conservatives. They say he should have done more. It is really ironic.

I asked the Bloc and the NDP, who say they will support this motion, about the behaviour of the leader of the Conservative Party. That is not a problem for them. I do not hear them saying anything about that. I asked them if they were going to give him a pass and they completely avoided the question. Like the buy-in on this Conservative motion, they want to focus on the minister.

What did happen? Back in July 2015, allegations were first raised under the Conservative government. What is truly amazing is that the leader of the official opposition was one of the individuals who was made aware of the rumours of misconduct. How many questions did he ask on the floor of the House in regard to that? When did he start asking questions? It would be an interesting question for the leader of the official opposition.

● (1315)

It was serious enough that the leader of the official opposition asked his staff back then to notify the then prime minister's chief of staff, who then took it to the Privy Council Office for a review. In other words, they took the very same steps our minister has taken. The primary difference might be that our minister did it a whole lot quicker than what the current leader of the official opposition did. What a double standard.

Are the NDP, the Bloc, the unholy alliance, saying that no harassment of this degree took place over the last 10 years, that this is relatively recent and that our party is ultimately responsible? There is an institutional issue that needs to be dealt with, and this government, in particular the minister, are committed to dealing with that issue, unlike Stephen Harper and the current leader of the official opposition who both had a chance to do so.

For the members at the standing committee, in particular those from the opposition parties, where was their interest in this issue pre-2015? Did they attempt to study the issue? Often what happens is issues come up and committees will respond to them, departments will respond to them. That is typically what would give the committee the mandate to look into things and to investigate them.

I do not think members are naive. I believe we all understood there was a very serious issue, just like I know there are very serious issues with systemic racism in other institutions, whether it is with the RCMP or the Canadian forces. These issues exist. If the standing committee had wanted to study the issue in a truly non-partisan way, I am sure there would have been far greater progress.

Earlier today, when we had the tabling of reports from committees, we even heard some members comment on how effective committees could be when their members worked together. With the official opposition, policy does not matter. It is how its members can tear down the government and the people who make up the Government of Canada. That is their primary objective, and today the focus is on the Minister of National Defence, again.

I asked a question about the character of the individual. I referred to this quote earlier, a wonderful quote by Brigadier-General David Fraser, who was in charge of NATO's regional command south in Afghanistan back in 2006. His comments reference today's Minister of National Defence. He said:

I have had the pleasure of having Constable and Major [Minister of Defence] work for me for the past nine months on OPERATION ARCHER/ATHENA, Canada's contribution to the global war on terror in Afghanistan. I must say that Major [Minister of Defence] is one of the most remarkable people I have worked with, and his contribution to the success of the mission and the safety of Canadian soldiers was nothing short of remarkable.

● (1320)

He tirelessly and selflessly devoted himself to piecing together the ground truth on tribal and Taliban networks in the Kandahar area, and his analysis was so compelling that it drove a number of large scale theatre-resourced efforts, including OPERATION MEDUSA, a large scale conventional combat operation that resulted in the defeat of the largest TB cell yet identified in Afghanistan, with over 1500 Taliban killed or captured. I rate him as one of the best intelligence officers I have ever worked with—fearless, smart, and personable, and I would not hesitate to have him on my staff at any time in the future.

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Members in my constituency look see him as a hero, and he was. Literally tens of thousands of people look up to him, and the Conservative Party wants to take him down. They are saying that it is not personal. What garbage. The NDP and the Bloc might be fooled into believing that, but I am not.

Many thousands of people who know the Minister of National Defence do not believe it either. They understand what is taking place today. Shame on the combined unholy alliance of the opposition parties that have made the determination to try to censor a hero, a Minister of National Defence who has brought not only legislation before the House but budgetary measures to increase the funds for the armed forces, which Stephen Harper could not and did not do. I would compare the current minister of defence to Jason Kenney any day.

Do members of the unholy alliance of opposition parties believe there should be no consequences for the current Leader of the Opposition? Had he acted based on the standards that the opposition parties are talking about today, General Vance would never have been in the position in the first place.

At the end of the day, the opposition members had a choice. They could continue their character assassination line, something which they started back in 2015, as the records will show, going after one minister after another with a special focus on some ministers over others. It is not the first time they have called for a minister to resign. On the other hand, they could have actually talked about an issue. After all, we are in a third wave of the pandemic. Canadians are dying because of the COVID pandemic.

Yesterday, a bogus question of privilege was raised by a member who stopped just before Private Members' Business. He still has not come back to finish it. That shows just how important the question of privilege was. I stood and said that it would be a good opposition day motion, because it was on policy. The member wanted to talk about issues affecting the pandemic, Canadians, taxation policies and so forth.

The problem is that the opposition wants to shy away from policy. It does not want that. The official opposition wants to assassinate the character of those within cabinet and try to give a false impression. That is really unfortunate. No matter how hard that focus is, whether it is on the floor of the House or in our standing committees, this is a government that will continue to be focused on the pandemic and on ensuring Canada is in a good position to recover, no matter what sort of approach the unholy alliance of opposition parties chooses to take.

I am very disappointed in the Bloc and the NDP. I hope that at some point they have the ability to justify their behaviour—

• (1325)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite made a number of comments about the previous service of the Minister of National Defence. I would like to note, and if he had been listening to the speeches he would

know, that nobody has attacked the service of the minister while he was in uniform. Rather, they are talking about his lack of accountability and leadership since he has become the Minister of National Defence.

I know the member served in the Canadian Armed Forces and understands the chain of command, so I would like him to answer this very simple question. Who do the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Canadian Armed Forces ombudsman report to?

As well, I would like his feedback or comments on the fact that former senior officers are reaching out to me saying the minister no longer enjoys the confidence of either the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces. Victims are also reaching out to me, and the one word they are using to describe the Liberal filibustering at the defence committee is “brutal”.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the same leadership the Minister of National Defence demonstrated so clearly in his days prior to entering into politics is the same leadership he brings to the Department of National Defence. As there are thousands of members in the Canadian Armed Forces, not all of them will be happy with the individuals within a government.

The issue of sexual harassment is one of substance. It is very real and tangible. This government is doing more on that front than the previous government. That is a fact.

• (1330)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his presentation. He said he was disappointed to see the Bloc and the Conservatives joining forces in calling for the defence minister's head, shall we say.

Does he not think that victims of harassment are the ones paying the price for these machinations to keep the minister on?

This looks to me like an old boys' club trying to protect one of its own. Does the parliamentary secretary agree that victims are being forgotten in all this?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, absolutely not. If we were to take action to benefit the victims of the harassment taking place today in our Canadian Armed Forces, the unholy alliance of opposition parties would take a different course at the standing committee. The purpose of their current course at the standing committee has one purpose, and that is to embarrass the current minister as opposed to dealing with this very serious issue.

This is an issue that directly affects hundreds, if not thousands, of members in the Canadian Armed Forces. I do not need to be told how important the issue is. I understand, as does the minister, which is why we would like to see more productivity on the issue rather than personal attacks.



**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Madam Speaker, based on the speeches here this morning and the comments made, it is obvious to me that the Minister of National Defence served within our Canadian Armed Forces, as well as with the Vancouver Police Department, with honesty and integrity, but in 2015 something changed. In 2015, he joined the Liberal Party.

We heard in the speeches this morning that he has misrepresented the facts and the truth, refused to answer questions and instructed Liberal members at committee to engage in meaningless filibustering. Something changed when he started running with the posse of the Liberal cabinet.

My question for the member is this: Does he think the systemic moral corruption and rot within the Liberal Party has claimed another victim?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, unlike the member across the way, I have never experienced that rot that he talks about within the Liberals. That might be the case in the Conservative Party, but it is definitely not the case in the Liberal Party.

The member and his colleague spoke about honesty, integrity and leadership, and those three very important characteristics, those very same attributes, are things the Minister of National Defence has brought from his previous life to the House of Commons. I believe he stands by those characteristics day in and day out, serving members of the Canadian forces, Canadians and his constituents on a daily basis.

I find it a disgrace that the unholy alliance of opposition parties has taken this opportunity to discredit a man that deserves a lot more credit for the things he has accomplished for our country. Shame on all of them.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc member that asked a question said that we should be concentrating on the victims, which we totally agree with. The NDP and the Bloc have said that today. If we look at the committee records, we will see time and time again that the Liberal members are the ones who concentrated on the victims.

Unfortunately, what the other three parties concentrated on was an anonymous email that, for the privacy of the person, no one knew what was in it. Unfortunately, most of the members in the debate here do not realize that there was roughly an hour of testimony at committee on all the things this minister has done dealing with sexual misconduct, which is more than any other minister in history.

Does the member think that it would really hurt those victims to remove the minister who has done more than anyone else, is ready to action right now and who says there is a lot more that needs to be done? That would hurt the victims the most.

• (1335)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, if the unholy alliance of the opposition parties really wanted to do something positive today, they could withdraw the motion. It is a disgraceful motion. They could amend it, so we could talk about the victims of sexual

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harassment and those who are being exploited by individuals in powerful positions.

If there was any honour, we would see them withdraw the motion or amend the motion and deal with the subject matter, so we could talk about the victims.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is disheartening to listen to the member for Winnipeg North with his continued Liberal deflection, dithering and delays, which we see all too often from the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence. We are now seeing it from the parliamentary secretary himself.

He would rather sit here and talk about how we have more victims because of the lack of action by the Minister of National Defence. When he learned of the General Vance allegations and was presented with the evidence, he pushed away from the table, turned a blind and covered it up for three years. He took honour out of Operation Honour by leaving General Vance in charge of the Canadian Armed Forces during that entire time.

The member for Winnipeg North has no moral authority to come in here and try to pass judgment, when he should be standing up and saying, “Yes, we need to censor the Minister of National Defence. Yes, we believe in ministerial accountability.” If he will not do the honourable thing and tell him to resign as the Minister of National Defence, then will he tell the Prime Minister to fire him?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member is wrong. He is absolutely and totally wrong. This is how a double standard is applied. This is a member from the Conservative Party who believes that the Conservative Party did absolutely no wrong, yet they are the ones who actually found out about the allegations in the first place. Had they done their job according to their standards today, he never would have been there.

**An hon. member:** Wrong.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, we have this problem today because the official opposition is not applying the same standards to the Leader of the Opposition when he was in a position of authority to deal with the issue that it is applying today to this minister. That is called hypocrisy.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During the response from the member for Winnipeg North, somebody on Zoom yelled out, “Wrong.” We cannot do that. We are not supposed to interject. Would you like to remind members that they should not be doing that?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Yes, we certainly want to remind members to keep their microphones off when it is not their turn to speak.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Calgary Shepard.

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Normally when I rise in the House, I am very pleased to put words on the record about all the issues we talk about here, but today I rise with extreme frustration and disappointment concerning the sexual misconduct in the Canadian military, the lack of results from the Liberal government and the failure of the defence minister to take this issue seriously.

The Conservative motion on the table today rightfully calls for the resignation of the defence minister because of his record on this issue, and because of the men and women in our Canadian Armed Forces who have been sexually exploited and who he has let down.

I listened intently to the minister's speech today in response to our motion. I was waiting and hoping that he would express regret for his record on failing to address sexual misconduct in the military, but he did not. There was no personal acknowledgement that he had thus far failed to send a clear message to the most powerful men in our military, who report to him, that this behaviour will not be tolerated and that this culture is no longer acceptable.

The minister has been in charge of our military for over six years, yet in that time, and especially in the last five months, we have seen eight senior ranking military officials resign in disgrace over allegations of sexual misconduct under his watch. In the five months since the scandal concerning General Vance broke, who at the time was the head of our military, it has only gotten worse.

Most recently, Canadians learned that the man who has authority over the investigation of sexual misconduct went golfing with the man accused of that misconduct. After five months of headlines, they thought it would be okay to go golfing together, which is the clearest violation of conflict of interest that I have ever heard of.

When I saw that headline the other day about the golfing scandal, it truly sickened me to know how little has really changed after the last five months of repeated headlines and conversations about this scandal. I cannot imagine how that headline was received by the men and women in the military who have been raped, abused and mistreated by their superiors, and for them to know that nothing has changed.

This was after the minister answered dozens and dozens of questions in the House, in committee and from reporters on this issue since it broke in February. Time and time again, he has said that he is essentially proud of his progress on this issue, with that disclaimer of, "Oh, there's much more work to do, but don't worry, we'll get to it".

Well, the fact that the man in charge of the investigation thought it would be acceptable to go golfing with his buddy, the man accused of the misconduct, is all the information I need to know about how this Liberal minister clearly failed to pass on the message he has so proudly shared in the House of Commons with members from all parties. He is happy to say the words to reporters, to the opposition and to his voters, but he is, apparently, incapable with following through, being a leader and laying down the law. He is the head of our military. The buck stops with the Liberal Minister of Defence.

When it comes to this culture of old boys' club men protecting each other from accountability for demeaning and disrespecting women in our military, the minister has demonstrated that he does

not have the ability to follow through on his words. Otherwise, the golfing scandal would have never happened. That is why we are asking for his resignation today.

I want to speak for a moment about what it is like for the thousands of women in uniform who have served our country, and the millions more women in Canada who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. I say women, but of course, we know that men also experience this. In fact, 30% of the sexual misconduct complaints in our military are from men, so it is important that we do not forget them. However, I can only speak from a female perspective, and that is what I will be doing today.

I will use the example of the email that General Vance sent to his junior officer, whom he far outranked, because not only does it show what he thinks is acceptable behaviour, but it speaks perfectly to the broader issue of the power imbalances in the workplace when sexual relations are brought into it.

A junior ranking military official met General Vance at a function, and he offered her mentorship and career advice if she ever needed it. It is pretty exciting as a young, aspiring career woman to get an offer of mentorship by a superior, especially an older man, which is very valuable.

We live in a man's world, so we cannot put a price on that career advice, and I can imagine she was quite excited for the opportunity. However, when she emailed him for that career advice, he concluded his reply with, "Or...we could throw caution to the wind and escape to a clothing optional island in the Caribbean...I hear the beer is good there... Cheers, JV"

Now, I do not know this woman, but I do know how she must have felt reading that email. She was probably excited to see the email pop up in her inbox, to see what he was going to say, but she opened it only to see that he was propositioning her for sex.

Make no mistake, this happens all the time, but when it happens, when one gets a message like that, whether it is in person, a text, an email or a phone call, a woman instantly gets a pit in her stomach. It is like a vice grip. Her heart starts beating. She may start to sweat. She is sickened with anxiety and dread because she knows in that instant that everything has changed for her, but not for him.

● (1340)

I am not sure whether his comment was flippant or deliberate, and I am not sure which one is worse, but with it General Vance changed the entire dynamic of that relationship. Why is that? These types of relations are against the rules in the military, which he would have well known. If these were unwanted advances, which clearly they were, now the junior member had to deal with an ordeal that she did not ask for.

Now it is a situation that she is going to stress over. She is going to lose sleep over it and try to navigate it without damaging her career. This woman had to figure out how to push back and say she was not interested without damaging his ego. All women in this chamber will know that when a man makes advances they do not want there is that nervous laughter: “Ha, ha, so funny. Get your hand off me”. I think all the women in this chamber have probably experienced that at some point or another.

Every woman I know certainly has had to deal with this at some point in her career, and it is particularly insidious when it is at the workplace. Perhaps there is an aggressive drunk at a bar. We know the feeling of dread and of having to try our best to let these men down gently so we do not hurt their egos. Make no mistake, I have met thousands of men who are amazing allies to women, but I have come across those insidious men in my career and in my life.

A woman knows that if she does not tread carefully, verbal abuse can ensue or perhaps violence. It can affect her career if her name comes up for a promotion, for example, or for a new posting or new opportunity, and the old boys are talking about who they are going to pick for that promotion or that new posting. She knows that if she hurts a man's ego with her response, it might affect the reference he would give her when her name comes up. Let us be real here. That is what is going on. That is what women have to deal with when unwanted sexual advances come their way from male superiors in the workplace, and this happens all the time.

It is particularly insidious at work because it affects a woman's career. Everything that she put work into is at stake in that ridiculous moment when someone thoughtlessly says something to her. General Vance did that to this servicewoman. He might not have given it a second thought, but if that is the case, that is how detached from reality he really is. That is how drunk on power he and his fellow high-ranking military officers really are. They have no idea what it is like for the women they do these things to.

We know this kind of behaviour is just the tip of the iceberg. It is symbolic of a greater problem. Women have been sexually abused, raped and harassed day in and day out in our military, all while trying to do their jobs, keep their heads down and advance their careers like everybody else.

There are land mines like this everywhere for women as they rise up the ranks in their careers. I know it. I have lived it, just like millions of other women. I am not unique, but it is real and it happens every single day.

What is most disappointing is that the Liberal government was elected twice on its feminist promises and credentials, yet here we are six years later with no feminist change seen in our military. The defence minister has spoken at length about this, yet nothing has happened. The scandals just keep rolling out. Every day there is a new headline. These men thought that going golfing during an ongoing sexual misconduct investigation was somehow acceptable just a few days ago. That is the minister's record on this issue. That is why we are calling for him to resign.

Before I conclude, I have two quick things to say. I want to seriously thank the Conservative members on the defence committee for their dedication and their tireless effort. I am very proud to

### *Business of Supply*

serve alongside them. They have been tireless in their pursuit of justice for the women and men who have been mistreated in our military.

To the men and women in our military who have suffered through this hell, and I do not choose that word lightly, I say we are with them. We have their backs and we will not stop until there is a reckoning in our Canadian military.

I will conclude with a message to women Liberal MPs in the House. I know that they are all proud feminists, but now is the time to walk the talk. If they are going to go door to door in the next election and tout their feminist credentials, they have to stand up for women when it counts. It counts today.

The minister has failed the women in our military. He has failed to stand up for them. He has failed to fulfill his duty and hold these powerful men accountable. He has failed to send the message that it is not okay to go golfing with the accused when an investigation is going on. There is no way around it. There is no other way they can try to spin it. That is the reality.

I know that in their hearts the Liberal members, particularly the women, know what I am saying is correct. The minister might be a nice guy, but that is not the point. He clearly cannot fulfill his duty.

In conclusion, the current minister has proved he cannot defend women who have been sexually harassed, raped and abused. The women in our military only need seven Liberal MPs to abstain or, better yet, vote for his resignation. He could still be an MP, but he should not have control over changing the culture in our military after he has let us down as women so profoundly. I would ask seven Liberal MPs to please consider this and do the right thing.

● (1345)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for her speech because she can speak from a point of experience. Certainly the empathy that she has is shared by many in the House, but the Conservative motion and the opposition support for it are even worse than that old joke: Give him a fair trial and then hang him. We cannot even be that charitable. This is not a fair trial.

This is not a fair recounting of what this minister has done, which no minister before him had done or was willing to do in spite of the fact that we are dealing with a rot in the military that has been established for a very long time. The member would know this. It began way before this minister came into his position.

*Business of Supply*

We agree that it is this minister's job to fix whatever happened in the past for whatever reason it happened in the past. However, the member appears not to be aware of the things that minister has done and is doing. She simply discards them. Can she comment on that?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, what I am aware of is that just a few days ago, the heads of our military thought it was acceptable to go golfing, which is a clear conflict of interest. The man accused in this sexual misconduct investigation went golfing with the man who has authority over that investigation. Therefore, clearly the minister is not being effective. Clearly, the message is not being delivered to this minister. He must resign.

• (1350)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, here on the NDP benches we were really moved by the hon. member's speech. It is true. What woman has not had to endure that?

As members of the status of women committee, we were trying desperately to put forward some recommendations to get the government to actually listen and move forward with substantial actions as opposed to burying their heads in the sand for yet another potentially five or six years, as it has been sitting on the Deschamps report.

Could the member talk about some of those recommendations? The report was released today, so maybe she has not had a chance to see it, but there are strong recommendations that are coming forward. How would she like to see the government move forward on those recommendations, instead of just ignoring the problem?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, it was really great to get to know the member on the status of women committee. She is an extraordinary member of Parliament and stands up very strongly for women in this country.

Regarding the report, I would say the minister has had six years to act on it. Clearly there has been no action, or we would have seen results and we would not have had another scandal this week-end where the most powerful military men in this country thought it was okay to get together just like the old days, as if nothing had happened.

What I would want to see from this minister is real action and results. Just within the last week, we are seeing that has not been the case. He has had six years to make a difference and he has done nothing.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I find the reaction on the other side of the floor just extraordinary. I thank my colleague for her passionate comments. This is not just a historical matter. It is a current matter, as is clearly shown by this latest golfing excursion.

The last time I looked, the current government had been in power for almost six years. This minister has had his portfolio and his mandates for that same amount of time. Could the member comment on the fact that this is not just a historical matter, but a current matter?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, when I was crafting my remarks today I knew that some women and men from the military

who had been sexually exploited and abused might be watching. I want to take this opportunity to say how sorry I am for what they are going through. When I was writing my remarks, I was looking to give some advice on what they could do, but the reality is that after six years there is still not a clear line of authority for reporting this kind of misconduct.

We saw that with General Vance three years ago. When the ombudsman came forward and said there was something going on, what did the minister of defence do? He pushed himself away from the desk and said that he could not hear about this. That is what the minister of defence did when he was approached with a sexual misconduct issue. He physically excused himself from that situation, did nothing about it and never followed up.

That is where we are with the current Liberal government. That is really the only hope that the Liberals are offering women in the military today. How disappointing that is, and I wish I could have offered something more—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is hard to follow a member like the member for Kildonan—St. Paul. She basically made the entire case for this motion. I am not going to repeat what she said because she passionately explained to Canadians and her constituents the exact matter at hand: the minister's dereliction of duty, his failure to take command of the situation, to own responsibility for it and to do the right thing.

This is a motion that calls for the minister's censure. The House of Commons is unsatisfied with the quality of his work. It is not enough to simply keep repeating that he is doing something. I have heard Liberal MPs say this repeatedly. The member for Winnipeg North made the best possible case that could be made in the House, and it is still not enough. I hear from constituents and read in the papers that he is just not doing enough. He has failed. He has not done the job.

The Prime Minister refuses to relieve him of his responsibilities, so we are at a point where we have to censure a member. Earlier today the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman mentioned that 20 years had passed since a member had been censured in the House in this manner for the performance of their duties and responsibilities to Canadians. It has been a very long time.

The issues are the sexual harassment and misconduct allegations in the military, the treatment of Vice-Admiral Norman and the continuing cover-up of what is going on. They include misleading Canadians on the withdrawal of fighter jets in the fight against ISIS. They go on and on. The Canadian Forces are in disarray. The men and women in uniform do not have a leader who is willing to take command. At last count, eight or nine senior officers in the military had either resigned, been fired or been relieved of command duties. That is huge. We have no commander-in-chief and there is no Governor General, either. The minister is supposed to be the one responsible at the moment, and I do not think there is any faith in his ability to deliver on everything that he is supposed to right now, which is why Conservatives are asking for a vote of censure on him.

“The first rule of politics: never believe anything until it's been officially denied.” That is a Sir Humphrey Appleby quote. There will be a Yiddish proverb at some point. I will think of one.

The minister has denied knowing anything, but then there were internal access to information requests that came back saying the minister knew. There was a long chain of information from the Privy Council of what it knew, when it knew it and when it was informed these were #MeToo sexual harassment allegations. Now we have that information and it is unbelievable that we are here, nearing the end of June and still debating who is responsible for the failure to address these systemic problems in the senior ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Brigadier-General Gordon O'Connor served the House very honourably. He was the minister of national defence over a decade ago. He used to say that sexual harassment and misconduct issues in the military were issues of command. There is a command responsibility for senior officers to look after those in the lower ranks, and to make sure they are treated correctly by their commanding officers. Commanding officers who cannot keep control of their troops have failed in their duties of command, in just the way the minister has failed in his responsibilities of command.

The reason I know Gordon O'Connor, a former brigadier-general, former “zipperhead” or tank commander and former minister of national defence in the House, is because I was a junior exempt staffer in his employ. I know exactly what he expected of senior officers in his ranks. That is well over a decade ago now, so I am dating myself. As my staff always remind me, there is a generational divide between them and me.

The Yiddish proverb I am thinking of is, “Words should be weighed, not counted.” The motion has weighty words in it. Conservatives are asking for censure of a minister for his performance and failure in the conduct of his duties. He has a responsibility to the men and women in the armed forces to ensure, first, that their commanding officers do not mistreat them, and second, that he follows through on investigations to make sure they are safe from their own members in their workplace. They expect the enemy on the battlefield to be shooting at them, trying to end their lives and kill them.

• (1355)

What they expect in return is that we have their backs, that the minister has their backs and that when he sends them into harm's way, he sends them with commanding officers who are able to ensure their personal safety from their own. That is a minimum requirement we should expect from the minister and the senior ranks of the military.

I know that the member for Edmonton West will appreciate that I have gone through the minister's departmental plans that he signed off on. After question period I will refer to the departmental plans, but they show that the minister, who signs off on these documents every time they are submitted with the estimates that we have to vote on, and the military have not been taking it seriously.

I read here, “To be determined by 31 March 31 2021”, and then it defers it until 2022 and future years. There are no targets in place. There is no plan in place in their own departmental plans. They

### *Statements by Members*

have not said anything in about here fixing actual goals for dealing with the problem. They are literally kicking it down the road. They are waiting for future years to take care of this. There is talk publicly, but as for the actual plans for the civil service and what it is supposed to be doing, there is nothing there.

After question period, I will fill members in on the rest.

• (1400)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. member will have three minutes and 45 seconds to complete his speech.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Mr. Derek Sloan (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Ind.):**  
Madam Speaker, Canadians know that I have fought hard for them in Parliament over the past several months when other parties have failed to do so. Too many times, we heard nothing but silence in Parliament over urgent issues, such as the detainment of Canadians at airports; research into promising COVID treatments like Ivermectin, which has been utilized in other jurisdictions but not Canada; the unconstitutional push for vaccine passports with no debate in the House of Commons; the use of endless lockdowns across Canada, despite the negative impact on our economy and youth mental health; the rights of workers against forced vaccinations in the workplace and, of course, the Prime Minister's famous double standard on the constitutional rights of Canadians to protest.

I have always stood up for Canadians on these issues, just like today when I hosted a panel of Canadian doctors and professors, who are now facing extreme censorship across our nation due to their whistle-blowing on Canada's handling of COVID-19.

I call on the government, big tech and other organizations to stop muzzling medical experts and let them share their concerns freely without fear of reprisal and censorship.

*Statements by Members***FOOD CRISIS**

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada is currently facing an entirely avoidable crisis. Every year, we waste approximately 13 million tonnes of food, one of the highest per capita levels in the world. This wasted food creates some 56.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions, uses 1.5 billion cubic metres of fresh water, uses land three times the size of PEI and could feed 24 million people if it were recouped. This massive waste is only made worse by the fact that four million Canadians still struggle to access healthy food. All along the supply chain, from farm to fork, are inefficiencies that end up leading to more than half of all food produced in Canada being wasted.

It is time for the federal government to take a serious look at the avoidable crisis of food waste and develop a comprehensive federal strategy to address it.

\* \* \*

**MEMBER FOR NORTH OKANAGAN—SHUSWAP**

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as this parliamentary sitting nears conclusion, I stand in appreciation of Canadians I have been honoured to work with through the challenges of the past 16 months.

I send my thanks to my team in Ottawa and at home in the North Okanagan—Shuswap. To Joel, Chelsea, Mary, Penny and Teresa, I give my thanks for being on the front line of the thousands of calls, emails and letters the office has received. Working as a team, they have consistently gone that extra mile to assist constituents with professionalism.

I also want to thank the good people of the North Okanagan—Shuswap for their patience and co-operation as my team and I worked with them through the challenges of stranded travellers, lost jobs, struggling businesses, separated families and more. As we move into the summer months and beyond, my staff and I will continue to be available to them all.

To everyone, I wish a safe, healthy and happy summer.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SUMMER FESTIVITIES IN MONTREAL**

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the good weather is here, and Montreal is coming out of lockdown. Our patios and shopping streets are bustling. After these long and difficult months, it feels so good to be able to get together and celebrate life. Nothing says summer in Montreal like festivals.

With the MURAL Festival, the Festival des musiciens du monde, the MAPP Festival, the Montreal St-Ambroise Fringe Festival, the Festival international Nuits d'Afrique, the Montreal International Jazz Festival, and many others, Montreal will truly be celebrating this summer.

[English]

We still need to be cautious. We still need to respect our local health and safety measures, but we also need to celebrate. We need

to celebrate everything that makes life worth fighting for and worth living: our families; our friends; our art; our culture.

I am so proud of our community, from the live music on the rooftops of POP Montreal to the free delivery service of the COVID-19 help hub, to moms baking for local food banks and chalk rainbows in every alley and driveway. Our community came together—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**RAÏF BADAWI**

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this afternoon in Montreal, people gathered at the urging of Amnesty International to once again demand the release of Raïf Badawi. I say “once again” because Mr. Badawi has been imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for nine years now, without having committed a single crime. For nine years now, his wife Ensaf and his three children have been hoping that the Canadian government would take action to reunite their family, but nothing is being done.

We actually thought that the process would speed up in January, when the House unanimously demanded that the federal government grant Raïf Badawi Canadian citizenship. However, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has done nothing. If this continues, Mr. Badawi will serve his entire unjust sentence before Ottawa takes the slightest measure to facilitate his release.

Enough is enough. There are four days left in the session. The House has been asking the minister to grant Raïf Badawi citizenship for five months. His wife and family have been waiting for him for nine years. The minister must do his job.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**SUMMER IN MADAWASKA—RESTIGOUCHE**

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that our borders are finally open, and we are really beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel, after many months of discipline, sacrifice and patience.

This summer is the perfect time to come and discover the people in my region. I invite everyone to come and experience our indigenous, Acadian, Irish and Scottish cultures, and enjoy the festivals that will be taking place throughout my riding this summer.

Whether travelling solo or with family or friends, everyone is invited to come taste the beers crafted by our microbreweries, feel the salt winds of Chaleur Bay, and bask in the tranquility of our beautiful lakes. Enjoy the lull of the current carrying their kayak down our majestic rivers, or the thrill of a mountain bike ride on one of our woodland trails through the heart of the Appalachians.

We invite our beloved neighbours, friends and relatives to visit, or revisit, our beautiful riding of Madawaska—Restigouche.

I wish everyone a great summer. As La Sagouine would say, “v'nez nous ouère”. For those who do not speak Chiac, that means come and see us.

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[English]

#### GEORGE CARSTED

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, teacher, soldier, husband, father, patriot and Reform Party volunteer. That was George Carsted, who passed away peacefully at the age of 90. George immigrated to Canada in 1951 from Germany.

While he was a patient at McKellar General Hospital in Fort William, he charmed his future wife Helen, who was a nurse on his ward. They would be happily married for 64 years. George became a teacher and got his first teaching job at Glenlawn Collegiate in 1958 in Winnipeg. Later, he became the principal of Hasting Junior High and then Glenwood School.

While still a teacher, he took on a second career with the army reserves. He was the commanding officer of The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada for a time and then Colonel Carsted ended his military career as deputy commander of the Militia Area Prairies in 1981.

George and Helen retired to Calgary to be closer to family. To Caroline, Frederick, Elizabeth, Eric, my friend Douglas, and to his 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, please accept the eternal gratitude of this nation.

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#### RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Kamloops Indian Residential School on Tk'emlups te Secwépemc territory operated for almost 100 years before it was finally closed in 1978.

Indigenous children stripped from their lands and their families were brought there and to hundreds of schools like it and subjected to a cultural genocide.

The discovery of 215 children buried at the school grounds was yet another stark reminder of the horrific intergenerational legacy of the residential school system. It also underscores the ongoing oppression and systemic racism this country must confront in order to meaningfully walk the path of truth and reconciliation.

Like so many, I have been moved by the outpouring of grief and the support of communities. In Milton, 11 students, nine of whom are indigenous, set up a memorial outside the Town Hall. They placed candles and 215 pairs of shoes surrounding a pair of moccasins and participated in a moment of silence for the children who never made it home.

This was an act of reconciliation to remember and commemorate the lives and cultures lost. It was a deep act of respect that was educational for many, very meaningful and represented a step forward on the path of meaningful reconciliation, and I thank them for that.

#### Statements by Members

#### COVID-19 VACCINES

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada now leads the world in first-dose vaccinations against COVID-19, with more than 72% of eligible Canadians having received at least one dose. All vaccines approved for use in Canada are free, they are safe and effective, and all of them will help us get back to the activities and the people we have missed so much.

More than 30 million vaccine doses have been administered to Canadians and we have delivered more than 33 million doses to provinces and territories. These milestones are a true team Canada achievement. Our government will continue to go above and beyond to ensure every Canadian who wants to be is fully vaccinated.

On July 7, I will be getting my second shot, and I would like to encourage all to get their second shot as soon as they become eligible. A return to a more normal life is nearing. We are not there yet. We must all continue to follow public health measures like physical distancing, wearing a mask and reducing non-essential outings to a minimum.

Let us end this crisis together.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the small business owners in my riding and across the country who have been working so hard to stay afloat throughout the pandemic. Our communities are better and stronger places to live because of their tenacity and commitment to weathering this storm.

That said, on behalf of Manitoba business owners, I want to express their disappointment and frustration over how the Liberal government continues to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses, especially in the catering, hospitality, travel and tourism sectors, remain shuttered because of the Liberal government.

Just today, one of my constituents said, “All I ask of the government is to quit making us beg to open.” They made the sacrifices and took on mountains of debt to get through this crisis. However, the Liberal government’s slow reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of forward planning and late rollout of vaccines and rapid testing are directly responsible for the delayed reopening of our economy and the ongoing suffering of small businesses.

Canadians deserve a government with a plan to secure their futures. Unfortunately, Liberal ministers have repeatedly ignored their phone calls and emails. Canadians deserve better.

*Statements by Members***PERU'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE**

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks Peru's 200th anniversary of independence. Peru is Canada's third-largest bilateral trading partner in Latin America, with Canadian exports in Peru reaching \$871 million in 2020 and Canadian merchandise imports from Peru reaching \$3.7 billion.

In December 2020, the Peruvian Canadian Institute was launched in partnership with me and Dr. Kevin McCormick, president of Huntington University. It fosters friendship between countries and brings together leaders to collaborate on important topics such as education, politics, trade, culture, environmental sustainability and gender equality.

I encourage all members of the House to join ParlAmericas's international activities to strengthen our strong ties with Caribbean and Latin American countries like Peru.

I would like to congratulate the people of Peru on the important historical milestone.

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[Translation]

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker,

It starts in school:  
A tug of the hair  
Some crass language  
A first love, without love, without respect  
Not to worry, boys will be boys...  
And it continues  
A new relationship, passionate, but unhealthy  
Love serves as bait, but has no soul  
That first love planted a seed, now growing strong  
The respect comes and goes, and then just goes  
Kind words become unkind  
Whispered words become screams  
Connection becomes disconnected  
A gentle touch, now but a memory  
Replaced by bruised skin, bruised heart  
The love is gone, control's all that remains  
Isolation, devastation  
Death.  
13 women were killed in Quebec  
13 lives lost to a treacherous love  
I can no longer stand by and hold my tongue  
I can no longer ignore this violence.  
To colleagues and Canadians alike:  
We cannot pretend we don't see  
The cries, the tears, the noises, the bruises  
Are not all harmless  
Perhaps a sign of something wrong  
We cannot close our eyes  
If we're to save that 14th woman,  
Who's now suffering in silence, hoping a neighbour  
Will see the signs  
And put an end to the deadly cycle  
Of domestic violence

\* \* \*

[English]

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, ordinary Canadians are being left behind by the Liberal government.

Inflation is out of control. Prices are skyrocketing. Wages are down. Unemployment is rising. Businesses are closing. When Canadians look at their country, they no longer see it as a place where they could build something for the future. That is on the Liberals.

They have turned Canada into a country where it has become impossible to succeed. Inequality is rampant and opportunity is nowhere to be found. Young families cannot afford to buy a home. People are losing their jobs. Taxation, red tape and restrictions are stifling and shuttering businesses across the country. Success is no longer determined by hard work. It is something only well-connected Liberals and the wealthy can achieve.

Canadians need hope. They need assurance that there is a future for them. That is what the Conservatives are fighting for. Canadians are counting on us to secure their future, and we will not give up.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday General Motors announced a 75% increase in investment in electric vehicles to \$35 billion. GM will accelerate construction of two new electric battery plants in the U.S., in addition to the plants in Ohio and Tennessee that are now being built. None are in Canada.

With the entire auto sector having a once-in-a-generation investment cycle, which will impact us for many decades as vehicles will be produced, Canada's lack of a national auto policy is leaving workers behind, and our country is at risk of losing the industry that built our middle class. We cannot and should not depend solely on the impressive union contract negotiations that Unifor has achieved to secure any new investment. For the past 19 years, as a member of the House, I have been advocating for national auto strategy and warning what would happen without one. While other countries of the world have implemented theirs, our vehicle production has continued to decline year after year.

As we have seen with the pharmaceutical, medical device, PPE and technology sectors, once manufacturing leaves it is extremely difficult to bring back, and the pandemic has exposed the consequences. Canada needs a national auto policy immediately to secure our workers, our industry and our country's future.



[Translation]

### ÉDITH CLOUTIER

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on May 15, the Institut national de la recherche scientifique awarded an honorary doctorate to Édith Cloutier. This is her second honorary doctorate, after the one she was awarded by Concordia University in 2018.

Ms. Cloutier has been the executive director of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre for more than 32 years and also served as chair of the board of directors of Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue. She was the first indigenous woman to hold this position at a Quebec university.

She is credited with implementing practical projects for the urban indigenous community such as the Minowé Clinic, a model of indigenous health care services in Quebec. Ms. Cloutier has received many accolades from governments, community organizations and universities, including the Ordre national du Québec in 2006 and the Order of Canada in 2013.

I congratulate Ms. Cloutier, and I thank her for all her work on behalf of members of first nations and indigenous peoples.

\* \* \*

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford more of the same from the Prime Minister and his Liberal government. As we turn the corner on the pandemic, Canadians need paycheques and opportunity. However, for my constituents whose paycheques depend on the Canadian energy sector, more of the same from the Liberal government is actually detrimental. With their livelihoods already under attack long before the pandemic, more of the same from the Prime Minister means more job losses and even less opportunity.

Only Canada's Conservatives have a five-point plan to secure the future. It includes job creation and economic recovery in every region and every sector of this country. Canadians who can afford not to worry about their jobs have four parties to choose from. However, for everyday Canadians who care about securing Canada's economic future, there is only one choice: Canada's Conservatives.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### VIMY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as this school year draws to an end, I would like to congratulate the graduates of the secondary schools in my riding, including École Saint-Martin and École Saint-Maxime and Laval Senior Academy, on their amazing achievement.

Obtaining a diploma is no small feat, and here in the House, we recognize the unique challenges that these students have had to overcome and the sacrifices they have made to get to where they are today.

### Oral Questions

As they celebrate this milestone and think about the next chapter in their lives, I encourage them to continue being curious, compassionate, engaged and bold. They should not be afraid to break down barriers, shatter glass ceilings and work towards a future that is just, equitable and sustainable for all.

I wish them all the best as they embark on this incredible journey, and I hope they will have a safe and happy summer.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us review. The minister falsified his service record, turfed Admiral Mark Norman, bought used fighter jets, slashed health care for military personnel and covered up sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces after a complaint by a woman in uniform three years ago.

Will the minister finally resign?

● (1420)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will start with what matters most to me and to our government. No woman should be sexually harassed at work. No woman in the Canadian Armed Forces should be sexually harassed while serving her country. We must change the toxic culture in the Canadian Armed Forces, and we will do just that.

[English]

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will not fire the defence minister. The defence minister will not do the honourable thing and resign. The military has no respect for their minister, and the hard-working people of Vancouver South have lost confidence in him.

Canadians cannot afford more of the same corruption from the defence minister. Therefore, I urge all my Liberal colleagues to vote in favour of censuring him for his conduct, and join the Conservatives in sending a clear message to the women who serve their country that we are demanding better and demanding a change at the top.

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start with what is most important to me and our government, which is that no woman should be sexually harassed in Canada. That is particularly true when it comes to Canada's brave women in uniform. To those women I would like to say directly that there is clearly a toxic culture in our armed forces and that must change. Our government has full confidence in our Minister of National Defence.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the Deputy Prime Minister is concerned, she should realize the toxic culture starts with the Prime Minister, the defence minister and the chief of staff. For three years, everyone in the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office knew of these allegations. The Deputy Prime Minister has an office in the same building.

If she is sincere about ending the toxic culture she just talked about, after three years of failing the woman who came forward, how can women in the Canadian Armed Forces possibly have any faith in the defence minister to do his job after he failed them so badly for three years?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our Minister of National Defence is an inspirational trailblazer and we are proud to have him on our team. I would like to share with the House and Canadians some examples of the minister's work that I saw first-hand as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He defended Canada's national interests during the Trump administration in the face of charges that our steel and aluminum tariffs posed a national security threat. We worked together at NATO to pledge Canada's support for the Baltic states, for Ukraine and to build the training mission in Iraq. This is the track record of our Minister of National Defence.

[Translation]

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed in the minister's response. The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is not accountable to the House. The committee has no authority to look into an ongoing investigation. The rules make that clear. The cover-ups need to end.

When will the Prime Minister turn the Winnipeg lab documents over to the House?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has a lot of respect for the House of Commons. We understand that the House and its committees have a job to do and should have all the information they need to do that job. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that national security is a priority for our government.

[English]

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is wrong. The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is not allowed by law to review active investigations. The committee is now being used as a political tool by the Prime Minister to cover up the Winnipeg lab incident.

The Conservatives will never be complicit in this Liberal corruption and will bring accountability back to Ottawa. That is why today I am informing the government that Conservative members of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians will be withdrawing their participation effective immediately.

• (1425)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, the Liberal government will never play games with Canadians' national security. We will continue to oper-

ate in a way that protects the privacy and security concerns of Canadians, and that is why the Public Health Agency of Canada has provided fully unredacted documents to the committee. I am sad to hear that the Conservatives will not participate in such an important process.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House of Commons acknowledged the fact that Quebec constitutes a nation and that French is its only common and official language. It stands to reason, then, that the House of Commons also voted in favour of applying the Charter of the French Language to federally regulated businesses. Indeed, Quebec's demand to be the master of its language policy is consistent with its unique reality as a French-speaking nation.

Yesterday, the House of Commons requested that Bill 101 be applied. Why does the Liberal Party continue to oppose that? It is alone in doing so.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that we will continue, along with every Quebecer, every francophone in the country and every Canadian, to protect and promote the French language in Canada.

Why? Because French is a minority language that needs more than just a helping hand; it needs our attention. With our new historic official languages bill, we will further protect the beautiful French language and take steps to recognize new linguistic rights for francophones and linguistic minorities in Canada.

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, note that yesterday, when the House almost unanimously agreed that Quebec is a French-speaking nation, 10 Liberals from the greater Montreal area abstained from voting and refused to acknowledge that Quebec considers itself a nation whose official language is French.

I would also point out that, yesterday, the Liberals were the only ones to vote against Quebec applying its Charter of the French Language to federally regulated businesses.

Are the Liberals obstructing the clear solution that seeks to promote French at work in order to please some of their own, for whom, these—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Official Languages.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, either my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois want to protect and promote French with the government or they want to push their plan for Quebec's independence and pick a fight with Ottawa. It is up to them, but Quebecers and Canadians see right through their games.

### GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the middle of the pandemic, what brilliant idea did the Liberals come up with? They cut the Canada recovery benefit by \$800 a month beginning in July. That means it will drop from \$500 a week to \$300 a week.

Are the Liberals really that heartless? Entire sectors, such as arts, culture and tourism, are still struggling.

Will the Liberals finally come to their senses and reverse the cuts to the Canada recovery benefit, yes or no?

[English]

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the CRB is part of a comprehensive set of emergency and recovery measures to support Canadian workers and businesses. Through the CRB, if opposition parties support Bill C-30, Canadians can have access to up to 50 weeks of benefits. Canadians can also have access to more flexible EI benefits. Businesses can continue to have access to the wage subsidy, and we can help Canadians re-enter the labour market by creating 500,000 new training and work opportunities and launching the Canada recovery hiring program.

This is what is at stake when the opposition does not help get Bill C-30 through.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in just a few weeks, the Liberals are planning on cutting vital money that Canadians need. Those receiving CRB benefits will soon get \$800 less per month. The Liberals are forcing them to live on only \$1,200 per month, and that is simply not enough. People who needed the CRB in January are going to need it in August. Thousands of Canadians are scraping by. They will have to make difficult decisions just to get by.

Will the minister commit to reversing this decision, which will have devastating impacts on two million Canadians?

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the CRB is helping and has helped two million Canadians, and at present Canadians have access to 38 weeks under the CRB. If opposition parties do not support Bill C-30, Canadians will end their benefits in the weeks to come. We can reverse that. We can pass Bill C-30. We can give Canadians the extra weeks they deserve, give them more flexible access to EI, give them access to the wage subsidy, and 500,000 training and work opportunities.

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• (1430)

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's military is in crisis on the defence minister's watch. There have been hours of jarring testimony detailing accounts of abuse of power, rape, sexual harassment and discrimination. Numerous generals are under investigation, others complicit through their actions or their silence. However, the defence minister will not accept any responsibility. He will not do the honourable thing, admit he has failed in his duties and resign.

### Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister act and fire his defence minister?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work very hard to look after our women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces. The horrible allegations that have come forward are extremely alarming and we must work harder. The work we have done in passing Bill C-77 is one of the first steps, also SMRC and the work that is being done there, plus the work that Madam Arbour will also do. We will get this done.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the defence minister has consistently misrepresented the facts, refused to answer questions, failed to implement important changes to improve the military's culture and turned a blind eye to serious allegations of misconduct. The Prime Minister directed his ministers to create a "culture of integrity and accountability that allows [them] to earn and keep the trust of Canadians". The defence minister has been derelict in his duty and has lost that trust.

Will the Prime Minister act and fire the defence minister?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I respectfully and completely disagree with the member's assertions. Any allegation that has ever been brought forward was immediately taken to the appropriate authorities. We want to make sure that when survivors come forward, they are heard and they are supported. That is exactly the work that we started back in 2015 when we came into government, and we will continue this work because we know that we have a lot more work to do.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since taking office, the defence minister has been making decisions that defy logic.

His government promised to help the victims of ISIS, and yet what was one of the first decisions this minister made? He decided to pull our CF-18s out of the bombing campaign against ISIS. That campaign was protecting the victims.

Can the minister tell us the real reason for the withdrawal of our CF-18s from the fight against ISIS?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question because I also briefed him on the plan on how ISIS was going to be defeated on the ground working with our coalition partners, and that is exactly what we did. We increased our troops contributions on the ground. We increased our intelligence support, because that is what our coalition partners asked for. Now, 98% of the territory is not controlled by ISIS. We also took a regional approach. Our plan worked because we worked with our allies by supporting our troops on the ground.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that does not answer my question. What is the real reason? We do not know.

I have another question. This minister oversaw the wrongful indictment and unconscionable dismissal of Vice-Admiral Norman. When Norman stood up to defend Davie's construction of the MV Asterix, the minister did the Prime Minister's bidding rather than think of the best interests of the Royal Canadian Navy.

That is absurd. Can the minister tell us the real reason for the accusations made against Vice-Admiral Norman?

*[English]*

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, talk about supporting the navy. The previous government allowed our two joint supply ships to be lost. We lost that capability. When it came to the interim supply ship, I supported this work. Our government approved it, got it done, but more importantly, we put the money into the defence policy so we can buy two brand new joint supply ships, and they are being built right now as we speak. Plus, we are also equipping the navy with the Arctic and offshore patrol ships, six of them, and 15 surface combatants, because we put the money there to serve our troops.

• (1435)

**Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Major Kellie Brennan appeared before the status of women committee, she told the committee that General Vance told her he was “untouchable” because he owned the CFNIS. Now it has been revealed that while under investigation he went golfing with Vice-Admiral Baines and Lieutenant-General Mike Rouleau, who himself held oversight authority for the military police. Given these startling revelations, when will the minister finally follow through with the Deschamps report recommendations and create a fully independent external investigation body?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no person in Canada is above the law. The military police and the NIS are independent of the chain of command. When it comes to the incident of the golf course, the acting chief of the defence staff has also, as the member knows, advised me that the vice-chief of the defence staff is no longer in his role.

We know that we have a lot more work to do, and we will get it done. We have accepted Justice Fish's recommendations.

**Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Vice-Admiral Norman was under investigation, the minister immediately had him suspended. Meanwhile, when the minister became aware that the former chief of the defence staff was under investigation, he refused to even look at the evidence, left him in his role, and even gave him a pay raise.

Given that General Vance believes that he is above the law, and given the minister's refusal to act, does the minister also believe that General Vance is above the law?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree with the assertions that the member has made. Any allegations that were ever brought to my attention were always taken to the immediate authority. No politician should ever get involved in an investigation. No politician should start an investigation, especially on the Canadian Armed Forces members, as the previous government used to do.

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*[Translation]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Official Languages keeps repeating that the Charter of the French Language and her bill do the same thing. She says that someone protected by Bill C-32 has the same rights as someone covered by the Charter of the French Language.

However, when minister Jolin-Barrette says that the Quebec law must apply to everyone, the minister digs in her heels. When the House voted for Quebec's federally regulated businesses to be subject to the Charter of the French Language, she voted against it.

My question is simple: Why did she vote against it if it is the same thing?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think that my colleague should read Bill C-32. She would get a good answer to her question.

Essentially, 55% of businesses that have already complied with Bill 101 in Quebec will have the right to continue under the same system, and those that have not can decide to do so at that time.

Naturally, we want to protect the right to work in French, the right to be served in French and the right not to be discriminated against for being a francophone in Quebec as well as in regions with a strong francophone presence.

My colleague will also recognize that within federalism, the federal government must have a national role and an approach that protects all francophones. That is the objective—

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, our bill says that the Charter of the French Language applies to federally regulated businesses in Quebec. The minister recognizes that Quebecers form a nation, that Quebec has a single official language and that French is the common language of the Quebec nation. She should therefore be able to understand that, as a francophone nation, Quebec must have a single language regime.

Why is the minister opposed to the Charter of the French Language applying to all Quebecers?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague, and I can see that our objectives are aligned. We both want to protect the French language in Quebec. Now, we want to protect it across the country too, and we will. We also want to protect linguistic minorities, including francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec.

My colleague should be happy. For the first time ever, the federal government is stepping up and protecting the French language. That is why I encourage her to vote in favour of Bill C-32 on official languages.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand where the minister stands on the language issue.

There are two systems: One is for the very large majority of Quebecers, who are protected under the Charter of the French Language. The other is for about 200,000 workers in federally regulated businesses. These are the people Bill C-32 seeks to help.

My question is simple: Between Bill C-32 and the Charter of the French Language, which one is more effective in protecting the right to work in French?

• (1440)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is not for me to say. The Conseil du patronat du Québec, the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal and all the unions that represent workers in Quebec are in favour of the bill. We can see that there is a very large consensus in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada to protect these rights.

Therefore, I think the federal government is doing its job and assuming its responsibilities, and the reform we presented is ambitious. It is a robust bill, and I hope the Bloc Québécois will be able to acknowledge this work and, of course, support the bill.

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[English]

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, orders of the House and its committees are binding and must be complied with, just like Canadians have had to comply with public health orders about quarantining. Your ruling yesterday made it clear the government was defying three orders of the House and its special committee.

#### Oral Questions

Will the government now comply with these orders and deliver the unredacted documents to the law clerk before the House has to adopt a fourth order demanding the government comply?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, we see the Conservatives playing games with national security. On this side of the House, we will never do that. In fact, the Public Health Agency of Canada has provided fully unredacted documents to the appropriate committee of parliamentarians with the appropriate security clearance. I have written to the committee to suggest that if it study this issue, that would be appropriate.

[Translation]

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not playing games. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Minister of Health has been telling Canadians to do what public health tells them to do. However, she insists on not doing what the House is asking her to do, and that is to submit the documents regarding the Winnipeg lab.

Does the government not understand that it is undermining the rule of law when it tells Canadians to follow the rules and then does not do the same?

[English]

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to the public health officers across the country who have worked for so long to protect Canadians from COVID-19. In fact, I know many of them personally and I know they have done their absolute best to protect the citizens in their care. Just like them, we will never do anything to put Canadians' national security at risk.

We will continue to be open and transparent, and provide these documents to the appropriate committee, which the Public Health Agency of Canada has done. That committee has the appropriate clearance to review these documents.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has laid bare the truth about our institutions; they are weak and mediocre. We have no Governor General because of scandal; the former clerk resigned in scandal; eight senior leaders of the Canadian Armed Forces have been forced out. We have a military procurement that cannot procure and payroll systems that cannot pay. Now we have a Parliament that cannot do its job, because the government defies the House.

When will the government preserve what little remains, comply with the orders and hand over the unredacted documents to the law clerk?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, on this side of the House, this Liberal government will never play games with national security, like we see the Conservative Party doing right now. The member opposite knows that there is a committee of parliamentarians that has the appropriate level of security clearance to review these documents. Those documents have been provided to that committee, fully unredacted. I have written to the committee, asking it to consider reviewing the issue.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, over the past few months, the scandal surrounding former General Vance and the Canadian Armed Forces has been a constant reminder of the lack of action and leadership from the Liberals to address the toxic culture within the military.

Women and all service people deserve than empty apologies and promises to do better from the minister and the Prime Minister. They deserve more than to be pushed away and dismissed as someone else's problem. They deserve action.

Will the minister and his government please stop with the platitudes and finally implement the Deschamps report?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces to ensure that we create an inclusive environment. We are working not only to implement the report of Madame Deschamps, but also Justice Fish's report on the military justice system and Madame Arbour and the work she will do, when it comes to the recommendations on the culture change that is needed, which will look at the performance evaluation system and also look at how leaders are selected and trained.

● (1445)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals fail to understand is that they are failing women in the Canadian Armed Forces. For six years now, they have protected the men who are exhibiting this toxic behaviour, who have failed to act to stop it and who have chosen to take in a round of golf instead. The government has the responsibility and the power to act.

When will the government take responsibility and do something? Calling for another study or report will not stop this toxic culture that continues to harm women in the military.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the member opposite. When it comes to that, we need to do more. We have started, from 2015, making the changes that have been necessary, but we know they have not gone far enough, and we are willing to do more. We are willing to take in any further recommendations.

On the recommendations that have provided by Justice Fish, we have accepted; the work that Madame Deschamps brought on, highlighting the problem that is facing the Canadian Armed Forces; and also the work that Madame Arbour will be doing.

We will be taking action. We continue the work on passing Bill C-77 and also ensuring we continue to create an inclusive environment for all in the Canadian Armed Forces.

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**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a person's name is fundamental to who they are. Indigenous names are endowed with deep, cultural meaning and speak to indigenous peoples' presence on the land since time immemorial. Yet, the impact of colonialism means that many indigenous peoples' names have not been recognized.

Could the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship please update the House on the progress the government has made in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action 17 to enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim and use their indigenous names on all government documents?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, supporting first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in reclaiming and using their indigenous names is an integral part of the shared journey of reconciliation. We have now established a formal process for residential school survivors, their families and all indigenous peoples to reclaim their indigenous names on passports and other travel documents free of charge.

Fulfilling call to action 17 means that indigenous peoples can proudly reclaim that which was always theirs, their names, which will allow us to continue on the road to reconciliation.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, inflation is on the march, and life is getting more expensive for Canadians.

Today, economist William Robson of the C.D. Howe Institute warned that the Liberals may have gone too far with massive borrowing and spending, and they risk inflating away the value of our money. Deutsche Bank warns of an inflation time bomb. Stats Canada says that inflation is higher than it has been in over 10 years.

Yes, inflation is on the march. When will the government finally act to make life more affordable for Canadians?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me tell the House who is going too far. It is the Conservatives who are going too far with their partisan games and thereby threatening Canada's economic recovery.

Canadians need the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy to be extended until the end of September. Our government wants to do that, but Conservative partisan delaying tactics are stopping us from passing the budget, and that irresponsible Conservative behaviour is the biggest threat to Canadians' well-being today.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the same rhetoric we heard yesterday and the day before. The minister's talking points do not make life any more affordable for the many Canadians who have seen their dream of owning a home disappear under the government. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the minister may have miscalibrated her economic policy.

Meanwhile, the price of everything is going up, food, clothing, rent, gasoline, yet the minister and her plutocrat Liberals refuse to listen. Why is she hell-bent on hurting struggling Canadians?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yet again, it is the Conservatives who, for reasons I cannot understand, seem hell-bent on hurting hard-working Canadians. They are hurting Canadians by depriving them of the income and business supports they so urgently need. They are hurting Canadians by depriving the provinces and territories of \$5 billion to support the vaccination campaign and our health care systems that are working so hard to protect us.

It is time for the Conservatives to stop posturing and to support the budget so we can support Canadians.

• (1450)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister should know that the real threat to Canadians is the inflation rate of 3.6%, a rate that has not been seen in 10 years.

The minister seems to be completely unaware of the state of Canadian families' finances. Everything costs more: gas, food, houses and furniture. However, the government is not taking action because it knows very well that inflation means more money in its pockets but less in Canadians' pockets.

Why does the Prime Minister not call his finance minister to order by requiring a credible plan to create jobs and kick-start the economy?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the biggest threat to Canada's economic recovery is the Conservatives' partisan games. The Conservatives' tactics are preventing us from passing the budget, and this irresponsible behaviour is jeopardizing the well-being of each and every Canadian.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to the Prime Minister. What does he not understand when I say that everything is more expensive?

This government has lost control of public spending. We are talking about a deficit that has now reached over a trillion dollars. This deficit is a debt that Canada has to pay back, and it is the Canadians of this generation, the one after that, the one after that, the one after that and the one after that who will pay for it.

### Oral Questions

If nothing is done, Canadians will pay more tax on more products that will cost more. Is the Prime Minister beginning to realize that all Canadians will pay dearly for his fiscal recklessness?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand and I understand very well the serious threat posed by the Conservatives' tactics. Canada is currently in the process of reopening its economy and building a strong economic recovery. To do so, however, Canadians and Canadian businesses need the support of our budget. It is the Conservatives who are preventing us from supporting Canadians, and they need to stop.

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### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when we asked the minister if she thought that her Bill C-32 would protect French better than Bill 101 in Quebec, she said, and I quote, "Indeed, our remarks involve the entire country. Why? Because that is important. That is how we strengthen our federalism."

That is great for her federalism, but her bill is supposed to strengthen French in Quebec. Does she realize that she will not strengthen French in Quebec with a single approach that does not accept that French is the only official language of Quebec?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleague that he is in the House of Commons, which is the legislative assembly of the federal parliament. As such, it is important for us to take care of Quebec and Quebecers, francophones and anglophones and the French language, the official language of Quebec.

However, it is also important to protect francophones outside Quebec and to give anglophones the opportunity to learn French. That is what makes our country great, what makes it work. If my colleague disagrees—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is not doing a very good job of explaining how two different language regimes in Quebec will protect French better than simply applying the Charter of the French Language.

She is sending businesses the message that they have the choice to side with Bill 101 and French or with both official languages. What is worse, she is telling all of the businesses that chose francization themselves that it is okay to make less of an effort and to take a step backward toward the government's policy of institutional bilingualism. How can she claim that she will better protect French like that?

*Oral Questions*

• (1455)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure my colleague. Once he has read the bill, he will realize that the provisions for protecting the right of consumers to be served in French, the right to work in French and the right to not be discriminated against because one is francophone will achieve the same results in federal businesses as the linguistic regime in place in Quebec.

Now, as the Minister of Economic Development, I am very sensitive to the issue of red tape and any type of administrative measures that will be too onerous on businesses, particularly in the midst of an economic crisis. That is why we are giving them the choice. We are safeguarding language rights while ensuring that things run smoothly and efficiently.

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[English]

**SENIORS**

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, seniors who collected CERB and submitted a statement of estimated income with their GIS applications have been left in limbo. These seniors have been told by Service Canada that their applications are on hold and cannot be processed because they are awaiting direction.

Without GIS many seniors will find themselves in serious financial hardship and some seniors stand to lose other benefits tied to the program. What is worse is that there is no indication that a decision is even forthcoming.

How long will the Liberal government leave seniors in limbo?

**Hon. Deb Schulte (Minister of Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are keenly aware of how important GIS benefits are for seniors and because of our temporary extension, over 200,000 seniors continue to receive their GIS and allowance benefits even though they did not submit their 2019 income information. We know GIS recipients need to file their 2019 tax information as soon as possible. We have sent seniors letters and made calls reminding them to do this. We did outreach activities, such as engaging groups that serve seniors using social media to raise awareness.

We will be there for seniors because we know how important their benefits are.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, nearly half of COVID-19 deaths were immigrants at the start of this pandemic. The government botched the vaccine rollout and new Canadians lost their lives. These people came to this country for a new beginning, yet the government's repeated failed response has cost people their lives and livelihoods. Vaccination rates are still low in immigrant communities, leaving the most vulnerable in our society at risk.

Why has the government failed our hard-working immigrant and new Canadian communities so badly?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first let me say that my heart goes out to everyone who has struggled with COVID-19 or lost someone to this disease.

The member is absolutely right. We all must do better to protect people from infection of COVID-19 and that is why we have been there for provinces and territories. Let us just talk about vaccination for a minute. Over 34 million vaccines were sent to the provinces and territories. As of June 17, over 30 million doses have been administered across Canada, 65.6% of Canadians have received their first dose and more is on the way. We have also been there to help provinces and territories administer vaccines to immigrants, newcomers and other populations, and we will continue to work together to get the job done.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, provinces have been setting out measurable goals and benchmarks for when they are lifting public health measures. This gives businesses the ability to plan for reopening. Groups like the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada are urging the government for a federal plan, yet when it comes to the Liberal government's restrictions, there is only uncertainty.

What benchmarks are the Liberals using to determine when to safely open the border with the United States to everyone and how long until we reach that point?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have been transparent with Canadians that our first and most important job is to protect their health and to prevent against the importation of the virus. As I just mentioned to the member's colleague, over 34 million vaccines have been shipped to the provinces and territories to date, and 65.6% of Canadians have received one dose. Canada is the first in the G7, the G20 and the OECD for population that received at least one dose and we are administering second doses now. That is great news for everyone because we are better protected and we can see our lives coming back.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the government introduced Bill C-32, which seeks to modernize the Official Languages Act. This bill contains historic measures to protect and promote French across Canada, including in Quebec.

Can the Minister of Official Languages tell the House how Bill C-32 will help us achieve real equality between our two languages?



• (1500)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his excellent question and his leadership at the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Our Bill C-32, essentially a modernisation of the Official Languages Act, will protect and promote French in all areas of Canadian life, in our cultural institutions, in our public service and in international relations.

Bill C-32 guarantees that francophones have the right to work and be served in French, whether they live in Quebec or somewhere in the country with a strong francophone presence. I hope that all parties will join us so we can quickly pass Bill C-32.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the government undertook the modernization of the Official Languages Act.

I am somewhat concerned about the timing of the bill's introduction. It will be a slap in the face to all those who have been waiting a long time for this bill if the government introduced it knowing that it intends to dissolve Parliament. Only the Liberals have that authority.

Can the Prime Minister promise now that Parliament will be back in the fall to study the bill?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his excellent question. He knows full well that we are a minority government and that every bill needs the support of the opposition parties.

Given that the Conservative Party has been calling for the modernization of the Official Languages Act for years, and given that the government has now introduced a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act, my question for him is this: Will the Conservative Party support our bill, yes or no?

\*\*\*

[English]

## HEALTH

**Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, patient groups across the country have been calling on the government to delay the implementation of the PMPRB guidelines, which are set to come into force on July 1. Most of the witnesses we have heard at health committee on the subject were unanimous in their position that they want less pandemic distraction and more time for a transparent discussion, to ensure that the new regulations will do more good than harm.

The implementation of the new regs has already been postponed twice. Will the minister postpone the regs again, as requested by patients?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have done a tremendous amount of work to lower drug prices in this country and we will continue to work with all stakeholders to do that. Canada has among the highest patent medicine prices in the

## Oral Questions

world and these high prices negatively affect the ability of patients to access new medicines.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders to make sure that we can drive these prices down so that all Canadians have access to effective medication.

\*\*\*

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has responded to several questions today in the House, but will not respond to my questions and I ask if he would. As someone who has served his country, he knows the military slogan, "Never pass a fault". That is what he is doing with his failed leadership. He is the only original minister of the Liberal government. He has had six years, three Supreme Court justice reports, two ombuds reports, eight generals who have resigned, the last two chiefs of the defence staff under investigation, and he gives words like, "We need to do better; we need to do more". We do, but we need a new minister with the confidence of Canadians to do that.

Will he resign?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of not passing a fault, maybe the member should ask himself this: What action did he take when General Vance was appointed and went under an investigation?

We will not take lessons from the member opposite when it comes to service of this country. I also served my country and I take very seriously looking after our people. That is why we increased our budget for the military and put people number one. Why I say we need to do more is because I also feel the pain of our members. I will do my darndest and best always for the sake of the Canadian Armed Forces until we get an environment that is inclusive and not the politics that the member opposite continually plays.

\*\*\*

## DIGITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic we have seen how important our digital capacity is in order to respond to the urgent needs of Canadians. Our government rose to the occasion and ensured that they received the benefits and the programs they needed in a timely fashion. We do know, though, that there is more work to be done.

Can the Minister of Digital Government update this House with her plans to continue the important work in providing critical digital delivery of services to Canadians?

• (1505)

**Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells for his hard work.

### *Tribute*

Our digital response to COVID showed that we are capable of moving very quickly to bring critical programs and services to Canadians when and how they need them. My newly released digital government strategy is about modernizing how we build and manage IT, improve the service experience of Canadians, collaborate using secure tools and data, and change how we work to better meet the digital expectations of Canadians. It is about government services that are secure, reliable and easily accessed, including from any device.

\* \* \*

### AIRLINE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that the U.S. department of transport is fining Air Canada \$25 million for failing to promptly refund passengers. By comparison, the Liberal government did nothing for over a year while Air Canada sat on billions of Canadians' hard-earned dollars. The minister repeatedly defended the airlines. Then, over a year after the pandemic began, the government turned around and loaned Air Canada the money to finally pay back passengers.

The U.S. stands up for its citizens. The Liberal government stands up for corporations. Why is that?

**Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government stands up for our citizens and passengers. We understand that the pandemic has been hard on everyone. This is why we made significant progress in securing refunds for Canadians. My colleague knows about the deal that we have signed with Air Canada and Air Transat, and we are working on signing other deals with other airlines to ensure that passengers receive the refunds they deserve. We are committed to Canadian passengers.

\* \* \*

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

**Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, in my last S. O. 31 on May 31, I talked about the excessive use of power regarding systemic racism and discrimination intra-community, and in institutions and government.

What steps will the government and the leadership be taking to eliminate these concerns of misuse of power, not in their own self-interest, but for the best interest of Canadians at large?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the work that our government has been doing. Since taking office in 2015, we set out to create Canada's anti-racism strategy. It was created by Canadians informed by lived realities and experiences for Canadians. We have continued to look at our appointments process. The Prime Minister has acknowledged that systemic racism exists. It is going to take all of us to dismantle these institutions and I appreciate the member showing his support, because racism is real and we have a lot more work to do. Our government has made commitments through programs. I look forward to working with the anti-racism secretariat to ensure that we have a more consciously inclusive Canada.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** The member for Outremont on a point of order.

\* \* \*

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think there was a technical problem earlier when I gave my member's statement.

I am wondering if I could get the unanimous consent of the House to give my statement again.

**The Speaker:** Do we have the unanimous consent of the House?

**Hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The member for Outremont.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, the good weather is here and Montreal is coming out of lockdown. Our patios and shopping streets are bustling. After these long and difficult months, it feels so good to be able to get together and celebrate life.

Nothing says summer in Montreal like festivals. With the MURAL Festival, the Festival des musiciens du monde, the MAPP Festival, the Fringe Festival, the Festival international Nuits d'Afrique and the Festival international de Jazz de Montréal, Montreal will truly be celebrating this summer.

[English]

We still need to be cautious. We need to respect our health and safety measures, but we also need to celebrate. We need to celebrate everything that makes life worth living, such as our families, our friends, and our arts and culture. I am so proud of our community. From the live music from the rooftops of Pop Montreal to the free delivery service of the COVID-19 Help Hub, to moms baking for local food banks and chalk rainbows in every alley and driveway, our community came together to take care of each other. Let us celebrate that. We have earned it.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

[Translation]

### ANDRÉ GAGNON

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, in July, André Gagnon, Deputy Clerk of the House of Commons, will celebrate 31 years of service in the House.

André needs no introduction. He has been a table officer for nearly 23 years and has served 24 different chair occupants.

*Tribute*

After having held positions in every area of Procedural Services, it is not surprising that he was appointed deputy clerk in September 2014.

[English]

His experience, deep understanding of procedure, and ability to distill and explain complex procedural and administrative questions has made him a trusted source for good advice to members from all parties. Trust me, after the last couple of days, he has been a real source of knowledge for me.

This chamber will continue to benefit from André's counsel thanks to the often quoted third edition of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which he co-edited with former acting clerk Marc Bosc.

[Translation]

As the vice-chair of the Association des secrétaires généraux des parlements francophones since 2006, he also helped francophone parliamentary institutions grow and flourish. He will be leaving us in a few days for a well-deserved retirement.

André, on behalf of myself, all those who have had the honour of serving the House in the chair, MPs and employees of the House of Commons administration, I would like to thank you for your contributions to our institution. You have always served with dignity, humility, a strong sense of duty and your own brand of humour.

I wish you and your wife, Lucie, health and happiness as you begin this new chapter of your life.

**Hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to join you in congratulating and thanking André Gagnon for his years of service to the House and members of Parliament.

[English]

Of course, as you have said, Mr. Speaker, André has vast knowledge, wonderful professionalism and dedication. He has been truly invaluable. I know that numerous Speakers have relied on his wise advice and guidance. He has done his very best to save Speakers from themselves, and usually with success.

[Translation]

I am sure he must be looking forward to spending more time with Lucie and his family and maybe riding his bike, which I have seen him do a few times. I wish him all the best in life and in the next phase of his career.

I wish you the best, André.

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to pay tribute to a wonderful man who I was fortunate to get to know during my time in your role as Speaker. I do not need to tell you that serving as Speaker is an extremely challenging role, but thanks to a strong support team of clerks, such as Deputy Clerk André Gagnon, Speakers are able to continue the tradition of safeguarding the rights and privileges of the House, and

members continue to be served by the highest degree of professionals.

As deputy clerk, André Gagnon has played a leadership role. If one has been around here long enough, then they likely know his big bright smile, his quick jokes and his kindness. André is serious, smart, understanding and a strong leader. He is admired by his staff and is highly respected by his colleagues. He also pulled some of the best pranks this chamber has ever seen. His work ethic and dedication to this chamber are second to none, and I know we will all miss his wisdom around here.

The whole House administration team during my time, clerk emerita Audrey O'Brien, former clerk Marc Bosc, Eric Janse, Bev Isles, Colette Labrecque-Riel, and of course, the man of the moment, André Gagnon, were a procedural dream team. I cannot thank them enough.

The years we spent sitting around the table in 220 north Centre Block will be forever ingrained as some of the best of my career. We debated and edited, re-edited, rewrote, debated and re-edited more rulings than I can count, but there is no other team I would have rather done it with. André was there. He was there to support this House, his team and all members of Parliament.

In the aftermath of the October 22 shooting, André was there with a steady hand. It was difficult. Things were changing quickly, but he was such an incredible force to help the chamber get through that, always putting the interest of the institutions first.

In the changeover to our temporary home in West Block, the House administration had an enormous task. Much of it we might never know, but, again, André was there all along.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, you no doubt know first hand that, as deputy clerk, André helped lead the House of Commons administration during the pandemic. I would like to commend André and his entire team for the role they have played in ensuring that this House, this institution that is so vital to our democracy, was able to function with all the challenges that the pandemic posed.

André, we will miss your smile, your personality, your wisdom and your experience in this chamber. We are sorry to see you go, but I am sure I speak for everyone who ever worked with you when I say we are so grateful for your service. We wish you all the very best in your post-parliamentary career.

## Tribute

• (1515)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it brings a tear to my eye to join my Bloc Québécois colleagues in the House of Commons in recognizing Deputy Clerk André Gagnon for his excellent work. By “colleagues”, I mean all MPs, past and present, and every Bloc Québécois staffer over the years.

Mr. Gagnon chose to step down a little sooner than we might have liked. It was only just in 2019 that we made a vigorous comeback. All of us—the Bloc Québécois, the House of Commons, Parliament, all members and every unit of the House of Commons administration—are losing an exceptional man, a man who made his mark and whose influence will not soon be forgotten in this place.

Mr. Gagnon is the Gagnon of Bosc and Gagnon's famous *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. It is a monumental work, a manual detailing the procedure and practice of the House of Commons, and he was its co-author. It took seven years of rigorous, serious work by a rigorous, serious man.

It is also true that, throughout his career, which began in 1998, he has had exceptional experiences. He worked closely with Audrey O'Brien, the first ever female clerk of the House of Commons. He also worked closely with the youngest member of Parliament to become Speaker of the House, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who was 32 when he was appointed.

Mr. Gagnon saw and supported the arrival of several members from parties not recognized by the House of Commons: the Greens in 2011 and the Bloc Québécois between 2011 and 2019. He saw majority and minority governments and, in every situation, he was quick on his feet and skilfully dealt with the pressure from the various parties.

Mr. Gagnon is well liked by all political parties, members and colleagues, for a number of reasons. The first, and most important, is that he has a keen understanding of the political issues faced by MPs. We feel understood; he understands us.

He has a profound respect for the role of MPs. All members, be they government members, opposition members, members of an unrecognized party or independents, receive the same robust and respectful support.

Generous in his explanations and teachings, he wants members to understand procedure. He knows how to transmit his passion. I must also point out Mr. Gagnon's contribution to promoting the French language in the world of parliamentary procedure, since he has been vice-president of the Association des secrétaires généraux des parlements francophones since 2006.

Mr. Gagnon is known to be a unifier and a positive leader. The Bloc Québécois has a great affection for him and greatly admires his career. I want to say that he also has the perfect personality for the position. His smile, his good humour, his sense of humour, his ability to listen, his generosity and his respect for members are, in my opinion, human qualities that every clerk should have. Let us be frank, he has them all.

We are sad to see him go. We are losing a giant, an exceptional man, and we know that our sadness is shared by his colleagues and by every member of the House. We all know that he will be leaving behind a great void.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to extend my most heartfelt thanks to deputy clerk, procedure, André Gagnon for his excellent work, his contribution and his dedication to the public service. We owe him much, and wish him a wonderful retirement.

Thank you, André Gagnon, I wish you well.

• (1520)

[English]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to pay tribute to André Gagnon.

While I have not had the privilege of working as closely with him as some of the other members who just spoke, I do know one former member, a former deputy speaker, another Blaikie, who has had the opportunity to work closely with him. He sends his regards to Mr. Gagnon on his retirement.

[Translation]

The House is losing one of the greatest clerks it has ever had and an extraordinary man.

[English]

Clerk since the 1990s and deputy clerk of procedure since 2014, André Gagnon has left his mark in the House of Commons. Everyone will agree that his work ethic and his respect for the institution are exemplary.

Among the New Democrats, a number of qualifiers have been used to describe him, including “professional”, “courteous”, “neutral” and “skilled”. He has a great sense of humour, even in the weirdest situations, like when he inversed voting results on October 21, 2020.

[Translation]

André has a solid understanding of procedure, form having studied and analyzed it so thoroughly. Perhaps that is why his hair seems to get darker with time, rather than turning grey.

He has excellent general knowledge, too. He knows all the classics in music, from Zabi to Fugain, as well as contemporary music.

André knows that nobody is irreplaceable. He knows that others will follow in his footsteps with the same passion for procedure and the same work ethic, and that they will take up their duties with as much respect for members, for the rules and for this institution, the House of Commons.

Nevertheless, his departure is still a great loss for the House. André has been one of the greatest clerks the House has ever known. I thank him for his professionalism, his wise counsel and his sense of humour. Thank you for everything, André, and happy retirement.

[English]

On behalf of the NDP caucus, I thank André very much for sharing his knowledge and wisdom throughout the years. We wish him the best in his future plans.

\* \* \*

### PRIVILEGE

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

The House resumed from June 16 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:25 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 question of privilege in the name of the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Call in the members.

● (1540)

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

(Division No. 148)

### YEAS

#### Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Angus
Arnold	Ashton
Bachrach	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
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Dalton	Dancho
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DeBellefeuille	Deltell
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Doherty	Dowdall
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Fortin	Gallant
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Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Harder	Harris
Hoback	Hughes
Jansen	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian

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Finnigan  
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Fortier

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Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
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MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinly
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Regan
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
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Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tassi	Trudeau
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PAIRED

Nil

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

# **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (House Leader of the Official Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I ask today's Thursday question, we are entering the final sprint before the summer break. I say “break” because in politics, there are never any real holidays. It is a summer parliamentary break.

Here is my question for my counterpart on the government side, the hon. member for Honoré-Mercier. Can the minister inform Canadians and this House of the parliamentary business we can expect in the coming days?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and also thank and congratulate André Gagnon for his invaluable help and his kindness. I wish him a happy retirement.

To answer my esteemed colleague's question, this afternoon we will finish the debate on the opposition motion. This evening we will debate and vote on the estimates.

Tomorrow we will resume debate at report stage of the same bill, Bill C-30, budget implementation act, 2021, no. 1.

Next week, priority will be given once again to Bill C-30 at third reading stage because it is absolutely essential. We want to send this bill to the Senate as soon as possible of course.

Our other priorities will be Bill C-12 on net-zero emissions, Bill C-10 on broadcasting and Bill C-6 on conversion therapy.

In closing, since this is my last Thursday statement before the House rises for the summer, I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the incredible and at times difficult work that you did all year to guide us in these hybrid sittings of the House, which added an extra challenge. I also want to thank the clerks, the interpreters, the support staff, the pages and all the parliamentary staff without whom we would absolutely not be able to do our job every day.

Many thanks to all of you.

[*For continuation of proceedings, see part B*]







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CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
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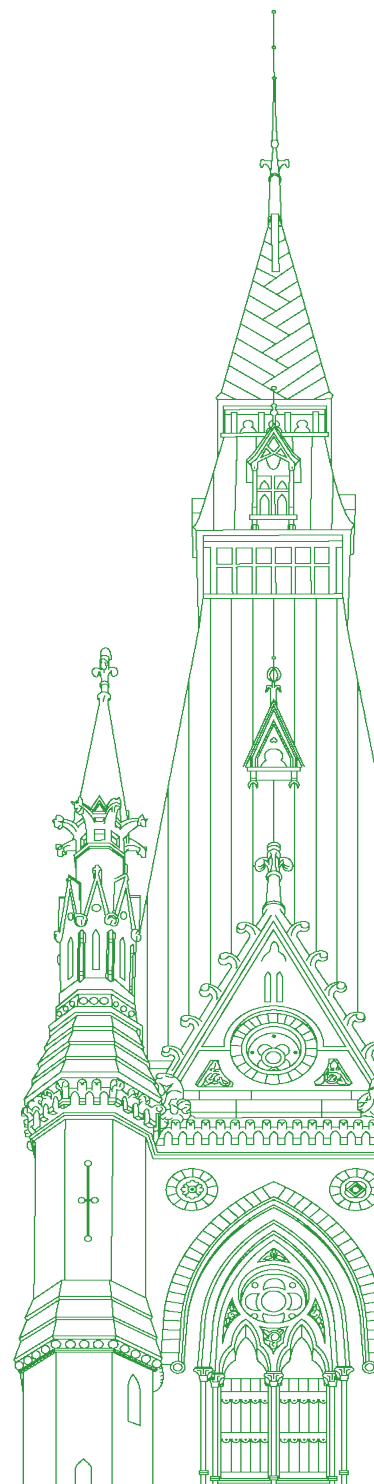
# House of Commons Debates

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Thursday, June 17, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 17, 2021

[Continuation of proceedings from part A]

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—CENSURE OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Shepard has three minutes and 45 seconds remaining in his debate.

• (1540)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the extra 45 seconds. It is much appreciated. I was worried I would not have time to go through the departmental plans.

Where I left off before question period was that I wanted to get into the departmental plans. This is where the rubber hits the pavement. This is where we see the priorities of the minister. Is he actually taking seriously the sexual misconduct allegations, stories, and individual cases of men and women who have been abused by others in the military? What I discovered is that the government is not taking it seriously, and the minister is not taking it seriously.

Let us go back to the 2018-19 departmental plan. It has “Annual # of reported incidents of Harmful and Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour in the Defence Team” as one category of priorities, and then under “Target”, it says “To be determined by 31 March 2021”. It has no available indicators of where they were at. Under the field “Number and type of actions taken in response to reported Harmful and Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour incidents by the Defence Team”, it says “To be determined by 31 March 2021”.

I will move on to the following years, 2019-20. Under “Annual number of reported incidents of Harmful and Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour in the Defence Team”, it says “To be determined by 31 March 2021”. Again, there are no indicators anywhere, no reported numbers anywhere. Under “Number and type of actions taken in response to reported Harmful and Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour incidents by the Defence Team”, it says “To be determined by 31 March 2021”.

I will move on to the next departmental plan, 2020-21. Under “% of the Canadian Armed Forces...who self-identify as victims of harassment”, the target is “Less than 11.9%”. The minister signed off

on every single departmental plan. Less than 12% is one in eight members of the Canadian Armed Forces to suffer being inappropriately harassed in the workplace. The actual results for 2018-19 were 17.7%. This is the first time there are actual numbers being presented here.

Now, in the departmental plan for 2021-22, the fields actually change, which is pretty typical of the government. We have “Annual number of reported incidents of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces”. Members would think that by now the department would have it figured out, but no, it says “To be determined by 31 March 2022”. There are two wonderful little asterisks, and they leave it for well into the future.

If the minister was actually serious, if the words he says in this chamber and outside in nice statements actually meant anything to him, he would have followed through in the departmental plans that he signs off on and ensured that there was follow-up and actual, real targets put forward. This is why the House has come to the moment now of censuring the minister, because he has shown a dereliction of his duties, an irresponsibility of command and, overall, he has led the Canadian Forces into disarray. The situation we find ourselves in is entirely of his own doing.

As was mentioned during question period, this is a minister who served in his post the longest of any member of cabinet. He owns the entire last six years; they are entirely his responsibility. We are making a judgment call here, as members of Parliament, to hold him personally accountable for his own performance, which, as we can see in the departmental plans, does not meet the standards of what a minister should be doing.

As the member for Kildonan—St. Paul said before me, the minister has shown an extreme dereliction of duty and of his own responsibilities as the top member responsible. He is the political head of the department, the political head of the Canadian Armed Forces. It falls to him at the end of the day, and he has fallen far short. We must vote to censure the minister on this matter.

• (1545)

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the departmental plans, as described on the government's website, “describe departmental priorities”. These are priorities presented in the House, signed by the minister himself.

*Business of Supply*

Now, in the departmental plan for this year, there are two notable things. My colleague mentioned several, but there is also “Number of Canadian Armed Forces members who have attended a training session related to sexual misconduct (Operation HONOUR)”. It says the department will set a goal, not this year, but a year from now. So, there is no goal set for this year. This has been an issue for three years, and the department cannot even set a goal until next year. The other one is “Number and type of actions taken in response to reported sexual misconduct incidents by the Defence Team”. What is the department's goal? There is not any this year, but it will set a goal next year.

What does my colleague think when the minister stands and states again and again that this is a priority? Ending this misconduct is a priority, and yet the minister's own form that he signed and presented to the House states that the department will not even look at it this year and maybe a goal will be set next year.

● (1550)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. The member for Edmonton West obviously has read the departmental plans. He is probably one of the few members who have read all of the departmental plans that the government ministers put forward. If anybody wants to follow at home, it is actually page 51 that we are talking about. It is one of the rows below.

He is right. If this was a priority and it was absolutely serious, then in these plans that the minister signed off on he would have given absolute direction to the department, set the target, benchmarked himself against the goal he was trying to reach, and proven to the rest of us that he actually does take this seriously.

We have had three Supreme Court justice reports up to this point. There are more than a half-dozen senior officers in the military who have resigned, stepped down or been relieved of their command. We do not have a Governor General. The Canadian Forces is in disarray, and it is entirely the fault of the defence minister. He has to be censured.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for my hon. colleague, but first, the fact that so many survivors are coming forward is also an indication that there are actual consequences happening.

Does the member opposite believe that sexual harassment and assaults did not occur previous to the last six years? If he does think that they occurred, is he disappointed in the Leader of the Opposition for sitting around the cabinet table at a time when there was a culture of sexual misconduct and there were no consequences? They did not take it seriously, and therefore the culture of the old boys' club being protected by the Harper government and his leader continued. Is he proud of that history and that record?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, this is a perfect example of what the Liberals have been doing all day. I have been listening to the entirety of the debate. They deflect and deflect. Real leaders take responsibility in the present, in the situation they find themselves in. The minister has had six years to deal with the situation. He has been aware for three years of the specific allegations against General Vance. He has done nothing.

In the motion before the House, we lay out the case for why the minister should be censured. Leaders, in the moment, take responsibility. They do not look to deflect the issue to others who are not in the employ of the government today. They do not look to past governments. They take responsibility, they move forward and they change things, and the minister has not done that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

In my opinion, not taking the allegations of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces seriously is reason enough to censure the minister. However, when we read the motion, we see that there are several other issues that justify censure.

When we ask the Liberals what they have done to put a stop to sexual misconduct in the military, they answer that they have asked for more reports. The Liberals made no effort to implement what was in the 2015 Deschamps report. Does my colleague believe that it is about time that they take concrete action rather than commissioning more reports?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, my colleague is absolutely right. Once again, during question period, three reports prepared by former Supreme Court justices were mentioned. The member just referred to the report by Marie Deschamps.

It is time to do more than just talk. I mentioned individual departmental plans earlier; that is where the planned measures should be outlined. The source of funds is one thing, but what will be done with that money? Usually a departmental plan should show whether this subject is taken seriously. The minister signs it, decides what it will include and what will be the department's focus for the next year, if required.

There are already three reports, the facts have been established and action needs to be taken.

● (1555)

[English]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my wonderful friend and colleague, the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

I rise today to talk about our government's commitment to supporting the Canadian Armed Forces and the crucial role it plays in keeping Canadians safe, and supporting stability and security around the world.

The previous Conservative government did everything it could to take Canada out of global affairs. Its philosophy is clear: It believes the world needs less Canada. Our Liberal government believes the opposite. We know the world needs more Canada.



*Business of Supply*

When we were elected in 2015, our Prime Minister was crystal clear to our friends, allies and partners around the world. After 10 years of disinterest in foreign policy and disengagement under the previous government, Canada was back, multilateralism was back, diplomacy was back and engagement was back.

Around the globe, including at the recent NATO and G7 summits, Canada's leadership and contributions to global security are saluted by our partners and friends. Canada's international reputation as a force for good is in large part thanks to the sacrifices and hard work of the women and men of our Canadian Armed Forces. Since 2015, the capabilities of the Canadian Armed Forces have been on full display in several expeditionary operations.

In the Middle East, the Canadian Armed Forces have worked to bring peace and stability on a number of operations in recent years. On Operation Artemis, they worked to counter terrorism and disrupt illicit drug trafficking in the maritime domain.

While deployed, the HMCS *Calgary* shattered two of the maritime forces combined all-time records for the largest heroin seizure of three metric tonnes and the most seizures by any ship on a single deployment, with 17 seizures.

Working with traditional and non-traditional partners under Combined Task Force 150, the Canadian Armed Forces have increased security in the Red Sea, the gulfs of Aden and Oman, and the Indian Ocean. What is more is that Canada has led the CTF 155 times since 2008. This included our most current command of the task force when it had considerable success in interdicting narcotics that help fund terrorist activities.

Canadian Armed Forces members also contributed to Operation Calumet, Canada's support to the Multinational Force and Observers' independent peacekeeping operation in the Sinai Peninsula, in an area many Canadians know well thanks to the engagement and continued legacy of former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in the region.

Canadians may be most familiar with the work our Canadian Armed Forces have done as part of Operation Impact, which includes its contributions to NATO's capacity-building mission, NATO Mission Iraq. On that mission, the Canadian Armed Forces have worked to build the military capabilities of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, and set the conditions for their long-term success. Here too Canada assumed a leadership role for NATO Mission Iraq between 2018 and 2020.

As a founding member of NATO under Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, our commitment to NATO is strong and ironclad, unlike the Conservatives, who cut NATO contributions by \$100 million and allowed military spending to reach an all-time low, dropping below 1% of GDP in 2013. Of course, these ideological cuts, which ignored the needs of our military, were aimed squarely at undermining Canada's history of multilateral engagement, all in a failed Conservative attempt to balance the budget on the backs of our Canadian Armed Forces.

Thankfully, our government has returned Canada to its proud tradition of engagement. Just this past March, the Government of Canada announced the extension of Operation Impact until March

2022, so Canada's important work on NATO Mission Iraq will continue.

As members of the House are aware, eastern Europe has suffered significant instability in the past several years. Here too the Canadian Armed Forces have contributed significantly.

On Operation Reassurance, it has contributed to NATO's assurance and deterrence measures to reinforce NATO's collective defence. In recent years, there have been a combined total of up to 850 Canadian Armed Forces members deployed on the operation, making it Canada's largest current international military operation. Canada has assumed several leadership roles, as the framework nation of an enhanced force present in Latvia or by regularly leading standing NATO maritime groups.

● (1600)

In Ukraine, on Operation Unifier, the Canadian Armed Forces support the country's security forces. They have assisted with training and capacity building, while co-operating with the U.S. and other allies to ensure Ukraine's sovereignty, security and stability.

Closer to home, members of our armed forces have delivered significant successes as part of Operation Caribe, where they have participated in the U.S.-led enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean. They have worked to suppress drug trafficking in international waters where they have seized dozens of tonnes of cocaine.

While we are proud of what the Canadian Armed Forces accomplishes around the world, there is perhaps no more important role they have fulfilled than assisting Canadians in their times of need.

In the past several years, the Canadian Armed Forces have been called upon, on numerous occasions, to do so as part of domestic operations. The Canadian Armed Forces are called upon to assist in search and rescue operations, natural disasters and any other emergency where only their expertise can adequately support Canadians.

Search and rescue crews are on standby 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They cover over 18 million square kilometres of land and sea and launch hundreds of times each year to respond to search and rescue emergencies. Since 2015, CF SAR techs have launched more than 4,200 times to save Canadian lives. Highly trained CAF members also stand ready to respond to natural disaster wherever and whenever required.

*Business of Supply*

Over the past few years, the role of the Canadian Armed Forces in domestic disaster response has increased significantly. That is because climate change has resulted in more extreme weather, which, in turn, has produced more severe storms and natural disasters. While the Conservatives continue to deny that climate change is real, our government is engaged directly with vulnerable communities across Canada and our Canadian Armed Forces are working with Canadians to provide relief from the very real impacts of climate change.

CAF support to Canadians during these events is called Operation Lentus, and I think we can all agree that Canadians are fortunate to have such a dedicated and skilled military to support them when their need arises.

The winter before last, CAF deployed to Newfoundland and Labrador after major snowstorms led to emergencies.

In 2019, the CAF supported Nova Scotia with its response in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, and Ontario with the evacuation of first nations communities when they were at risk of smoke from forest fires in Manitoba.

When wildfires ravaged parts of British Columbia and Manitoba in 2018, again, the armed forces were there to bring aid to remote communities and help prevent the spread or reignition of fires. That year, Canadian Armed Forces also assisted provincial partners in their responses to four other natural disasters across Canada, including floods, forest fires and winter storms.

In total, the Canadian Armed Forces have deployed in support of Operation Lentus 18 times since 2015, and remain prepared to do so again whenever necessary.

The CAF efforts that will stick out most prominently in the minds of Canadians are likely those related to the global COVID pandemic.

In February 2020, Canadian Armed Forces members helped bring people home in the face of the growing threat of coronavirus, repatriating Canadians from around the world. As part of Operation Globe, they helped return 870 people to Canada to quarantine safely.

By April, thousands of CAF members were assigned to Operation Laser, the mission to support the government's response to COVID-19. Through the operation, the CAF have assisted the federal, provincial and territorial governments through 60 requests for assistance.

During the first wave of COVID, the number of CAF members poised to assist all over the country peaked at more than 9,000 troops. Among them were approximately 1,700 personnel who worked tirelessly to help manage COVID outbreaks and protect vulnerable Canadians in 54 long-term care facilities, 47 in Quebec and seven in Ontario.

I wish to thank the Canadian Armed Forces members who came to my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and who assisted the residents at the long-term care facility at Woodbridge Vista. We are forever thankful and grateful for their service, not only there but across the country. They do it day in and day out, very quietly and

with such professionalism and a spirit that truly reflects the best of our country.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that my colleague never once addressed the motion of censuring the Minister of National Defence. I want to join with him and thank all the brave women and men who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces and do such incredible work. Unfortunately, their morale has been severely hurt because of the lack of leadership shown by the Minister of National Defence.

The member talked about how Canada was back. I can tell him that the number of Canadian forces members serving on U.N. missions today is at the lowest levels in history, where we struggle to even have 40 members deployed on U.N. missions anywhere in the world. Canada is back? That is complete rhetoric and virtue-signalling without actually taking any action.

He talked about Operation Impact, something that was started under the previous Conservative government, in which we advised, assisted and worked side-by-side with the Kurdish peshmerga, our allies in stopping ISIS. Unfortunately, now we have found out that the Liberals changed the mission and may have our forces training Iraqi war criminals. That is deplorable.

Operation Unifier was started by our Conservative government as well.

Will the member vote with us tonight to censure the Minister of National Defence because of his lack of leadership, for him misleading the House on too many occasions and for his destructive work in undermining the trust of the Canadian Armed Forces?

• (1605)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, it was obviously a very long question, so I want to address one part of it, and that is our contribution to NATO and our ongoing contribution to NATO.

As hon. members have said, and as we stated in the House, we know the Minister of National Defence has committed to making the much-needed institutional and cultural change at the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, but also to increasing the funds dedicated to our soldiers. We are on target over the next 10 years to increase the annual defence spending by 70%. We remain committed to a number of operations in a number of theatres throughout the world.

On a personal note, the Minister of National Defence is someone who has served our country with extreme professionalism. I thank him for his service and all members of the Canadian Armed Forces for their service day in and day out.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting speech, although it had nothing to do with the motion. It was a nice speech designed to restore the image of the Canadian Armed Forces.

It was interesting, but it was similar to the answer we got from the Deputy Prime Minister today, in response to questions about the Minister of National Defence. She responded by boasting about the minister's career achievements.

When someone spends so much time singing their own institutions' praises, is that not an admission that there is a problem? Is this not an admission that the minister's actions, which are being denounced in today's motion, tarnished the Canadian Armed Forces?

[English]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, we are committed as a government to supporting our men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces, and have been since 2015. For example, with respect to what we are doing going forward, we are investing in the health, safety and well-being of all our defence team members by committing over \$236 million in budget 2021 toward eliminating sexual misconduct. This is along the lines of increasing the defence budget by 70% and ensuring our Canadian Armed Forces have the resources they need to do their job day in and day out.

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after becoming the minister of defence in 2016, the minister decided to quash an inquiry into the Canadian transfers of detainees to local custody in Afghanistan where they were routinely facing torture. An inquiry would have revealed why these transfers were not stopped and why these war crimes were never reported. In making this decision, the minister was in an apparent conflict of interest as he served as an intelligence officer in Afghanistan at the time of the transfers and would have had knowledge of the torture of detainees.

If he was, in fact, the architect that he claimed to be, would the minister not have known about the tortures of the Afghan detainees that the Canadian forces handed over to the Afghan authorities at that time?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, the statements the member made are obviously quite important but also very serious. I do know that the Minister of National Defence has served our country in a very honourable and professional manner in the theatre in Afghanistan, I believe on one or two tours, and has done so on a very professional basis, which has been cited.

• (1610)

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate, and I must say that I am very disappointed. Instead of working together in the House and at committee, where Liberal members have been trying to work in good faith, we are debating this motion today. We should be working together across the aisle to address survivors and their needs, and to change the culture of toxic masculinity that exists in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Both at committee and in the House, Liberal members have tried in good faith to put forward concrete suggestions that will really make a difference for the women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces. I am very disappointed with the opposition. The Conservatives have chosen to take an entire day of debate to make personal and baseless attacks against the minister.

### *Business of Supply*

The Minister of National Defence is one of the most honourable individuals I have ever met. He has served this country, both in uniform and in the House. He has broken down barriers as the first Sikh commander of a regiment, and I have personally seen his commitment to inclusion and equality as an ally. The aspersions that we are hearing today against him in the House are based on half-truths and blatant partisanship. The Minister of National Defence deserves our thanks and our respect.

Today in my remarks, I would like to focus on the achievements since 2015, under this minister's leadership, to build a modern, agile and inclusive Canadian Armed Forces.

Since 2015, we have worked hard to provide defence team members with everything they need to succeed both here at home and around the world. We have significantly invested in important procurement projects for our brave women and men serving in the army, navy and air force. We have ensured that everything we do is carried out with an eye toward environmental sustainability, and we have made progress building a more inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all members.

In each of these lines of effort, we are guided by a robust and comprehensive defence policy: "Strong, Secure, Engaged". It is a policy that puts our people first. In fact, it is the very first chapter. It makes sure that we are accountable to Canadians.

However, at the same time, the Minister of National Defence and I recognize that we need to do more. It is clear that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are in need of significant institutional culture change. It is clear that there are those who have been harmed by the remnants of an outdated, exclusionary and toxic military culture.

[Translation]

As the minister said earlier, we are dealing with issues such as inequality, racism, systemic discrimination, sexual misconduct and abuse of power. These challenges are undermining the capacity of the armed forces to keep Canadians safe. They are eroding trust in the institution and, more importantly, they are hurting the people who chose to serve our country.

We are taking important steps to address all of these challenges as we continue with our other important work.

[English]

I want to take some time today to give an overview of the important work going on across the entire department. First, I want to talk about the work we are doing to support our people and drive culture change.

When we launched the defence policy in 2017, our goal was to ensure that our people are at the heart of everything we do. We launched important new initiatives to support their health and well-being at all stages of their careers, and we committed to taking care of their loved ones as well.

*Business of Supply*

These programs have helped thousands of CAF members over the last four years, but at the same time, we know that we have to do more for them, because we know that investing in the well-being of those tasked with our protection is and should always be our top priority. We need to create a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion for all members at all levels, military or civilian.

We are committed to making comprehensive and lasting change and to addressing the systemic challenges that foster sexual misconduct and other inappropriate behaviours, including abuses of power, discrimination, biases and harmful stereotypes. That is why we asked former Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour to undertake an external, independent, comprehensive review earlier this year.

• (1615)

Within the defence team, we have also created a new organization, Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture, under the leadership of Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan. Its goal is ultimately to ensure that our actions, behaviours and institutional policies reflect the very best parts of our organization and Canadian society. That work is already under way.

These efforts will build on our previous work done to modernize policies and processes and to promote true diversity and inclusion across the ranks. This includes integrating gender-based analysis plus in all of our policies, programs and services to remove barriers to inclusion and better support our personnel, and launching a new advisory panel on systemic racism and discrimination and the Anti-Racism Secretariat.

At the same time, we are also working hard to ensure that our military justice system is modern, fair and responsive to the needs of the Canadian Armed Forces. Through Bill C-77, we are implementing several significant changes to the military justice system, including incorporating a victims' bill of rights to ensure that victims are supported and their voices are heard when interacting with the system.

Earlier this month, we tabled the third independent review by Justice Morris Fish. We accepted all 107 of his recommendations in principle and have already begun to implement 36 of them immediately to better serve our people.

Moreover, through budget 2021 we are committing \$236 million to eliminate sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the Canadian Armed Forces. This includes expanding the reach of the sexual misconduct response centre and providing online and in-person peer-to-peer support.

All options to create a safer future for women and men serving in the Canadian Armed Forces are being considered to change the culture of toxic masculinity that creates an unacceptable workplace.

[Translation]

Supporting our members means ensuring that they have the equipment they need to do the incredible work we ask of them.

That is why, in our "Strong, Secure, Engaged" policy, we identified hundreds of new investments we will have to make to ensure that our armed forces have access to modern, agile and customized equipment.

I am pleased to say that, in spite of the challenges presented by COVID-19, 37% of these 342 projects are either completed or in progress. That is incredible progress, especially in light of the challenges the global pandemic has brought.

Our efforts to build a well-supported and well-equipped military have prepared and positioned us to respond to threats here in Canada and to support our allies and partners abroad.

Domestically, Canadian Armed Forces members are called upon to take part in search and rescue operations and to offer support in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation where their expert knowledge is invaluable in supporting Canadians.

[English]

Since the global pandemic hit, members of the Canadian forces have been helping out in communities across the country. They include the approximately 1,700 members who helped protect vulnerable Canadians in 54 long-term care facilities in Quebec and Ontario, and countless first nations and remote communities.

Internationally, our CAF members are engaged in Europe through both NATO and non-NATO missions, as well as in the Middle East, the Asia-Pacific region and Africa. Closer to home, we participate in U.S.-led counternarcotics operations through Operation Caribe, and we work closely with the United States at NORAD and on other issues pertaining to continental defence. In missions like these across the globe, CAF members make vital contributions to safety and stability. They serve with excellence alongside our friends and allies, and when needed, they help out in our communities.

We ask CAF members to do critical, life-saving work every single day, but we know that for them to accomplish these extraordinary tasks, we need to build an environment where they are both well supported and well equipped at all times. We need to listen to survivors of sexual harassment, assault and abuse of power, and put the well-being of the brave women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces front and centre. We must end impunity and restore trust.

• (1620)

We encourage those who have experienced misconduct to come forward. We are committed to making the institutional change necessary to ensure that we prevent sexual misconduct from happening in the first place. We are focused on providing not only a safe workplace, but one where all members of the defence team can truly belong and thrive. That is our priority on this side of the House.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the work she does alongside me at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which just studied sexual misconduct in the military.

We heard that the Minister of National Defence knew about this for three years. In fact, the Prime Minister's Office knew about the Vance allegation too, but no action was taken. Even when senior officials in the armed forces continued to step aside or step down because of allegations, no action was taken.

I think the member remembers the testimony from survivors. They said that until the people at the top are held accountable, there will not be change. Would she not agree that the people at the top should be held accountable, starting with the Minister of National Defence?

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Mr. Speaker, that is a really important question. People are being held accountable. As we have seen, people are under investigation and people have lost their positions. There are consequences.

Survivors are coming forward for things that happened years or decades ago. They are becoming more comfortable with coming forward because we are putting in place the changes that are needed to make sure they are supported and have the systems in place to find a just outcome, which they absolutely deserve.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the private sector, much like in any even remotely serious institution, when leaders no longer have the attention and the respect of their colleagues, when responsible leaders can no longer serve as they should, when blunders pile up, as is the case here, when nothing changes after many years, I think something must be done. A bit of fresh air could make all the difference.

[English]

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the premise of the question. I believe that the Minister of National Defence has tremendous respect and has, in fact, made sure that the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces are front and centre in everything we do.

Colleagues can see that through a number of the things he has done. We have put the SMRC in place. We have put in legislation, through Bill C-77, to create a victims' bill of rights. We have done a review of all unfounded cases. We have created the path to dignity and respect. He commissioned the Fish report on the military justice system. We have settled the Heyder Beattie case instead of dragging it out in court. We have created Seamless Canada to make sure that the families of people in our military are taken care of.

### *Business of Supply*

This is a minister who has spent his career serving and protecting, and he has always put the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces first.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question that the member for Sarnia—Lambton put to the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Here we have a Minister of National Defence who for years was hearing allegations of sexual misconduct. He has said numerous times in the House that he immediately passed on those allegations, those serious concerns, to higher offices, whether it was the Privy Council Office or the Prime Minister's Office.

I wonder if perhaps this motion has been framed incorrectly. Who should bear the responsibility for this inaction? Should it be the Minister of National Defence, or should it perhaps be the Prime Minister?

• (1625)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Mr. Speaker, the people who should bear the responsibility are those conducting this bad behaviour in the first place. It is the perpetrators.

As we have seen under the minister, every action that has been taken has been done following the proper processes. In fact, what we are seeing right now is that more and more people are coming forward, and there are more and more consequences. People are losing their jobs, and there are people under investigation.

I believe we are going to see more of this. We are in a very difficult period of time, but I believe it is a period we have to go through in order to see the end of impunity and see the kind of culture change that we need. The minister is leading the charge.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for the parliamentary secretary.

Why will the Liberal members of the defence committee not even vote on their own motion at the committee?

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask why, even though we have asked to adjourn the debate over 20 times so that we could go directly to reviewing the report, the opposition has refused to adjourn debate.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

I am actually very torn to be speaking today. As most members in the House know, I spent 25 years in the military. I am actually speaking from a level of disappointment. I am not going to attack the minister's record of service. In fact, I respect his record of service, both as a police officer in British Columbia and as a reservist with our Canadian Armed Forces. He has done three tours in Afghanistan. If I had to go back out on military operations in the future, I would trust him to be beside me.

### *Business of Supply*

There is a lot of talk here about politicians and civilian oversight, which nobody in the military would ever disagree with. We need that. We live in a democracy. However, and I hate to burst the bubble of some of my colleagues, the rank and file of the military do not really care too much about us in the House of Commons. They respect what we do, but they serve the country. They are not serving us: They serve all Canadians.

One serving member, as they followed some of this unfortunate situation with the sexual misconduct allegations and the state of the Department of National Defence and the military right now, said this just drives it home. They think they are political pawns for the government and that all decisions are being made based on keeping votes versus what is right.

For the rest of my speech, I am going to speak about the leadership and accountability of this minister, or lack thereof, since he became the Minister of National Defence.

In times of crisis, militaries rely on leaders to provide focus on the priorities that matter. They bring energy and determination and demand that standards are met. In a democracy, militaries are led by elected officials who must set the tone, give direction and follow up on that direction.

None of this has happened, in the last three years in particular. Platitudes and evasion of accountability are the exact opposite of what is expected, and indeed what is demanded. Leaders must not only lead, they must be seen to lead. They seek and accept accountability in themselves and others. Canadians expect more. Canadian Armed Forces members need more.

The solution is not to express surprise and disgust, but to actually provide detailed, specific expectations, a path to meet those expectations and consequences when those expectations are not met. Accountability starts and stops with the Minister of National Defence.

I am going to focus on three of the sexual misconduct allegations currently ongoing within the Canadian Armed Forces. Let us talk about the former chief of the defence staff, General Vance, going back to 2018. I have discussed with the minister in the past my own frustration with and disappointment in the current Prime Minister for his interference in the independence of our judiciary and our prosecution system tied to the SNC-Lavalin affair.

In this case, the minister says it is not up to politicians to interfere in an investigation. I would totally agree. However, as the CDS and the ombudsman report to the Minister of National Defence, he is at the top of their chain of command. He is clearly accountable for the performance of the Chief of the Defence Staff and he is the steward of the Canadian Armed Forces.

When he was duly informed of a potential breach of Op Honour, an allegation of sexual misconduct by the former chief of the defence staff, the minister failed to take appropriate action. He could have initiated an investigation, or at least ensured one was initiated by the appropriate authorities. However, once he was made aware of that breach, he actually became complicit in allowing the breach to continue by not taking that appropriate action.

Had the minister still been a serving member within the Canadian Armed Forces, he could have been held accountable for failing

to act. The minister knows this, and knows that it is the honourable thing to step down.

• (1630)

Further, as a former police officer, he knows that initiating an investigation or demanding that one be conducted is not tantamount to interference. Interference with an investigation can only occur if one has been initiated. The minister, as a former police officer, cannot argue that he was unaware of that fact.

Now I will talk about Admiral McDonald. During testimony at the defence committee, Lieutenant-Commander Trotter talked about how he attempted to report the allegations against Admiral McDonald. He was eventually placed in contact with the chief of staff to the department assistant. This is an office that supports the Minister of National Defence, but reports directly to the deputy minister. These DND staff mishandled this complaint, initially suggesting that Lieutenant-Commander Trotter report the incident to the sexual misconduct response centre, which has no mandate to handle sexual misconduct complaints. Trotter was then referred to the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, but only after the military police liaison officer to the SMRC was brought into the discussion.

This incident further reinforces my point that even now, three years after the minister was first made aware of allegations of shortfalls within the department, under his lack of leadership the department is still incapable of properly handling a sexual misconduct complaint when it involves higher ranks. This is clear evidence of sustained and systematic failure within the department.

More recently we heard about General Fortin. I am not going to get into the details because the only information I have is what has been made available to the public. However, what has been reported in the media suggests that DND and the Canadian Armed Forces are not even following their own policies involving General Fortin. He was directed to step aside and take leave when he was accused of historical allegations of misconduct. From the media reporting, General Fortin is now attempting to deal with this in court because the department and the military failed to follow the removal from command process that was established in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

This is a mess. Based on the public information available from General Fortin's lawyer, it has been suggested that senior Liberal leaders are directly engaged in these decisions affecting the employment of the Canadian Armed Forces senior leadership. Of the first two examples, the minister is refusing to take action on one under the auspices of not interfering, yet the Liberals are not following the proper processes on the other and are actually interfering in a potential sexual misconduct allegation.

I would like to conclude with some feedback and commentary that I have received from the rank and file and recently retired members of the Canadian Armed Forces: their opinions about the current government and the lack of leadership by the minister. One said, “I had no intention of framing or hanging my certificate of service because it has the current Prime Minister's name on it. Now I think it might make a very good fire starter.” When I talk to victims and people I know who have testified at committee about sexual misconduct allegations, and I ask what they think about the Liberal filibustering going on at the defence committee, the word they use is “brutal”. A former senior military officer said, “This Minister of National Defence enjoys no confidence from any part of either the department or the Canadian Armed Forces due to his lack of leadership.”

This is why, unfortunately, Conservatives had to move this motion today calling for the minister to be censured. As my regimental slogan goes, never pass a fault.

• (1635)

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth and to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to thank my friend and colleague for his years of honourable service. I know that he has lots of experience and a tremendous amount of insight into the military and that he represented our nation honourably. I also want to thank him for not joining the apparent chorus and pile-on effect in attacking the Minister of National Defence and his record. I have been disappointed in this House over the last couple of weeks by some of the unwarranted personal attacks.

Given the degree of experience my friend across the floor has, his background and service, it is not impossible to imagine a universe in which, if the Conservatives formed government, he would become the minister of national defence. By the same token, the current leader of the Conservative Party was the minister of national defence when this came to light in 2015.

If the member were the minister of national defence, how would he have dealt with this differently, and why would that achieve a different outcome?

**Mr. Alex Ruff:** Mr. Speaker, I will correct the member. The Leader of the Opposition was not the Minister of National Defence at the time of the previous incident. He was the Minister of Veterans Affairs and was not the one accountable or directly responsible. In fact, he took the appropriate action by reporting an allegation or rumour he heard to the appropriate authorities, which was then investigated by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service. Obviously, based on the information it made available, it maybe did not highlight the shortfalls with the previous chief of the defence staff.

As for answering the member's hypothetical, if I had been the Minister of National Defence when the former ombudsman brought that allegation forward, I would not have hesitated to look at it and make a determination to get an investigation started, then I would have stayed out of it. Once I had initiated that and ensured it was done, I would need to turn it over to the proper authorities. We can-

not turn our backs. As the Minister of National Defence, the CDS reports to him.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am listening to the debate, and I cannot help but think that this is a sad time for women. One woman a day in Quebec is a victim of domestic violence. All these women want somewhere to go for help, but they have nowhere to turn because of a lack of resources. I assume the situation is similar across Canada.

According to the Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel, only 5% of sex crimes are reported to the police. This means they are almost never reported. Some cases do go to court, but only three out of every 1,000 sexual assault complaints result in a conviction.

For years now, we have been witnessing a sad spectacle as the government, including the Prime Minister, his chief of staff and the Department of National Defence, have tried to cover up this sexual misconduct, which is documented. On top of that, according to a report from six years ago, action could have been taken if we had an independent office.

Does my colleague not find this sad spectacle, and the message being sent to the women of this country, to be absolutely shameful?

• (1640)

[English]

**Mr. Alex Ruff:** Mr. Speaker, it is really sad. When we had the take-note debate a while back on gendered violence, it was based on the tragic killings in Quebec. I spoke up then about the need for more resources.

Specifically within the Canadian Armed Forces, when the first report by Madame Deschamps came out I was still in uniform. I was shocked. In fact, I will even admit I almost did not believe it until I started talking to a number of my female colleagues who are still serving, and they started telling me stories. I got so disgusted and mad that I almost got mad at them, because I had obviously failed if they did not feel they could use me as a colleague or peer, as we were lieutenant-colonels at the time. They could not come forward and tell me what was going on regarding the behaviour of some general officers. That is on me. That is on every senior officer, male and female, within the Canadian Armed Forces who is allowing this to be perpetuated and not fixing it. Yes, independence is required. Everybody needs to step up. That is why I go back to my comment about the failure of the minister with respect to accountability and leadership. When something is reported, we have to do the right thing.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Public Safety; the hon. member for Bow River, Canadian Heritage; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Small Business.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wish that we did not have this motion before us today. This is not something that is great for Canada or for our armed forces, but at the same time it is necessary. I am a bit frustrated and a little angry to be speaking to this today.

The Canadian military forms an integral part of who I am, as an individual and as a Canadian, as is true for so many other Canadians. My father enlisted in the Korean War in the 1950s. He was 17 years old. His father would not sign his papers unless he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. He actually was in the process of signing up for the Princess Pats. This unit went on to Korea and fought in the battle of Kapyong, where we had many casualties.

This battle was really a key battle. The Princess Pats regiment was given a presidential citation for bravery for facing overwhelming odds against Korean, North Korean and Chinese troops as they were swarming over and invading South Korea at the time. The PP-CLI was there to protect the retreat. They were the rearguard for South Korean and American forces and troops, putting their lives at stake, and there were deaths. As a matter of fact, it got so bad that they called on artillery to be fired upon their own positions because they were being overrun.

This measure of bravery is what Canadians are known for, and they have been for over a century. Members can think of the First World War and Vimy Ridge. Canadian soldiers got the job done. There were thousands of casualties. They advanced in the face of fire and lay their lives down.

Over 100,000 Canadian troops, men and women, have laid down their lives for our country and for our freedoms, and we honour them. We honour their memory for what they have done, not just those who have lain down their lives, but all those who have served in the military and who are serving the military. We are proud of them.

I can imagine being at the mess hall table or in the barracks and having these conversations. I am sure it is frustrating to hear about how many generals have had to resign. This is at the top, and the onus and leadership needs to be taken. We have actually seen a lack of leadership and a lack of accountability, and it is shameful. It is not right. It is not appropriate for our troops.

We live in a critical time. I will talk more about that in a few moments.

My dad went on to serve for 36 years. We lived on bases. I was born in Germany, at 4 Wing in Baden Soellingen. It was West Germany at that time. The Berlin Wall was built when I was there. I am kind of aging myself. I know I look very young, but I was born at that time, in the 1960s.

My dad later told me that when I was born he wondered what type of world he was bringing his child into. He did not know, with nuclear bombs all over. I remember growing up later on, having air-raid sirens and preparing for the potentiality of a war, but the Canadian troops were there. They served in great strength and numbers. We were a very serious partner.

● (1645)

We still are. We have great troops. They have been reduced over the years, but we have fantastic troops. One thing Canadian soldiers are noted for is their quality. They are great professional soldiers who do their job and are not trying to get glory.

I talked to my father before he died and asked about stories he had not told me before. He started in the Air Force working on the ground crew putting munitions on aircraft, bombers and fighters. He was serving somewhere in Alberta at the time, and he said a Lancaster bomber landed and crashed into the hangar at the air base. It was fully loaded with bombs.

My father took no thought to his life, and he ran in with an extinguisher. He saved the airmen and put the fire out. He dragged out the pilot and did not make a big fuss about it. The pilot actually gave him \$20. In those days that was quite a bit. He did not get a medal. He was not trying to get the glory, and that is what our soldiers are like. They are not necessarily trying to get the glory. They are there to do the job.

I want to pay my respects for what the men and women in uniform do day in and day out on land, sea and water serving our country. They deserve our applause. We applaud them. I think of various battles. I think of the First World War and Vimy Ridge. That had been assaulted numerous times by other troops, but the Canadians went in there and they took it over. They are soldiers known in the past, and now, for their valour, intelligence and commitment.

They were also the shock troops in 1918. Even in 1918, there was the risk of losing the war, and they were first in line.

My wife and I were at Juno Beach in 2017. While I was there I had the realization that, during the Second World War, Canadians had spilled their blood there. Hundreds of young soldiers. I ask members to imagine the sacrifice they made.

We have a strong peacekeeping tradition. I am from a family of six children raised, as I mentioned, in a military home in Chibougamau and Valcartier, Quebec, and Holberg, British Columbia, all these different bases. My first memories are of men in uniform and what they did, and of being proud to see my dad. I had the opportunity to also serve in the military, along with my brothers and sisters. I was proud to serve Canada, proud of the uniform and committed to the country. Honestly, I really feel that this is beyond politics. I know the Liberals will say this is politics.

This is also about our military and, in the face of great looming dangers with China and Russia, we cannot afford to have our military demoralized. We cannot afford this. The minister needs to do the right thing, even if he thinks he is innocent. Members have heard why we do not think he is so innocent, but that is not the point. The point is he needs to do the best thing for Canada.



*Business of Supply*

• (1650)

He needs to step down. He does not have to wait for the Prime Minister to say he needs to leave. He just needs to tell the Prime Minister he needs to step down because this is not good for Canada.

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for sharing his life story and his birth date. I was born a couple of decades after he was, but I can assure him I share those same sentiments about how much our Canadian Armed Forces have continued to support us, to work for the safety of Canada and Canadians here and abroad.

I want to pick up on one point the member talked about. He said we cannot afford to demoralize the military. I wonder what these polarizing motions do to the morale of our Canadian Armed Forces, those women and men in uniform who are working so hard to protect our country. How does he think it makes them feel when we are questioning the integrity of the men and women who have served?

We are playing partisan games to prevent any combined and collaborative action that could address the very real issues that exist within the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, we should not be in the position we are in today. There should not be a motion. We should not have to be speaking about this today. This should have been dealt with a long time ago.

We should not have been in this situation three years ago with General Vance. There was knowledge of his improprieties and the sexual misconduct. To knowingly place him in that position was wrong. There are so many misleading statements that the minister agrees to, yet he is still in this position. We should not be in this position, and I put the onus on the Liberal government and the Prime Minister.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very moving speech.

In light of the facts before us, which were reported by the media, and from what we heard in committee, the minister flatly refused to meet with the ombudsman 12 times. Obviously, he was trying to protect General Vance, and that is unacceptable. It is unacceptable for all of the women who were brave enough to file a complaint. That is unacceptable because we would not let that happen if we were talking about our daughter or sister.

Why does my colleague think that we are still allowing the Liberals to protect each other?

• (1655)

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her question. I agree with her. It is unbelievable that we are in this situation.

The minister said that he was not aware, but the other witnesses had proof that he was. It is therefore really unbelievable that he is still in his position.

[English]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to recognize this is about correcting mistakes. I know that the hon. member was not here at the time, but the Conservative government did close veteran offices, including mine in Windsor West, where we actually had to fight to bring it back to life.

Is that something that the Conservative Party now believes was a mistake, or is that something that would happen again? We have the Essex and Kent Scottish regiment here. Many recruitment agencies have come through here and made attempts in the past. We also have many veterans. I would like a sincere response to this question: Is this about correcting mistakes for our veterans?

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Royal Canadian Legion in Maple Ridge, and I believe it is the largest in Western Canada. I certainly personally support our veterans, as I am a vet myself. It is very important, and I know the Conservative government will look after our vets. We are committed to that.

**Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge for providing us a glimpse of what honour in our military has been in the past. Although it is being impacted, we still carry that honour in our Canadian military.

In the Chinese culture, there is a saying that the leader sets the example. If the upper beam is crooked, it will cause the entire building to crumble. I would like to ask my hon. colleague for his response.

In 2018, the Prime Minister responded to an accusation of groping a journalist by saying that everybody understands things differently. In 2019, in the SNC-Lavalin incident, he mentioned that he would take responsibility. Would that have anything to do—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid we are out of time there. We will ask the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge to respond.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, it has become very evident that there is a tremendous amount of virtue signalling from the Liberal government and from the Prime Minister. We heard comments yesterday from the leader of the Green Party. This has been ongoing, the pretending to be against harassment, sexual harassment, and yet they continue to allow these sorts of things to continue. It is embarrassing and it is a shame.

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I want to rise in the House today to speak about the Minister of National Defence in light of this very unfair opposition motion. I want to talk about who he is as a person and what he has done to serve Canada alongside so many others.

Like so many of our friends and neighbours, the Minister of National Defence came here as an immigrant. His mother came to our country in the hopes of building a better life for the minister and his sister. His parents left India because Canada was a place where they believed they could find the opportunity and that success. They left behind their family and their community.

### *Business of Supply*

This story is likely familiar to you, Mr. Speaker, and to many others here in this House. It is a story of countless immigrant families from across this country. It is a story of sacrifice. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of National Defence's father was not a politician who served for almost two decades in the provincial Legislature. Instead, the Minister of National Defence stood beside his mother as a child in the blueberry, raspberry and strawberry fields, from Richmond to Abbotsford in British Columbia. He would wake up at 5:00 a.m. and join his mother and his sister, packed in a van with 30 other field labourers, for a long day of work.

It was in these fields where the Minister of National Defence realized that racism could be met with deadly consequences. As the minister said last year in an interview with CTV, one of his co-workers, a man in his 20s, did not show up to work one day.

Later on, we found out that it was actually an attack based on race – and he was killed.

The minister has spoken many times of his experience with racism. He has worked his entire life to end this discrimination. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of National Defence had to work in a country that was hostile, is still hostile, to Black and brown bodies. It is a fight that he has had to endure his whole life. It is a fight that he continues to endure.

In fact, the Leader of the Opposition and many others from the opposition still do not bother to pronounce the minister's name correctly. Maybe I will take a moment to say that the minister is "Saj-jan," which means honourable, respectable in Punjabi. For over six years, the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite have had the opportunity to learn how to pronounce his name, and they have chosen not to. People who are visible minorities know what this is. These are microaggressions, and they are not mistakes. These microaggressions are racism, pure and simple.

The Minister of National Defence has devoted his life to service, service to his community, service to Vancouver and service to Canada. He served over a decade as an officer in the Vancouver police force, working in the riding that he represents today, Vancouver South. He fought against the scourge of organized crime and drug trafficking, protecting the community that he still serves and protects today.

Like thousands of other Canadians, he put up his hand and served this country in the Canadian Armed Forces. While he served in uniform, he experienced discrimination there as well. Let me quote again from the minister's interview with CTV.

I remember one person...saying to me "I let you join my military." Just that position of power and privilege that he was throwing in my face, it just upset me so much.

Despite the racism that he has faced, he still served. He served in Bosnia. He served three tours of duty in Afghanistan.

• (1700)

He has been awarded numerous military medals for his service, including the Order of Military Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Canadian Forces' Decoration, the South-West Asia Service Medal, the General Campaign Star, the commendation medal, the NATO service medal and the Canadian Peacekeeping Service

Medal. Now, the opposition has the audacity to question his service by bringing up questions about the Minister of National Defence's service in Afghanistan.

Why do we not hear from the people who actually worked with him in Afghanistan, like Colonel Chris Vernon, chief of staff to the Coalition Task Force Headquarters who led Operation Medusa? He stated:

[The minister] was a major player in the design team that put together Operation Medusa. He was able to put together an intelligence picture of the Taliban and the tribal dynamics west of Kandahar, without which we probably wouldn't have been able to mount Operation Medusa. So that's what he did. Pretty significant stuff.

Why do we not hear from Major-General David Fraser, then head of NATO regional. He described the minister as having "remarkable personal courage...often working in the face of the enemy to collect data and confirm his suspicions, and placing himself almost daily in situations of grave personal risk." He also went on to say, "I must say that [the Minister of National Defence] is one of the most remarkable people I have worked with, and his contribution to the success of the mission and the safety of Canadian soldiers was nothing short of remarkable."

The opposition members sit there and continue to question the minister's commitment and his service record. That is shameful. They question his work as the Minister of National Defence.

Why do we not take into account the opinion of David Perry, a senior military analyst at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute? He said, about the minister, "In terms of actual results that have been delivered for defence since he's been a minister: on that front I think it's pretty fair to say that he's done very well." He went on to add that, "Under [his] time as defence minister the government has committed to spending more money on the military in real dollars than at any time since the Korean War."

This opposition day motion is very troubling. It ignores the fact of the minister's service to his community, to Vancouver and to our country. I know and Canadians know that, time and again, the minister has stepped up and served his country. Despite the opposition's attempts, Canadians will remember this motion as exactly what it is: a petty, personal attack on Canada's first Minister of National Defence of colour. It is an attempt by the Conservative members to whitewash the actions the Minister of National Defence has taken to support those who serve Canada each and every day.

The members have heard my colleagues speak of our investments into the Canadian Armed Forces after a decade of darkness because of the cuts from the Harper Conservative government. Members have heard my colleagues speak of our commitment to building a more inclusive and diverse Canadian Armed Forces, and they have heard my colleagues speak about our commitment to building a Canadian Armed Forces that is free from sexual harassment and assault.

• (1705)

The Conservatives might stand up and say they have been champions for women and for minorities. Nothing can be further from the truth. When the Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to stand with our friends and neighbours in the Muslim community—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will have to leave that there for the moment as time has expired, but we will now go to questions and comments and perhaps the hon. member will have the opportunity to pick up those last thoughts in the course of the next five minutes.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the member. She said that the Conservatives were questioning the service of the defence minister. The Conservative member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, who served in the military, got up and said that this is not about the service record of the minister when he was in the military.

It is about his service record here in the House of Commons as the Minister of Defence. From the CF-18 debacle to the Mark Norman debacle to the fact he did nothing about General Vance and the succession of people who have had to step down, he has taken no action. Leadership is about accountability. With all of the things the minister has failed on, is that not the reason he needs to step down?

• (1710)

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to help the member understand the impact of the words of this motion and how it impacts the minister's respect. The motion states “that the Minister of National Defence has clearly lost the respect of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, including those at the highest ranks” and then lists a number of reasons.

The member spoke about leadership and accountability. I would argue that leadership is about listening. We are here to serve Canadians, and the way we can serve Canadians, including those who serve in our armed forces, is to listen in a non-partisan way instead of playing these kinds of political games. The way we can serve them is to sit down, listen in a non-partisan way, understand what the issues are and put our heads together and actually find those solutions. I challenge the member to do that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have here an 18-page summary that describes the actions of the Minister of National Defence since he has been in office. My colleague may not care, but I still want to tell her that I think the minister seems like a very nice man. He seems like a good person who probably has a good military record. I have no doubt about that. I would even go have a beer with him. That is not the problem. He failed as a minister and he is still in that position.

How can my colleague, who is a woman, no less, accept the fact that this minister covered up so many allegations of sexual misconduct in the military?

[*English*]

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Mr. Speaker, I remind the member sexual misconduct and abuse of power in the Canadian Armed Forces is not

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something that came up with the Liberal government. It has been ongoing for decades and decades and decades, and it is about high time we listened to those women and stopped using them to score cheap political points in trying to defame a very honourable minister and the whole institution of the Canadian Armed Forces. Again, I implore the member from the Bloc, can we please put our heads together in a non-partisan way and find those solutions instead of debating these useless motions?

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very upset about the serious sexual misconduct allegations that came out in 2015 and then again in 2018, where research found there was a serious problem in our military. I want to know why the Prime Minister never ever mentioned this issue as a priority in any of the minister's mandate letters. Can the member explain the reason for that?

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Mr. Speaker, budget 2021 outlines \$236 million dedicated to combatting and eradicating sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. If that is not taking the issue seriously, I would love to hear his opinions and ideas to ensure that both women and men are safe as they serve our country.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills for allowing me to share my time with her. I very much enjoyed listening to what she had to say. Unfortunately, her time ran out at the end. She was about to say something that never actually resurfaced in response to questions.

I would like to finish what the member was about to say, that the leader of the opposition voted against Motion No. 103, which dealt with Islamophobia in Canada. In fact, only two Conservatives, two brave Conservatives, voted in favour of that motion. I hate to put you on the spot, Mr. Speaker, but I believe you were one of them as was the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Every other Conservative voted against that motion. We find ourselves in the situation we are in today even though members like the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills tried to sound the alarm a few years ago, and the Conservatives chose to ignore it.

In any event, we are certainly not here to talk about that today. We are here to talk about the motion tabled by the official opposition, a motion that, in my opinion, is politically motivated, a motion whose only purpose is to try to defame a decorated veteran, a member of our cabinet, an individual who has served our country, who has done great things for our country and then has gone on to serve in the House.

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This is not a surprise. This type of personal attack has been the ongoing theme of the Conservatives over the last six years. We have seen this day in and day out. Rather than talk about policy or how the Minister of Finance can do something different or the Prime Minister should work on a different policy, it has always been “the Minister of Finance is this; the Prime Minister is that”. It has been personal attacks day in and day out. Unfortunately, what we are seeing here is nothing more than that. It is the same thing, once again, trying to attack the credibility of an individual, somebody who has served his country and continues to do so in another capacity now.

Why? In my opinion, this is all for political partisan gain, thinking that this might skew the current polling numbers. Rather than talk about the issues and encourage Canadians to vote for them because of their ideas, the ideas they can bring forward on behalf of Canadians, the Conservatives spend all their time focusing on how to make other people look bad, so they become the default choice, ruining careers in the process.

Looking at the heart of this motion and in listening to members from other sides of the House today speak to it, a number of different issues come up. The main and most important issue is the culture that exists in our military. I really wish the motion would have focused on that. It is clear there is a ton of work to do with respect to that culture within the military.

I do not know if this is the natural way that hierarchical organizations in the military are structured, coupled with the natural desire to keep things hush within the organization that has produced this culture, but from what we have seen, it is extremely toxic. Change needs to happen, so the people in the military, women and men, who are harassed are properly cared for, but, more important, that they feel comfortable to come forward to talk about it so they can get the care and protection they need.

I could not agree more with a lot of the comments I heard earlier today about the vice chief of the defence staff playing golf with General Vance. The fact that happened is a huge issue.

• (1715)

The suggestion is that this issue lies at the feet of the Minister of National Defence. The Minister of National Defence does not approve the personal activities of individuals. Within organizations, it is expected that individuals can make good, sound judgments and decisions based on what is right and what is wrong, and this individual made a wrong decision. What happened? That individual is no longer in that position. It is entirely appropriate for us to accept the fact that the person is no longer in his position and it sends a clear message down the line that anymore behaviour like that will have the same result.

There has been a lot of discussion today about General Vance specifically, how he came to be in this role and how the current government had been propping him up, encouraging him, giving him raises and on and on. I am not going to go through the details again about how the complaint came forward, how it was handled, what was specifically said, what information was not obtained and why the investigation did not move forward. We have heard all about that on a number of occasions.

What about the fact that the Leader of the Opposition, who was the minister of veterans affairs previously, was made aware of allegations against General Vance? He did the right thing, exactly the same thing the national defence minister did. He brought those allegations forward. They were brought to the PMO. Stephen Harper knew about the allegations. He was made aware of them through his chief of staff. Stephen Harper even met with General Vance. He sat down with him and asked if any of the rumours were true, to which the reply was no, that none of them were true. Then Stephen Harper still appointed him even when he knew about this.

I find it extremely rich when the Conservatives stand in the House time and time again and point to the manner in which the current Minister of National Defence handled this. We can compare this to what Stephen Harper did. Harper sat down with him, like two boys having a beer, and asked Vance if he had done anything. Hearing no, he appointed him. Why did Harper not start a process to find out more about it? Why did he not dig into it? Why did he not insist on some form of an investigation? Why did he not do that? All he did was meet with the person who was accused, that person said he did not do it, he took his word for it and appointed him. The hypocrisy of this, They literally went through almost the exact process and then appointed the individual.

The motion today, similar to yesterday's motion, is extremely unfortunate. We voted on the motion today to bring a public servant before the bar of the House. The New Democrats voted in favour of that. The champions of the public service, who will have a front-row seat when it happens on Monday, voted in favour of it. They can explain to the public service why they thought it was the right thing to do, why it was the right course of action.

It is shameful that we are having this discussion today, as was the discussion on the motion yesterday. I certainly will not be supporting this motion. It is just another attempt at a political grab in the last hours of this Parliament, for the Conservatives to somehow grab onto some form of relevancy.

• (1720)

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have had the opportunity to hear the member for Kingston and the Islands straighten this issue out. We thought it was the Minister of National Defence who, for years, ignored evidence of sexual harassment, but all along it was Harper's fault. Now we know.

Putting that aside, I appreciate everything the gentleman has to say to cover up for the horrible deeds and lack of deeds of the Minister of National Defence. I have to ask him about the departmental plan.

The departmental plan is not like the budget; it is not an aspirational thing. It is a legal document brought to the House to justify the three-year plan and for the department to justify the spending of resources. In that plan, signed by the Minister of National Defence, is a goal to have only 12% of the Canadian Armed Forces be harassed. That is a goal.

If the member opposite really believed in ending harassment in the armed forces, why is it not a zero-tolerance policy? Why is the goal set at 12%?

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● (1725)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, only the Conservatives would ask a question like that. The member knows clearly the way these documents are put together. Only that member, a Conservative member, would interpret that to mean there is an actual goal. The ludicrousness of the question itself just shows that the member does not even take the issue seriously.

Back to his original point, I did not not blame Harper. He clearly did not listen to what I said. What I said was that the current minister followed the exact same process that apparently the current Leader of the Opposition took as veterans affairs minister with the former prime minister, but that somehow it was different this time.

I would argue that the only difference is that the Conservative Party is much more interested in political gain than anything else.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, that deserves a standing ovation. What a jaw-dropping performance. The Liberals have been in power for six years. We know for a fact there were cases of sexual misconduct in the military. They are the ones in power, yet it is everyone's fault but their own.

What an extraordinary production. Bravo. Congratulations, that was incredible. I could never put on such an amazing act. I do not know many in the House who could.

The government has had the Deschamps report for six years. Keeping in mind that this was written six years ago, it says:

...there is [a] culture...that is hostile to women and LGBTQ members, and conducive to more serious incidents of sexual harassment and assault. ...It is not enough to simply revise policies or to repeat the mantra of "zero tolerance". Leaders must acknowledge that sexual misconduct is a real and serious problem for the organization, one that requires their own direct and sustained attention.

The government has had the report in its possession for six years, but it has not done a darn thing.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I understand that the member was an actor in his former life, and there are few people who are more animated in the House than me, at least from my perspective, but I do applaud that. When someone from his position is complimentary toward me in my ability to represent my constituents in the House, I am certainly flattered by that.

However, his notion that this government, that the minister did nothing is absolutely false. The notion that no action has been taken on this file for the last six years is also completely false. I sat on the national defence committee for four years. We studied this issue.

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has turned a blind eye to evidence of war crimes by Iraqi troops who Canadians were training as a part of Operation Impact. When the Canadian trainers were shown evidence of war crimes, including rape and murder, the Minister of National Defence refused to open up an inquiry.

How does the hon. member reconcile these reports, when the Minister of National Defence is failing to live up to the government's legal obligations to report war crimes?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** If the member is so passionate about that particular item, why did he not amend the motion to include it? The motion does not include any of the references he made.

To his point, I have great faith in the minister's ability to report sexual misconduct when he sees it, which has been told to the House time and time again. If the member has factual information about the reporting process, what happened or what the minister did not do, I would love for him to come forward and tell us about the conversations that he claims to know something about.

● (1730)

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

I hold in great respect the opportunity to participate in today's debate. The topic of this debate is something I hold close to my heart, as both my brother and father served our country. I witnessed firsthand the honour, integrity and respect they both held for the roles and their time in service.

My father served as an officer in the Royal Canadian Navy during World War II on HMCS *Stormont* in the Battle of the Atlantic. In his recollection of his experience in the navy, he stated, "True leaders lead by their actions, not by the words." It was a virtue that he carried out throughout his entire life and was the foundation of what made him a noble leader who many respected and looked up to, me included.

My brother, who served as a pilot from 1981 to 1996, was a captain at the National Defence headquarters and also a man who led with a high degree of integrity, righteousness, honesty and the type of honourableness that gains trust from fellow comrades, as well as from citizens for whom my family had the privilege of serving.

Lastly, the riding I represent, Edmonton Centre, was previously held by the Hon. Laurie Hawn, who also served in the Canadian military with distinction. I have enormous respect for him.

I share these personal stories because they make up only a few of the individuals who have been recognized as contributors to Canada's reputation of having a noble, virtuous, principled and ethical armed forces. It is these folks who we owe great respect to, as they have upheld our entire country to a standard of righteousness, rectitude and reverence.

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It is because of these noble individuals that we have been able to effortlessly create trust between the armed forces and the public, the very cohesion to create unification, wholeness and a sense of togetherness in this country. It is a cohesion that has been eroded for six straight years, and the defence minister has placed all Canadians at risk of ever trusting our armed forces again by covering up sexual misconduct allegations. This is alarming, troublesome and unacceptable. More than that, it is offensive and completely dismissive of all the individuals who have come before the minister and those who are currently serving and doing so with a high regard for themselves, their actions and the Canadians they serve. As I stand here today, I cannot help but think about the women in my life and all the women residing in Canada who have witnessed the government shamefully continue to turn a blind eye to this and neglect the previous claim of being a feminist government that empowers women.

This is not about the minister's military service. We acknowledge that he served with incredible distinction. This is about what is happening today. It is about the impacts these actions and the lack of responsibility have on all Canadians today, and will have moving forward if appropriate measures are not taken. This is about ensuring that we as a country feel immense pride in our institution that continues to serve, that all men and women feel it is a safe place where sexual allegations are taken seriously and that any further incidents of sexual misconduct will be condemned and justice will be served. This is about creating certainty for the men and women currently serving and those who are contemplating joining our armed forces so that if they ever encounter this type of harassment, their government will not turn a blind eye, like this one has continued to do for many years.

This involves all of us. All of Canada's reputation is on the line. Anyone who genuinely and sincerely cares about the credibility, stature and honour of this country and our institutions would nobly resign and refuse to be selfish by remaining in a role that is no longer held in trust by the people it is meant to serve.

If the Prime Minister continues to make the choice not to act like a leader in this serious situation and leaves this to the defence minister, who has serious allegations against him, the result will be a continued erosion of the relationship between institutions, government and public. The lack of action speaks tremendous volumes about this Prime Minister's leadership and where he stands on equity for all persons.

This is not about partisanship and it is certainly not about politics. It is about ethics, morals and the willingness to do the right thing and protect the citizens who serve and the citizens who look to their government and their institutions for protection. How can we expect our honourable armed forces to keep us safe if CAF members themselves do not feel safe in the armed forces?

• (1735)

It is astounding that months after we called for action and years after sexual allegations were released, the Prime Minister decided to protect his own chief of staff rather than the thousands of men and women who serve this country. That is an insult to all of us. The Prime Minister has blatantly shown us where his true values lie, and it is certainly not with our armed forces and the people who graciously and righteously choose to be of service.

We will not back down from holding leaders and all persons in government to the highest standard of honesty and integrity. The minister and the Liberals refused to be accountable for their failure on the sexual misconduct allegations made against General Vance three years ago, but they have had the opportunity in the last couple of months and weeks to clean up their actions, recover their reputation and just ask the defence minister to step down. However, instead of the Liberals spending the past few weeks figuring out how they could make this situation better and lead with more dignity and integrity, we found out that the military's second in command, the vice chief of the defence staff, and the commander of the navy went golfing with Canada's former chief of the defence staff, the retired Jonathan Vance, who remains under military police investigation for the alleged inappropriate behaviour we speak of. This is problematic given that the vice chief has oversight of the police force investigating Vance.

It is blatantly obvious that the standard of conduct that is being held by the government is shameful and embarrassing, and the minister's leadership, or lack thereof, is downright deceitful. Over two months ago, Canada's Conservatives not only continued to speak out about the government's wrongful dismissal of the allegation, but also acknowledged that no amount of words would ever recovery a situation like this one involving the defence minister, as so much trust has been broken.

This is not something that can be combed over with an apology or long words on the history of the minister's military service, regardless of how distinguished it is. This requires taking action and responding to the current impacts that the lack of measures has had and will continue to have. Change and reinstatement of a noble government and a noble armed forces can only come through action, the very thing missing from the minister.

This is not a partisan issue. This is certainly not a personal issue against the Minister of National Defence. This is a countrywide issue affecting all of us. How could trust be instilled by the same person and persons who lost it and by the ones who are to blame for placing the collectiveness between government, the armed forces and the broader public in discord? The faith in a just and equitable government has diminished and will continue to do so until we see notable activity.

This is why the Conservatives have laid out an accountable, actionable plan that will be implemented to tackle the issue of sexual misconduct in the armed forces. The plan will recover the trust that has been broken and reinstate the integrity lost. This plan will include an inclusive service-wide independent investigation into the sexual misconduct in the military. It involves suspending all general and flag officer promotions and salary increases while an investigation into sexual misconduct of the military is taking place. Furthermore, it will involve the introduction of policies to ensure that future complaints are made to an external independent body outside the chain of command.

Canada's Conservatives will continue to stand up for women and men in uniform and demand the Liberals end their cover-up of sexual misconduct. We cannot allow our daughters, sisters and mothers to work in unsafe environments. No one should be subjected to sexual harassment when they show up to serve our country.

I stand here to ensure that any woman or man can serve their country with honour and without compromise. I stand here on behalf of my brother and father, who served and contributed to the uncorrupted and therefore reputable armed forces. I stand here for the thousands of Canadians who so selflessly served in our armed forces and continue to serve. I stand here on behalf of the Conservative Party, but also for every single Canadian who is questioning the character that makes up the government and the morals it leads with. If the government truly believed in leading with the highest degree of integrity, ethics and equity and believed in justice for all, then the decision to censure the minister would occur without hesitation.

I will conclude with my father's words, a man who served in the Royal Canadian Navy, from his recollection of his experience in the navy: "True leaders lead by their actions, not by their words." I stand here and appallingly question the entire government's morals and lack of action and ask it this: If the government is so willing to let this terrible example of abuse of power slide, what else will it let slide?

• (1740)

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for sharing stories of his personal recollections of his father and others, like the former member for his riding.

I will ask for the member's opinion.

In 2012, the previous government axed nearly \$5 billion from the budget that was available for defence. It had let \$10 billion of approved funding go unspent since 2007, and this included nearly \$7 billion in DND's capital budget. We heard from survivors in the Canadian Armed Forces about how much impact this kind of funding has on gender-appropriate equipment for soldiers who are serving our country.

How does the member feel about the fact that the party he represents made all of these cuts? How did this impact the Canadian Armed Forces and how—

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

### *Business of Supply*

**Mr. James Cumming:** Madam Speaker, how do I feel about an issue as important as this today? Did the member actually hear my speech? This is about today. This is not about what happened before. This is about action that can be taken today.

We need leadership. We need the defence minister to show some leadership. If he wanted to do the right thing, he would resign.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Minister of National Defence stated that the nature of the allegations against General Vance was unimportant and that what mattered was the steps taken. We quite agree. As a friend of mine would say, "Go for it, big guy." No steps were taken though. The minister had everything he needed right there in front of him, right in the Deschamps report, for six years. The report is smart and substantive, and it contains plenty of meaningful, detailed measures.

Can my colleague comment on that?

[English]

**Mr. James Cumming:** Madam Speaker, to add to my colleague's question, the last thing we need is more studies. We have a report, and we have suggestions on how we can fix the problems. It is time to execute on that, but it is not what we have seen from the Minister of National Defence. He has had ample opportunity to act on that report, but he has not done it. We should get on with it and get it done.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, what I think Canadians are most concerned about when they hear news of the Canadian Armed Forces these days are these allegations of sexual misconduct that just keep coming.

Over the last three years that I have been in the House, every time the Minister of National Defence has stood up, he has said that when he heard allegations, he reported them immediately to the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office. He did the right thing.

I am wondering if the Conservative motion today has been framed in the wrong way and that perhaps the defence minister is right that it is the Prime Minister's Office that is at fault here.

**Mr. James Cumming:** Madam Speaker, leadership starts at the top, so who is responsible? Ultimately, in the government, it is the Prime Minister of Canada who is responsible. He should do the right thing and make sure the minister resigns.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, sexual harassment is not a new phenomenon in the forces. It has been going for a very long time, and it did not start in 2015.

In the 10 years that Stephen Harper was prime minister, how many senior officers left the forces because of allegations of sexual misconduct?

*Business of Supply*

● (1745)

**Mr. James Cumming:** Madam Speaker, this is another classic example of the idea that it is Stephen Harper's fault. I find that appalling. Action has to be taken now, and it is this government that needs to take action.

**Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion. For months, we have heard through the media allegations of sexual misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces and the complicity of the Minister of National Defence. This prompted the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to launch a study into sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, which we just concluded and the committee report was tabled today.

Many of the FEWO study witnesses spoke of the Canadian Armed Forces' challenges with repeated sexual misconduct incidents, with one witness noting, "I joined the Canadian Armed Forces in July of 2018. Since then, I feel like I've experienced a lifetime's worth of sexual assault and misconduct."

Another witness who appeared before the committee gave a very interesting perspective on the double standard that the military justice system has toward women and men. The witness discussed how when they were deployed in Afghanistan an investigation had been conducted into a consensual relationship she had with a U.S. officer who was not in her unit but was of the same rank. She admitted that the relationship she had was against regulations and that she had pleaded guilty to the charges. She was fined, repatriated from theatre and posted out of her unit. She accepted this as her punishment.

However, as a result, she was called demeaning names and was told she was not worthy of leading soldiers. She said she was threatened with violence by commanding officers and would be repeatedly chastised by other officers. She was sent to work alone in an office managing a single Excel spreadsheet, and it quickly became clear to her that her career in the Canadian Armed Forces was over.

When she left the military, she had originally been given an offer to go into the reserves, but that was revoked upon her leaving, with the commanding officer telling her she was not the type of leader he wanted in his unit. She said that her biggest failure in life was how she was pushed out of the armoured corps, and that is something she continues to carry immense shame for.

However, this is precisely the type of leadership displayed by the former chief of the defence staff, who served as the longest-serving chief of the defence staff. This former CDS, General Vance, not only rolled out Operation Honour, but at the same time was having inappropriate relations with those under his command.

That included one woman who, when she appeared before FEWO, mentioned how she had asked questions about who would have the ability to investigate actions against the chief of the defence staff and whether the CFNIS would be the appropriate body. The response the general gave her was that he was "untouchable" because he owned the CFNIS. It was deeply concerning to hear that someone would actually believe he was above the law and would be willing to create an unsafe work environment and felt he could not be investigated. To this day, this woman believes she is not go-

ing to get justice for herself, but that it was important for her to come forward so the issue could be dealt with, with the aim that other women in the military would be able to get justice. It is not hard to see why this witness would believe that.

Over this past weekend, we heard that while under investigation, General Vance went golfing with Vice-Admiral Baines and Lieutenant-General Rouleau, who himself held oversight authority for the military police. The abuse of authority and the flagrant disregard for women in the Canadian Armed Forces are completely disgusting.

Shortly after a witness appeared before our committee, a Facebook group of military police were making comments such as "If you sleep with a senior rank you get good postings and promotion to support the bastards but no parenting and support from the senior rank". Another said, "Giggity", while another said, "Her story is about as clear as a PMQ orgy party on pay day." It is no wonder women do not feel safe in our Canadian Armed Forces.

● (1750)

What makes this worse is that all of this occurred under the watch of this minister, who, to this day, has yet to take any responsibility for his role in allowing for this toxic culture to exist.

When the minister appeared before committee, my colleague said to him, "[Y]ou're not owning up to the reality that you're not taking action to create a shift in the culture.... [T]he longer you continue to dodge responsibility this way or that—it's not going to change.... If you keep repeating the same points—I'm just sensing you're still not owning up to this". The minister just kept repeating the same points. He did not take any responsibility for the actions of the General Vance investigations.

As was pointed out to our committee:

...General Vance had to be protected because he was seen as a rising star during his career and therefore a good move for the military. It wasn't in the interest of the Forces to cast him aside or investigate him due to an allegation of sexual misconduct or assault. You don't want to tarnish the career or cause the loss of a valuable co-worker who is your right-hand man, for example. So General Vance's superiors or peers certainly had an interest in hiding these things, because they liked his work, operationally speaking.

Canadians expect our ministers to represent all Canadians, work to defend all Canadians and support all Canadians. However, all the minister has done is protect and excuse the inexcusable, and he has sent a message to all those serving in uniform that as long as one is a man, a friend and high enough in rank, one can sexually assault someone and the minister will turn a blind eye on it. This is not my Canada.



A fundamental change within the Canadian Forces with regard to its toxic culture and sexual misconduct issues is needed to ensure the safety and success of its members. Our brave service members deserve better. Conservatives are committed to ensuring that change occurs in the Canadian Armed Forces and will continue to hold the government to account on its shortcomings on this file, including and especially the need to take responsibility for the ongoing leadership crisis and the harm it has caused.

As a woman, it broke my heart to listen to the witnesses come forward and tell their stories, and how they continue to live with the trauma of sexual misconduct and sexual assault months, years and decades later. We constantly heard from witnesses about how tiring and disrespectful it is to continue to just talk about this issue. These are conversations we have had for decades.

All of the survivors spoke of the urgency to bring about cultural change, but they and military academics highlighted the requirement of having the most senior leadership, including the minister, involved directly in this change.

What we have seen from the minister is an abdication of his responsibilities in bringing about this change. He testified at committee that even prior to being appointed minister he was aware of this issue. If he truly was aware of this issue and the significance of it, then why has he sat silently on the sidelines while women have suffered significantly under his watch? Why did he turn a blind eye when his buddy, the former chief of the defence staff, was placed under investigation? Why does the minister continue to refuse to bring about true cultural change instead of yet another report?

I guess it is true what they say about Liberals. There is not a problem in the world they cannot solve by just having another report written. The time for reports is over. Women need action now, and we can start by getting rid of this inefficient minister, who places friendship over the security of individuals.

• (1755)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, listening to the member's intervention, I heard her talk about the need to protect somebody to advance his career because they thought he was a rising star. I was confused. Was she talking about Stephen Harper, because Stephen Harper is the one who actually appointed General Vance after hearing rumours about misconduct? Could the member indicate if she was actually talking about Stephen Harper when she made those comments?

**Ms. Jag Sahota:** Madam Speaker, what can I say? I am disappointed with the question the member has asked me. What I have heard throughout the day is how the Liberals want to just deflect and place responsibility on the previous government.

The Liberals had six years to fix this issue that they apparently knew about before they became the government. Maybe it is time for them to start looking at themselves internally and ask what they can do. They say big words, that they are going to protect women, to support women. Maybe it is time for action now. That is what Canadian women in the armed forces and in uniform are looking for.

### *Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very moving speech. I agree with her on several points.

The time has come to protect these women. All day I heard Liberals say that we must protect women. However, they continue to protect a man who failed these women. We know that the Minister of National Defence protected General Vance instead of protecting women.

My colleague said that it is time for action and that the time for reports is over. I could not agree more. I believe that censuring the Minister of National Defence is a first step, but what should the Liberal government do next?

[English]

**Ms. Jag Sahota:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. There are a lot of words that have been said for decades. Over the last few months, we have heard more words. We have heard more fluffy words: "We protect women. We are the feminist government."

If we look back, the definition of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces was not even fixed. Even though that was recommended in 2015 in the Deschamps report, nothing was done until November 2020. It is basically the Liberal government saying a lot of fluffy words and doing nothing for women.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her emphasis on the victims. I know she appreciates that the Liberals in the defence committee spent more time than anyone else bringing forward the evidence of the victims and trying to have solutions for the victims.

The member talks about action. Unfortunately, she was not at our committee, but there was close to an hour of evidence of all the actions the minister has taken to fight this, more than any other minister in history. As the member asks for actions more than words, could she talk about any actions that any other minister has done? We had an hour's worth of what this minister has done to fight sexual misconduct in the military.

**Ms. Jag Sahota:** Madam Speaker, I am going to go with the survivors and believe what they have told me. They have basically said there has been no cultural change in the Canadian Armed Forces and women continue to suffer because of the lack of action by the government and the boys' club that continues to put women down. This is exactly what we see here: one man protecting the other. I cannot emphasize enough that every witness we spoke to basically said that the change has to come from the top down. That is where the cultural change needs to start.

I would say that whatever has been done is not enough. We need to move forward with concrete actions that help women, so this does not happen to another woman in the Canadian Armed Forces or in uniform.

*Business of Supply*

• (1800)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in our democracy, Parliament seldom has to have such a serious debate on the failings of one of its members. We must not, under any circumstances, take this situation lightly.

Recent and not-so-recent events are forcing us to question how well—

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Steveston—Richmond East is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Kenny Chiu:** Madam Speaker, there has been no translation into English.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The problem with the interpretation has now been resolved, and the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean can continue his speech.

**M. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, as I was saying, in our democracy, Parliament seldom has to have such a serious debate on the failures of one of its members. We must not, under any circumstances, take this situation lightly.

Recent and not-so-recent events are forcing us to question how well one of our own is performing his ministerial duties. There is no denying that we are finding many faults with the Minister of National Defence, who must answer to the citizens we represent in Ottawa.

Before formulating my opinion, I want to make one thing clear: The minister is not the only one accountable. There is also the Prime Minister. He is the one who appointed the Minister of National Defence and signed his mandate letter.

In my opinion, tonight's debate is inextricably tied to the Prime Minister's judgment and his ability to spring into action when duty calls. Unfortunately, the fact that we are debating this in the House means there is a problem, a breach of our trust in the government on a specific subject.

The Prime Minister had plenty of opportunities to show the leadership that his role calls for, but he did not. The member for Durham's motion is harsh, but the reality is that we are indeed disappointed with the Minister of National Defence. The Bloc Québécois called for the minister's resignation just last month. We are even more sure that that is the only possible course since the most recent shameful episode of his term.

As opposition members, we have a duty to confront the government and its ministers about their actions. That is the essence of ministerial responsibility. It is the essence of our democracy.

The Liberals blame all their failings on systemic problems, yet they are the ones in charge of the system. There is still time to show that there is at least one working system in Canada that the government has full control over. The only possible course is for the minister to step down.

Let us start with some of the less serious criticisms of the minister. First, the minister misled Quebecers and Canadians over the withdrawal of fighter jets in the fight against ISIS. The minister said that Canada's allies had no problem with the CF-18s being withdrawn from Operation Impact, shortly after the Liberals came to power in 2015.

According to him and the Liberals, Canada's allies understood and respected Canada's decision to withdraw its CF-18s. That is not true. We expect the things a minister says to be true. We would never have expected him to say something so easily refutable, since a minister can usually count on competent staff to help him avoid embarrassment. The situation was the opposite of what the minister was saying: The Iraqis and our allies were strongly opposed to the withdrawal of our aircraft. The media obtained copies of documents indicating that such was the case.

When confronted with that revelation, the minister alleged in an interview that he had actually wanted Canada to keep its CF-18s there, which says a lot about the liberties the minister takes with the facts when it involves our allies. Sadly, the minister's blunders do not end there.

The government knows as well as I do that many Quebecers and Canadians are proud of our military capabilities and the people responsible for our success. Many Quebecers and Canadians respect and recognize the work being done by those risking their lives for us and our freedom. Our fellow citizens are humbled by the accomplishments of our soldiers.

Meanwhile, during a speech in India, the minister said that he was the architect of Operation Medusa in 2006 in Afghanistan. Actually, I should say that he took credit for the work of his colleagues. To give a little bit of background, this operation managed to surround and eliminate up to 700 Taliban fighters who had gathered to launch attacks on allied bases. Canada, the Afghan army and other allied nations managed to defeat the Taliban soldiers. The offensive was led by Canada thanks to many of our military officers.

The men and women who serve Quebec and Canada are very proud of their teamwork. Teamwork is not about playing the hero for the public or showing off at a reception by making self-important boasts.

• (1805)

Operations are not carried out solo, especially not operations like that one. Even de Gaulle, Churchill and MacArthur would never have claimed to be the architects of anything whatsoever. No matter the context, planning an operation depends heavily on intel from troops on the ground and the tactical skills of all kinds of people.

At the time, the minister was involved in planning Operation Medusa, but he was not working alone. Bringing this up again in 2021 seems silly, but it is part of a continuum of untruths and deceit that point to the minister's priority being his own self-interest. But wait, there is more. The minister presided over the indictment and removal of Vice-Admiral Norman. More Quebecers and Canadians should be familiar with that story. The whole thing is an embarrassment and unworthy of the offices held.

*Business of Supply*

Shortly before the 2015 federal election, the Conservatives announced that they had at long last granted a contract to convert a container ship into an oiler replenishment ship for the Royal Navy. The plan was to build that ship, the *Asterix*, at the Davie shipyard in Quebec, for once. When the Liberals took office in 2015, the first thing they did was try to cancel the contract in favour of the Irving family.

Scott Brison, the minister's good friend and the former president of the Treasury Board, was very close to the Irving family. He knew them. It is perfectly simple. He tried to derail the contract. I will give Mr. Brison credit for finally backing down once the story hit the media. It is very typical Liberal behaviour. That always seems to be the Liberal approach to decision-making. Do the Toronto Star, Global News, CBC and Radio-Canada know about this? If not, then we will do it. Do they know about this? If so, then we will not do it. That is how the Liberals operate. Sadly, it did not stop there.

The Liberals chose to behave like an angry mob: find the whistle blower and take him out. Who better than the good old RCMP to act as the political police and investigate the leak? That is what led to the filing of charges against Vice-Admiral Mark Norman, who at one time was the second-highest ranking officer in the Canadian Armed Forces under General Vance. Instead of standing up and ending the witch hunt, the minister did what he does best, in other words protect his interests and the interests of the Liberals.

The Minister of Defence, like the current Prime Minister, did not defend Norman when Vance accused him publicly. The minister even supported Vance's decision to suspend Norman in 2017. As I said, that is embarrassing. It happened one year before Norman was formally charged with leaking confidential documents. "When the decision was made, I supported it", the minister said. The Prime Minister still owes him for that, because he again looked ridiculous.

The numerous documents obtained by Norman's defence team proved that the Liberals were trying to rip up the contract. The government was so embarrassed that Brison resigned from all his roles. Even more embarrassingly, Norman was eventually completely exonerated, but he never got his job back.

The minister is not a team player. How many people have left under his leadership? Five, six, seven or eight people have left, and that cannot continue. Sometimes life gives us subtle signs. Can the minister see these signs? Can the Prime Minister see them? We, the opposition parties, certainly can.

It is also difficult to ignore what happened to former ombudsman Gary Walbourne. Several of my colleagues, who are more eloquent than I am, had the opportunity to speak more specifically about the problem of sexual misconduct in the army. The minister has become known for his failures on this matter.

Nevertheless, I want to come back to it because it ties in with what I was saying earlier in my speech. The Liberals' little clique was not happy with the ombudsman, an extremely important official in the Canadian military. He was dragged through the mud, accused of terrible things and had his funding cut off. The minister was at the centre of the disagreement with Gary Walbourne, who was just trying to do his job. When he approached the minister

about setting their differences aside to address an issue more important than their feud, specifically an allegation that General Vance had committed sexual misconduct towards a female soldier, the minister did little if anything.

● (1810)

He did not want to hear about it, so he passed the puck to the Prime Minister's Office. Remember, the Minister of National Defence is the boss of the department. Quite aside from the substance of the case, which is terrible, I am interested in the minister's behaviour. The one time in his career when he could have really been the architect of something, he looked the other way.

He could have spearheaded a complete overhaul of the culture at the Canadian Armed Forces, but instead, we lost three years. The survivors lost three years. Once again, the Minister of National Defence has not demonstrated that he is a team player. Worse still, when the story first broke, he denied it, then admitted it, then pointed the finger at Gary Walbourne's incompetence.

The next step, taken straight out of the Liberal crisis management playbook, is to blame something systemic.

I have my own theory. A problematic culture, a systemic problem, is not an incantation. Something must be done. Waiting to be painted into a corner before deciding to do something is not worthy of the office of minister. That is exactly what we are talking about today, being worthy of the office, being responsible and accountable. The minister is no longer worthy of his office.

The Prime Minister may not see that, but I hope my hon. colleagues do.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his speech.

He did a good job of telling the troubling story of the Liberals and the Minister of National Defence. The Liberals truly did not take their responsibilities; neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of National Defence.

What does the member think we should do?

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

First, we want the Minister of National Defence to resign. There comes a point when a line has been crossed and there is no going back. That is what has happened. Actually, that line was crossed a long time ago.

I understand the Liberals' partisan concerns. It is in their DNA. They are very good at blaming the people opposite, but they have never been good at introspection or soul-searching.

Now is the time to do that. They must take a good, hard look in the mirror. The only decision, the right decision, is for the Minister of National Defence to resign.

*Business of Supply**[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.):** Madam Speaker, in so many ways the member is wrong. In fact, in listening to him I thought maybe he grabbed the wrong speaking notes. It sounds more like a Conservative speech than a Bloc party speech, which emphasizes the degree to which the Bloc have fallen into the gutter with the Conservatives on this issue.

Let me quote Brigadier-General David Fraser, who was in charge of NATO's regional command in Afghanistan, referring to the Minister of National Defence in 2006:

He tirelessly and selflessly devoted himself to piecing together the ground truth on tribal and Taliban networks in the Kandahar area, and his analysis was so compelling that it drove a number of large scale theatre-resourced efforts, including Operation Medusa, a large scale conventional combat operation that resulted in the defeat of the largest TB cell yet identified in Afghanistan, with over 1500 Taliban killed or captured. I rate him as one of the best intelligence officers I have ever worked with—fearless, smart, and personable—and I would not hesitate to have him on my staff at any time in the future.

The Conservatives and the Bloc are all about character assassination, and I say shame on both those political parties. I would ask the member this: Would he apply to the leader of the official opposition the very same principles that he is applying in this situation?

• (1815)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, that is fascinating.

When we supported the Liberals on Bill C-10, the Conservatives said we sounded just like the Liberals. Now that we are supporting this Conservative motion, the Liberals say we sound just like the Conservatives. When I said they were partisan, this is exactly what I was talking about.

The speech I just gave was made up of known facts that are documented and have been reported in the media, and yet, I am still being told that I did not quote any facts, which is absurd.

The Bloc Québécois does not take position based on where people sit in the House. If something is good for Quebec, we vote for it; if it is not good for Quebec, we vote against it. When we consider a motion that speaks to our conscience, we vote according to our conscience.

*[English]*

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one of the more interesting aspects of the member's intervention was his recognition that the systemic excuse that the Liberals are using is not entirely valid. That is because they have been in power in government for so many years. Similarly, the Conservatives have had a role in this to some degree through their ownership of the start of this entire discussion.

I would like to know a little more about that, because there have even been reports that have been overlooked. The systemic lack of work on this issue extends beyond just this Department of National Defence file and veterans. I think it is also in Parliament. Perhaps

the member could expand on that, because I think it is important to note that it is not an acceptable excuse that it is systemic when the Liberals have been in power for so long.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

I completely agree with him. The Deschamps report was written in 2015, but never considered. It was shelved. They say that the Liberals have done a lot for survivors of sexual misconduct in the military. I have to say that was not part of the mandate letter of the Minister of National Defence.

The Liberals have been in power for six years and all they are doing now is blaming the Conservatives for things that happened 10 years ago. Their only argument to save the minister is that he is a good guy and it would be fun to grab a beer with him. The Liberals should stand up, look in the mirror and take action.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean.

I have to come back to the question from the member for Winnipeg North because I am stunned. I am outraged.

In the current context, we talk a lot about violence against women and we denounce the culture of harassment and sexual violence in the military. In defence of his minister, the member for Winnipeg North says that the minister is a good guy and we should look at his list of accomplishments. That is like telling a battered woman that her husband is a very good guy even though he beats her up all week.

Does my colleague get the impression that, in addition to being incapable of speaking out against violence against women, the Liberals seem to be condoning it?

• (1820)

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I could not have said it better. She got it exactly right. It is sad that the member for Winnipeg North is playing politics on such an important and sensitive issue. We need to be there for victims and survivors. There must be accountability. Right now, someone failed these women, the victims and survivors.

Even if the minister is the best person in the world, as it has been said, he cannot remain in his position. It is not possible. People need to be responsible for their actions, especially when they are a minister. Being the Minister of National Defence is no small matter. It is a big deal.

I could not have said it better than my colleague did. The government knows that there is only one thing to do, and the opposition parties agree. In my opinion, it is time for the minister to resign.

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I just want to say how much I enjoyed the speech from the member for Lac-Saint-Jean and that I enjoyed working with him on the national defence committee, as he is the critic for the Bloc Québécois on national defence.

The member talked about the minister needing to resign, and I appreciate his support of our motion today to censure the minister because of this constant misleading of the House and Canadians. He very eloquently laid out the litany of problems that we have had with this minister over the past six years.

In light of the fact that the minister will not do the honourable thing and resign, and knowing that we are going to censure him because of his behaviour and dishonourable conduct as a parliamentarian, as a minister, will the Bloc Québécois also call on the Prime Minister to fire the Minister of National Defence?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I really like working with him because he is honest, true and serious. He works really hard on the Standing Committee on National Defence and is very familiar with the files.

I agree with my colleague. In one way or another, it has to be done. If the minister does not want to resign, if he does not want to do it himself, and that would be the most honourable way to do it, then we will compel him to leave.

[English]

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I usually say it is an honour to join in any discussion and debate on the floor of the House of Commons, but today it is not an honour. It is actually with a heavy heart that I join in the debate, because we are once again talking about sexual harassment and allegations of sexual impropriety in our armed forces.

Many colleagues have spoken very eloquently on this debate, including the member for Kildonan—St. Paul. A lot of people have brought their own personal experiences to this House today and have spoken passionately on why there needs to be a cultural change in our armed forces.

I am a six-foot four-inch 255-pound, or sometimes 260-pound, farm boy from Saskatchewan, so I have not had a lot of experience with sexual harassment personally. However, people who are close to me have. Talking with them about the experiences they have gone through, I have always taken this very seriously. It is a passion of mine that any kind of sexual harassment should be stopped dead in its tracks. We should stand up for the victims, always.

Some of the questions from the Liberal MPs today invoked the minister's past history. That is not what we are here to discuss today. We are here to discuss his overseeing of a continuation of sexual harassment and a culture of depravity in our armed forces. We need to listen to the victims when they come forward. That is what we are discussing.

For my Liberal colleagues, we are not tarnishing the record of the minister's service when he was a soldier in the armed forces; we are talking about his record as the Minister of National Defence of

### *Business of Supply*

our country. It is not well suited for him to continue in this position. He misled Canadians when it came to the fighter jets. He misled Canadians when it came to Vice-Admiral Norman. He made sure that the culture of sexual harassment could continue in the armed forces.

When some of our senior people in the Canadian Armed Forces are golfing with someone who has had that charge brought against them, it shows a complete and utter disrespect for the members of the armed forces who have come forward to talk about their harrowing sexual harassment experiences.

The victims are not the only ones who have to go through this. Their family members do as well. They are there to support the victims when they have nowhere else to turn. For those family members, this does not go away. There is a lifetime of trying to get through what has happened at the hands of the aggressor. It is something that needs to be stopped in its tracks, and if the minister has shown an inability to do that, we need to hold him to account in this House by voting in favour of this motion. He does not have the moral authority or the legitimacy to continue on in his role as the Minister of National Defence for our country. The House has to say that in one voice. That would show that we do want this culture in the Canadian Armed Forces to change. It is something we need to do as a single voice.

I appreciate all the speeches from my Bloc colleagues, my NDP colleagues and everyone in the opposition who is going to stand with the victims of sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces by saying, "No more." It cannot continue. Something or someone needs to be put in place to change that culture.

We could just look at the department plan, for example. A colleague, the member for Edmonton West, pointed this out to me. This is almost unforgivable. The goal for the Department of National Defence is to have 12% or less people reporting sexual harassment. That is the target. That is the goal.

Colleagues, that goal should be zero, not 12%. If they cannot figure that out on the other side of the House, then most of them are not fit to be in the positions they are in. There should not be a 12% goal of sexual harassment in any department anywhere in Canada.

The Liberals have said they are going to bring back reports. Some of these reports have not brought in any goals since 2018. The Liberals always say there are systemic issues in the departments or systems in Canada. They always like to say they are the natural governing party of Canada. Liberals have been in office more than anyone else, so it is their systems that they say they cannot change.

● (1825)

If they are not willing to do it, in the Conservative Party of Canada we have a government-in-waiting that will not stand for sexual harassment in our Canadian Armed Forces. Our goal will be zero sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces, not 12%.

*Business of Supply*

I am sure that when the member for Durham sends out his mandate letters to ministers, especially to the minister of defence, it will mention the culture of sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces and the fact that it needs to change. The men and women in uniform will have a minister of defence in the Conservative government whom they can trust, whom they have respect for, who will make sure to have their backs.

That is not what is happening right now. Many colleagues who have very good relationships with the members of the Canadian Armed Forces have told their stories. They have said that it is almost impossible to continue to have respect for a minister who continues to let them down time and again. This is not a single instance. There are four or five defining moments in this minister's career over the past six years when he has failed to measure up to the bar of the minister of defence, whether it be Vice-Admiral Norman, the fighter jets, his taking liberties with his own record, or the sexual assault of individuals in the Canadian Armed Forces. We need to do better. Canadians and the hard-working men and women in uniform deserve better than the record of this minister over the past six years.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 6:30 and this being the final supply day in the period ending June 23, 2021, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the opposition motion.

The question is on the motion.

• (1830)

[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.

[English]

**Mr. Alex Ruff:** Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), the division stands deferred until later today.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that it has passed the following two bills, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-211, An Act to establish International Mother Language Day, and Bill S-222, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (use of resources).

\* \* \*

[English]

**MAIN ESTIMATES, 2021-22**

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

That Vote 1, in the amount of \$741,693,237, under Department of Transport — Operating expenditures, in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

**Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity to speak about the government-wide main estimates for 2021-22.

[Translation]

As members know, on February 25, the hon. Minister of Seniors tabled, on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board, the annual departmental plans and the main estimates, 2021-22.

[English]

These main estimates have been studied and last week the President of the Treasury Board put forward the motion that the main estimates, less the amounts voted in the interim supply, be approved by this House. Today, I would like to explain why this is so important and the steps the government has taken to ensure transparency and accountability in government spending.

As Canadians continue to fight COVID-19 and its devastating impacts, the main estimates set out the government's requests for the financing needed to fund its ongoing operations in the year ahead.

[Translation]

As we all know, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it plunged our country into our worst recession since the Great Depression. Tens of thousands of businesses closed down, and jobs and incomes were lost all across the country. The hardest hit were seniors, women, young people, racialized communities, low-income workers and small businesses, especially in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The pandemic took the lives of too many Canadians.

[English]

An essential part of Canada's fight against COVID-19 has been the unprecedented support made available to Canadians and Canadian businesses by the government. We knew Canadians needed a lifeline to get through the COVID-19 storm, so we launched programs to help our citizens, like the Canada emergency response benefit, the Canada emergency student benefit, the Canada emergency wage subsidy and targeted support for regions, economic sectors and not-for-profit organizations. This approach has worked, but the storm is not over. Canadians continue to need the government's ongoing support as businesses reopen and the economy is repaired and built back better for everyone. The funds requested in these main estimates will help the government do just that.

● (1835)

[Translation]

Government organizations are seeking funds to continue delivering already approved programs and services and to make investments to support Canadians during the pandemic and create the right conditions for a successful economic recovery. The funds requested reflect our ongoing commitment to investing in Canada's pandemic response, from economic support for individuals and businesses to paying for vaccines, enhancing support for mental health tools, virtual health care and more.

The main estimates provide information about the \$342.2 billion in proposed expenditures for 123 organizations. That amount can be broken down into \$141.9 billion for voted expenditures and \$200.3 billion for statutory expenditures.

Statutory expenditures have already been authorized in existing legislation, such as the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act and the Canada Recovery Benefits Act, so they are presented in the budget for information only.

[English]

In March, roughly \$59 billion of the \$141.9 billion in voted expenditures was approved to cover the requirements of organizations for the first three months of the fiscal year, including to continue the government's key operations, and for COVID-19 response measures and emergency reports.

Of the total \$342.2 billion being requested in the main estimates, just over \$22 billion is related to the COVID-19 pandemic response, split almost evenly between voted and statutory expenditures. This includes just over \$10 billion for the Canada recovery benefit, the Canada recovery sickness benefit and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit.

Other significant changes in statutory spending from last year's main estimates include updates to major transfer payments, such as elderly benefits, the Canada health transfer and an increased climate action incentive payment published in the fall economic statement 2020.

Let me now focus on some of the larger organizations in these estimates. There are six organizations seeking more than \$5 billion each in voted budgetary expenditures.

[Translation]

One of these is the Public Health Agency of Canada, which is asking Parliament for authorization to spend \$8.7 billion. PHAC will use the money to continue its important work helping Canadians deal with the pandemic by investing in COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutic products, medical equipment and PPE, as well as closing gaps in biomanufacturing.

PHAC is also responsible for maintaining quarantine facilities funded by the federal government, strengthening its border and health travel program and helping municipalities offer safe voluntary isolation sites to prevent the virus from spreading further.

Although the main estimates reflect government spending in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they also demonstrate ongoing

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support for other priorities that are crucial to Canadians' interests, such as national security and defence.

[English]

The Department of National Defence is presenting \$22.8 billion in voted expenditures in the 2021-22 main estimates, which include investments in the "Strong, Secure, Engaged" defence policy, as well as important funding for equipment upgrades.

There is also the Department of Indigenous Services, which is seeking \$13.4 billion. Included for Indigenous Services Canada in the estimates is a proposed net increase of \$508.6 million to improve access to safe, clean drinking water in first nations communities. In addition, proposed spending includes increases of \$122.6 million for supportive care in indigenous communities and \$104.7 million for education programs at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels.

The fourth organization I will highlight is the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, which is seeking \$7 billion through these main estimates.

● (1840)

[Translation]

These planned expenditures include a number of votes that are centrally managed by Treasury Board ministers and total nearly \$3.7 billion. The funds are allocated to federal organizations and facilitate the Treasury Board's roles as employer, management board and budget office of the government. Just over \$3 billion is also set aside for its responsibilities as an employer.

These expenditures will be used to make payments under the public service pension, benefits and insurance plans, including the employer's contribution to health, income maintenance and life insurance premiums.

Finally, the main estimates of the Treasury Board Secretariat also include a net increase of \$27 million for program spending. The main objective of this increase is to improve diversity and inclusion in the public service and to ensure that the Canadian Digital Service can continue to provide critical digital products and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Another important priority for the government is international development and diplomacy. Through the proposed funding of the \$6.3 billion in these estimates, Global Affairs Canada will continue to implement Canada's feminist foreign policy and support actions to reduce poverty and fragility in developing countries. Global Affairs Canada will also work with global partners to promote trade and continue to strengthen its consular program.

Hon. colleagues, Canadians also care about how we treat our veterans and how we want the government to honour their service. These men and women are the veterans who served to protect the very rights and freedoms we enjoy today. With the proposed funding in these estimates of \$6.2 billion, Veterans Affairs Canada will continue to deliver important services and ensure benefit programs continue to meet the needs of our veterans.

*[Translation]*

I would like to mention a couple of other organizations that provide essential services to Canadians: the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The CBSA provides border services that support national security policies and facilitates the flow of people and goods across the border. To do this, it is requesting just over \$1.8 billion.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation helps Canadians meet their housing needs. For example, it works with the provinces and territories, first nations, as well as the private and non-profit sectors to improve access to affordable housing. It is requesting approximately \$3.3 billion to carry out its activities.

*[English]*

We would also like to assure Canadians that their government is committed to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability, especially in times of rapid change. Let me turn to that now, beginning with the overall estimates process, of which these main estimates are a part.

In our system of Parliament, the estimates are crucial to ensuring transparency and accountability in the government's use of public money. The main estimates, supplementary estimates, departmental plans and departmental results reports, in conjunction with the public accounts, all help parliamentarians scrutinize government spending. I cannot overstate how important this information is to the functioning of our system of government. In fact, accountability is predicated on parliamentarians knowing how public funds are being spent, so that they can hold the government to account for its actions.

● (1845)

*[Translation]*

The government fully recognizes its responsibility and its commitment to accountability to Canadians through the members of Parliament who represent them. This commitment has taken on a special significance since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency measures taken by the government.

Due to the unprecedented levels of spending in response to the pandemic, the government provided Parliament information that went beyond what is normally presented. For example, in the spring

of 2020, the Minister of Finance began submitting to the Standing Committee on Finance a biweekly report on statutory spending in response to the pandemic. As for the estimates, we are providing side reports, with a detailed list of statutory authorities and an on-line annex on estimated pandemic-related expenditures.

*[English]*

There is also a complete breakdown of these planned expenditures by standard object, such as personnel, professional services, transfer payments and more. This information on planned spending on the COVID-19 response, along with estimated expenditures, is also publicly available on GC InfoBase, an easy-to-use online tool, and through the open government portal. By developing these datasets and digital tools, we are demonstrating our commitment to providing parliamentarians and Canadians with more information on where public funds are going and how they are being spent. To close the loop on expenditure reporting for the fiscal year, the government will also report on actual expenditures and results in the public accounts and departmental results reports in the fall.

Hon. colleagues, the government is committed to being open and transparent with Canadians and their representatives, particularly during this pandemic. We have introduced special measures to help our citizens, businesses and communities from all regions during these challenging times. Many of these measures were passed in Parliament through emergency legislation and continue to help Canadians through the crisis. Again, the full disclosure of all these is paramount for the government.

*[Translation]*

I should also mention part III of the main estimates, the departmental plans and the departmental results reports, which work together and have been part of the government's efforts to improve accountability to Parliament for the last 25 years.

In recent years, the government has tabled the main estimates and the departmental plans at about the same time.

The departmental plans show how each department plans to achieve results and provide further details on the resources requested in the main estimates. They also establish a link between program performance, expected results, commitments set out in the ministers' mandate letters, and government priorities. Departmental plans are organized according to core responsibilities and expected results, which are the baseline against which organizations monitor and report on their end-of-year performance.



[English]

That reporting and tracking is done through the department's subsequent departmental results reports, which are tabled in Parliament after the end of the fiscal year, at around the same time as the public accounts. All this detailed information is available on GC InfoBase, as well as departmental web sites. These reporting mechanisms ensure parliamentarians and Canadians can easily track our priorities and plan spending to see how we are achieving results.

I have gone into some detail describing the monies requested through these main estimates, why it is important and how we are ensuring transparency and accountability with respect to government spending, but let me come back to the key point. The story of the main estimates 2021-22 is more than just a story about numbers and expenditure management. It is a story about Canadians looking after each other.

We all know how hard the pandemic has hit Canadians and their families. It has been a matter of life and death for some, financial hardship for many and protecting our loved ones for us all. That is why the government acted quickly over the past year to provide financial help for individuals, businesses and the health care system.

• (1850)

[Translation]

A good number of these measures are ongoing in 2021.

These measures placed real pressure on many departments, which must continue to provide these emergency measures in addition to their core programs and services.

As parliamentarians, our work consists in ensuring that government organizations have the financial resources required to do the work that Canadians expect of them. Departments must have the financial capacity to continue protecting Canadians, and the funding proposed in these estimates will let them do that this upcoming fiscal year.

In closing, in the upcoming year, we will face ongoing and new challenges. The main estimates attest to the government's commitment to address these challenges while continuing to work on other national priorities.

[English]

It has been a long journey, and if COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that we are in this together.

I would like to close my remarks by thanking my hon. colleagues on all sides of the House for their ongoing collaboration as we work together to help Canadians during these difficult times. As we finish the fight against COVID-19 and rebuild a resilient, economic recovery that creates jobs and growth for our people, I know that the government can count on members' support.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am astounded that the member talked about openness and transparency from the government. Does he not realize that this is the government that has redacted documents, prorogued Parliament so people could not find out about the WE Charity scandal, filibustered at committee and, just today, was found in contempt of Parli-

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ment for not delivering requested documents? I do not call that openness and transparency, but I digress.

My question today is about the transportation estimates, which is what we are here to talk about.

I notice that the government donated money to Air Canada, which gave its executives bonuses, and that sounds a lot like Bombardier and all those other Liberal friends. I do not know why the government is choosing winners and losers. It gave money to Air Canada and Air Transat but not to WestJet. Is it just Liberal friends and donors that get money from this government?

[Translation]

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton for her question.

Concerning the transparency and availability of the data, which, as I mentioned, is available on GC InfoBase, it is very important for parliamentarians to have the means to do a proper analysis and ensure that the government is accountable for its spending.

[English]

It is very important for members of Parliament, especially those members of Parliament who choose to be part of the public accounts committee, to make sure they have information in a timely and full way so they can truly determine how the Government of Canada is spending its money and that it is meeting the expected requirements set out in the departmental plans for the upcoming year.

This is the reason why a couple of years ago we changed the way that we report the numbers to make sure the main estimates line up with—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have to go to other questions.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened very attentively to my colleague from Hull—Aylmer and to his presentation on the main estimates.

I have two questions. He spoke about financial capacity, but the government refuses time and again to implement a wealth tax, even though Canadian billionaires saw their wealth grow by \$80 billion during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the government is preparing to reduce the Canada emergency response benefit, or CERB, from \$500 per week to \$300 per week in the coming weeks. I know that in my colleague's riding and in ridings across the country, there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who depend on the CERB. It is a contradiction to reject a wealth tax and, at the same time, to reduce the CERB for the average Canadian who really needs this emergency assistance.

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• (1855)

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from British Columbia for his question.

The government has been there from the beginning to support Canadians during this health crisis and the resulting economic crisis, the likes of which we have not seen in 100 years. That is why we created the CERB, to support Canadians during this very difficult period.

That is why we also created a program to help businesses across Canada pay workers and keep their employees on the payroll, so as to help everyone through this health and economic crisis.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to see my friend, the member for Hull—Aylmer. We have had some good times together here and abroad. I am always happy to see him.

I find it unfortunate, though, that the Minister of Transport is not here to give a speech and answer questions, because it is quite clear that this motion is directly related to transportation. Although my friend from Hull—Aylmer gave a very good speech, it did not specifically address transportation.

I can understand why. In my opinion, as my party's transportation critic, the government has botched this file, and that includes the airline and cruise ship industries.

Why did the member not talk about transportation, the subject before us, instead of giving an overall vision?

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, I would also like to commend my colleague from Calgary Midnapore, whom I had the pleasure of getting to know better through our interactions here in Canada and abroad.

The reason I wanted to present an overview of this government spending to my hon. colleagues today is that the presentation by the next parliamentary secretary or minister will certainly deal specifically with the budget for the Department of Transport.

However, I would like to remind the House that with help from the government, the large employer emergency financing facility will issue loans of \$4 billion to Air Canada in order to protect jobs and ensure that it has the necessary liquidity to keep Canadians and Canadian markets connected.

This is very important, and I am sure that my hon. colleague will have the chance to elaborate—

[*English*]

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have had the privilege of serving with this excellent member on the public accounts committee. I enjoy working with him. I do have a relatively pointed question for him, though.

There is some aviation in my riding, and in the recent budget the Liberals proposed a tax on planes and other items. The idea, of course, is to tax the wealthy, but in my riding it would cost jobs. I want to know what he would say to the family members who are going to lose their jobs because of this tax.

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of serving with the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for the past year on the public accounts committee, where we have had an opportunity to really review in-depth, and I believe in a very non-partisan way, the expenses of the government and to make sure Canadians are getting a full accounting.

Details on that specific pointed question will follow in the next government member's speech on transport, but I would like my hon. colleague to share the message with his constituents that we have their backs. This is the reason we created the Canada emergency wage subsidy, to help businesses keep connections with their employees. It is the reason we supported individuals through the Canada emergency benefit.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

That way, we were able to ensure that Canadians got the support they needed at the worst point in the crisis. I am pleased to say and to see that we are emerging from the crisis. The economy is getting stronger across Canada, and I hope that will also be the case in my hon. colleague's riding.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Niagara Falls.

I mentioned in my question earlier that the reason we are here today is to discuss the estimates, specifically as they relate to transport. My message here today is about the overwhelming incompetence of the government regarding transport. The estimates here today are just a symptom of that. There have been so many instances in which the government has not delivered on the file of transport.

Regarding airlines, for months the airline sector waited for a plan from the government. I have gone through the timeline before and will attempt to go through it briefly today. On March 18, 2020, the international border closed. On March 21, Porter Airlines suspended operations. On March 23, Sunwing Airlines suspended operations. There was no plan from the government.

On April 1, Air Transat concluded repatriation operations. On April 18, Air Transat suspended flights. On April 20, Air Canada concluded repatriation operations. There was still no plan. On June 30, Air Canada announced it was discontinuing services to 30 regional routes and closed eight stations. On July 17, WestJet concluded its repatriation operations. On July 23, Air Transat restored operations. On June 24, WestJet laid off 3,333 employees through restructuring. There was still no plan.

On July 31, Air Canada posted \$1.7 billion in quarterly losses. On August 14, the Government of Canada introduced flight plans. On September 1, Nav Canada increased fees by 29.5%. There was still no plan. On September 23, Air Canada announced a COVID-19 testing pilot project at Toronto Pearson Airport. On October 1, Air Canada ordered approved rapid tests. There was still no plan. On October 14, WestJet suspended routes to Atlantic Canada. On November 2, the Calgary Airport quarantine and testing projects began. There was still no plan. On November 6, Sunwing Airlines restored operations briefly, but there was still no plan.

We have seen this continue through the fall, the winter and now the spring with no plan from the government. However, promises were made. Promises were made by the Liberals on March 10, 2020. When asked what the government could do to help airlines, the Minister of Economic Development said, “What we’re looking at is how can we mitigate the impacts while making sure that we can have, still, a strong summer season, and that we can really bounce back.” We did not see anything.

On March 19, 2020, then finance minister Bill Morneau said, “We will be refining what we’ve done, we will be thinking about next steps. We are working hard with the airline sector.” Still, there was no plan. On March 20, the Prime Minister’s government promised a plan to help the industry that would follow an \$82 billion aid package that was announced earlier that week, yet still nothing happened.

For months we heard empty promises from the government. Devastating actions were occurring in the airline sector, yet there was no plan. Finally, when we saw not even plans, but deals with specific airlines begin to emerge as brought forward previously in the House by the member for Sarnia—Lambton, we found out the government was incapable of creating deals without taking care that there would be no executive compensation.

When I demanded a plan for the airline sector in the House several times over, I made my demands clear: support for regional routes, protection of workers and, most importantly, making sure that taxpayer funds were not used for executive bonuses. However, Air Canada, with which an agreement was negotiated, was awarded \$10 million to give bonuses to executives, and the government was incapable of excluding this when it made its plan.

I wish I could say this was the only incident of government incompetence when it comes to executive bonuses. We found out, not a week later, that Nav Canada handed out \$7 million in executive bonuses after laying off 700 workers and increasing airport fees by 30%.

● (1905)

I wish the incompetence stopped there, but it did not, and I can see why the Minister of Transport did not show his face in the House today.

I currently have five letters outstanding to the Minister of Transport. The first one is on a pleasure craft operating competency program. Changes were going to be made in the operation of pleasure craft, which was bringing stress and strain to tourist and boating operations all across the country. There was no response from the Minister of Transport on this letter. Regarding electronic logging

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devices, on which we have seen legislation come into place, a letter has been sent to him, and there has been no response from him.

On ballast water regulations, which are having a major effect on shipping, which is—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry. The hon. member for Yukon is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, I thought the member mentioned the presence or absence of a person—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member will have to come back to another point of order. He does not have his headset on, and I would ask him to do that.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, I thought the member mentioned the presence or absence of someone in the House. That is not allowed at this time, is it?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry if I missed that.

I want to remind the hon. member, if she did, that it is not allowed to mention who is or is not in the House. I actually do remember now, as I am thinking back to what the point of order is and the speech that the hon. member was saying. I want to remind the hon. member that she is not to mention who is and who is not in the House.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore may continue.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I do not believe I recognized someone as being in the House or not. I was recognizing who delivered a speech. There is a difference between the two. One indicates the physical presence of someone, which is what the Standing Orders say we are not able to comment on, and the other indicates someone who gives an address. For example, because this is specifically regarding transport, I expect we would hear from the Minister of Transport. I distinguish one as being physical and the other as an individual delivering a speech. I will leave it there.

I will go back to the third letter I did not receive a response to, about ballast waters as I said, which have a major effect not only on shippers, but also on supply chains in the country. I sent this letter on May 31 and I have yet to hear a response. Again, this is more incompetence by government and the minister. I sent a letter on June 9 to the Minister of Transport regarding shipping containers, which are causing major stress for exporters as they attempt to get their goods out of the country to international markets, and I have yet to receive a response.

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Most insulting not only to me, but to the individuals who asked me to take on this task, was the presentation of pins with insignias of airline sector companies that I made to the minister on March 11. I received no correspondence from him saying he had received the pins. In fact, I posted a video on social media of me delivering the pins. I was outside his door with this presentation and he never got back to me. This presentation of hundreds of company insignia pins from workers in the airlines sector who have lost their jobs is now sitting in my office if he would like to contact me to claim it.

Another example of the government's incompetence with regard to the transport sector is the reannouncement of announcements. The night before last, my staff said the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Transport were making an announcement the next morning at the Macdonald-Cartier airport, and we had better be ready to respond. We did not have to be ready, because the government did what it always does: It reannounced funds that had been announced already. It made a spectacle of it in a press conference rather than following through with actions.

We have seen sign after sign of incompetence by the government, but most frustrating in this moment is the lack of a restart plan from the government not only for the airline sector, but for Canadians in general. Other jurisdictions are moving ahead. I am very disappointed that I do not have the opportunity to hear from the Minister of Transport at this time in this regard.

Health Canada's expert advisory panel released its chart on conditions for entry into Canada on May 27. This was weeks ago, and we still have not heard any announcement by the government as to the timelines and thresholds tied to this announcement and the report from Health Canada's expert—

• (1910)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, the hon. member's time has expired. I am sure she can add more during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the frustration that my colleague has shared regarding the government's response.

A company in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona is using the wage subsidy program to pay for scab labour so it can lock its workers out. Like her, I have brought up many times to the Deputy Prime Minister that I would like the government to close this loophole, and I have heard nothing.

Could the member comment on why she thinks the government refuses to close loopholes, refuses to make the plans that need to happen and refuses to do its work?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, like myself and the leader of the official opposition, share a commitment to Canada's workers. She is right that the government, in not coming up with a reopening plan for the nation, is leaving all of Canada's workers in the lurch.

I stand beside her in the hopes that the government soon will pay attention to Canada's workers and come up with a plan, not only for the workers of Canada but for all Canadians.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member spoke about no plan for the airline industry. I put a question to the Minister of Transport about the cruise ship industry. He had a plan. His plan was to start in springtime of 2022. He was totally blasé, not recognizing that it is a \$2.6 billion industry. It would not even allow for technical stops.

Does the member have any comments about that?

• (1915)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his advocacy for the cruise line sector in British Columbia, which also serves the cruise line sector across Canada, of course, because other ports are affected.

The cruise line industry was clear with the government, when U.S. legislators put in temporary legislation, that action was necessary, yet it did not act. Now we see an effort from the U.S. government to perpetually halt these technical stops, which will have a devastating effect on the cruise line sector in Canada. The industry has indicated to us that it must have government response immediately, at the very latest in October, or else its next season will be ruined as well.

The member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge and I are begging the government for action in regard to the loss of these technical stops, in perpetuity.

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, I have a quick question regarding the implementation of a vessel arrival system. We have freighters parked all over the Southern Gulf Islands. This is costing Prairie farmers \$23 million a year to have freighters parked, waiting to get into the Vancouver port.

Does the hon. member think we should have more efficient use of our port to save these Prairie grain farmers money?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, during my conversations with port authorities, they told me that there were gluts of anchorage all along the western coast as a result of this pandemic. Once again, it falls upon the federal government to find solutions to these problems. I hope it starts to do that.

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today and take this opportunity to share my thoughts on the recently tabled transportation estimates. These estimates, which are based upon budget 2021, have failed to present the needed road map and economic recovery plan that would lead us out of this pandemic in a timely manner. Not surprisingly, these estimates are just as disappointing as the budget itself.

Transportation is a critical component to our travel and tourism industry. Without the important role played by the transportation sector, Canadians and international visitors alike would be unable to experience the amazing sights, culture, landscapes, attractions and history that Canada has to offer. While a great number of provinces and territories are getting closer to a reopening of their economies, with plans in place, the federal government's lack of preparedness in its own jurisdiction poses a major obstacle in accelerating our economic reopening progress as a nation.

Let us take the Canadian cruise ship industry for example. Last February, the Minister of Transport banned cruise ship activity in Canada for a full year, without even considering whether health conditions could improve faster to allow the industry to resume earlier and salvage part of the late summer or early fall season this year. Instead, it was a blanket ban for a full year. Meanwhile, the Americans took this issue with an approach much different and far more optimistic. They could restart their American industry much sooner and responsibly before Canada's cruise ban ends in February 2022.

Consequently, our neighbours to the south have recently introduced legislation to allow American cruise ships to bypass Canadian ports on the west coast during voyages between Seattle and Alaska. As a result, Canada's west coast cruise industry is at risk of losing its spot in this marketplace. There is a real fear that these proposed changes could one day become permanent, which would have a devastating impact on Canadian coastline economies. Thousands of jobs in the tourism and maritime service industry rely on the safe operation of cruise ships between Canada and the United States.

As the American cruise ship industry begins to resume safe operations and with Canadian industry making it clear that a plan is urgently needed to save its 2022 season, there is still no safe restart strategy for cruise ships in Canada. We can blame the federal Liberals and their indifference and naivety for the unnecessary turmoil and economic loss.

Another example of the federal government's lack of preparedness can be found in its transportation consideration at our international land border crossings. There are four major international bridge crossings in my Niagara Falls riding alone. These include the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie, the Rainbow Bridge and Whirlpool Bridge in Niagara Falls, and the Queenston and Lewiston Bridge in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Before COVID, all four bridges were critical in facilitating travellers and trade in a timely manner. However, since COVID, all four bridges have struggled greatly without emergency financial assistance from our federal government.

When the American federal government stepped up to support the bridge authorities on its side of the Niagara River, financial aid from our federal government was nowhere in sight. I have written to the minister about this issue and still no action has been taken. One would imagine that CBSA officers who are front line, outward facing and essential workers would be prioritized by the federal government, their employer, to get vaccinated earlier. Instead, vaccines only began to arrive in Niagara for CBSA officers a few weeks ago, and this only happened after I asked the minister responsible about this in question period. It should not be this hard.

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Another border challenge involving transportation is quickly coming and it will be here before we know it. In my discussions with local bridge authorities, there is a major concern about how the logistics of reopening these bridges and testing travellers will work from a border management perspective. What is to be avoided from their perspective is a plan that will result in border delays so long and dreadful that it may deter U.S. travellers from coming into Canada altogether. That is why we have been asking for months now for the government to present a safe and responsible federal reopening plan. When will this be announced?

As I have said many times in the House, COVID-19 hit our travel and tourism industry first, it hit it the hardest and it will take this industry the longest time to recover. These estimates are tone deaf to the fact that we are still fighting this pandemic nearly 15 months after it started. In addition to lacking any coordinated effort of sense of a recovery plan, there is scant to no mention of sector specific support measures for those hardest hit in our transportation sector.

Let us take motor coach buses for example. This industry has been a key component for connecting Canadians and visitors in rural and remote areas to the larger urban centres and beyond. However, COVID has been relentless against this sector.

● (1920)

It is no coincidence that on May 13, in the midst of a severe third wave of this pandemic, Greyhound Canada announced it was permanently cutting all bus routes across the country and shutting down its intercity bus operations after nearly a century of service.

An article in BNN Bloomberg reads, "The decision is a blow to rural and remote areas that rely on a patchwork of private intercity bus companies for transportation."

Many Canadians, including the most vulnerable, live in rural or remote regions that depend heavily on these bus services to travel large distances between smaller towns and urban areas. As Greyhound continues to operate in the United States, it is difficult not to place the blame squarely on the dire economic situation in Canada that we face because of the Prime Minister's third wave.

The operators of Double Deck Tours, a local business in my riding, have also written to me. It is Niagara Falls' oldest tour company and it provides fully guided tours of the attractions, events and sights of Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. They write:

### *Business of Supply*

Given the impacts of COVID's third wave on our economy and the absence of a coordinated border reopening plan, we are facing the possibility of having to rely exclusively on limited local business and a summer with ongoing restrictions. This will significantly reduce our recovery trajectory and our ability to replace these subsidies with revenues. The limited opportunity presented by a restricted summer will not be sufficient for businesses to accrue the liquidity required to make it to summer 2022, our next peak travel period.

Pressure is mounting on this issue. Earlier this week, the Canadian press reported that Canadian business leaders were demanding a plan from Ottawa to reopen our borders and our economy now. Perrin Beatty, the chief executive officer of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, is quoted as calling Canada an outlier in failing to provide a fully fledged reopening plan that includes vaccination rates and other criteria.

What are the Liberals waiting for? We need them to coordinate and co-operate among themselves with industry, with business leaders and with our international partners to come up with a safe and responsible reopening plan so we can get life back to normal as quickly as possible. Canadian businesses and industries are eagerly seeking clarity and certainty from their federal government. Instead, it is becoming more clear by the day that the federal leadership, in this regard, is sorely absent.

Transportation, travel and tourism are among some of the hardest-hit sectors of our economy. It is going to take some time for them to recover. In fact, many businesses in these sectors are in survival mode, while they watch other parts of our economy reopen more quickly. The reality is that travel and tourism will not restart overnight. While 2019 was a record year for many Canadian tourism businesses, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada estimates it could take until at least 2025 before 2019 levels are achieved again. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada fears it could lose nearly 30 years of economic progress in its sector if more emergency financial support is not provided soon by the federal government.

Before this pandemic, Canada's travel and tourism industry was the country's fifth-largest sector, responsible for \$105 billion in revenue, or 2.3% of GDP. It employed one in 10 Canadians, or 10% of Canadian jobs, and had 225,000 small and medium-sized businesses across Canada. It is terrible to see how much economic damage, loss, suffering and setback have been caused by this prolonged 15-month pandemic. It is even more terrible to know that our federal government, whose key responsibility is to protect its citizens and Canadian interests, was not ready to protect us at the start, and 15 long months later, it remains unprepared to provide a clear plan forward on safely and responsibly reopening our economy and our borders.

It should never be lost on any Canadian that the Liberal government prorogued Parliament last summer in the midst of a national pandemic health crisis. Let that resonate for a moment; think about it. Canadians deserve so much better, and Canada's Conservatives are ready and prepared to deliver the the governance and leadership they so badly deserve.

• (1925)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian**

**Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have two questions.

First, tourism is very important to me too, and we would like the border open. What day does the member think the border should be open?

Second, I support a number of the issues the member had, and the answers the government has for them: the new rural transportation initiative related to buses; the record trade corridors program; the billion dollars targeted for tourism, a targeted tourism part of our RRRF; and increases to Destination Canada for tourism.

However, the member made a good point that we need these supports in place and they will not be in place without the budget. Has he encouraged his colleagues to support the budget quickly, because those supports run out this month?

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:** Madam Speaker, in terms of the budget, this government is in control of its own legislative agenda. It prorogued Parliament last summer. That was six weeks of delay right there, and this budget is the first budget that we have seen in two years. Let that resonate for a moment.

I can tell the member that I was disappointed by the funding provided for the tourism sector. It is \$1 billion for a sector of our economy that generates \$105 billion. It is simply a pittance and it is not what is required for our sector moving forward. In my community alone, there are 44,000 workers and 16,000 hotel rooms that depend on the tourism economy. Let this resonate for a second: We generate in Niagara alone \$2.4 billion in tourism receipts.

What this government provided for tourism is not sufficient and will not support the sector.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. Tourism is also very important in my region, particularly in the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé. One of the problems businesses are facing is a labour shortage. They are hoping to get help from temporary foreign workers, but it is a very complicated process.

I think my colleague would agree that the departments are working in silos. The Department of Health ran into complications related to COVID-19 testing and quarantines. Then, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship obviously did not do enough to bring in temporary foreign workers, and when it comes to economic development, they are investing in everything but the small businesses that really need it.

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

[English]

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:** Madam Speaker, like the hon. member, I believe that the issue of temporary foreign workers is plaguing all tourism operators across the country. I have heard from numerous tourism operations across the country, including in my own riding, about the need for labour and the need for temporary foreign workers.

To the member's point, yes, this government is operating in silos. It is not talking to the stakeholders. It is not assisting with meeting the needs that are so important to them as we move forward and look towards the recovery that we all want.

Among stakeholders across the country, there was almost unanimity among everyone I have spoken to. Why is the government ending programs like the CEWS and the CERS and the Canada recovery benefit this summer, when almost all of the stakeholders asked for those programs to be extended until the end of the year?

• (1930)

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member's riding and mine have a lot of similarities. We are border ridings, we rely on tourism and we both have a large and important wine industry.

I am wondering if the member could comment on the recent news that the government had pledged \$102 million over two years to help the wine industry get through COVID and get through the WTO challenges and the loss of the excise tax exemption—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Niagara Falls for a brief answer.

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct that the challenges the grape and wine industry faces are the result of the government's own actions. The government caused the problems that resulted in the World Trade Organization challenge, and on the \$102 million, which is divided in the first year, I am already hearing from stakeholders that it is insufficient to meet the needs that those stakeholders, wineries and growers have.

Again, the government is not talking to the sector and it is not talking to the industry. That needs to change if we are going to see benefits resulting from it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé, whom I affectionately refer to as my favourite MP.

On June 9, the House adopted Motion No. 69, which was moved by my colleague from Montarville. The motion presents six concrete measures to help the government take more effective action against tax evasion and tax avoidance.

This evening, I would like to remind the House of those six measures. I expect the government to take action. I would also like to remind the House that our role as legislators involves guiding the government on such motions. Since the motion was adopted, I expect concrete action to be taken. I expect the government to follow through on this.

### *Business of Supply*

The first measure is as follows:

amend the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Regulations to ensure that income that Canadian corporations repatriate from their subsidiaries in tax havens ceases to be exempt from tax in Canada;

Here, the motion calls for subsection 5907(1) of the income tax regulations to be repealed.

I would note that this subsection, which was adopted behind closed doors, allows Canadian corporations to repatriate money tax-free from their subsidiaries in one of the 23 tax havens with which Canada has a tax information exchange agreement.

This measure would change things so that any income repatriated by a Canadian corporation would be taxed. There is no need for a bill to do that. The motion was adopted in the House, and the order was sent to the government. All the minister had to do was delete it from the income tax regulations, thereby revolutionizing the fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance. That is what we are asking the government to do. We are in a pandemic, and spending levels are higher than ever. The motion proposes measures that will enable to government to bring in more revenue and increase tax fairness.

The second measure is as follows:

review the concept of permanent establishment so that income reported by shell companies created abroad by Canadian taxpayers for tax purposes is taxed in Canada;

When a company registers a subsidiary or a billionaire establishes a trust abroad, that subsidiary or trust is considered a foreign national, independent from the Canadian citizen or company that created it, and its income becomes non-taxable.

In taxation jargon, these subsidiaries or trusts are referred to as permanent establishments, in other words, they have a taxable fixed place of business independent of their owner. In many cases, they are shell companies with no real activity. There is no justification for treating them differently from any other bank account and exempting the income they generate from tax.

The Standing Committee on Finance is looking into shell companies set up on the Isle of Man by KPMG. Things need to change. The motion adopted by the House contains a measure to do that. We expect the government to take action with a view to collecting additional revenue in order to offset the additional expenses arising from the pandemic.

The third measure is as follows:

require banks and other federally regulated financial institutions to disclose, in their annual reports, a list of their foreign subsidiaries and the amount of tax they would have been subject to had their income been reported in Canada;

### *Business of Supply*

This may surprise many people, but for years banks were required to include that in their annual reports. It used to be released and that requirement needs to be reinstated. Here, the House is calling on the government to require the banks to be transparent again. It would just take a simple directive from the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. The government can send this notification and this very simple measure could be applied very quickly because it does not require any international negotiations or any legislative or regulatory change.

In 2019, the six Bay Street banks made a record profit of \$46 billion. That is a 50% increase over five years. In 2020, despite the pandemic, they made \$41 billion in profits. Their profits rise, but they pay less tax because they report their most profitable activities in tax havens, where their assets keep growing.

Until the door to the use of tax havens is closed shut, consumers could at least be able to choose their financial institution in an informed manner, and taxpayers would be able to judge whether the banks deserve government assistance.

• (1935)

Some of the measures the government announced in its latest budget are consistent with the fourth measure, which reads as follows:

review the tax regime applicable to digital multinationals, whose operations do not depend on having a physical presence, to tax them based on where they conduct business rather than where they reside;

We see this in rich countries. There are two pieces of good news in this budget. First, the government will finally start collecting the GST on services sold by digital multinationals as of July 1, so two weeks from now. This tax change was included in the notice of ways and means that the House voted on.

It is hard to understand why Ottawa waited so long, when Quebec has been doing it for two years and it is going great, but as they say, better late than never.

Also, still on the topic of this measure, the budget announces the government's plan to tax multinational Internet companies on their activities at a rate of 3% of their sales in Canada beginning on January 1, 2022. This commitment might be merely hot air, however, since there is talk of a possible implementation after the likely date of the next election. There is speculation that it will be called in mid-August, if the polls remain comfortable for the party in power, but still, this commitment is good news. It will be really good when it happens.

During the last election campaign, which was not so long ago, the Bloc Québécois proposed such a measure and the use of the revenue generated to compensate the victims of web giants, the creators. We are talking about the artists and the media who do not receive copyright fees from the web giants that use their content. The government is not going that far, but is instead reporting this GAFAM tax in the consolidated revenue fund. Nevertheless, we applaud this measure. It is a good start.

The fifth measure is as follows:

work toward establishing a global registry of actual beneficiaries of shell companies to more effectively combat tax evasion;

This is an extremely important measure. This needs to happen. Experts told the committee that the problem was that the information was not accessible; we cannot see the information. The fifth measure adopted by the House changes that. In many cases, tax havens are opaque, and it is impossible to know who truly benefits from the companies and trusts that are set up. Often, we only know the name of the trustee that manages them or the legal or accounting firm that created them, but not the name of the person hiding behind them. Such a setup is a real boon for fraudsters who can hide their money with complete impunity.

This type of registry already exists in Luxembourg, but it is accessible only to financial institutions. These institutions do their own audits, but this type of registry must be made available to governments or tax agencies. Tax evasion and avoidance has gone on too long. We do not know who is hiding behind these companies. I am calling on the government to implement the fifth measure.

The sixth and final measure is a very important one

:

use the global financial crisis caused by the pandemic to launch a strong offensive at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development against tax havens with the aim of eradicating them.

As members know, in response to the 2008-09 financial crisis, the OECD has been working hard to combat the use of tax havens. It was then that countries started to seriously go after tax havens within the OECD by launching a broad multilateral instrument on international taxation and tax base recovery called the framework on base erosion and profit shifting, better known as BEPS. Some progress has been made since the initiative was launched, but not much.

We are facing a global economic crisis, as countries took on record amounts of debt in an effort to provide income support and stabilize the economy. These efforts are absolutely warranted when they are well done and well used. However, this crisis is a reason to emphasize that everyone needs to pay their fair share and implement, once and for all, the recommendations proposed by the OECD. This is extremely important. It is a matter of justice and tax fairness.

• (1940)

In conclusion, I remind members that less than two weeks ago the House adopted a motion setting out these six actions. We are calling on the government to move forward. These are good solutions, and the current pandemic is the right time to implement them.

[English]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it appears the hon. member and I share a passion regarding tax evasion. As the critic for national revenue, I had the opportunity to write an Order Paper question on the matter of high-net-worth individuals, people who have wealth over \$50 million. It is clear the Prime Minister wants to make it look like he is taking action on tax evasion while he continues to protect the wealthiest among us.



Despite the CRA's over 6,000 audits, and an increase of almost 3,000% in funding for its program expenditures, there have been no criminal prosecutions and consequently no convictions of millionaires who are not paying their fair share. Could the hon. member expand on the ways in which the ultrawealthy in this country continue to cheat Canadians out of their fair share of taxes?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague from Hamilton Centre for his question and his comment. I completely agree with him: this is unacceptable. Things have to change, and that means taking concrete action.

Here is an example. Previously, a former KPMG associate appeared before the parliamentary committee. During his career, this person participated in putting together schemes that enabled multi-millionaires and billionaires to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. He may still be doing so.

I told him that people with low incomes, such as orderlies and nurses, paid between 35% and 50% tax, while the super-rich paid just peanuts, something around 0%. I asked him if that was immoral. He replied that it was legal and refused to say more.

We have to change how the people who design these immoral schemes see things. That which is immoral must be made illegal. We have to do more.

• (1945)

[English]

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we want to go after all these people who are cheating on their taxes, but unless we fix the other side of the equation, which is the out-of-control spending of the government, it will not do us any good. I wonder if he could comment on that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton for her question. I congratulate her on her work in the House and her tireless commitment. She is making a difference and she has my utmost respect.

We must indeed pay attention to revenue. We must have tax fairness and tax justice. We need to be very careful with government spending. Every time the government spends a dollar, it must remember that it comes out of the taxpayers' pockets or from their collective debt, and so out of the pockets of tomorrow's taxpayers. That is why we must always ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively.

In a time of crisis, if there is one lesson the economy has taught us, it is that implementing stimulus programs, for example, an income support program for those who lost their income during the pandemic, is the least of all evils.

We are in favour of such programs, but they must be properly implemented. That money should absolutely not be misappropriated by the cronies at We Charity. Our job as legislators is to keep an eye on the government to make sure it does not commit this type of reprehensible blunder.

### *Business of Supply*

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Standing Committee on Finance. His speeches are always good.

He addressed the issue of tax evasion. As my colleague from Hamilton Centre said, tax evasion costs Canadians up to \$25 billion per year. One can only imagine all of the support and programs that could be offered to Canadians if we had that money.

What surprises my colleague the most about the astronomical amounts that both the Conservatives and the Liberals have lost to tax havens every year?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby for his question. I would also like to commend him for his work in the Standing Committee on Finance. He is the one who proposed a motion to have the committee study tax evasion and tax avoidance. I think that we succeeded in making a big difference. We got involved and we took our work seriously. My colleague asked some very good questions today, and I tip my hat to him. We are fighting the same fight.

It is all about fairness. It is true that we could go after a lot of money. Personally, the first thing I think of is low-income earners, ordinary people, people who work for minimum wage and who pay high tax rates.

The money we earn as MPs enables us live a decent lifestyle with some leftover to splurge or save. However, low-income earners do not have that luxury. They work hard for every dollar they earn. We see some people living lavishly in luxury and abundance and not paying taxes. That needs to change.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, even though I always run out of time, I will allow myself the luxury of taking a few seconds to extend a personal greeting to you. I will take advantage of the fact that I am delivering a speech in your presence to say that, during the brief time that we have worked together, you have been very pleasant and very efficient. I really enjoy your creative way with the French language.

Now to the matter at hand. I really have a lot to say about the main estimates and the supplementary estimates. I will try to be efficient.

First of all, we need to talk about how this money is being spent. We need to talk about how this money comes in from across the country and is being taken out of the hands of levels of government that are closer to the people. Case in point, health transfers to Quebec and the provinces. I simply cannot rise in the House to talk about expenditures and budgets without talking about that injustice. The provinces are unanimous in their demand for \$28 billion, but that is not in the budget. The federal share has to go up to 35%. That is essential.

I will also talk about old age security. How could anyone possibly sleep at night after voting for a budget that, with a deficit of nearly \$400 billion, does not improve the quality of life of those who built our society? I can still hardly believe it, and every time I talk about it in the House, I get a feeling of revulsion that turns my stomach. It is outrageous, and I urge the government to act quickly on this.

### *Business of Supply*

Some may think no one is talking about this anymore, but we have people calling our offices and commenting on social media every day, asking us what we are doing, why they are not hearing about this issue anymore, and whether we are still discussing it. I always reply that we still are, and that is what I am doing here tonight.

Now I would like to talk about the securities regulator. In this budget implementation case we want to pull back spending. Fortunately, my favourite MP, who spoke before me, was very effective in committee and managed to reduce the funding. We must be vigilant, and I invite the members of this Parliament, especially the opposition, to be vigilant with us and block any possible return of this odious attempt to further dispossess and weaken Quebec. This is unacceptable. We cannot accept losing control of our economic institutions.

A provision in the budget implementation bill states that companies that received the Canada emergency wage subsidy may not pay bonuses to their senior executives. Someone should have mentioned that to Air Canada. Fortunately, public pressure did the job. I think measures like these are appropriate.

However, I cannot help but draw a parallel with the fact that the wage subsidy was used by almost everyone here except us. Every party in the House benefited from that subsidy, or rather abused it; I am not sure which word to use. It is a measure that we voted in favour of in good faith to help our businesses, but people will use that money for their election campaigns in the coming months. If that is not scandalous, I do not know what is. Not only do the parties need to stop receiving the subsidy, they also need to pay it back. That money does not belong to the parties.

I could speak at length about what was done during the COVID-19 crisis, including the Canada emergency response benefit, CERB, which discouraged people from working. We rose many times in the House to have CERB help people get back to work. CERB harmed our businesses. It has left a mark and it is not over. The topic comes up every time I meet with my municipalities. This is a crazy situation knowing that we have a labour shortage. Earlier my colleague mentioned that using foreign workers was one way to overcome the labour shortage. These foreign workers are essential in many sectors.

● (1950)

The Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is in chaos right now. Nothing is moving. Visa processing has been suspended and businesses are not getting answers. They are calling us and are desperate. Even we have a hard time getting answers for them. It is unbelievable.

There are certain changes that could reasonably be made right now, for example to the percentage of temporary foreign workers authorized to work in the agri-food industries. This has been discussed a lot at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and the members unanimously agreed that the percentage must be doubled at least. Let us do it. Let us make it easier for these people to integrate as well. The Bloc Québécois has made some concrete proposals, such as offering three-year visas; doing fewer market impact assessments because they are not really necessary

since the job market does not change that quickly; and allowing for flexibility.

I spoke about the agri-food sector, but I also want to talk about the hospitality and tourism industries. They are really struggling. Restaurants are shutting down in my riding. It is heartbreaking to see, since these institutions have been around 25, 30 or 40 years. They are so good that they put towns on the map. These establishments have put up signs saying that they do not have the staff to reopen. We need to find solutions. One way to get more workers for our businesses is to vote for smart measures that encourage people to find work. I am talking about incentives rather than disincentives.

I would be remiss if I talked about temporary foreign workers without mentioning that, on June 9, the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec, the Association des producteurs de fraises et framboises du Québec, and the Quebec Produce Growers Association urged the Liberal government not to abandon them, but that is precisely what is happening.

Let us remember when the mandatory quarantines were established. Would anyone here have dared to say that a foreign worker need not quarantine for 14 days? No one would have. Let us remember that the Bloc Québécois has always clearly stated that quarantines are a federal responsibility. The government did not carry out its responsibilities. It downloaded them onto our farmers. Yes, farmers are capable of carrying them out. Yes, they managed this in an extraordinary way, but it was not up to them to do it, and it was especially not up to them to pay for it. Not only were they forced to manage the quarantines and to provide multiple housing units, but, in addition, they have to pay the workers when they are here, which is only right.

The government introduced a measure, namely a \$1,500 support. In their letter, which I believe and hope was acknowledged, they ask that this program be maintained. Yesterday, June 16, the amount was cut in half to \$750. Why? Does it cost less to quarantine now than it did two weeks ago? Is it not as necessary now as it was two weeks ago?

I am going to read the last sentence from the minister's announcement because I do not have the time to read more. "This program will be available as long as the Quarantine Act is in force and the isolation protocol is followed." Is that not currently the case? The government and the minister must keep their word and not abandon our producers before the war on COVID-19 is over.

On top of that, there is also the Switch Health saga. They have calculated the costs. A standard 14-day quarantine costs \$1,750 per worker, but \$3,000 if the worker has to quarantine at a hotel. With all the chaos caused by Switch Health, it costs \$113 more per worker per additional day, and \$223 more per worker per additional day if the worker is quarantining at a hotel.

What is the government telling farmers about that? The government is saying that it is sorry that it has put farmers in dire straits but that it took two months to work things out. That is unacceptable. We need to support our farmers. We need to think about the people on the ground when voting on all of these expenditures. I want to briefly mention what has been happening in the House over the past few days and invite members of this Parliament to work constructively in the few days we have left. We have a pile of fundamental bills that we need to vote on.

• (1955)

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Bloc Québécois member for his comments.

He talked about his riding and about the restaurants, stores and small businesses that are closing because they cannot find enough workers. The same thing is happening in my riding of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

My colleague talked about incentives. Can he elaborate on that?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his laudable efforts in the language of Molière. It is much appreciated, bravo.

I could talk about this all day. What measures has the government taken to encourage people to work, for example, in the agri-food sector? Labour shortages are nothing new. They have been around for years.

What measures have been taken, if only to get the information out or help with recruitment? What measures have been taken to promote permanent residency for foreign workers? Of course, there have been pilot projects, but it takes a long time to set things up. Can we innovate? Can we use our heads?

Also, there are other ways to make up for the labour shortage, including through innovation, a bit of mechanization, and automation, but that takes investments. There is chronic underinvestment across the entire agri-food industry in Canada and Quebec right now. That makes me worry a lot about the future. When one has not invested in one's house in a long time, sometimes it seems as though it would be cheaper to tear it down and build a new one.

Do we want to see closures in 15 or 20 years?

The government must show foresight and it must take action.

• (2000)

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé for his speech.

I am saddened to hear that several businesses in these picturesque villages, like Saint-Élie-de-Caxton, Charette and Saint-Paulin, had to close their doors due to labour shortages.

I would like to ask my colleague a fairly specific question. He says that CERB was too much, that business subsidies were mismanaged, and so on. However, for 15 months, the Bloc told us that it was not enough, not fast enough, never enough. Today, he says it was too much.

### *Business of Supply*

Did his riding benefit from CERB?

Can he look his constituents, the businesspeople and all the families that were saved by CERB in the eye and tell them that CERB and the subsidy were not necessary?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his questions and his knowledge of my neck of the woods. I am touched.

He misunderstood part of my speech. I did not say that it was too much. I said that it was mismanaged. There is a big difference.

He asked whether I can look my constituents in the eye, and the answer is of course. I mentioned the municipalities. When I meet with them, people tell me that CERB is no good. I start by telling them that honestly, we in the Bloc Québécois agreed to adopt it quickly in March 2020. However, at the end of April 2020, we did not say to end CERB. We said that it needed to incentivize work. There is a nuance here that is important to grasp.

The wage subsidy was one of our proposals, and we are proud to have maintained the employment relationship between businesses and employees. It was a good idea. In fact, it needs to keep going. I am not saying we need to reduce spending. I am saying that we need to spend wisely.

During the summer, we made a pact here with the Deputy Prime Minister. I get a little upset when I get questions like that. I need to calm down. We pushed for a measure that would get people back to work, but the Liberals did not go ahead with that. They said the machine was too big to do it. I have some choice words to say about that, but I cannot say them here. Seriously. Students who worked more than 18 hours lost their whole benefit. They would have had to work 43 hours to earn that same amount. Students are not lazy, and they are smart.

Governments need to bring in measures that make sense and get people back to work. For that to happen, there has to be collaboration. The government has to listen to the opposition. Things were going well at the start of the crisis, but before long the government stopped listening.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I am coming to you from the traditional unceded territory of the QayQayt First Nation and the Coast Salish peoples. I thank them for this privilege.

[*English*]

I would like to start off by paying tribute to frontline workers, health care workers and emergency responders across the country. We have seen over the last 15 months, as our country has entered into this unparalleled health crisis, incredible bravery and incredible dedication on behalf of all those Canadians who have tried to keep us alive and well, and who continue to serve us during this pandemic.

Now, we can look, and there is a potential light at the end of the tunnel, as we start to see, slowly, the number of infections going down. We still have much work to do, there is no doubt, but we can start to envisage what kind of society we can actually build post-COVID.

### *Business of Supply*

I do that from my background as a financial administrator. As members know, I started out my adult working life as a factory worker and eventually was able to save up enough money to go back to school and learn about finances and financial management. I was able, fortunately, to use that in a variety of social enterprises and organizations.

The one thing I learned that is fundamental, when we talk about financial administration, is that we have to follow the money to see what the priorities of a social enterprise, business or organization are. What the priorities are is often dictated by where the flow of money goes. In this debate and this discussion around the main estimates and where we are as a country, it is fundamentally important to ask the question “Where is the money flowing to?” That is why this main estimates process and this debate tonight are so fundamentally important.

As members well know, in our corner of the House, and this dates back to the time of Tommy Douglas, within the NDP we have always believed that it is fundamentally important to make sure that those who are the wealthiest in society pay their fair share. Tommy Douglas was able to, in the first democratic socialist government in North America, actually put in place universal health care. He was able to do that because he put in place a fair tax system.

We can look at the NDP governments since that time. I am certainly not telling tales out of school. As members are well aware, the federal ministry of finance is not a hotbed of New Democrats. However, the federal ministries of finance have consistently, over the last decades, acknowledged that NDP governments have been the best in terms of balancing budgets and providing services for people. That is the same approach that we will take, one day, to provide the type of stewardship that we believe is fundamental to renewing our country, providing the supports, and building a society where everyone matters.

Let us look at where the current government stands, in terms of that flow of money. Prior to the budget, we put forward, and it should have been reflected in the estimates process, a variety of smart ideas that other countries have already incorporated as we go through this pandemic. We believe that we should be putting into place, as other countries have done, a wealth tax. We should be saying to the billionaires and the ultrarich of this country that they have to pay their fair share. They benefited from this pandemic and their wealth has increased, and now they have to give some of that back, to make sure that we all have the wherewithal to move forward.

We also proposed a pandemic profits tax, because we have seen in previous crises, like the Second World War, that putting that type of practice into place ensures that companies maintain the same profit levels but are not profiting unduly from the suffering that so many people have experienced through COVID-19.

• (2005)

We have also been foremost with regard to cracking down on overseas tax havens. As members know, I have spoken out about this. The member for Burnaby South, our national leader, the member for Hamilton Centre and the rest of the NDP caucus have been vociferous in this regard because these lose an astounding amount

of taxpayers' money every year. They are the result of both Conservative actions and Liberal actions.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer pointed out two years ago that Canadians lose \$25 billion every year to overseas tax havens. That \$25 billion could meet an enormous amount of need. It could serve in job creation or the transition to a clean energy economy. All of those things could be accomplished, but what we see is an intricate network of tax havens that has built up over the years because of both Conservative and Liberal government decisions. The cost to Canadians is profoundly strong when we think of \$25 billion a year in taxpayers' money being lost to overseas tax havens.

When we couple that \$25 billion with a pandemic profits tax, which the Parliamentary Budget Officer evaluated at \$8 billion, and a wealth tax, which would bring in \$10 billion a year, we start to see what financial underpinnings could be put into place to actually meet the needs of Canadians across the country. We often see that there is a flow of money to the ultrarich: the wealthiest banks and billionaires in this country. At the same time, we often see that those who have the most critical needs do not even get a trickle of that financial flow.

At the beginning of this crisis, where did the government decide to flow its money? We know this now. This is no secret. In fact, the Liberal government seems to be proud of this fact. Within four days of the pandemic hitting in Canada, an astounding, unbelievable, record amount of \$750 billion was made available in liquidity supports to Canada's big banks through a variety of mechanisms and federal institutions: OSFI, the CMHC and the Bank of Canada. That is \$750 billion. It is unparalleled in our history and unprecedented.

If we go back to the Harper government, there were criticisms at that time because during the global financial crisis \$116 billion in liquidity support was provided to the banking sector. Of course the banking sector prospered enormously from it, but \$750 billion is so difficult to get our minds around. It is a vast amount of money. It is a colossal flow of an unprecedented amount of cash in liquidity supports to the banking sector.

The banks have responded accordingly. There were no conditions attached. They jacked up their service fees, as so many Canadians know. They did not reduce their interest rates to zero, as we saw in the credit union movement. Credit unions, such as Community Savings Credit Union in Vancouver, reduced their line of credit interest to zero and their credit card rates to zero because they knew Canadians were suffering. Canadians had to struggle to put food on the table, and the credit union sector in many respects responded to that, but the banking sector did not. It just kept seeing that money roll in. During the pandemic, its profits have been \$60 billion so far. It is unbelievable.

I pointed out earlier that there is no pandemic profits tax and there is no wealth tax. Canada's billionaires have increased their wealth during this pandemic by an astounding \$80 billion, yet there are no measures for any sort of fairness or to make sure the ultrarich pay their fair share. We can follow the money and see, with the Liberal government, that as we went through an unprecedented crisis its first and foremost thought was for the banks and billionaires of this country. This is unique in the responses of governments through crises in the past.

During the Second World War when we needed to win the battle against Nazism and fascism, the federal government put into place an excess profits tax and wealth taxes to ensure that we had the wherewithal to win the war effort. After the Second World War, we were able to build an unprecedented amount of public housing, hospitals and educational institutions across the country and to build the transportation sector. The country boomed in so many respects because the investments were there starting with a fair tax system, but not this time. There is no wealth tax, no pandemic profits tax and no cracking down on overseas tax havens.

What did the NDP do? We hear rumours that the Prime Minister desperately wants to call an election, and we will all be asked what we did during the pandemic.

● (2010)

Under the leadership of the member for Burnaby South, the NDP went to work immediately. We saw the huge amounts of money that were made available to the banking sector right off the bat, and we started pushing for an emergency response benefit that could lift people above the poverty line. We forced and pushed because we had seen from the best examples of other countries that we needed to put in a place a 75% wage subsidy. We pushed hard, as members know, to make that a reality.

The track record is very clear. We pushed in the House of Commons for supports for students, seniors and people with disabilities, with the big caveat that the Liberal government never put in place wholesale supports for all people with disabilities. It has now asked them to wait three years before there is any hope of support. People with disabilities will have to wait three years while banks had to wait four days in the midst of a pandemic. That is the national tragedy we see with the flow of money going to the ultrarich, the wealthiest, to make sure that banks and billionaires benefit first.

New Democrats fought those fights and won many of them over the course of the past year. I know that has made a difference. We still see suffering. We still see people lining up at food banks in unprecedented numbers. Tragically we still see people with disabilities who are barely getting by. Tragically we still see people closing, for the last time, the doors of businesses that they may have devoted their lives to building up. These are community businesses that served the public and created jobs in communities across this country, but in so many cases those small businesses have had to close their doors. Nothing could be more tragic.

As we come out of such a profound crisis, we see many people being left behind; however, the government has put forward a budget that slashes the CERB benefits even more. The CRB was slashed from \$500 a week to \$300 a week, which is below the poverty level. We see the government responding to the economic

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crisis of seniors by saying that those over 75 get a top-up on their OAS to lift them up to the poverty line, but those under 75 are out of luck with the government.

That contrasts vividly with the government paying out money through the wage subsidy to profitable companies that then paid huge executive bonuses or often paid dividends to their investors. The government says that is okay, despite the NDP's warnings from the very beginning that it had to put measures into place. It is not a problem: It will recover money elsewhere, but then it slashes the CERB benefits for people who need them the most.

What does this mean, in terms of an estimates process, and how would the NDP approach the issue of making sure we meet the needs of Canadians and respond to the crisis that so many people are living through in this country? As I have already mentioned, New Democrats would tackle it from the revenue side. We would make sure that the ultrarich pay their fair share. We would crack down on overseas tax havens. The government never introduced a single piece of legislation that adequately responded to the crisis in financing we see with the hemorrhaging of \$25 billion a year to overseas tax havens.

The CRA was before the finance committee last week. The year before, I asked who had been prosecuted in the Panama papers, the Bahama papers, the Paradise papers and the Isle of Man scam. A year ago, CRA was forced to say it had never prosecuted anybody. This year I asked the same question, and the result was exactly the same. No company and no individual has ever been prosecuted. We have thousands of names of people who have been using these particular strategies to not pay taxes, yet the CRA has never had the tools in place to take them on.

New Democrats would make sure that everyone pays their fair share, that the ultrarich actually pay their fair share, that billionaires do not get off scot free and that the companies that try to take their earnings overseas have to pay income tax and corporate tax. We would make sure of that.

● (2015)

What would we do in the estimates? What would an NDP estimates process look like? We have already seen signs of that over the past year. We have been tabling legislation, bringing forward bills and making sure that we actually put into place the programs Canadians need.

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Members will recall I tabled Bill C-213, the Canada pharmacare act, ably supported by my colleagues for Vancouver Kingsway and Vancouver East. We brought that to a vote with the support of 100,000 Canadians who had written to their members of Parliament. Liberals and Conservatives voted that down, even though we know pharmacare is something that will make a huge difference in the quality of life for Canadians. It is estimated that 10 million Canadians cannot pay for their medication. Hundreds die every year because they cannot afford their medication. For thousands of others, families are forced to choose between putting food on the table and paying for their medication. We can end that suffering. At the same time the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that independent officer of Parliament who can tell us with such accuracy what the net impacts of policies are, has told us we would save about \$4 billion overall as a people. We would be able to reduce the costs of medications, so the estimates process would include universal public pharmacare in this country.

As we saw with the member for St. John's East just last night, we would be bringing in dental care for all those who do not have access to dental care. Why is that important? We heard yesterday about a person in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, who passed away because they did not have the financial ability to pay for the dental work that was vitally important for them to be able to eat. These are tragedies that are repeated so often in this country.

What else would we see in the estimates? The guaranteed livable basic income was brought to the House of Commons by the member for Winnipeg Centre. We have seen how so many members of our caucus have fought for the rights of indigenous peoples. It should be a source of shame for the government that dozens of indigenous communities still do not have safe drinking water, six years after the Prime Minister's promise. As the member for Burnaby South said in response to a question from a journalist, how would we ever accept the cities of Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal not having safe drinking water? It is simply astounding, yet we have no wealth tax or pandemic profit tax in place. We have no set of priorities that allows us to ensure that all communities in this country have safe drinking water.

We saw the incredible tragedy of the genocide in residential schools. There are first nations communities that do not have the funding to find their missing, murdered, dead and disappeared children. This has to be a national priority as part of reconciliation. It cannot simply be pretty words. We have to act, and that means ensuring that when we say "follow the money", it is no longer the very wealthy or ultrarich who receive the vast majority of federal funds, but the people across this country, indigenous peoples, who get the supports that they need and the quality of life they deserve.

There is the issue of the right to housing. Again, it would be part of our estimates to ensure that all Canadians have roofs over their heads at night. This is not rocket science. It takes investment. Other countries have had the right to housing instilled. In a country with a climate as cold as Canada's, housing should be a fundamental right of every Canadian.

We would provide supports to peoples with disabilities, students and seniors. People have been struggling through this pandemic, yet students are still paying their student loans, seniors are being denied the increased OAS if they are under age 75 and people with

disabilities are being asked to wait three years. The Prime Minister wants to pump \$20 billion into the TMX pipeline instead of investing in clean energy that would result in hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

The estimates process with an NDP government would be different and better. We will continue to fight for a country where no one is left behind.

• (2020)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to give a huge shout-out to you for your career. You are retiring. What an amazing job you have done. You are so honoured by everyone. It was way past midnight last night, and you were there. That was great.

I always enjoy the member's very thoughtful speeches. I am going to ask him a question because of his background in finance, which I could not ask other people because they probably would not have any idea.

There is an innovative idea in the budget about Canada's social financing bonds. I just wonder if the member has any thoughts on that yet.

• (2025)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Yukon always has thoughtful questions. He knows as well as I do, I am sure, that the issue of social bonds stems from Jack Layton and the NDP's green bonds. We brought them forward through a number of election campaigns. In fact, the member might recall that back in 2011 that was a major part of what the NDP put forward. Canadians could invest in that transition to clean energy, the green new deal, ensuring hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The building trades estimate that over the next four decades up to three million new jobs will come from investments in clean energy and the clean energy economy, so the green bonds issue was the inspiration. The social bonds are something that is much smaller in scope and scale.

I think it is fair to say that, given the challenges that we face, we need to be bold. We need to be looking to solutions that actually make a difference in Canadians' lives.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of sitting at the finance committee while we heard the CRA talk about tax evasion and the Panama papers. We heard first-hand, in response to this member's question that, for two years in a row, there have been no convictions. Could the member expand upon that?

In the case of the Panama papers in particular, the informant evidently put his life in jeopardy in order to bring justice and capture people who are avoiding paying these taxes. As the late great Jim Flaherty said, every time there is a tax evader, it means that middle-class Canadians have to pay more taxes.

I wonder if the hon. member could expand upon the impact to Canada and the personal impact to him hearing over and over again that there have been no convictions with respect to the Panama papers, despite so much being sacrificed to get those materials out.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member's presence at the finance committee today. This is something that should be on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* if they were actually covering important issues like this. We have databases that are publicly accessible of thousands of Canadian companies and individuals. CRA admits that they have never prosecuted a single one. This is a litany of failures. We have had the national revenue minister get up in the House of Commons and say that they are taking care of it, when we know for a fact that there has never been a single prosecution.

I think the failures of the government are evident to everybody. There has been a hemorrhage of \$25 billion a year. That is an incredible cost to our economy, communities, people's quality of life and Canadian families. It is at an enormous cost, yet the government has not tabled a single piece of legislation to provide the tools for the CRA to prosecute. It is simply doing nothing to stop the—

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which he ended with a few words on the environment. I would like him to say more about that, because I was so disappointed by the NDP's behaviour at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development during the study of Bill C-12.

We already knew that the Liberals were talking out of both sides of their mouths on the fight against climate change, but I was certain that the NDP and the Bloc held the same beliefs. However, the NDP gave the Liberals a free pass, which means that the climate law will be weak and toothless.

In the budget, the Liberals earmarked \$17.6 billion for what they have the nerve to call a green recovery when, from the start of the pandemic, they have given \$18 billion to oil companies. Scientists are saying that if we continue to subsidize oil companies and invest in oil, we will never reach our targets or achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Does my colleague agree with me that we must stop giving oil companies government subsidies?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very pertinent question.

The NDP has been campaigning against oil subsidies for years. As my colleague knows, we have been campaigning across the country not just against these subsidies, but also against the Trans-Mountain pipeline, which crosses my riding.

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We have asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer several times to give us an assessment of the increased construction costs for this pipeline, as well as its lack of viability. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the government would never turn a profit on this pipeline, which will continue to swallow up taxpayers' money for years to come. The government refuses to listen—

• (2030)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Vancouver East.

[English]

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his hard work. I know he works day and night on these issues.

One of the issues that I know he cares deeply about as well is that the government intends to cut the CRB in the last eight weeks, from July to September, for members of the community. I know the member has been trying to bring these issues to the attention of the government to get it to walk this back. I wonder if he can update the House on what he has done on this issue, and what the response has been from the government.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Vancouver East is just an extraordinary member of Parliament, speaking out on behalf of not only her constituents but also people right across the country.

The member points out that so many people are concerned about this dramatic cut the Liberal government wants to bring in. Five hundred dollars a week is certainly not a sinecure. Five hundred dollars a week is just getting by. It is making sure they have a roof over their head, hopefully, and food on the table. Slashing it to below the poverty line at a time when Canadians desperately need it is simply the most mean-spirited cut that one could possibly imagine at this time.

The NDP tabled amendments and tried to push them through the finance committee. The Liberals have continued to say no. Their thinking is that they have taken care of banks and they have taken care of everything. Canadians' voices need to be heard. These cuts should not take place. The government should roll back on that and ensure that Canadians can get through the pandemic. We will continue to fight to make that so.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a family where my father and my mother used to say that the best way to effect change is to start looking, and start with oneself.

The member talked about everybody enriching themselves, billionaires and whatnot, but on April 1 all of us in this chamber had a salary increase. Could he confirm whether he donated his salary increase to a local organization?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I do that every year. It is fundamental that we support organizations in our community that do good work.

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In the past, I have flagged in the House the Burnaby Firefighters Charitable Society, the New Westminster Firefighters Charitable Society, Caring During COVID in Burnaby, Helping Hands in New Westminster and many other organizations across the country that are struggling with this pandemic.

That is why we need to provide supports to people and families, and make sure that seniors and people with disabilities and students are taken care of. This is why I am so critical of the government. The Liberals should not be saying that the charitable sector can just pick that up. If they can give \$750 billion in liquidity supports to Canada's big banks, they can make sure every Canadian is taken care of.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on June 9, the member for Calgary Midnapore submitted a notice of opposition regarding Vote 1, "Operating expenditures", in the main estimates, under Department of Transport, in the amount of \$741,693,237.

The notice of opposition calls on Nav Canada executives and managers to pay back \$7 million in bonuses they received in the last fiscal year, supposedly during the pandemic, while the private not-for-profit organization was receiving government assistance and issuing layoff notices. To protest those bonuses, the member is suggesting that \$7 million be cut from the Transport Canada budget.

Let me begin my remarks by discussing what such a cut would mean for Transport Canada's programs and, by extension, for Canadians. A \$7-million reduction to Transport Canada's main estimates funding for 2021-22 would significantly reduce its ability to deliver on its commitments. This reduction would have undesirable consequences, such as weakening the implementation of monitoring, testing, inspection and subsidy programs across all modes of transportation, including air, marine, rail and road. It would also result in reduced enforcement activities that could increase the potential risk to the safety and security of Canadians.

Furthermore, reduced surveillance of equipment, operations and facilities in the transportation industry could lead to accidents, malfunctions and loss of life. It would also have a negative impact on the department's efforts to support the economic recovery of the air sector and other transportation sectors affected by the pandemic. This reduction would set a precedent for departments to pay for organizations that operate at arm's length from the Government of Canada.

• (2035)

[English]

Allow me, for greater emphasis, to reiterate some of these points in English.

The impact of a \$7-million reduction to Transport Canada's 2021 main estimates funding would significantly reduce its ability to deliver on its commitments. Undesirable consequences could include reduced levels of inspections across all transportation modes: air, land and marine. It could include reduced enforcement activities and reduced surveillance of the transportation industry's equipment, operations and facilities.

How would these cuts impact ordinary Canadians? I will give some examples. Transport Canada recently announced the funding of \$7 million in Lethbridge for the rehabilitation of runways, \$5 million through the national trade corridors fund to improve the efficiency of rail logistics in Alberta's industrial heartland; \$2 million to the remote air services program to British Columbia to ensure essential air services to remote communities in the province; a combined \$8 million to the communities of Smithers and Terrace in the riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley to rehabilitate airport infrastructure; and \$11 million to the community of Mont-Joli in the electoral district of Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia to rehabilitate the airport.

Which of these projects would the opposition cancel in order to recuperate the \$7 million it is purporting to cut?

The cuts also negatively impact the department's efforts to support the economic recovery of the air sector, as well as other transportation sectors affected by the pandemic. It would also set a precedent for government departments to pay for organizations that are operating at arm's length from the Government of Canada.

In short, this would be a very unwise way to protest Nav Canada's financial decision, which again has nothing to do with the supply vote in front of us.

[Translation]

I would like to say a few words about Nav Canada. Nav Canada is a private, not-for-profit corporation tasked with managing Canada's air navigation services. This model was introduced for the first time in 1996 to replace the air navigation services that were previously provided by Transport Canada. All subsequent governments kept that model in place.

Nav Canada oversees air traffic in Canada through a sophisticated network of area control centres, air traffic control towers, flight service stations, maintenance centres, flight information centres and navigation aids across the country.

Its customers include airlines, business aviation and air cargo operators, air charters and air taxis, helicopter operators and general aviation pilots and owners.

Nav Canada is independent from the Government of Canada because it does not report to the Minister of Transport or Parliament. Nav Canada is not part of the Minister of Transport's main estimates. As a result, it is not included in Transport Canada's Vote 1 estimates of \$741,693,237 for 2021-22. What is more, Nav Canada's financial statements are not included in the Government of Canada's main estimates process.



As a not-for-profit corporation, Nav Canada invests directly in its operations, people and infrastructure to keep Canada's air navigation system as safe, efficient and innovative as it can be.

Nav Canada's governance structure is composed of federal government representatives, users and unionized employees. In turn, these representatives select the members of Nav Canada's board of directors.

Now I will turn to the bonuses paid out to Nav Canada executives. Nav Canada bonuses are paid to senior executives and exempt staff, who are managers. Bonuses are usually between 5% and 20% of an employee's total compensation. They are accounted for in Nav Canada's vision, which is to pay wages equivalent to the market average.

Bonuses are normally paid to about 550 employees, but they are not distributed evenly. The average amount paid out from that \$7 million would be \$13,000, but the amount varies from one person to the next.

Recent media reports stated that Nav Canada was planning to issue layoff notices to 49 employees. Those notices have since been rescinded. Nav Canada chose not to publicize its senior executives' compensation because of its policies stating that disagreements with the unions are not resolved immediately.

Now I would like to talk about Nav Canada's independence from Transport Canada. Once again, there is no connection between the payment of Nav Canada bonuses and Vote 1 of the main estimates for Transport Canada in the amount of \$741,693,237. Nav Canada receives no direct funding from Transport Canada and is not accountable to either the Minister of Transport or Parliament.

Nav Canada is primarily funded by the fees it receives for managing more than 18 million square kilometres of airspace. Additional revenue is generated through technology sales and other related business activities. The company operates with a break-even business model, balancing costs and revenues by borrowing to meet cash flow requirements.

I want to make a few points about the \$7 million in bonuses paid by Nav Canada while the company was receiving government assistance and issuing layoff notices. The bonuses reported in the news were paid for the first half of the company's fiscal year, from September 2019 to February 2020, before the industry suffered significant negative impacts from COVID-19. Budget 2021 proposed requiring that publicly listed corporations repay the wage subsidy for any qualifying period after June 5, 2021. The Nav Canada bonuses were paid outside of the period set out in budget 2021.

In response to COVID-19, Nav Canada executives agreed to significant reductions to salary and benefits, and there is no immediate plan to restore them before the airline industry recovers.

● (2040)

Note that salaries were reduced by 3% to 5%. Pensions were restructured and became less generous. The annual salary review for senior executives to reconsider possible raises was cancelled. The management team was also cut in half and, during that time, the company issued layoff notices to 49 employees. As I was saying earlier, these notices were rescinded.

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Like other Canadian companies, the employees at Nav Canada can receive wage subsidies through the Canada emergency wage subsidy, or CEWS. Nav Canada noted that its employees had benefited from the CEWS and that the company had not received the large employer emergency financing facility, or LEEFF, nor had it received any special financing under favourable terms.

As far as the rule around the wage subsidy is concerned, budget 2021 stated that the wage subsidy should be paid back in certain cases where senior executives' compensation increased.

Budget 2021 proposes to require a publicly listed corporation to repay wage subsidy amounts received for a qualifying period that begins after June 5, 2021, in the event that its aggregate compensation for specified executives during the 2021 calendar year exceeds its aggregate compensation for specified executives during the 2019 calendar year.

For the purpose of this rule, a publicly listed corporation's specified executives will be its named executive officers whose compensation is required to be disclosed under Canadian securities law in its statement of executive compensation.

This generally includes its chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and three other most highly compensated executives. A corporation's executive compensation for a calendar year will be calculated by prorating the aggregate compensation of its specified executives for each of its taxation years that overlap with the calendar year.

The amount of the wage subsidy required to be repaid would be equal to the lesser of the following: the total of all wage subsidy amounts received in respect of active employees for qualifying periods that begin after June 5, 2021, and the amount by which the corporation's aggregate specified executives' compensation for 2021 exceeds its aggregate specified executives' compensation for 2019.

This requirement to repay would be applied at the group level and would apply to wage subsidy amounts paid to any entity in the group.

I hope that my remarks have clarified some of the questions about the bonuses paid to Nav Canada executives. I think that what should be quite clear is that the proposed \$7-million reduction to Transport Canada's operating budget is an ill-advised and irresponsible way to protest these bonuses. The funds used to pay these bonuses did not come from Transport Canada's budget.

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Furthermore, the cuts would hurt Transport Canada's ability to carry out its mandate. As I mentioned earlier, this would weaken the implementation of monitoring, testing, inspection and subsidy programs across all modes of transportation. It would also result in reduced enforcement activities that could increase the potential risk to the safety and security of Canadians.

In addition, reduced surveillance of the transportation industry's equipment, operations and facilities could result in accidents, malfunctions and, of course, loss of life.

I will give the member who proposed these cuts the benefit of the doubt and assume that she did not consider some of their potential consequences.

It is very easy to fan the flames of anger about executive compensation, and in some cases, this is often completely justified. However, as legislators, we must also act responsibly when making decisions and ensure that we do not inadvertently hurt Canadians.

I urge all members to vote in favour of Vote 1, "Operating expenditures", in the main estimates, under Department of Transport, in the amount of \$741,693,237.

• (2045)

Transport Canada worked very hard to maintain the safety and security of our transportation system throughout the COVID-19 crisis. This work must continue, and the department needs the resources required to do that.

• (2050)

[English]

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this transport minister and his cabinet colleagues left our international borders open for too long. Flights were coming into Canada carrying COVID-positive individuals as the virus was spreading around the world, and was continuing to be brought into Canada. Yet, we had tourism operators, like guide outfitters and fishing lodge operators, who were crying for assistance. They had COVID management plans in place and quarantine management plans in place to bring in customers so that they could at least maintain their business, and yet this government turned a blind eye to them.

Why did this government take so long to close our borders, and why did it turn a blind eye to tourism operators who were crying out for help?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

My colleague is well aware that, from the start, the government implemented all of the necessary measures to ensure the health security and safety of Canadians and provide the social and economic safety net they needed to get through the pandemic.

Whether through the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which was made available to many of the country's economic sectors, the Canada emergency response benefit or business loans, all sectors were supported during the pandemic because our goal is to leave no one behind.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for the introductory course on Nav Canada. It was very interesting.

I would like to ask her a question about ports and wharves.

There is one expenditure that I would have liked to see in the estimates, but it was not there. I would have liked to see an agreement with Municipality of Nouvelle regarding the Miguasha wharf. Since 2009, Nouvelle has been trying to become the owner of the port facilities so it can make something of them and attract visitors.

When will Transport Canada come to an agreement with small municipalities like this one? That would boost regional economic development. The government is using COVID-19 as an excuse for not coming to an agreement and for putting an end to the negotiations.

When will Transport Canada assume its responsibilities with regard to the Gaspé?

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I think she is aware that we have done a lot for ports and for a number of small ports in several municipalities. One example is Cap-aux-Meules, where we made sure there would be a fishing season this year. We are working very hard to make sure there will be fishing seasons in future years.

I would be happy to work with my colleague on the Miguasha file. I can see that it is really important to her, and it is to us too.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I know there are people in her riding who still need the Canada emergency response benefit, which is set at \$500 per week. The NDP lobbied hard for that amount. The government is about to reduce it from \$500 to \$300 per week. That means the people still receiving it will dip below the poverty line.

I have a simple question. How will this drastic reduction in the CERB affect her constituents, especially at a time when variants are spreading and COVID-19 is still with us?

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question because it gives me a chance to talk about my riding.

What I can tell him is that I recently spoke with someone at the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve community kitchen who told me that if not for the government her organization would not exist.

Thanks to the many programs we brought in during the pandemic, several organizations like the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve community kitchen and Chic Resto Pop, to name just a couple, survived the pandemic. The Canada emergency benefit has helped people in my riding pay their rent and buy groceries. We provided the social safety net that was needed. People in my riding thank us for being there for them.

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● (2055)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

[English]

The Liberal government is incapable of accepting responsibility. I am so tired of receiving the response that Nav Canada is an arm's-length organization. The government has to take responsibility for the decisions of Nav Canada.

However, we have seen this consistently. We see this with the documents from the Winnipeg lab. We saw this with Bill C-10. We saw this with General Vance. We saw this with the WE scandal. We saw this with SNC-Lavalin.

Here is the solution to where we find the \$7 million: We go to the executives and ask for it back. It is as simple as that.

When will the government take responsibility for something?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her passion and for her question.

I would like to reiterate once again that there is no connection between NAV Canada and the appropriations that are before us today. There is no connection between NAV Canada and Transport Canada, or Parliament. It is a not-for-profit corporation.

My colleague calls the government all kinds of things, but I notice that the opposition is sticking to its narrative of budget cuts. I invite her to tell me where she would like to make cuts. The official opposition continues to see what it wants to see and ignores the reality. I invite my colleague to tell me which Transport Canada budget items she would like to cut.

[English]

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government continues to spend and spend. There is no doubt that there was a need to spend during the pandemic. There was a need to bridge. However, as the PBO said, we are walking on a very thin tightrope right now. If we were to have a crisis like an economic recession or a climate-related crisis, we would have big financial problems.

If we were to reach a financial crisis, which tax would the member increase? Would she put a tax on principal residences? Would she cut spending? Would she cut civil servants? What is her approach for the crisis that we will almost inevitably face?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Madam Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague for his question.

Once again, it is the classic example of the opposition party. I entered politics and I decided to get involved at the federal level because the previous government had made cuts across the whole cultural and social system.

Our government decided to help Canadians and businesses get through the situation. Now is not the time to take on individual debt. We must take on collective debt. Now is not the time for austerity measures, as my opposition colleague would have us do.

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure tonight to rise in the House to speak to the main estimates for the Department of Transport. I note that I will be splitting my time with the member for Regina—Wascana.

Since the beginning of the current session of Parliament, it has been my pleasure to sit on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. This committee is filled with a good group of parliamentarians working to get answers for Canadians on transport-related issues and to secure the future of transport in this country.

This past fall, we began a study to examine the impacts of COVID-19 on the aviation sector in Canada. We heard heart-wrenching stories from many witnesses about how much of their workforce had to be laid off. Many were struggling to put food on the table in cases where there were gaps in federal support.

What is interesting to note is that, while some companies were getting little to no support and could not secure a meeting with the minister, other companies were receiving much more support and getting meetings with the minister on a regular basis. The patchwork approach the government has been taking when it comes to getting support to Canada's aviation sector ignores all the workers in the aviation sector who have lost their jobs as a result of the government's inaction on this file. Canadians have been watching closely over the past year, and many in this sector still have not received the support they require. Hope is dying.

It is nice for aviation workers to hear from the government that help is on the way, but when is it coming? When days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months and then months turn into over a year, I can see why so many in the industry who have still not received support have lost hope. However, members should note that not all airlines are still waiting for support. Air Canada received a \$5-billion package from the government in April, and shortly after, it awarded more than \$10 million in bonuses to executives and managers. The Conservatives have been clear from the beginning: We must get support out the door to those who need it most, and no taxpayer money should ever be used for executive bonuses.

A couple of weeks ago, I heard from a constituent who, prior to COVID, booked a vacation for himself and his wife for their 30th anniversary. Because of travel restrictions, their vacation was put on hold and they received a travel voucher that was good for 24 months. This was all good until my constituent lost his job because of COVID and needed to access the funds that were tied up in a vacation that he and his wife never got to go on.

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Many travel companies have said that passenger refunds are tied to government support. Sunwing received a temporary support package back in February and set aside money for customers, but it has not dispensed that money, as it is still in negotiations with the government regarding its full support package.

The predicament this constituent and many other Canadians in similar situations now find themselves in is that they still have no clear indications from the government about when travel restrictions will be lifted, and the end of the 24-month period for the travel voucher is coming quickly. If the government does not soon finalize the support package, customers in this situation are at risk of losing the thousands of dollars they saved for a vacation that they may never get to go on. This is just one story of how the government's inaction on this issue is costing Canadians.

On the border, as I mentioned, the government has still not provided Canadians with any sort of indication as to when the border might open. The government waited far too long to close the border. Now we are nearing the end of the pandemic, and it refuses to provide Canadians with certainty as to when we will reopen it.

● (2100)

I would like to thank all those who work at the CBSA and have been challenged over the past year to quickly adapt to the ever-changing rules and travel restrictions thrown at them. COVID began in March 2020, and we knew very early on that COVID was entering Canada because we left our borders open and the government repeatedly failed to take meaningful action to secure them.

The spending that is occurring in the transport budget is important, and I agree that we must provide support to the industries that were hardest hit by COVID. However, with the government, we repeatedly see money being allocated in the budget and then either not getting out the door fast enough, like all of the lapsed infrastructure spending, or getting out the door and into the wrong hands, like with the WE Charity scandal and Air Canada's executive compensation package.

An area that needs support is the tourism industry. When I talk about targeted support being needed, an area that comes to mind with a shortfall is tourism.

COVID-19 has been incredibly tough on the tourism industry. I talk with many stakeholders in my riding, and a concern I hear from them is that, while the \$500 million in support the government is offering is appreciated, when stretched to companies from coast to coast to coast, this support is being spread too thin. Businesses have suffered major losses through no fault of their own. The support they need should be available to continue their operations.

It is extremely important that we fully recover the tourism industry, especially in communities that rely on the industry as a significant part of their economy. A factor we need to think about in relation to tourism recovery is the transportation of people and how easy it is for tourists to get to their destinations. In many cases, taking a bus over a flight or driving can make for a more economical vacation. With the closing of Greyhound Canada, this is leaving a gap in our transportation network.

Many Canadians across Canada who live in rural or more remote regions depend on intercity bus services to travel large distances between smaller towns and urban areas. As Greyhound continues to operate in the United States, we must recognize that the decision to close down operations in Canada will have a ripple effect on our tourism industry and will result in consumers having less choice in how they reach their vacation destinations.

Our transportation sector is of vital importance for the tens of thousands of Canadians employed in the sector. These are real people who need support and must not be treated as political pawns. For nearly a year, the government has been promising them support but repeatedly failing to deliver in a meaningful way.

To conclude, my Conservative colleagues and I are calling on the government to deliver support to our aviation sector. That means restoring Canada's regional routes, ensuring passengers receive refunds, making sure travel agent commissions are not clawed back, ensuring Nav Canada maintains adequate service levels for air traffic controls and bringing forward a comprehensive travel restart plan so that Canadians are no longer left in the dark.

● (2105)

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He spoke of the tourism industry. In the Lower Saint-Lawrence, the Bas-Saint-Laurent Tourism Association has come up with an ambitious plan to become one of the 30 most popular destinations in eastern Canada, which, of course, comes with certain challenges.

We spoke a bit earlier about the labour shortage, but there is also the problem of entrepreneurial renewal and the lack of proponents. In fact, the federal government invested in the tourism sector, but—it must be said—the devil is always in the details: The government invests in awareness campaigns, but that will not supply manpower and workers.

What more does my colleague think the government should do to help our small tourist operators?

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Madam Speaker, the member has brought up some very good points that we need to start looking at.

One of the big things is that many businesses are financially not viable because clients are not coming in to support the business. They do not have funds because no one can travel and be part of tourism, or it is because of the isolation. Since we cannot properly distance in a lot of tourism opportunities, we cannot have proper engagement.

That is where the government needs to either secure loans or create a compensation package in order to make these businesses viable once again. That is the challenge that the Liberals are not responding to for Canadian businesses. Small businesses such as those in the tourism industry are going to suffer greatly without this compensation package.

• (2110)

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we heard the hon. member speak about the need for supports in tourism. He talked about rural isolation and in particular the abandonment by Greyhound of some critical routes. I am wondering if the hon. member would support our plan, which is to expand VIA Rail to include bus service in a nationalized public transit system to allow northern rural communities to connect with southern cities and municipalities and have the kind of inter-regional travel that is necessary to keep communities like his going.

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Madam Speaker, the member has brought up some very interesting points. I am not saying the plan is not a great concept; the problem is financial viability. Unfortunately, Canada does not have enough densely populated areas, so it would be very expensive to build and operate and maintain that kind of rail system. That is the only downside to that kind of concept. It would be fantastic if we had better populations in the remote areas.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the difficulties is that with the failure of the government on border controls in this pandemic and the flawed vaccine rollout that the Liberals are scrambling to catch up on, what has happened is that the government introduced programs to help businesses at the beginning, but a lot of people were falling through the cracks. Even though the defects in the programs were identified in March of last year, the government has continued to extend the programs and not repair them. Now we find that a lot of tourism and travel businesses are out of runway, and the support is simply inadequate.

I wonder if the member could comment on how that is happening in his riding.

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Madam Speaker, the member has brought up some very good points. We remember how our Prime Minister spoke to start off with, saying that we should not worry, that the government was there to help the majority of the people first and that then it would be able to help those people who fell through the cracks. When are the Prime Minister and the government going to actually help the people who have fallen through the cracks?

Many people have commented to me that they applied for this program and got a couple of dollars from it or they applied for that program and were not eligible. Unfortunately, they fell through the cracks, and because of that they have now lost their businesses. Very many business owners are experiencing the same type of financial situation.

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to have the opportunity to rise in this virtual chamber to participate in tonight's debate.

I have the privilege of serving on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities with an outstanding group of MPs from all parties. Over the course of the past several months, the committee had the opportunity to hear

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from many representatives from the country's air travel sector. Yesterday the committee presented to the House its report, entitled "Emerging from the Crisis: A Study of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Air Transport Sector". However, the committee witnesses were unanimous in their bleak assessment of the effects of the pandemic on air travel.

Few sectors have been hit harder by the pandemic than the air travel sector. Airlines, airports, independent travel advisers, air traffic controllers and small business owners who run the souvenir shops at the airports have all experienced job losses, cutbacks and hardship. However, unlike many sectors, restarting the air travel sector will not be like turning on a light switch. The air travel sector has faced many unique challenges during the pandemic, the effects of which will be felt for years to come.

For this evening's debate, I will focus my remarks on the difficult situation in which Canada's airports find themselves.

The air travel sector cannot function without financially viable airports. After all, the airplanes have to have some place to land and some place to take off from. When most of this country's airports were privatized in the 1990s, a fee structure was established with the airlines that was based on air traffic volumes. This country's airports could rely on a steady stream of revenues as long as there was also a steady stream of commercial airline flights. All of that came to a halt in the spring of 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

In my home city of Regina, the Regina International Airport went 10 days at the beginning of the pandemic without a single commercial passenger flight. For much of the pandemic, air travel levels were down as much as 90% compared to pre-pandemic levels. This lack of air travel means a lack of revenue for this country's airports.

As a result, airports had to lay off staff and dip into cash reserves. When the cash reserves ran out, they had to go to the bank and borrow. Today, this country's airports have debt loads that they have never seen before. How will they pay off this debt? It will be by passing the cost on to consumers as air travel resumes after the pandemic.

Now, some people may shrug their shoulders and say "So what? Airport debts and debt servicing fees get passed on to air travellers; that is life." Maybe it would not be such a big deal if Canada were a closed country that lived in isolation, but we are not.

Air travel policies of the American government are bound to affect Canada and the rest of the world as well. It is worth noting that within weeks of the start of the pandemic, the U.S. Congress passed the CARES Act to provide \$10 billion in financial relief to American airports. This means that American airports have had financial certainty throughout the pandemic and have not had to go deep into debt. It means that American airports will not have the financial burden of debt and debt servicing costs to pass on to their customers.

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Even before the pandemic, flying out of a Canadian airport was significantly more expensive than flying out of an American one. This is because, historically, American governments have viewed airports as an infrastructure investment, while in Canada, most airports operate on Crown land and serve as a source of revenue for the federal government through ground lease payments.

As Canadian airports take on more and more debt and pass more and more debt and debt servicing costs on to passengers, American airports become relatively less expensive by comparison. This poses a real long-term problem for Canadian airports, especially those that are located within driving distance of the U.S. border. The Bellingham airport in the state of Washington is just a short drive across the border from Vancouver. The Niagara Falls airport is on the American side of the border, just a short drive down the highway from Hamilton and St. Catharines. The airport in Plattsburgh, New York, already advertises itself as “Montréal's U.S. Airport”.

• (2115)

All along the Canada-U.S. border, the story is the same. American airports will become more attractive options as Canadian airports struggle to find ways to pass their crippling debt loads on to Canadian travellers. These debt loads will have a ripple effect across the air travel sector as Canadian airlines, independent travel advisers and hotels lose business across the board.

What could the government do to help this country's struggling airports? I would say one thing the air travel sector really needs right now is a safe reopening plan. The quicker we could get Canadians flying again, the quicker airline and airport revenues will rebound, and all of the harmful effects of the pandemic that I have described could be minimized.

However, the biggest challenge facing the air travel sector is a lack of customers, caused by uncertainty in the marketplace. The pandemic has thrown many sectors of the economy into chaos, including restaurants, movie theatres and clothing stores. Most businesses are primarily governed by their provincial governments, and most provincial governments have already spelled out a safe reopening plan based on vaccination levels.

For example, in my home province of Saskatchewan, in just three more days restaurants will no longer have to limit the number of customers seated at a single table, although customers will only be able to order à la carte and buffets are not allowed yet. Just think of how much easier it will be for restaurant workers and owners and their customers to plan a major dinner party when there is a clearly spelled out reopening plan for restaurants.

Now, imagine if the federal government were to do the same thing for air travel. I am sure that after well over a year of this pandemic, many Canadians would really like to start making their summer travel plans. Airlines, travel advisers, tour operators and hotels would all like to start making bookings.

What are the rules? More importantly, what will the rules be next week and next month and in the coming months as vaccination levels continue to inch upwards?

If someone who is fully vaccinated flies down to the States and then flies back, how much longer will that person still have to go

through the mandatory 14-day quarantine? How much longer will that person still have to go to the quarantine hotels? What about someone who is only partially vaccinated? What about a husband and wife who are fully vaccinated but whose children are too young to receive the vaccine?

That is just for international travel. What about travelling within Canada? Are we going to see a patchwork of different rules within Canada, whereby some provinces require quarantines and others do not? Will it be easier for Canadians to fly to the United States for their summer holidays than to other provinces within Canada?

These are all very reasonable and practical questions that Canadians are starting to ask. The absence of any answers and the absence of any safe reopening plan from the federal government is putting another summer travel season in jeopardy. The loss of another summer travel season would cause undue harm, not only to this country's airports but to our airlines, independent travel advisers, air traffic controllers, tour operators and so many Canadians who depend on a properly functioning air transport sector.

I call on the government to present, as soon as possible, a safe reopening plan for air travel.

• (2120)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I was listening carefully because I also have an airport in my riding; its volume is relatively small, but large enough to warrant a control tower.

As air travel declined during the pandemic, Nav Canada quickly decided to slash air traffic control services. However, getting a control tower back up and running is very difficult because air traffic controllers are highly trained.

Could my colleague tell us whether it was a good idea to delay making a decision about shutting down control towers until more was known about how the pandemic would play out? Also, does he think, in general, this is a service that should be maintained as much as possible?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Kram:** Madam Speaker, some of the vocabulary is a little technical, so I am going to respond in English.

It is my hope that this is not just a delay in the closing of these air traffic control towers. It is my hope that once air travel resumes to normal levels, there would not be a need to close these towers at all and that life would be back to normal. Canadians would be flying again, and there would be no need for layoffs at Nav Canada.

I would encourage the hon. members to read the report that was tabled in the House yesterday. One of the themes of the report, and one of the recommendations, is the need for alternative funding models for not just Nav Canada but air travel in general during the times of a pandemic. The funding model for Nav Canada has worked very well for the first quarter-century of Nav Canada's existence, but when a pandemic hits, everything becomes quite topsy-turvy.

We have a social safety net in place for workers in the form of employment insurance and workers' compensation and that sort of thing. Maybe we need a self-funding social safety net for Nav Canada, where it could draw—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, I have to allow for other questions. I would ask the hon. member to keep his responses to a minutes.

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

**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, understanding the importance of our airports in all regions of the country is something this government has demonstrated quite clearly. Whether they are international or local airports, no matter what their size, these facilities provide major economic and social benefits. There is no question that they play a role in those communities. The government has been there to support them in very tangible ways.

The question I have for my friend is this. Canada is a vast country. He seems think that all we need to do is just pick a date when people can start to travel, that we do not have to listen to the health care professionals or science. Does he not recognize there could be another wave and that we need to listen to health care professionals and science—

• (2125)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Regina—Wascana.

**Mr. Michael Kram:** Madam Speaker, it would be foolish to pick a date on the calendar at random and say that is the date of the re-opening. We need to have a comprehensive plan that is built in consultation with our medical professionals. What the federal government should do is follow the lead of many provincial governments, which is to come up with a minimum level of vaccinations that would make a safe reopening plan reasonable. Then it could look at the calendar and say, based on the current levels and rates of vaccination, what a reasonable time frame to achieve those goals would be so Canadians could start making their summer travel plans, so they could be working again and getting life back to normal.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will stick with the airline industry.

The Bloc Québécois believes that when the big airlines get public subsidies, they should be required to pay passengers back for a service that was not delivered. The Standing Committee on Trans-

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port recently recommended that a bill introduced by my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères be adopted as quickly as possible.

I would like to know whether my colleague will vote in favour of the bill when it comes up for a vote.

[English]

**Mr. Michael Kram:** Madam Speaker, yes, I am certainly in favour of the principle of refunds for air travel passengers who have paid for a service they have not yet received. I will have to admit that I have not yet read that bill in full, but I will certainly read it with interest.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am speaking from the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council.

I want to talk about the background to the estimates and the budget, and the fall economic statement that provides the background that the budget is supporting, that the estimates will be supporting. I will talk about transportation and a number of other items.

The biggest emphasis in the budget is to finish the fight against COVID, and there is a large contribution to the provinces and territories for that. It is still not over and that is very essential. There is support for individuals and businesses to get through this economic fallout. We are on the road of recovery, but as a number of interventions have shown, in the tourism industry, for instance, there is still a lot of time before everyone is fully recovered, so we need to keep those supports going.

The third big objective is for the economy to come roaring back in a way that includes everyone, with special supports, for instance, for women and for indigenous businesses. We want the economy to come back with a green economy, which has so much potential for jobs. We want an economy that will come back in a competitive way, where we can compete internationally, that creates a lot of new jobs, particularly for youth.

People who have experienced not having a job at some point in their lives, and they have to support a family, feel a big pit in their stomachs. There are very few things that can be so scary, upsetting and devastating. Although it was a very large investment, as many people have said, a huge investment, it was very essential to keep people working through these difficult times. That was obviously a big objective and the parties co-operated in a very good way to achieve it.

Based on the questions of some members, they may not have been aware that there were 861,000 CEBA loans for over \$46 billion. There were 5.3 million jobs saved with the wage subsidy of \$73 billion. Our first rent assistance program saw 140,000 applications approved and 1.25 million employees were assisted with \$2 billion. The second rent assistance was worth \$2.5 billion and helped over 150,000 applicants.

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Even with all these programs, there may have been people who fell through the cracks. As everyone knows, these programs had to be created very quickly if we were going to help people from going under. There may have been cracks that were not filled, so the regional relief and recovery fund was put into the regional development agencies across Canada, with the tremendous leadership of the Minister of Economic Development. A few fell through the cracks, but that fund helped over 23,000 applicants across the country, with \$1.4 billion.

Tourism is important to me, and out of those amounts of money, tourism alone had over 4,400 approvals for \$392 million.

A lot of these supports were so critical to keep jobs during these unprecedented times not seen since the war. The fall economic statement added to that. For tourism, there is the HASCAP program. The RRRF I just mentioned was so needed and efficient that we had to increase money for it. Then there was the regional air transport fund, which is so important in rural Canada.

One of the most exciting things was the announcement of the new regional economic development agency for British Columbia. British Columbia is a unique area and there will be all kinds of special supports, recognizing that uniqueness, with this new agency.

• (2130)

Of course, that leaves the prairie regional development agency on its own with all those previous funds, which it can now enhance even more its work, over and above all the projects that went there through the RRRF already. This will be great for the Prairies, and they can lead the way for us in resource projects. Their human resources are very bright, great research done is done in the prairie areas, and all kinds of businesses can lead with exports and help the recovery in Canada.

I want to talk about some of the things that are really essential for the north. First, I am most excited about the increase in the northern residents deduction for the Territories and the northern parts of the provinces. A lot of people were not eligible for this deduction. People could only claim it if their employer put it on their T4 slip, gave them a travel allowance and then they could collect this northern residents travel reduction. However, this budget has allowed for everyone to have access that deduction. They do not need their employer to include it on their T4 slips. That will be so exciting for the economies of the north, and for the people of the north as a personal support.

Our biggest employer and hardest hit one is tourism. There is a record amount of additional funds specific to tourism in the budget, \$1 billion, of which \$200 million is for local festivals, cultural events, heritage celebrations, local museums and amateur sports events. In my riding, we have all those things in great numbers and, of course, they greatly contribute to employment and to our economy.

There are another \$200 million for the major events in those areas, such as festivals, cultural events, heritage, local museums and amateur sports events. That does not affect my riding so much, but in the big cities of the country, that will be critical for those activities to carry on, to provide employment and to keep jobs. For decades, I think parliamentarians have underestimated the cultural

sector and its importance to the creation of jobs and to moving forward our cultural ideas and thought processes.

There are also \$100 million for Destination Canada. Canada has not put as much into marketing our great nation as some other countries of the world. It is something I have always advocated for, and I am so excited to see that funding for Destination Canada, again to help our tourism industry.

Then we have the \$500 million tourism relief fund, once again, recognizing the tourism industry and how hard it has been hit. Our borders are open to all the other businesses. Trucks can come across. The one thing the border is not open to during the pandemic is tourism. On top of all that for tourism, is a \$700 million for small business financing fund. It will not all go to tourism businesses, but again, it provides more support for small businesses to particularly help them in the green area, to be inclusive, to be competitive and to create more jobs.

In the north, our two biggest sectors are mining and tourism. In my riding, the mining sector's first request was support for hydroelectric power. We are running out of power in the north. Therefore, the budget includes \$40.4 million to study and prepare potential hydroelectric projects across the north.

The Yukon government is one of the most progressive in the country with its climate change plan and reducing greenhouse gas plan, and it wanted some assistance, so the budget has included \$25 million for it.

As a Conservative member mentioned earlier this evening, and I believe it was the member for Niagara Falls, tourism will not be back right away. It will take some time, yet our rent subsidy and our wage subsidy are running out this month. Therefore, unless we get the budget implementation act passed, there is going to be a lot of difficulty in the tourism sector, both for businesses and for NGOs that need the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy, which this budget implementation act, Bill C-30, would extend into the fall.



● (2135)

Another item that is very important for us and that probably has not been mentioned much is the centre of excellence for critical minerals. Critical minerals are needed a lot for batteries, for one thing, so they are absolutely essential, first for the mining industry and to have a clean environment to deal with the climate change crisis. As members know, one country in particular is trying to corner the market on critical metals, and we have an agreement with the United States. It is very important for us, for various reasons, so I am very excited to see that in the budget.

In past budgets, there has not been so much for communities, but communities were hit hard by this. Their various types of support were also reduced during the pandemic. I was delighted to see a Canada community revitalization fund, something brand new. There is \$500 million there so the small communities across the country can have projects that are very important to them.

There are a number of supports for seniors. During our term, we increased the GIS for the lowest-income seniors, and there are several other supports for seniors during COVID. There is a huge increase to the new horizons for seniors program, and there is an addition in the budget of 10% for seniors over 75 to add to all that, for the most needy seniors.

Then there is a very large Canada digital adoption program. As members know, we are in the 21st century, the digital economy. It is a lot of learning for me, but if we are going to keep up with the rest of the world, our businesses have to keep up, so it is great to have that fund to help businesses transform over. There are a lot of jobs for young people in there as mentors to help the businesses transfer into the digital economy.

There is also the Canada recovery hiring program. As I mentioned, one of the big objectives is to hire more people, to get people back to work. If businesses had to lay people off, reduce their hours or reduce their wages, all those things can be supplemented from June 6 to November 20 through the Canada recovery hiring program. The very flexible idea is that for each month or each eligibility period for this program and for the wage subsidy, they can pick whichever one is best for their company.

I do not have time to talk about it now, but there are a number of improvements to small-business financing. Certainly there are significant investments in first nations. People will remember back to the biggest investment in history of \$5 billion, proposed by Paul Martin for the Kelowna Accord. Well, this budget has \$18 billion for first nations and \$4.3 billion for infrastructure, for instance.

In my career, very seldom have I seen money for social financing, for NGOs and charities, but in this budget there is \$200 million for a social financing fund. To get companies ready, there is an investment of \$50 million in the investment readiness fund, because the first one was so successful it was all used up. There is a very unique concept being floated of social financing bonds for those who want to invest to help the country in a socially responsible way.

As I mentioned, communities need support, and there is a community services recovery fund to help various community services and NGOs adapt and modernize, after they have been hit so hard by

### *Business of Supply*

COVID and so many of their resources have been decimated by COVID.

● (2140)

There is money for domestic vaccine production, which I think everyone appreciates. There is a huge increase, another increase, in the broadband fund, and that is very important for my riding, as well as cellphone coverage. There are 100,000 people being lifted out of poverty with the increase in the Canada workers benefit. There are huge funds for training, as I said, to get people employed again, 500,000 people, of which 215,000 are youth.

I will mention something that probably no one else will mention, the polar continental shelf funding of \$24 million. That is to help Arctic research.

There is also \$140 million for food security.

The Liard First Nation has a great housing manufacturing project that I am supporting. On self-governing first nations housing, they have great ideas. I would also like to see support for getting off-grid, remote mines off diesel, and increases for the equipment and O&M for indigenous broadcasters, who do such wonderful work in my riding.

I really appreciate the large investments in salmon, to enhance salmon on the west coast. They come right up into my riding. Salmon are very important for indigenous culture and ceremonies, for one thing, as well as for food.

There is also the doubling of the student grant for two more years and extending the waiver of interest to 2023.

I want to talk about aviation in the north for a bit. We really appreciate the northern air support that started almost from the beginning of the pandemic. It is important to know that we need interlining with the mainline carriers. We cannot let the mainline carriers put our small, local carriers out of business. We really need the mainline carriers to interline, to have co-operative arrangements where everyone wins. Neither airline has to go half-empty. The big carriers could get new customers for their overseas routes, while the local carriers that service the north could get the flights down to Edmonton, Vancouver, the big cities that are so needed for their competitiveness.

*Business of Supply*

I could talk about a lot of other things, but I do not have time now. The Conservatives brought up that what is really important for them is a plan. We have huge plans. The fall economic statement was a 168-page plan. It had all sorts of things to return the economy. Then the budget is a 740-page plan.

I will just mention some of the items in that plan to get companies back to work, over and above all the ones I have already mentioned. There is money for food security, indigenous and women entrepreneurs, an AI strategy, artificial intelligence strategy, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research—again, we are in the 21st century—a quantum strategy, the Canadian Photonics Fabrication Centre, business-led R and D through the colleges, Mitacs for 85,000 placements, CanCode, the net-zero accelerator to help the resource industry, the clean-growth hub, support for Measurement Canada, strategic innovation funds, IRAP expansion, which has been so important for innovation in Canada for decades, Elevated IP, the strategic intellectual property program review, the innovation superclusters, the data in the digital world, and support for the Standards Council of Canada and the Competition Bureau.

I encourage everyone to support all these items that I have mentioned, and the ones in the estimates, so that we could get Canadians back to work and businesses could keep our economy going. We would not need to continue government supports for either individuals or businesses once we get everyone back. We need to continue support for Canada and around the world. When COVID exists anywhere in the world, it is still a threat to us.

I will leave it at that. I hope we get support from all parties, which have been very co-operative and helpful during the pandemic.

• (2145)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his speech and for his work. I am interested to know how the transportation and tourism spending announced here is going to help his riding. What does he think is missing that should have been there?

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, the thing that will help my riding the most within tourism is the money that I mentioned right at the beginning for the festivals, the museums and the culture, and of course the billion dollars for the tourism industry and the marketing.

On the transportation side, it would be the trade corridors fund. The north got an inordinate percentage of that. I know in the first round we got something like \$200 million out of \$2 billion, which was way more than our number per capita, although we have a lot of area where we have to put that infrastructure in, to be able to get tourists in and out.

The other transportation funding that has been very important and essential for us has been the support for the northern air transport. We had several projects announced recently to improve our airport, the structure, the aprons and the runways, but also for the northern airlines that have been hurt, which provide service to the rural communities.

As I said, one thing that needs support from all members of Parliament is to have the big airlines interline with our northern air-

lines, so they can both still compete and they are not either putting the smaller airline out of business or costing the large airline more than it needs to—

• (2150)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have to allow for other questions.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Again, we see the flow of money being handed out left and right. It has been that way for weeks. Often it is for good reason, we have no doubt, but it is still our money, the taxpayers' money in Quebec and Canada. For Quebec, roughly 22% of that money is reinjected, generally for good reasons.

I would like to ask my colleague the following question because it is a question I am asked in my riding.

Has he heard about seniors or their children or their grandchildren who find that they have been unfairly treated in this budget?

[English]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, I am trying to think if I have had a lot of calls from any of those groups. I am not sure about the member's riding, but he probably knows the federal government supports. The COVID supports that people in his riding and across the country received, a large percentage of them have come from the federal government. The provinces, at least in my area, have had some very innovative and helpful programs to add to this federal support. I imagine that in his riding the provincial government has added some supports to the federal supports.

I have been in the House since the year 2000, and this is the biggest federal budget that I remember, which has something for almost everyone, some support for every group that he is talking about. I mentioned seniors. There is money for people with disabilities. There is money for students. There is support for low-income workers and support for unemployed people.

I did not mention the fact that there is an extension of the more flexible EI rules that have been put in place to get through the pandemic. That is being extended in this budget as well. There is something for all—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have someone else who is waiting to ask a question.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals' financial plan is failing to go after large corporate abusers of the wage subsidy while planning a 40% cut for the 1.5 million Canadians who are still depending on the Canada recovery benefit in order to make rent and put food on the table.

New Democrats have raised this issue many times in the House, and the government's answer has been either completely ignorant or totally disingenuous. When we express skepticism about the budget, government members say, "Oh the NDP, if they vote against the budget, they are voting against an extension of the Canada recovery benefit". Nothing could be further from the truth.

The problem is that the Liberals refuse to admit that there is a possibility, other than terminating the benefit or cutting the benefit, which is to continue the benefit at the current rate. So, while they are content to allow corporate abusers of the wage subsidy get off scot-free, I think it is totally inappropriate for them to be going after all these Canadians who still have not been able to go back to work, who are depending on the Canada recovery benefit and who cannot afford to go from \$2,000 a month down to \$1,200 a month.

I want to know what the member has to say to that, and do not tell me that it is a choice between either terminating the benefit or cutting the benefit, because we all know that if the government had the right intention, it could extend the benefit at the current rate.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, I know that the member is a very thoughtful member of Parliament, as was his father, whom I enjoyed being in Parliament with.

First of all, I cannot agree with the premise of the member's question that abusers are being let off. All the programs have conditions, including the wage subsidy, and those are followed up. For example, the wage subsidy can only be used for wages and, as I mentioned, that is what kept a huge number of people working so that they could put food on the table.

However, as the pandemic is winding down, as I mentioned during my speech, most of the supports are reducing as people come out of the pandemic, and both individual and corporate supports are going down.

I think I heard in a speech earlier in the week that 81% of the jobs lost have already been put back in place and so, as we recover, I think the supports will be reduced.

• (2155)

**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 just have a quick question for my friend.

The member made reference to the importance of cultural events. In Winnipeg, we have Folklorama, a fantastic organization that puts on an annual event that brings so much character and life to our city. These are the types of organizations that the government also supports.

Could the member add some further thoughts in terms of how important it is to emphasize that the government was there and continues to be there for our arts and culture communities?

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, the fact that there is \$200 million for big cultural events or festivals like Folklorama is very important. As I said, I think culture has been a bit of a forgotten sector in our economy, and so this is important for all the people who work in the sector. It is important for all of the performers in the gig economy who really have limited income, and it is so important to our spirit. As well, by having entertainment locally, we have Canadians supporting Canadians, we keep people in the country and have our dollars recirculate in the country, which is also very important.

Obviously, they had to close down during the pandemic, but a number of these proponents were actually eligible for the wage subsidy and CEBA loans. This has kept some of these very important charities, NGOs and festivals afloat during this time, so that they can start up as soon as the pandemic is over.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to be here tonight to talk about transportation and tourism. These sectors are very important not just in my riding, but across the country. As for the estimates, since I do not have a lot of time, I will be pretty succinct.

First of all, I will talk about what is needed and then what is in the estimates and the budget. We know that because of the pandemic, all of the airlines and a number of transportation businesses have had to lay off workers and they are in a tough spot. The government needed to come up with some kind of aid package. That said, it picked winners and losers. It decided Air Canada and Air Transat were going to get bailouts, but not WestJet. Why is that? That is just not fair. We need all of them to continue.

Greyhound has gone out of business. This is a critical service, especially for lower-income individuals and people across the country in rural and remote places. Something is needed there and there is nothing coming forward.

One of the groups that is very concerned is travel agents. A lot of times they have consulting fees and they have not been able to take advantage of a lot of the government's programs. Something needs to be done for them.

We need to get a border opening plan, not just with our neighbour to the south, but across the provinces, accelerating the vaccine rollout, working with the provinces and territories to open up and providing an incentive for Canadians to travel in this country. That is a huge \$30-billion opportunity, a way of restoring life to the tourism sector that has been very hard hit. The \$1 billion in the budget is not going to do it, so we need an additional incentive on top of that. In addition, as I have said, we need to put back in place all of the smaller routes and work on that plan.

*Business of Supply*

When it comes to the tourism sector, a lot of the festivals and fairs were very hard hit. In my riding, there is the Brigden Fair and the Plympton-Wyoming Fair. There are fall fairs all over the place and everybody wants to get back to them, but without some kind of government infusion, they will not be able to survive. We need to do something for them. Let us get back to normal.

• (2200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 10 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Call in the members.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY****OPPOSITION MOTION—CENSURE OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

• (2245)

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

*(Division No. 149)*

**YEAS****Members**

Aboultiaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Angus
Arnold	Ashton
Bachrach	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Carrie
Chabot	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duval
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Harder	Harris
Hoback	Hughes

Jansen	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Liepert	Lobb
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Manly
Marcel	Martel
Masse	Mathysen
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McPherson
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzner	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Perron
Plamondon	Poillievre
Qaqqaq	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shin	Shipley
Simard	Singh
Sloan	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Therrien	Tochor
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vignola	Wagantall
Warkentin	Wagh
Webber	Williamson
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 169	

**NAYS****Members**

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Besette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blois
Bratina	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher

*Business of Supply*

That Vote 1, in the amount of \$741,693,237, under Department of Transport — Operating expenditures, in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** If a member of a recognized party present in the chamber 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.

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

● (2300)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 150*)

## YEAS

## Members

Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Regan
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tassi	Trudeau
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Young	Zahid
Zuberi — 151	

## PAIRED

Nil

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

[*Translation*]

The next question is on opposed vote 1.

\* \* \*

## MAIN ESTIMATES, 2021-22

## CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—TRANSPORT

The House resumed consideration of Motion No. 1.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

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  
Guilbeault  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Ien

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  
Hajdu  
Harris  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jaczek

*Business of Supply*

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	Lightbound	Jansen	Jeneroux
Long	Longfield	Kelly	Kent
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Kitchen	Kmieć
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kram	Kurek
Maloney	Manly	Kusie	Lake
Marcil	Martinez Ferrada	Lawrence	Lehoux
Masse	Mathysen	Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon	Lloyd	Lobb
McDonald	McGuinty	Lukiwski	MacKenzie
McKay	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	O'Toole
Oliphant	O'Regan	Patzner	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Perron	Poilevie	Rayes
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	Redekopp	Reid
Powlowski	Qaqqaq	Rempel Garner	Richards
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Rood	Ruff
Regan	Robillard	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Rodriguez	Rogers	Scheer	Schmale
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shields	Shin
Saini	Sajjan	Shipley	Sloan
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Steinley
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Strahl	Stubbs
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Sweet	Tochor
Schulte	Serré	Uppal	Van Popta
Sgro	Shanahan	Vecchio	Vidal
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Viersen	Vis
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Wagantall	Warkentin
Simms	Singh	Waugh	Webber
Sorbara	Spengemann	Williamson	Wong
Ste-Marie	Tabbara	Yurdiga	Zimmer— 118
Tassi	Thériault		
Therrien	Trudeau		
Trudel	Turnbull		
Van Bynen	van Koeverden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vaughan	Vignola		
Virani	Weiler		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Yip	Young		
Zahid	Zuberi— 208		

**NAYS****Members**

Aboultaif	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

**PAIRED**

Nil

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

The next question is on the motion to adopt the main estimates.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved:**

That the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, except any vote disposed of earlier today and less the amounts voted in the interim supply, be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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. opposition whip.

[English]

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

● (2310)

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

*(Division No. 151)*

## YEAS

## Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Besette	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)
Duvall	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
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Manly	Marcil
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay

*Business of Supply*

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
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	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vignola
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid	Zuberi— 208

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	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

*Business of Supply*

Maguire  
Mazier  
McColeman  
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Moore  
Morrison  
Nater  
Patzner  
Rayes  
Reid  
Richards  
Ruff  
Saroya  
Schmale  
Shin  
Sloan  
Steinley  
Stubbs  
Tochor  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wong  
Zimmer— 117

Martel  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McLean  
Melillo  
Morantz  
Motz  
O'Toole  
Paul-Hus  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Rood  
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)  
Scheer  
Shields  
Shipley  
Soroka  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Viersen  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williamson  
Yurdiga

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  
Ersine-Smith  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Garneau  
Gaudreau  
Gerretsen  
Gould  
Guilbeault  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Ien  
Johns  
Jones  
Jowhari  
Kelloway  
Khera  
Kusmierczyk  
Lalonde  
Lametti  
Lattanzio  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Lightbound  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Manly  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mathysen  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKenna  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendès  
Michaud  
Monsef  
Murray  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Pauzé  
Petipas Taylor  
Powlowski

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  
Hajdu  
Harris  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jaczek  
Joly  
Jordan  
Julian  
Khalid  
Koutrakis  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lauzon  
Lebouthillier  
Lemire  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacGregor  
Maloney  
Marcil  
Masse  
May (Cambridge)  
McDonald  
McKay  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Morrissey  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Qaqqaq

## PAIRED

Nil

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

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-33, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

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

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to the committee of the whole.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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. chief opposition whip.

[English]

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote to the current vote.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

• (2325)

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

(Division No. 152)

## YEAS

## Members

Alghabra  
Anandasangaree  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Badawey  
Bains

Anand  
Angus  
Arya  
Bachrach  
Bagnell  
Baker



Qualtrough  
Regan  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Saini  
Saks  
Sangha  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schiefke  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Singh  
Spengemann  
Tabbara  
Thériault  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
van Koeverden  
Vandenbeld  
Vignola  
Weiler  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young  
Zuberi— 209

Ratansi  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Sahota (Brampton North)  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sorbara  
Ste-Marie  
Tassi  
Therrien  
Trudel  
Van Bynen  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Virani  
Wilkinson  
Yip  
Zahid

## NAYS

### Members

Aboultaif	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
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid

## Business of Supply

Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Sloan
Soroka	Steinley
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tochor
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williamson	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 118

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole.

The House will now go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Alexandra Mendès in the chair)

(On clause 2)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Chair, can the President of the Treasury Board assure the House that the bill is exactly in its usual form, with the exception of the non-recurring expenditures contained therein?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I would assure my hon. colleague that the presentation of this bill is identical to that used during the previous supply period.

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 3 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

[Translation]

Shall clause 4 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 5 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

*Business of Supply*

(Clause 5 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall schedule 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall schedule 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall the preamble carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Title agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Bill agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall I rise and report the bill?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Bill reported)

• (2330)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved:

That Bill C-33, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022 be concurred in at report stage.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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.

[*English*]

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

• (2340)

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

(*Division No. 153*)

## YEAS

## Members

Alhabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeu
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)
Duvall	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	Lefebvre
Lemire	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Manly	Marcil

Martinez Ferrada  
 Mathysen  
 McCrimmon  
 McGuinty  
 McKenna  
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
 Mendès  
 Michaud  
 Monsef  
 Murray  
 Normandin  
 Oliphant  
 Pausé  
 Petitpas Taylor  
 Powlowski  
 Qualtrough  
 Regan  
 Rodriguez  
 Romanado  
 Saini  
 Saks  
 Saingha  
 Savard-Tremblay  
 Schiefke  
 Serré  
 Shanahan  
 Sidhu (Brampton East)  
 Simard  
 Singh  
 Spengemann  
 Tabbara  
 Thériault  
 Trudeau  
 Turnbull  
 van Koeverden  
 Vandenbeld  
 Vignola  
 Weiler  
 Wilson-Raybould  
 Young  
 Zuberi— 209

Masse  
 May (Cambridge)  
 McDonald  
 McKay  
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
 McPherson  
 Mendicino  
 Miller  
 Morrissey  
 Ng  
 O'Connell  
 O'Regan  
 Perron  
 Plamondon  
 Qaqqaq  
 Ratansi  
 Robillard  
 Rogers  
 Sahota (Brampton North)  
 Sajjan  
 Samson  
 Sarai  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Schulte  
 Sgro  
 Sheehan  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
 Simms  
 Sorbara  
 Ste-Marie  
 Tassi  
 Therrien  
 Trudel  
 Van Bynen  
 Vandal  
 Vaughan  
 Virani  
 Wilkinson  
 Yip  
 Zahid

## NAYS

### Members

Aboultaif  
 Albas  
 Allison  
 Baldinelli  
 Barrett  
 Bergen  
 Bezan  
 Block  
 Brassard  
 Carrie  
 Chong  
 Cumming  
 Dancho  
 Deltell  
 Diotte  
 Dowdall  
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
 Fast  
 Gallant  
 Genuis  
 Godin  
 Gray  
 Harder  
 Jansen  
 Kelly  
 Kitchen  
 Kram

Aitchison  
 Alleslev  
 Arnold  
 Barlow  
 Benzen  
 Berthold  
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
 Bragdon  
 Calkins  
 Chiu  
 Cooper  
 Dalton  
 Davidson  
 d'Entremont  
 Doherty  
 Dreeshen  
 Epp  
 Falk (Provencher)  
 Findlay  
 Généreux  
 Gladu  
 Gourde  
 Hallan  
 Hoback  
 Jeneroux  
 Kent  
 Kmiec  
 Kurek

## Business of Supply

Kusie  
 Lawrence  
 Lewis (Essex)  
 Lloyd  
 Lukiwski  
 Maguire  
 Mazier  
 McColeman  
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
 Moore  
 Morrison  
 Nater  
 Patzer  
 Poilievre  
 Redekopp  
 Rempel Garner  
 Rood  
 Sahota (Calgary Skyview)  
 Scheer  
 Shields  
 Shipley  
 Soroka  
 Strahl  
 Sweet  
 Uppal  
 Vecchio  
 Viersen  
 Wagantall  
 Waugh  
 Williamson  
 Yurdiga

Lake  
 Lehoux  
 Liepert  
 Lobb  
 MacKenzie  
 Martel  
 McCauley (Edmonton West)  
 McLean  
 Melillo  
 Morantz  
 Motz  
 O'Toole  
 Paul-Hus  
 Rayes  
 Reid  
 Richards  
 Ruff  
 Saroya  
 Schmale  
 Shin  
 Sloan  
 Steinley  
 Stubbs  
 Tochor  
 Van Popta  
 Vidal  
 Vis  
 Warkentin  
 Webber  
 Wong  
 Zimmer— 118

## PAIRED

Nil

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

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 ask them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I want to see how each member votes, so I would ask for a recorded division.

● (2350)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 154*)

## YEAS

### Members

Alghabra  
 Anandasangaree  
 Arseneault  
 Ashton  
 Badawey

Anand  
 Angus  
 Arya  
 Bachrach  
 Bagnell

*Business of Supply*

Bains	Baker	Qaqqaq	Qualtrough
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Ratansi	Regan
Beaulieu	Beech	Robillard	Rodriguez
Bendayan	Bennett	Rogers	Romanado
Bergeron	Bérubé	Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini
Besette	Bibeau	Sajjan	Saks
Bittle	Blaikie	Samson	Sangha
Blair	Blanchet	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Blois	Boudrias	Schulte	Serré
Boulerice	Bratina	Sgro	Shanahan
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Cannings	Carr	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Casey	Chabot	Simms	Singh
Chagger	Champagne	Sorbara	Spengemann
Champoux	Charbonneau	Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Chen	Cormier	Tassi	Thériault
Dabrusin	Damoff	Therrien	Trudeau
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Trudel	Turnbull
Desbiens	Desilets	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Dong	Drouin	Vaughan	Vignola
Dubourg	Duclos	Virani	Weiler
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Duval	Dzerowicz	Yip	Young
Easter	Ehsassi	Zahid	Zuberi— 208
El-Khoury	Ellis		
Erskine-Smith	Fergus		
Fillmore	Finnigan		
Fisher	Fonseca		
Fortier	Fortin	Aboutaif	Aitchison
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Albas	Alleslev
Freeland	Fry	Allison	Arnold
Garneau	Garrison	Baldinelli	Barlow
Gaudreau	Gazan	Barrett	Benzen
Gerretsen	Gill	Bergen	Berthold
Green	Guilbeault	Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Hajdu	Hardie	Block	Bragdon
Harris	Holland	Brassard	Calkins
Housefather	Hughes	Carrie	Chiu
Hussen	Hutchings	Chong	Cooper
Iacono	Ien	Cumming	Dalton
Jacek	Johns	Dancho	Davidson
Joly	Jones	Deltell	d'Entremont
Jordan	Jowhari	Diotte	Doherty
Julian	Kelloway	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Khalid	Khera	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Kwan	Lalonde	Fast	Findlay
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Gallant	Généreux
Lamoureux	Larouche	Genuis	Gladu
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Godin	Gourde
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Gray	Hallan
Lefebvre	Lemire	Harder	Hoback
Lightbound	Long	Jansen	Jeneroux
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kelly	Kent
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor	Kitchen	Kmieć
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Kram	Kurek
Manly	Marcil	Kusie	Lake
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lawrence	Lehoux
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
McCrimmon	McDonald	Lloyd	Lobb
McGuinty	McKay	Lukiwski	MacKenzie
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Maguire	Martel
McPherson	Mendès	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Mendicino	Michaud	McColeman	McLean
Miller	Monsef	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Morrissey	Murray	Moore	Morantz
Ng	Normandin	Morrison	Motz
O'Connell	Oliphant	Nater	O'Toole
O'Regan	Paupé	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Poilevre	Rayes
Plamondon	Powlowski	Redekopp	Reid

## NAYS

## Members

Rempel Garner  
Rood  
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)  
Scheer  
Shields  
Shipley  
Soroka  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Viersen  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williamson  
Yurdiga

Richards  
Ruff  
Saroya  
Schmale  
Shin  
Sloan  
Steinley  
Stubbs  
Tochor  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wong  
Zimmer— 118

### PAIRED

Nil

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

(Bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

• (2355)

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2021-22

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 Kingston and the Islands.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (2405)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 155*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Alghabra  
Anandasangaree  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Badawey  
Bains  
Barsalou-Duval  
Beaulieu  
Bendayan  
Bergeron  
Bessette  
Bittle  
Blair  
Blanchette-Joncas  
Blois  
Boulerice

Anand  
Angus  
Arya  
Bachrach  
Bagnell  
Baker  
Battiste  
Beech  
Bennett  
Bérubé  
Bibeau  
Blaikie  
Blanchet  
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)  
Boudrias  
Bratina

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)  
McDonald  
McKay  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Morrissey  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Qaqqaq  
Ratans  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Sahota (Brampton North)  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte

### Business of Supply

Brunelle-Duceppe  
Carr  
Chabot  
Champagne  
Charbonneau  
Cornier  
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  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKenna  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendès  
Michaud  
Monsef  
Murray  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Pauzé  
Petitpas Taylor  
Powlowski  
Qualtrough  
Regan  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Saini  
Saks  
Sangha  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schieffe  
Serré

*Business of Supply*

Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Simms	Singh
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Tassi	Thériault
Therrien	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vignola
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid	Zuberi — 210

**NAYS**

## Members

Aboultaif	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
Poillievre	Raves
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Sloan
Soroka	Steinley
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tochor
Uppal	Van Popta

Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williamson	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 118

**PAIRED**

Nil

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

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved that Bill C-34, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*English*]

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved that Bill C-34, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

**The Deputy Speaker:** If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request either a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would ask them to rise and indicate so to the Chair.

I see the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

● (2420)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 156)

**YEAS**

## Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	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

*Business of Supply*

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)  
McDonald  
McKenna  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendès  
Michaud  
Monsef  
Murray  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Pauzé  
Petitpas Taylor  
Powlowski  
Qualtrough  
Regan  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Saini  
Saks  
Sangha  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schiefke  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Singh  
Spengemann  
Thériault  
Trudel  
Van Bynen  
Vandal  
Vaughan

Drouin  
Duclos  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Dzerowicz  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Fergus  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fortin  
Fraser  
Fry  
Garrison  
Gazan  
Gill  
Green  
Hajdu  
Harris  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jacek  
Joly  
Jordan  
Julian  
Khalid  
Koutrakis  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lattanzio  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Lightbound  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Manly  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mathysen  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Morrissey  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Qaqqaq  
Ratansi  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Sahota (Brampton North)  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sorbara  
Ste-Marie  
Therrien  
Turnbull  
van Koeverden  
Vandenbeld  
Vignola

Virani  
Wilkinson  
Yip  
Zahid

Aboultaif  
Albas  
Allison  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Block  
Brassard  
Carrie  
Chong  
Cumming  
Dancho  
Deltell  
Diotte  
Dowdall  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Gallant  
Genuis  
Godin  
Gray  
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  
Shields  
Shipley  
Soroka  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Viersen  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williamson  
Yurdiga

Weiler  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young  
Zuberi— 206

## NAYS

## Members

Aitchison  
Alleslev  
Arnold  
Barlow  
Benzen  
Berthold  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Bragdon  
Calkins  
Chiu  
Cooper  
Dalton  
Davidson  
d'Entremont  
Doherty  
Dreeshen  
Epp  
Falk (Provencher)  
Findlay  
Généreux  
Gladu  
Gourde  
Hallan  
Hoback  
Jeneroux  
Kent  
Kmiec  
Kurek  
Lake  
Lehoux  
Liepert  
Lobb  
MacKenzie  
Martel  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McLean  
Melillo  
Morantz  
Motz  
O'Toole  
Paul-Hus  
Rayes  
Reid  
Richards  
Ruff  
Saroya  
Schmale  
Shin  
Sloan  
Steinley  
Stubbs  
Tochor  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wong  
Zimmer— 118

## PAIRED

Nil

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

*Business of Supply**[English]*

I do now leave the chair for the House to resolve itself into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Alexandra Mendès in the chair)

(On clause 2)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Chair, can the President of the Treasury Board assure the House that the bill, which may be the last before a possible election this fall, is exactly in its usual form?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I commend my colleague for his prudence and assure him once again that the presentation of this bill is identical to those used during the previous supply periods.

*[English]*

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 3 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

*[Translation]*

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 4 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 5 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

*[English]*

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 6 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall schedule 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall schedule 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

*[Translation]*

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall the preamble carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Title agreed to)

*[English]*

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Bill agreed to)

(Bill reported)

• (2425)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (2435)

*[Translation]*

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

(Division No. 157)

## YEAS

## Members

Alghabra  
Anandasangaree  
Arya  
Bachrach  
Bagnell  
Baker  
Battiste

Anand  
Angus  
Ashton  
Badawey  
Bains  
Barsalou-Duval  
Beaulieu



*Business of Supply*

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  
Hajdu  
Harris  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jaczek  
Joly  
Jordan  
Julian  
Khalid  
Koutrakis  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lattanzio  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Lighbound  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Manly  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mathysen  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Morrisey  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Qaqqaq  
Ratansi

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  
Erskind-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)  
McDonald  
McKay  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendès  
Michaud  
Monsef  
Murray  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Pauzé  
Petitpas Taylor  
Powlowski  
Qualtrough  
Regan

Robillard  
Rogers  
Sahota (Brampton North)  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sorbara  
Ste-Marie  
Thériault  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
van Koeverden  
Vandenbeld  
Vignola  
Weiler  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young  
Zuberi— 207

Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Saini  
Saks  
Sangha  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schieffe  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Singh  
Spengemann  
Tabbara  
Therrien  
Trudel  
Van Bynen  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Virani  
Wilkinson  
Yip  
Zahid

**NAYS**

## Members

Aboultaif  
Albas  
Allison  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Block  
Brassard  
Carrie  
Chong  
Cumming  
Dancho  
Deltell  
Diotte  
Dowdall  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Gallant  
Genuis  
Godin  
Gray  
Harder  
Jansen  
Kelly  
Kitchen  
Kram  
Kusie  
Lawrence  
Lewis (Essex)  
Lloyd  
Lukiwski  
Maguire  
Mazier  
McColeman  
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Moore  
Morrison  
Nater  
Patzer  
Poilievre  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Rood  
Aitchison  
Alleslev  
Arnold  
Barlow  
Benzen  
Berthold  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Bragdon  
Calkins  
Chiu  
Cooper  
Dalton  
Davidson  
d'Entremont  
Doherty  
Dreeshen  
Epp  
Falk (Provencher)  
Findlay  
Généreux  
Gladu  
Gourde  
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

*Business of Supply*

Sahota (Calgary Skyview)  
Schmale  
Shin  
Sloan  
Steinley  
Stubbs  
Tochor  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wong  
Zimmer— 117

Saroya  
Shields  
Shipley  
Soroka  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Viersen  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williamson  
Yurdiga

Dubourg  
Duguid  
Duvall  
Easter  
El-Khoury  
Erskine-Smith  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Garneau  
Gaudreau  
Gerretsen

Duclos  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Dzerowicz  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Fergus  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fortin  
Fraser  
Fry  
Garrison  
Gazan  
Gill

## PAIRED

Nil

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** When shall the bill be read the third time?

**Some hon. members:** Now.

[*English*]

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

• (2450)

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

*(Division No. 158)*

## 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

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

Gould  
Guilbeault  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Ien

Johns  
Jones  
Jowhari  
Khalid  
Koutrakis  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lattanzio  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Lightbound  
Longfield

MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Manly  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mathysen  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Morrissey  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Qaqqaq  
Ratansi  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Sahota (Brampton North)  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sorbara  
Ste-Marie  
Tassi  
Therrien  
Trudel  
Van Bynen  
Vandal  
Vaughan

Johns

Ng

O'Connell

O'Regan

Perron

Plamondon

Qaqqaq

Ratansi

Robillard

Rogers

Sahota (Brampton North)

Sajjan

Samson

Sarai

Scarpaleggia

Schulte

Sgro

Sheehan

Sidhu (Brampton South)

Simms

Sorbara

Ste-Marie

Tassi

Therrien

Trudel

Van Bynen

Vandal

Vaughan

Green

Hajdu

Harris

Housefather

Hussen

Iacono

Jaczek

Joly

Jordan

Julian

Khera

Kusmierczyk

Lalonde

Lametti

Larouche

Lauzon

Lebouthillier

Lemire

Long

Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)

MacGregor

Maloney

Marcil

Masse

May (Cambridge)

McDonald

McKay

McLeod (Northwest Territories)

Mendès

Michaud

Monsef

Murray

Normandin

Oliphant

Pauzé

Petitpas Taylor

Powlowski

Qualtrough

Regan

Rodriguez

Romanado

Saini

Saks

Sangha

Savard-Tremblay

Schiefke

Serré

Shanahan

Sidhu (Brampton East)

Simard

Singh

Spengemann

Tabbara

Thériault

Trudeau

Turnbull

van Koevorden

Vandenbeld

Vignola

Virani  
Wilkinson  
Yip  
Zahid

Weiler  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young  
Zuberi — 208

## NAYS

### Members

Abouttaif	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)
McLean	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Nater
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shin	Shipley
Sloan	Soroka
Steinley	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tochor	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williamson
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 117	

## PAIRED

Nil

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

## Adjournment Proceedings

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this House at any hour, of course.

This evening I find myself talking about a subject that we have been discussing at great length. That is the complete disregard that Liberal members have for this place, particularly the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet, with respect to the subject of documents ordered by the Canada-China committee and the government's refusal to follow the orders for those documents to be tabled with that committee. When they have tabled the documents, recognizing the order made by the committee, they have done so with illegal redactions of those documents. Twice the documents were ordered; twice the government failed to properly table them. The House ordered the documents to be tabled; the government failed to table them.

Now today, in a landmark vote in the House, the documents were again ordered, but this time the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada is to deliver them personally at the bar of the House of Commons, at which time he is to be admonished by the Speaker.

It is unbelievable that we find ourselves in a position where the House has had to take this extraordinary step, but it certainly is consistent with the behaviour and the pattern of behaviour that the government has demonstrated over the last six years, and certainly in the recent months, with many hours of filibusters across multiple committees, be it the health committee, the procedure and House affairs committee, national defence or the access to information, privacy and ethics committee. There are no lengths to which the government will not go to perpetrate its cover-up, to hide the truth from Canadians.

In this case, we have to wonder what could be so damning in these documents that the government is refusing to comply with lawful orders of this place. There are provisions. We will hear the cries from the parliamentary secretary that national security could be at risk. That is disingenuous. We know that the parliamentary law clerk has been given the task to ensure that no breaches of national security could come to pass and would make all of the appropriate redactions to ensure that that is the case.

Canadians deserve to know the truth, and they deserve a government that respects the will of Canadians and puts their best interests ahead of corruption and pride. We have a government that has the Prime Minister and several ministers of the Crown who have been found guilty of breaking the ethics act. We have filibusters across multiple parliamentary committees, too many hours to rhyme them all off in the short time that I have, a prorogation to cover up the WE scandal, and now we have, of course, landmark findings against the government in this place today.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

As I said, Canadians deserve accountability. We were promised that we would have the most accountable government in history. With this Liberal government, Canadians have seen anything but that, so it is important to ask why. Why is this government refusing to respect the will of this place and respect Canadians?

● (2455)

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on June 2, the House of Commons issued an order for unredacted documents that pertain to the transfer of viruses from the National Microbiology Lab to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March of 2019, and the departure of two National Microbiology Lab scientists. As we know, the government is responsible for protecting certain sensitive information that may include safeguards, for example, around personal information and privacy, or information that could pertain to national security.

The government has actually tried to comply with the intent of the order while, at the same time, respecting the law that is on the books and ensuring that security-related information and privacy are, in fact, properly safeguarded. This matter was referred to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians for its review on June 4 and the Public Health Agency of Canada has, in fact, provided to that committee the unredacted documents as was requested by Parliament.

I will take a minute to outline, on behalf of the government, how it arrived at this particular decision. I will start with a couple of words about the National Microbiology Lab. This is a lab that provides critical scientific leadership for Canada's response to COVID-19. As we speak, that laboratory is conducting more than 100 research studies on COVID-19 that range from designing and testing vaccines, to investigating treatments, to understanding the genetic fingerprint of the virus. A very important part of that lab's work is international collaboration. Throughout the pandemic, the laboratory has worked with both domestic and international partners to combat the disease.

As the government has outlined on a few occasions, the two former employees named in the order are no longer working for the Public Health Agency of Canada. As well, as was noted on multiple occasions, there is no connection between the transfer of the virus as cited in the order and the subsequent departure of these employees. There is also no link to COVID-19. Though additional information was redacted to protect privacy and for security reasons, the government wants to outline that the National Microbiology Lab continues to play a critical role in protecting the health and safety of Canadians.

The government is seeking to be open and transparent, but it is important to highlight that there is a balance to be struck to ensure that very sensitive information can, in fact, be protected. Twice the Public Health Agency appeared before the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations to respond to the questions on this matter. In addition, the agency has promptly responded to all requests for information, again while respecting its obligations under the laws that were, in fact, passed by Parliament. Sharing the relevant information is, indeed, a balancing act, one that requires us to consider various laws, duties and the public interest.

The government is and will remain committed to being as responsive as possible to parliamentarians and to Canadians.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, it would be much easier to take the parliamentary secretary at his word that the government was acting with the best intention of Canadians in mind, and not simply looking to protect its own political self-interest. We have seen illegally redacted documents provided to the health committee against orders of that committee, to the finance committee and we have seen it now to this special committee.

While the Liberals may believe that they are acting with the best interests in mind, they are contravening lawful orders of the documents that have been ordered with provisions for national security that would allow for the parliamentary law clerk, an impartial intermediary, to make those redactions and allow Canadians to have their continued confidence in public institutions.

That is what we are looking to do. That is what the opposition is looking to do, striking a balance where they can hold the government to account in a responsible way and protect the confidence of Canadians.

● (2500)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, there is no question that Parliament's oversight is required so the government can function at its best. The government respects the need for transparency and understands the importance of accountability, though it also understands the importance of protecting sensitive information. In this case, disclosure of the documents, without certain safeguards in place, would potentially put very sensitive information at risk for public release.

As I mentioned previously, the government has already provided the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians with all of the unredacted documents that have been requested. The committee has the statutory mechanisms and protections needed to safely review this sensitive information while maintaining the important aspect of confidentiality.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, average Canadian workers and owners of small and medium-sized business have been hit hard by the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns. I have heard from many business owners who are struggling to pay their bills and keep their businesses open, and I want them to know that I will not stop advocating on their behalf. In this Parliament we worked together to provide financial supports to individuals and businesses, but these supports have not been enough. Too many Canadians are falling through the cracks.

In March the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported that one-sixth of small businesses in Canada are at risk of permanently closing. The average small business is now \$170,000 in debt.

Not everyone in Canada has been suffering financially through the pandemic. A tiny minority of ultra-wealthy citizens and large corporations have greatly increased their fortunes while so many Canadians are suffering.

Banks and their CEOs have been some of the worst pandemic profiteers. Democracy Watch reports that four of Canada's six big banks are among the 50 most profitable banks in the world. While raking in profits, several of these big banks have raised their service fees during the past year or are planning to do so this summer. TD Bank reported second-quarter net income of \$3.7 billion, 147% higher than last year. Its spokesperson was quoted as saying that fee increase decisions are never made lightly and only occur after careful consideration and review. Canadians would like to know exactly what careful consideration and review big banks go through before deciding to increase their fees during a global pandemic. Is being one of the top 50 most profitable banks in the world not enough? Do they need to be in the top 20?

Credit card companies charge an average annual rate of 20% on top of annual fees and cash withdrawal fees. Businesses are charged transaction fees, known as “interchange rates”, for every credit card swipe. In Canada, the average interchange rate is 1.4%. Retail giants like Walmart can negotiate very low interchange rates, while many small businesses pay between 2.5% to 3% per transaction.

In 2018, the government struck deals with Visa and Mastercard to lower their average interchange rates from 1.5% to 1.4%, but that was hardly worth celebrating. Even before the pandemic hit, the European Union had capped interchange rates at 0.3%. The sky did not fall and credit card companies still operate and make profits. The major difference is that the burden on small and medium-sized businesses has eased. Is agreeing to interchange rates nearly five times higher than the EU the best we can do?

Low-income Canadians are often forced to use payday lenders to cover financial shortfalls or unforeseen expenses. Short-term payday loans are regulated by the provinces, and their annualized interest rates could be as high as 400% to 500%. Some payday lenders offer long-term loans and lines of credit that are federally regulated. Annualized interest rates on these types of loans are as high as 50% and legally capped at 60%. There is no justification for capping rates at 60% when interest rates are at historic lows. This is predatory lending, and the government is facilitating it. This industry preys off people in need and locks them into a cycle of endless debt.

Canadians want to know when the government will step in and protect them from gouging by big banks, credit card companies and payday lenders.

• (2505)

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, before I begin, I want to thank my hon. colleague for raising this important question around bank fees. More broadly, I will extend my sincere appreciation for his continued feedback from the very beginning of this pandemic, which in fact has helped shape my own thinking on a number of our emergency supports.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

The past 15 months have not been easy for anyone. The COVID-19 pandemic and recession have affected every Canadian in some way, in particular low-income Canadians and small businesses. We are seeing some light at the end of the tunnel now, but we have to remain vigilant and not take half measures until we know this is behind us. That is why our government is continuing to offer support programs for individuals and businesses.

Turning to the issue of bank fees, we understand how essential it is for Canadians to rely on strong consumer protection standards in their dealings with their banks. The government takes the protection of financial consumers very seriously so that we can ensure all Canadians benefit from strong consumer protection.

As we well know, the pandemic has caused financial challenges and uncertainty for Canadians in every region of the country. We understand why so many people are concerned about higher bank fees. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada is currently conducting research to obtain a fuller picture of the impact of COVID-19 on financial consumers. In a recent survey, it found that 30% of Canadians were paying additional bank fees as a result of this pandemic.

The most common fees were overdraft fees, ATM fees, withdrawal fees, late payment fees and insufficient funds fees. Three of these examples either directly or indirectly relate to shortages of cash, which disproportionately impact lower-income people.

We have to be a little careful here. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate that financial institutions make decisions with respect to things such as the fees they charge their clients independent of the government. That does not mean there is no role for the government to play.

Over the past few years, we have introduced a number of measures aimed at improving the confidence of Canadians in their banks and in our financial consumer protection system. In budget 2018, the government introduced certain measures to strengthen consumers' rights and interests when dealing with the banks and to improve the ability of the FCAC to protect consumers.

In 2018, the government also helped to secure voluntary commitments from Visa, Mastercard and American Express that would lead to lower costs for businesses, resulting in annual savings for small and medium-sized enterprises estimated at about a quarter of a billion dollars a year.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In the most recent budget, the government committed to launching consultations on further lowering credit card transaction fees. This would help small businesses affected by interchange fees and would ensure consumers' existing reward points are protected.

We are also moving forward with a consultation to specifically lower the rate of interest in the Criminal Code of Canada applicable to, as the member suggested, payday loans offered by payday lenders. This, again, disproportionately impacts low-income folks.

As well, I will mention briefly that as a result of a recent meeting I learned of an incredible Canadian company. Borrowell will extend new choices to Canadians by providing new technology, giving them lots of choice and creating jobs here at home.

I look forward to the follow-up from my friend and colleague on the other side.

**Mr. Paul Manly:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for his words and for staying up late with me. I know it is quite a bit later on the other side of the country.

The big Canadian banks are some of the most profitable in the world, and they should not be raising fees during the pandemic when workers are having a tough time paying their bills and keeping roofs over their heads. Where is the regulation? Why is the government allowing this to happen when so many small and medium-sized Canadian businesses are facing bankruptcy?

Meyers Norris Penny reported in April that over half of Canadians were \$200 away from not being able to cover their monthly expenses. That figure was 10% higher than it was in December 2020. To call this extremely alarming would be a huge understatement.

Canadians deserve better protection from excess profiteering. It is time for the government to tighten regulations on banking fees, credit card rates and interest rates charged by payday lenders. I am glad to hear that this is moving forward—

• (2510)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his well wishes. It is 2:10 a.m. on the east coast, but we are still going strong.

Since the very beginning of this crisis, our focus has been to do whatever it takes to help Canadian workers and businesses through these tough times. We understand that there needs to be faith that the economy is not just working, but working for everyone. We continue to have a focus on helping some of the most vulnerable and hardest-hit people and businesses in Canada.

As things reopen, we know that our support has to evolve to continue to support the recovery. The government has implemented different measures to better protect consumers, as I noted before. In the most recent budget, launching consultations on the reduction of credit card transaction fees and the reduction of the criminal rate of interest on payday loans, specifically, are important measures that speak directly to the issue that the member has raised.

We need to continue to focus not on empowering the wealthiest in Canada, but on developing supports that will allow us to recover in a way that allows the most vulnerable Canadians to see themselves in the recovery. At the end of the day, Canadians deserve to know that our government has their backs.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. member for Bow River is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

Pursuant to order made on Monday, June 14, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:11 a.m.)







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