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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

JEFFREY S. MARCOUX

The Speaker: Hon. colleagues, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to acknowledge a very sorrowful occurrence, the loss of one of our colleagues, Constable Jeffrey S. Marcoux.

[*English*]

Over the course of several years, Constable Marcoux showed up in this place to serve, to keep each one of us safe.

To lose a colleague who was in the prime of his life is hard. To find words adequate to express the tragedy of this loss is simply impossible.

[*Translation*]

We are all saddened by his passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with Constable Marcoux's family and friends at this very difficult time. I know that, in this place, our thoughts will be with them, as they work through the painful stages of their grief.

[*English*]

Grief is a complex of emotions. Dealing with these emotions starts with recognizing that it is okay to not be okay, that it is okay to grieve.

[*Translation*]

It is important to give oneself time to grieve.

[*English*]

We know that, for his family and friends, many of whom are here on Parliament Hill today, nothing can take away the pain of this loss.

[*Translation*]

Please know that, here in the House, we honour his memory. We draw inspiration from his life of service. We will miss him.

[*English*]

I invite all hon. members to stand to observe a moment of silence in the memory of the late Constable Jeffrey Marcoux.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY HUB FUNDRAISER

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the strength of our communities is its people, especially those who commit to helping others in need. This past weekend, I attended the South Asian Community Hub's first annual fundraising gala, which was a huge success.

SACH is a non-profit organization offering wraparound services to individuals and families facing health and social challenges. Its mission is to foster the well-being of diverse communities in B.C. by providing low-barrier services, counselling and advocacy through a South Asian perspective in multiple languages.

I ask all members to join me in thanking SACH's outreach team, leadership and board of directors, including executive director Daljit Gill-Badesha and chair Harman Pandher, for their compassion, generosity and commitment to making our communities stronger and healthier.

* * *

• (1410)

MS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, MS Canada continues to push forward in the fight against multiple sclerosis. With a mission to connect and empower the MS community to create positive change for those affected by it, it has its sights set firmly on a world free of MS.

Statements by Members

I had the joy of having my wife, Kyla, and mother-in-law, Donna, join me in Ottawa this week for the kickoff of MS Awareness Month. We all know someone who lives with the disease. My wife has connected with people who have MS, including staffers, MPs' spouses and even her hairdresser, so they can share their experiences and talk about treatments. I have seen first-hand the impacts of MS, and the resilience of my wife in her fight with this disease. Some days are better than others with MS, but her fight against it inspires me every single day.

In honour of MS Awareness Month, I am wearing a carnation to show my solidarity with the MS community. Let us work for a better country for those with MS and support those who need it.

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POLISH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a proud Polish Canadian. This month, I am proud to join over one million Polish Canadians in celebrating the first ever national Polish Heritage Month.

For centuries, Polish Canadians arrived in waves to settle communities from Wilno to Winnipeg, to raise their families and to help build our Canada. They served as teachers, nurses, engineers and electricians. They built businesses from the aerospace to automotive industries. They contributed to the vibrant cultural mosaic that is Canada by opening restaurants, cultural centres and churches. They proudly served our country as members of our Canadian Armed Forces.

Tomorrow, we will raise the Polish flag on Parliament Hill for the first time, and I will think of my Polish schoolteachers, Pani Zechaluk and Pani Bochus, as well as my soccer coaches, Coach Kowalczykowski and Coach Kruba. Most of all, I will think of my parents, who instilled in me a love of Polish heritage. To all, I say happy Polish Heritage Month.

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*[Translation]***MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH**

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, multiple sclerosis, or MS, is a disease that affects thousands of people in Quebec and Canada. This disease generally strikes individuals between the ages of 20 and 49, when they are building a career or starting a family.

Thankfully, in recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of medications available to slow or halt the disease's progression. However, more can be done. Less than 10% of research funding is being invested in preventing this disease. It is imperative that we lend our full support to the research community as it investigates these new fields of study.

Today, to mark MS Awareness Month, I am wearing a carnation to show my commitment to improving the quality of life of people with multiple sclerosis.

*[English]***ST. JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH**

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to speak about Hudson's St. James Anglican Church in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. The venerable institution, which has stood proudly since 1842, was struck by a heart-wrenching tragedy on April 14, when a fierce fire devastated the historic structure.

For over 180 years, St. James Anglican Church has served proudly as a place of worship, a venue for music and arts shows, a drop-off location for the collection of food and supplies for those in need, and a gathering place where Scouts proudly receive the badges and accolades every year. It is where generations of couples have said "I do". It has served not just as a building but also as a pillar of community life, heritage, love and kindness. Amidst the ashes, the path forward is illuminated by unwavering resilience and kindness.

From the firefighters who fought valiantly to contain the fire to Reverend Sophie Rolland's steadfast determination to rebuild and all those who have come forward since to pledge support, the collective community response serves as a powerful reminder that, from the depths of despair, we will emerge stronger.

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ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Today, I think of Warrant Officer Lloyd Joseph Stock, who joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940 during World War II at the age of 29. He received his wings in Brandon, Manitoba, before going to serve in England.

As part of the Coastal Command's No. 220 Bomber Squadron, he had to protect the merchant marine ships by hunting German U-boats and submarines. It was dangerous work, a lot more dangerous than his job as a florist before the war.

On a sortie over the Bay of Biscay in 1942, Lloyd's plane was shot down. His crew had just 35 seconds to bail out into a rubber dinghy. They survived 30 hours in the cold Atlantic before an Australian Sunderland float plane rescued them.

In spite of his crash, Warrant Officer Lloyd Stock completed 22 sorties. Sadly, the rest of his crew did not survive the war.

Lest we forget.

• (1415)

MS AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, an opportunity to highlight the profound impacts MS has on all Canadians and, in particular, on the 90,000 people who live with the disease.

[*Translation*]

This month is not just about raising awareness; it is also about ensuring access to care, promoting research and fostering inclusion. We must all take the time to learn more about multiple sclerosis and how we can better support those affected in our communities.

[*English*]

That is why I am proud to be joining thousands of Canadians in wearing a carnation this month, a flower that, in the MS community, has become a symbol of hope for a future free of multiple sclerosis.

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SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we bid farewell to the fifth annual Sikh Heritage Month in Canada, a celebration of resilience, diversity and the enduring spirit of Sikhism, we take a moment to reflect on the rich contributions of Sikh Canadians and the vibrant Sikh community flourishing in the city of Vaughan, including in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

April reminded us of the remarkable contributions that Sikhs have made throughout Canada's history. They were pivotal in constructing the Canadian Pacific Railway, served with distinction in both world wars and significantly advanced agricultural innovation.

Sikh Canadians are key advocates for human rights and promoting equality. Their unwavering commitment is seen through community-oriented initiatives, such as the Seva Food Bank and Khalsa Aid.

Through their leadership, including in this most honourable House, entrepreneurship and cultural contributions, they are building bridges, breaking barriers and enriching our society. Sikh heritage is carried through the spirit of inclusivity and understanding, which are shared Canadian values.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years under the current Prime Minister, drugs, chaos, crime and death rage in our streets.

Last year, in B.C. alone, there was a record 2,500 overdose deaths. Since the Liberals came into power, there have been over 42,000 overdose deaths.

In communities across British Columbia, hard drugs are openly used, even in hospitals and coffee shops. Businesses have been

Statements by Members

forced to close. Parents comb through schoolyards, collecting needles, trying to protect their children.

Kicking and screaming, David Eby's NDP government has finally conceded that its Liberal-NDP drug legalization experiment has led to death and ruined lives in its wake. This failed radical Liberal-NDP experiment must end now, full stop.

Common-sense Conservatives will ban hard drugs, stop taxpayer-funded drugs and put that money into detox and recovery.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I rise today to draw the attention of the House to the horrific and wholesale abuse of justice taking place in Iran.

The regime in Tehran continues to wage war on its own citizens. Several days ago, 33-year-old Toomaj Salehi was sentenced to death. An extraordinary hip-hop artist and rapper, Toomaj has simply been demanding that the civil rights of all Iranians be respected.

Despite having already endured over 250 days of solitary confinement, Toomaj has remained resolute in his demands. His undaunted courage has inspired the world. Over the last several days, thousands upon thousands have participated in protests across Canada and in cities around the world. As members of the House, we should all add our voices to theirs.

Toomaj must be set free immediately. We can ill afford to turn a blind eye to the unconscionable impunity of the Iranian regime.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today out of great concern for all of us who live or work in the greater Toronto area. We have learned that Toronto City Hall is requesting that the federal government legalize hard drugs, such as fentanyl, meth and cocaine.

Evidence from British Columbia already shows that legalizing hard drugs puts the safety and health of our neighbourhoods at risk and only increases drug overdose deaths. It is alarming and, quite frankly, shocking that Toronto City Hall would want to expand the Prime Minister's extremist experiment from British Columbia and bring it to Ontario. We ask that the Prime Minister reject Toronto City Hall's request and instead invest in the treatment and recovery programs that our communities need.

Statements by Members

● (1420)

FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leadership race of 2024 is well under way, and Mark Carney is the first out of the gate. He has been jet-setting across the country preaching his gospel of four more years of the broken, failed and woke Liberal-NDP policies that have made Canadians poor and Canada's economy weaker. That is why common-sense Conservatives moved a motion at the finance committee to have Mark Carney testify.

When carbon tax Carney is coronated as Liberal leader, Canadians should be terrified of his wacko policies to continue to quadruple the carbon tax, continue deficit spending and hike taxes. It is too bad the Liberal lapdog NDP shut down our motion and chose to protect carbon tax Carney, the corrupt Liberal-NDP government and its leader's pension. It is time for the NDP to step up and show some intestinal fortitude, have Mark Carney testify at the committee and, for once, hold the Liberals accountable for their record of wacko policies.

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UNITED STATES CONSULATE IN WINNIPEG

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to commemorate the 140th anniversary of U.S. diplomatic presence in Winnipeg, a testament to the deep, enduring bonds between Canada and the United States. Since the appointment of the first U.S. consul in 1869, our ties have only grown stronger, underscored by the consulate's reopening in 2001. This event was marked by then U.S. ambassador Gordon Giffin and then Manitoba premier Gary Doer, who highlighted our shared commitment to cross-border co-operation and regional development.

In 2016, commitment was further solidified when Winnipeg hosted the North American energy ministers meeting. It was a privilege for my father, who was then the natural resources minister, to welcome the U.S. secretary of energy at that time, Ernest Moniz, along with other distinguished leaders. Their discussions culminated in a memorandum of understanding that enhanced our co-operative efforts on climate change and energy.

As we reflect on the past and look to the future, let us continue to nurture this partnership that not only supports our economic and environmental goals, but also strengthens the ties that bind our nations together.

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PORT MOODY SOCCER CLUB

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in the House to acknowledge a historic first for Canadian girls in soccer. The Port Moody Soccer Club U16 girls is the only Canadian team on its way to Dalian, China, to compete in the International School Sport Federation Football World Cup. This is the first girls team to represent Canada at this Olympic Committee-recognized event. It has been incredible to watch how hard the girls have worked to make this a reality.

I encourage all Canadians to give their support to these young women as they represent Canada on the world stage. It is not too

late for partners to support the team to help ensure all girls, regardless of financial situation, can go. On behalf of myself, all my NDP colleagues and the residents of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra, we wish the girls the best of luck. We are proud of them.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, together, let us celebrate May 1, International Workers' Day. Let us celebrate the day together and united to make our voices heard.

This is a time to remember the major workers' rights movements and the gains they made. It is also an opportunity to highlight the rights still left to be won, like the right to EI for everyone who has lost their job or whose work season has ended; the right to decent working conditions for everyone, including temporary foreign workers and asylum seekers; and the right to earn a living amid a soaring cost of living and housing shortages. There is also the right to feel valued in the workplace and the right to a life outside of work in an increasingly hectic society.

I invite those who can come to join the big march organized by the Coalition du 1er mai in Montreal. I urge all of us to stay united in the fight for workers' rights.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the radical Liberal-NDP coalition, crime and chaos are the new norm on our Canadian streets.

In B.C., the Liberals' dangerous hard-drug legalization experiment has caused chaos in hospitals, playgrounds, parks and public transit, which the radical B.C. NDP admitted to last week. The Liberals ignored evidence when they granted B.C.'s request, and overdose deaths skyrocketed by 400%. The city of Toronto is now asking the government to legalize cocaine, heroin and fentanyl, like it did in B.C. That would mean kids in Toronto would be stepping over needles in playgrounds, and there would be more dangerous drugs and more people suffering instead of getting the help they need.

This extremist experiment has failed in B.C., and the Liberals should rule it out for Toronto. The minister responsible is from Toronto. She could say no today, but she will not because her radical boss will not let her ban hard drugs. If they will not do it, Conservatives will.

When it comes to care, compassion, law, order, and common sense, it seems as though there is only one party with any of them.

* * *

• (1425)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, and MS Canada will recognize this through a variety of activities and events, including MS Day on the Hill. I would like to thank all those who go above and beyond in supporting and championing the MS community: the doctors, various health care workers, researchers, family support networks, and the entire MS Canada staff and its volunteers.

I would also like to acknowledge the impact that ordinary Canadians have had over the years through their generous donations. This year there is an \$8-million fundraising goal for the month of May, which would allow MS Canada to continue funding critical research and programming that enhances the quality of life of those impacted by MS. Recent breakthroughs in research also give us hope and give confidence to those who are living with MS.

We stand on the cusp of new discoveries. I thank all Canadians who rallied around the country to raise awareness and to support those living with MS, including my son, Riley.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, Montreal and Quebec are not immune to the chaos the Prime Minister has caused in British Columbia by legalizing hard drugs. Montreal's director of public health has proposed a similar legalization policy.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his radical position on drug legalization, or will he cause the same chaos in Montreal that he has already caused in British Columbia?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us take a moment to reflect on what happened yesterday. You had to censure the Leader of the Opposition for refusing to withdraw the unparliamentary language he used while making political attacks about a crisis, a human tragedy, that is happening in British Columbia.

The fact is that we will always take this tragedy seriously. That is why we are taking a compassionate and evidence-based approach. We will be there to support British Columbia as it adjusts its pilot project.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is he ruling out the legalization of hard drugs in Montreal, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we are a government that is rooted in facts and that co-operates with the provinces.

The province of British Columbia asked for a pilot project. We looked at their plan together and we green-lit the pilot project.

No other requests came from any other province. However, if any of the provinces want to do something, we will look at their plan and make a responsible decision based on facts and on what has happened in previous situations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is opening the door to legalizing hard drugs in Montreal and possibly other cities in Quebec. We are against that.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister legalized smoking meth in hospital rooms, shooting up heroin in parks next to children and using hard drugs on public transit. The British Columbia government has asked him to reverse this legalization for parks, hospitals and transit. Will he do so, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opioid epidemic is hitting families, communities and individuals right across the country, and it has for many years. This is why we are continuing to use an approach grounded in compassion, public safety and public health through facts-based decisions.

We responded to the British Columbia government's ask for a pilot project. We will, yes, work with it to adjust it in ways that it sees fit. It is important to make sure that B.C. continues to do the things it needs to do to keep people safe in its jurisdiction.

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister still refuses to answer the question on whether or not he will reverse it himself. He made the decision to exempt hard drugs from the criminal law, so it became legal to smoke meth or crack in a hospital room, including around nurses who are breastfeeding their kids. This has caused chaos, and six British Columbians are dying every day that he delays.

Will he announce that, as of today, he has changed his mind and he is reversing his legalization of hard drugs in B.C., yes or no?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, British Columbia approached us with a pilot project that it wanted to bring in to look at a different way of dealing with the ongoing public health crisis that was hitting British Columbians with the opioid epidemic. We worked with the British Columbia government as it developed this pilot project, and now that it is asking for modifications to that project, we are looking at those modifications. We will work with B.C. as it seeks to adjust its plans for public health and dealing with this opioid epidemic.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no time to waste. On Friday, the B.C. government asked the Prime Minister to reverse his legalization of crack, heroin and other hard drugs in public places.

Every day, six British Columbians die of overdoses under this policy, and many more die as a result of drug-induced crimes. There is no time for bureaucratic and political considerations. Will he announce now that his experiment with legalizing hard drugs in B.C. is over, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, colleagues will understand if I am a little skeptical when the Leader of the Opposition says this is not about politics, because he has been the one who has been pointing out vulnerable people and trying to pursue ideological aims on this ongoing public health crisis.

We have consistently stepped up to work with provinces, with municipalities and with jurisdictions. Indeed, that would include moving forward with British Columbia as it wanted to try a pilot project. We are working with British Columbia to adjust in ways that make sense. We understand the urgency and we will act.

* * *

[Translation]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am reassured. I have not been sleeping well for some time now. I am going to be able to return the signs to the printers and cancel the bus. The NDP is voting with the Liberals in favour of the budget. That being said, the Bloc Québécois is voting against it.

Let me read something from Amira Elghawaby:

We are committed to upholding the values of religious freedom...and equality that are imbedded in our constitution and are at the heart of our democracy. That is why we are challenging this discriminatory and unconstitutional law.

If Ms. Elghawaby's mission was—

The Speaker: Time is up. The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has chosen to build bridges across the country through our infrastructure investments. That is how we are building bridges.

We are also building bridges by fully engaging with all the various communities throughout the country, by listening to points of view and by understanding just how important it is to defend the fundamental liberties of all Canadians, whatever their origin, religion or language may be.

We will continue to be there to uphold the Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is how we are building bridges between Canadians.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you have been too generous with the Ritalin.

We are definitely talking about different sorts of bridges. I am talking about the bridges Ms. Elghawaby is supposed to be creating between communities. As Guy Rocher used to say, one person's privilege is another's injustice.

With her attitude and measures like Islamic mortgages, Ms. Elghawaby will ensure that groups like the Haitian community, the Vietnamese community and the South American community will lack the same privileges as those of the Muslim community, which, I would point out, we welcome with open arms.

How does the Prime Minister explain this?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a pluralist and diverse society like Canada's and Quebec's, it is important to discuss and listen to all the various concerns of the communities and to respond specifically to these concerns. That is how we build a free, open and resilient society.

We will continue to listen to everyone, including Quebec's Muslim community, which is expressing concerns about provincial laws. We will continue to listen to people from coast to coast to coast with a view to creating a stronger society.

* * *

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thousands of Canadians are boycotting Loblaw this month. They are taking action because the Prime Minister refuses to take on the corporate greed that is driving up prices for Canadians. The Prime Minister has set up a grocery task force, which has done no tasks and has no force. Today, Loblaw reported that its profits are up by nearly 10%. Liberal announcements are not going to cut it.

Why is the Prime Minister letting big grocery rip off Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many others, we are concerned with the refusal of Loblaw and others to sign on to the grocery code of conduct, which we know will protect consumers and will protect growers across this country as well. We will continue to impress upon them, using various means at our disposal, the importance of signing on to the grocery code of conduct.

We have also increased the Competition Bureau's ability to go after big grocery companies in terms of the competitive or uncompetitive options they are giving to Canadians.

We have also moved forward in other ways of supporting Canadians with groceries like the national school food program announced in our budget.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, big grocery continues to rip off Canadians, and the Prime Minister is not stopping it.

[Translation]

People know they are being ripped off at the grocery store and the Prime Minister has failed to protect them. Thousands of people are tired of waiting for him to act and have decided to boycott the grocery giants. What a failure of leadership on the Prime Minister's part. His job is to protect Canadians, but instead he is protecting the big grocery stores and their record profits.

When will the Prime Minister rethink his priorities?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the big grocery stores to ensure that there is more competition and that they adopt the code of conduct. I think it is a good thing that Canadians are expressing their disapproval of Loblaw's, which refuses to adopt this grocery code of conduct.

We will continue to be there for Canadians with increased competition and with the school food program that will help 400,000 more children across the country learn on a full stomach.

We are there to help families during these difficult times. We will always be there for Canadians.

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[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the decision is on his desk to reverse the legalization of hard drugs in British Columbia. The B.C. government has admitted that it was wrong. It decided not to go ahead with the full three-year pilot project that the Prime Minister brought in place by exempting hard drugs from criminal law.

Will he do as the B.C. government has done and admit he was wrong today so we can start saving lives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, we have been there to work on an evidence-based, science-based, compassionate public health approach to the opioid epidemic, and that included responding to B.C.'s request for a pilot program. Now that it is asking to adjust the pilot program, we will work with the province to adjust it in ways that make sense for the province.

Given the new, more reasonable tone of the Leader of the Opposition, I wonder whether he might take this opportunity to reassure Canadians that he neither supports extremist, white nationalist organizations like Diabolon nor wants their votes.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is false, and furthermore, there are six people dying every day in British Columbia. There is a 380% increase in overdose deaths in that province under the Prime Minister's legalization and subsidization of hard drugs. That is enough of trying to score political points over the issue. Do the right thing. It is on his desk.

Will he announce today that he has changed his mind, and reverse the legalization of hard drugs, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we are working with British Columbia to adjust its parameters and desires around the pilot project. We will always be there to work in order to keep Canadians safe.

At the same time, I will point out that the Leader of the Opposition refuses to say a simple thing: that he condemns Diabolon because it is a white nationalist, violent organization, and that he rejects the endorsement of Alex Jones, an extremist conspiracy theorist who denied the deaths of 20 kids at Sandy Hook. These are things that concern Canadians that he should also answer for.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the Prime Minister who has to answer for the people who are dying every day due to his policies, and worse still, he is now considering decriminalizing hard drugs in Toronto. City hall has made a formal request for him to use powers under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to do in Canada's biggest city what he already did in British Columbia.

Today I wrote him a letter asking him to change his mind, reverse his position and make clear that he will not legalize hard drugs on buses and in hospitals in Toronto.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there is fearmongering going on by the Leader of the Opposition right now.

I will recall for people that a number of years ago the City of Vancouver approached us with a desire to decriminalize in its city, and we said, no, we would not do that for Vancouver, that we work with provinces and public health systems. That is why we moved forward with British Columbia on a pilot project it wanted.

With regard to any other province, whether it be Quebec, Ontario or anywhere else, we will work with the governments in place on proposals they may or may not have, in order to deal with the opioid epidemic. That is all.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he still will not clearly answer the question, which is doubly concerning because Toronto has been overtaken by crime and chaos since he brought in the catch-and-release policies under Bill C-375, Bill C-5 and Bill C-83. Violent crime is up 40%. We just heard the tragic story on Monday of a liquor store robber crashing into a family, tragically killing grandparents and a precious child. The assailant was out on bail.

Will the Prime Minister repeal catch-and-release?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe if you or other parliamentarians, or indeed Canadians, look at the transcripts of these questions and answers, they will see that I actually did answer the questions the Leader of the Opposition posed to me in terms of how we were going to work with British Columbia and how we would work with any province that came forward with positions to try to help with the opioid epidemic. We would examine those on their merits.

However, the Leader of the Opposition has not answered Canadians' concerns about why he will not condemn Diagon, the far right extremist organization and why he will not reject the endorsement of Alex Jones, noted conspiracy theorist.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he has not answered the question of whether he would expand decriminalization elsewhere. He is using vague references to jurisdictions, but it is his jurisdiction alone to grant exemptions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Will he admit his real plan is to take the decriminalization of hard drugs he imposed on British Columbia and do that in all the provinces and territories across the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. For eight years, almost nine years now, Canadians have seen that our approach on the opioid epidemic is grounded in public safety, in public health, in compassion, in funding frontline workers and in doing things that work to save lives and help people. It is not to have some sort of secret plan, as he proposes.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about secret plans, he would probably do well to actually clear the air for Canadians about his seeking support among members of extremist right wing organizations like Diagon.

● (1445)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is again false. The government is now suddenly and only partially changing its message on decriminalization. The Prime Minister's minister of addictions is out now saying she is waiting for more information from British Columbia on its request to recriminalize crack, heroin, meth and other hard drugs in hospitals, on transit and in parks.

There are six people dying every single day. What more information does he need?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are dozens of people dying every day in provinces right across this country from the opioid epidemic. We could talk about the challenges faced in Alberta. We could talk about the challenges faced in Ontario. We could talk about the challenges faced right across the country. Different provinces and jurisdictions have different approaches. Some work better and some have not worked as well. We will continue to be there in a thoughtful, compassionate, rigorous, science-based way to work with jurisdictions on directions that work best for them and adjust those proposals and those responses as necessary. That is what a responsible government does.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister sees fit to challenge, through the person of Ms. Elghawaby, a law passed by the Quebec National Assembly and to create a law for a minority within a minority, who, I would point out, asked for no such thing. It is a religious law.

I respect the Muslim community at least as much as the Prime Minister does, but is he building bridges by creating privileges or by creating divisions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Bloc Québécois leader knows full well, when Bill 21 lands in the Supreme Court, we will intervene in our capacity as the federal government, because we are concerned about the consequences this bill could have on Quebecers. We will make our voice heard at that time. Yes, we have opinions on how the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Canadians can be better protected, and we will share those opinions.

At the same time, we will always seek to offer everyone the same opportunities to buy a house and build a better future, because we know that young people are struggling these days.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers want this law, and the money they have put into the Liberals' staggering deficit is going to pay for a Supreme Court challenge to a law that they want.

In short, can he rein in Ms. Elghawaby, tell her to stop attacking Quebec and respect the right that Quebecers have to live in a society with a secular state?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a democratic country and province, Canada and Quebec allow citizens to use their judicial system to challenge laws they disagree with.

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This is exactly what many Quebecers are doing because they disagree with Bill 21. It is their right, as Quebecers, to challenge laws they find unfair. That is what is happening, and it is perfectly legitimate. The Quebecers who are challenging the law are no less Québécois than anyone else.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Canada's biggest city, gun crime is up 66%. It is 100% nationwide. I just shared the tragic story of someone out on bail, slamming his car into an innocent family. Two wonderful grandparents are dead. A beautiful baby is dead. He was out on bail under the Prime Minister's catch-and-release bill, Bill C-75.

How many more will have to die before he repeals catch-and-release, and brings jail, not bail, for repeat offenders?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will highlight that we worked with provinces, including many provincial Conservative leaders across this country, to bring in bail reform. We will continue to work on things that are keeping Canadians safe.

At the same time, the leader opposite talked about gun crime. We moved forward with some of the strongest measures on gun control that this country has ever seen: a freeze on the purchase of handguns; a total ban on assault-style weapons, which has been in place for four years.

These are the kinds of things that the Conservative Party and its leader have consistently stood against, even as we move to make our communities even safer.

* * *

FIREARMS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he mentioned all the guns that he claims to have banned and that he promised to seize four years and \$40 million ago.

How many has he seized?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of different types of assault-style weapons that, for the past four years, have been rendered illegal to sell, illegal to buy and illegal to use, including at a gun range.

We are now working on a program to allow those owners to sell them back to the government, for them to be destroyed, and get money so that they can go buy other guns or other products if they want to, which will be legal. This is about fairness, even as we move to keep Canadians safe. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition wants to make those assault weapons legal again.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all those weapons are still legal. One can still own them.

The Prime Minister says he is going to seize them. He is going to buy them. He has spent \$40 million doing that.

I am going to ask this again: How many guns has he bought, just the number?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, we are in the process of establishing that buyback program. The priority was making sure those guns were no longer available to buy, to sell, to bequeath or to use. That has been the case for four years.

What the Leader of the Opposition is conveniently refusing to opine on is the fact that he has committed to the gun lobby across this country that he would reverse the 2020 OIC, which banned those assault-style weapons. He wants to bring those assault-style weapons back, or he can contradict me right here.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will contradict him because they are not banned right now. It is perfectly legal for people to possess those guns. They are easy to possess.

The answer to the question is that he has not seized a single, solitary one of them. He has spent 40 million tax dollars that could have secured our ports and our borders, and he has not taken in a single, solitary gun.

Is that why gun crime has risen by 100% since he became Prime Minister nine years ago?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will note, as did everyone in this chamber, that the Leader of the Opposition did not deny that he will be reversing the ban on assault-style weapons. He does not even think it exists right now. Well, it does exist right now. It is illegal to buy, to sell or to use any of those weapons. When the amnesty ends next year, it will be illegal to own them as well. We are giving an opportunity for people to sell them back to the government. That is what we are doing to keep people safe. That is what he will not commit to keeping.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, in Nunavut, the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation administers the Inuit child first initiative to help kids, but its great work is being made difficult by the government's delays. Close to 70% of requests were not processed on time, leaving traumatized children without the health care they deserve.

When will the Liberal government finally ensure that first nations and Inuit children can get the care they need in a timely manner?

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Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree that there is more to do. Over the past years, we have made significant historic investments in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon in responding to the health needs, particularly of indigenous, Inuit, first nations and Métis children.

We will continue to step up. There is more to do, but my work with Premier Akeagok and others is entirely focused on delivering more services to young people in a timely manner: more housing, more infrastructure and more health care. These are things we are working on. We will continue to do that work.

* * *

● (1455)

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last year, deaths related to the toxic drug crisis are up 17% in Alberta and 23% in Saskatchewan. Every toxic overdose death is preventable, but in provinces with Conservative premiers that do not have safe supply or decriminalization and do not believe in harm reduction, deaths are soaring. Alberta is on a trajectory to have the most toxic drug deaths per capita in Canada by June.

Treatment, recovery and harm reduction go hand in hand. Will the Liberals finally make sure that all Canadians whose lives could be saved have access to these life-saving supports?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Courtenay—Alberni for bringing up those stats, which show that there are real challenges around the opioid and toxic drug supply epidemic right across the country.

Every step of the way, the government will continue to be anchored in compassionate, evidenced-based approaches that look at this as a public health crisis. We will work with provincial governments across all jurisdictions to move forward on measures that support and save lives. That is our commitment to Canadians, and that is what we will continue to do.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is committed to promoting Canadian values, such as inclusion, diversity and acceptance. As elected members of the House, we are all responsible for our conduct in this chamber and outside of it. Yesterday, our government called out the Conservative leader for his behaviour in the courting of a far-right, white nationalist extremist group. Instead of standing up to apologize and to distance himself from it, he shockingly doubled-down and threw a temper tantrum.

Can the Prime Minister please tell the House what impact the far-right extremism and its enablers have on vulnerable communities and Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we saw yesterday from that side was unbecoming of anyone who aspires to leadership. The Conservative leader's refusal to

denounce far-right, white nationalist extremism cannot and will not be overlooked by Canadians.

Far-right extremism and its enablers pose real and dangerous threats to marginalized communities. This is not something that, as a country, we can stand for, and on this side of the House, we never will. Unfortunately, that leader cannot say the same.

The Speaker: I will get back to this at the end of question period, but I encourage all members, aside perhaps from the last question, to continue in the positive vein, which I think Canadians have noticed, that members have been taking today.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, after having doubled the rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled the needed down payment for a home, the Prime Minister promised, in his budget, that he would double home building. Here we are, two years later, and homebuilding is down 8%. His housing agency says that it will be down next year and the year after that. If it cost him \$89 billion in programs to bring homebuilding down, how much would he have to spend to bring it up?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the housing plan is focused on fairness for every generation. We, over the coming years, will be unlocking 3.8 million new homes by cutting red tape, by rezoning, by lowering the costs of homebuilding and by using public lands and vacant office buildings to build affordable housing for Canadians.

We will be reviving the dream of home ownership for young Canadians by making it easier to save up, tax-free, for a down payment and by giving renters credit for their monthly rent payments toward the ability to get a mortgage. We have put forward the most comprehensive and ambitious housing plan this country has ever seen.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing it does not do is build homes. Since the Prime Minister made the most recent promise, in 2022, to double housing construction, the number of builds is actually down and is expected to continue to drop, next year and the year after that, according to his own housing agency, yet he says we should all be reassured because, once again, he is spending tens of billions of dollars on the problem he created.

Can the Prime Minister tell us in what year homebuilding will actually rise?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know well that the federal government has an important role to play in ensuring housing starts across the country and in ensuring the opportunities for Canadians to buy their first homes and to move forward up the equity ladder. These are things that we know we have a role to play in. However, we are not alone in that, which is why we are challenging and encouraging municipalities and provinces to also step up with ambition in our national homebuilding plan.

This is why we are putting incentives on the table, and we are putting investments in the pockets of municipalities, including with our accelerator fund. There is more to do, but we will be doing it in partnership.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is what the Prime Minister has been saying for nine years, and the results have been doubled rents, doubled mortgage payments and doubled down payments. Just this week, a survey showed that 72% of Canadians who do not own a home believe they never will.

Canada was not like this before the current Prime Minister, and surely, it will not be like this after he is gone. Can the Prime Minister comment on what it is like to be the only prime minister in history to deprive an entire generation of home ownership?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government that was in place before I became prime minister had a housing minister who is now the Leader of the Opposition in a government that explicitly said that the federal government had no role to play and no responsibility toward building affordable housing across this country, so for 10 years there was almost no federal involvement in building homes across this country.

We turned that around, starting in 2017, and we will continue to invest to create opportunities and to create fairness for millennials and gen Zs, so that they can buy—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did turn it around. Obviously, nine years is too long for him because he is starting to attribute to the previous government words he said himself. He was the one who said the federal government is not responsible for housing construction or affordability and that is after he doubled the cost. When I was housing minister, we built 89,000 apartments at an average rent of \$973.

Since then, the rent has doubled. The mortgage payment has doubled, and the needed down payment has doubled. With all this failure, why is the Prime Minister doubling down?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our housing accelerator program, our comprehensive plan to build more homes to make sure Canadians can see themselves in home ownership once again, is exactly what we are continuing to invest in. Yes, I pointed out that we cannot build homes alone and that we need partners in the provinces and the municipalities, but I never denied that the federal government needs to continue to act on housing. That is why we have done that since 2017; that is why we are continuing to do it now. We need to make sure that young

Oral Questions

Canadians have opportunities that their parents and grandparents had. That is what we are stepping up for. That is what the leader opposite refuses to do.

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is the day that this government's greatest contribution to global warming comes on line: Trans Mountain. With this pipeline, the Liberals have ensured that oil dependence will continue for decades more. All the Prime Minister's rhetoric will never erase the simple fact that Canada is one of the world's biggest oil producers, and is on track to remain so.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how this \$34-billion oil investment is good news for the fight against climate change?

We are listening.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this project is in the national interest. It will create more jobs and increase Canada's GDP, and it is fully accounted for in Canada's climate plan.

Speaking of what is coming into effect today, I thought my hon. colleague was going to mention the dental care program. Beginning today, thousands upon thousands of senior citizens will be able to access dental care. In fact, 1.8 million of them have already signed up. As of 1 p.m. today, 1,200 seniors had obtained appointments and dental services free of charge.

We will continue serving Canada's seniors.

• (1505)

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no measure to combat climate change by the Liberals can make up for Trans Mountain's impact on the climate.

None of this government's environmental claims will ever speak as eloquently as its huge pipeline filled with tar sands oil. All the carbon taxes, the heat pumps and the billions of trees planted simply cannot make up for this \$34-billion investment in fossil fuels. That said, the Prime Minister should not worry: the Conservatives will keep his lovely pipeline.

Does the Prime Minister feel that the commissioning of Trans Mountain is good news for the planet?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Canada is to keep investing in the energy transition, if we are to continue investing in solutions and assistance for our citizens, we need to have good prices for our current resources.

Oral Questions

As everyone knows full well, however, we have a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We have a plan to build tomorrow's economy.

Today, we will keep doing what is necessary to invest in creating green technologies, renewable energy and a bright future for our children and grandchildren, both in Quebec and throughout the country.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already doubled the national debt by adding more debt than all the other prime ministers in our history combined, and all with the support of the Bloc Québécois, which, by the way, voted for a \$500-billion budget. The Bloc Québécois leader has never voted against a single budget proposed by this Prime Minister.

Today, we learned that the Prime Minister will continue to increase the debt by another \$300 billion, with the approval of the House of Commons. How much will that raise mortgage interest rates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know full well that the Conservative leader's plan is one of austerity that includes cuts to programs and services that Canadians need.

On this side of the House, we recognize that Canada has one of the best fiscal situations in the G7 and the world. We have the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the best debt-to-GDP ratio. We have the third-largest economy in the world that is rated AAA by the rating agencies.

We are here to invest responsibly, because a confident country invests in its people and its future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Prime Minister's decision to double the national debt, with support from the Bloc Québécois, we are paying \$54.1 billion in interest on the debt alone. That is more than we spend on health care. That is the total amount collected in GST. Every time Canadians buy something, the GST simply goes to pay wealthy bankers.

Why is he wasting our money to benefit wealthy bankers instead of using it to provide services to Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are accusing us of wasting money, but that money is actually going to child care centres, to create more child care spots. They are accusing us of wasting money on dental care. They are accusing us of wasting money on investments in Northvolt, in Volkswagen, in Stellantis, in Honda, to secure careers for generations to come in a greener economy. They are accusing us of wasting money on investments in seniors to protect their old age security.

They are accusing us of wasting money because the Conservative leader wants nothing but austerity and budget cuts. We will continue to invest responsibly in Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families are already living in austerity. The government is living in abundance. The people are poor, the government is rich. The more the government spends, the more Canadians pay. Interest rates are high, and the government's spending and borrowing are driving them even higher.

Have finance department officials briefed the Prime Minister on how much higher borrowing an additional \$300 billion will drive up interest rates on families' mortgages?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that Canadians are facing an affordability crisis. That is why we are here with solutions for them.

We have cut the cost of day care in half across the country, except in Quebec, where we have invested in more day care spaces. We are there to invest in dental care for the most vulnerable senior citizens, just as we did for young people last year. We are there to invest in our students and in jobs for the future. We are there to invest in Canadians.

In contrast, the opposition leader is proposing cuts and austerity as part of his misguided ideological approach.

* * *

● (1510)

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, the government has been committed to promoting shared Canadian values such as diversity, respect and equality for all Canadians.

We all learned last week that the Leader of the Opposition had visited a convoy camp set up by—

The Speaker: I am just going to interrupt the hon. member. I hope her question has something to do with the administration of the government. She has 15 seconds left, but I hope she gets to the heart of the matter.

The hon. member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, can the Prime Minister tell the House how the government will protect Canadians from extremist groups and what responsibilities all political leaders have?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of every government is to protect the well-being of all Canadians, including Canadians who are members of minority groups and groups that are mistreated or typically ignored by the majority. We are here to invest and to protect these people.

When someone who aspires to be a future prime minister of Canada continues to associate with extremist groups, white nationalist groups, he should at least either explain to Canadians why he is courting these people's support, or else condemn them. The Leader of the Opposition is doing neither.

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of debt interest. He doubled our national debt, adding more debt than all previous prime ministers combined. Now, we learn in his new budget bill that he is going to seek another \$300 billion of debt, money that he would borrow out of the economy. That is equal to over 10% of our GDP, which would surely put upward pressure on interest rates. How much would all this government binge borrowing add to the mortgage payment of the average family?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me once again to set the facts straight. Canada has one of the strongest fiscal positions of any country in the world, certainly the lowest deficit in the G7, the best debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and it is continuing to decrease, and we are the third-largest economy in the world with an AAA credit rating, the top credit rating by the agencies that look at fiscal sustainability of governments.

All that is on the backdrop of further investments we are making, generational investments to support Canadians. Contrast it with the ideology of the Conservatives: to leave Canadians to fend for themselves, cuts, and austerity.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we actually have the highest mortgage debt of any country in the G7, and by far. It is higher, as a share of our economy, than the Americans had during the mortgage meltdown. Now, interest rates are higher and families risk losing their homes. Government deficits push inflation and interest rates higher, and that makes the problem worse. Therefore, once again, how much would \$300 billion of yet more debt add in mortgage payments for the average Canadian family? How much?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is mixing different factors that are facing Canadians. Mortgages are high for Canadian families, and therefore the Canadian government is choosing to invest in measures that are going to support Canadian families. I talked to a family from Burlington who actually saw their mortgage payments go up because of the rise in global interest rates, while at the same time their child care fees were cut by larger amounts because of investments this government made. We are going to continue to be there for Canadians while the Conservative leader wants cuts.

• (1515)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation and higher interest rates are the costs Canadians pay for the spending that the Prime Minister told them was free. It is not free. Nothing is free. Every dollar he spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians directly through taxes or indirectly through inflation and interest rates. Now he wants to do another \$300 billion of binge borrowing.

Will he put aside that radical scheme and, instead, accept my common-sense plan to fix the budget with a dollar-for-dollar law so we can bring down interest rates and inflation for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there to invest for Canadians responsibly. We still have one of the top AAA-rated economies in the world. Our fiscal

Oral Questions

plan is sustainable and responsible. However, the Conservative leader still wants to make cuts to programs, cuts to our military, cuts to the initiatives that are helping Canadians across the country.

The things that we are doing are helping Canadians grow for the future in a responsible way, and that is why we are seeing inflation come down, and interest rates will be coming down, I am sure, in the coming months.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. George Chalal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has a responsibility to tackle misinformation and disinformation in Canada. Furthermore, the government has a responsibility to tackle hate and discrimination across Canada, and it is shameful that the Leader of the Opposition posed for photos with extremists who push hateful rhetoric.

Can the Prime Minister please tell the House how the government is taking these matters seriously?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have every right to be worried about the opposition leader's refusal, including multiple times during this question period, to condemn violent extremism, but they should not be surprised. Over his 19 years in politics, he showed Canadians time and time again that he will do or say anything to get elected. That includes pandering to extremists one day and pretending to stand with the very vulnerable communities those extremist groups target the next. Not only is this reckless; this is a failure of leadership.

Canadians deserve better. Canadians deserve leaders who will stand up for them every step of the way.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with disabilities have been ignored by Liberals and Conservatives for decades. The result is that they can no longer keep up with the cost of living, and the Liberal solution is \$200 a month. That is not even enough for groceries. Meanwhile, Canada's richest CEOs are still receiving \$60 billion in corporate handouts started by the Conservatives. With the Liberals and the Conservatives, Canada's ultrawealthy get richer and people with disabilities get crumbs.

Why has the Prime Minister abandoned Canadians living with disabilities?

Orders of the Day

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada disability benefit is a monumental step in our strong and unwavering commitment to creating a more inclusive and fairer Canada. We are now moving forward with the first step of the disability benefit, with a cost of over \$6 billion over the coming years. It will put hundreds of dollars a month, tax-free, in the pockets of the most vulnerable persons with disabilities.

We are continuing to commit to creating a better, fairer country for generations to come.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, more than 20 economic organizations across the country have raised red flags about the major risks involved in the upcoming deployment of the new Canada Border Services Agency assessment and revenue management software on May 13.

After the financial and human disasters surrounding the implementation of Phoenix and the ArriveCAN app, a third failure would be catastrophic and would once again cost millions in taxpayer dollars.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether his government intends to postpone the implementation date? What does he plan to do to avert another multi-million dollar IT fiasco?

● (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very aware of the concerns of the various groups, the stakeholders in this network and the Canada Border Services Agency. We are working diligently to make sure the project succeeds and to implement better software. We know that digitization will help improve our international trade and border crossings in terms of security, efficiency and speed. We will continue to move forward, but we will do so carefully and mindful of the risks, while also recognizing the positive aspects of the new software.

* * *

[English]

ADMISSIBILITY OF QUESTIONS

The Speaker: Colleagues, I indicated that I would come back to an issue that came up in terms of a question earlier today that did not deal with the business of the administration of government. I intervened in another question that I thought was going in that direction, but it seems that a correction was made. I want to make it clear to colleagues that the Chair and the chair occupants have been discussing this issue.

I think it is very important that all questions asked in the House respect our regulations and procedures and that they are relevant to the business of the administration of government. I refer members to a decision that the Chair made last year on November 20. Of course, there have been previous decisions made by former Speakers that were along the same lines.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

The House resumed from April 30 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:21 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage concerning the extension of time to consider Bill C-316, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act with regard to the court challenges program.

Call in the members.

● (1535)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 744)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Bois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen

		<i>Orders of the Day</i>	
Drouin	Dubourg	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Duclos	Duguid	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz	Plamondon	Poillievre
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ellis	Epp	Rayes	Redekopp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Reid	Rempel Garner
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Richards	Roberts
Ferreri	Findlay	Robillard	Rodriguez
Fisher	Fonseca	Rogers	Romanado
Fortier	Fortin	Rood	Rota
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Ruff	Sahota
Freeland	Gaheer	Sajjan	Saks
Gaine	Gallant	Samson	Sarai
Garon	Garrison	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Gaudreau	Gazan	Scheer	Schiefke
Généreux	Genuis	Schmale	Seeback
Gerretsen	Gill	Serré	Sgro
Gladu	Godin	Shanahan	Sheehan
Goodridge	Gould	Shields	ShIPLEY
Gourde	Gray	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Green	Hajdu	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Hallan	Hanley	Singh	Small
Hardie	Hepfner	Sorbara	Soroka
Hoback	Housefather	Sousa	Steinley
Hughes	Hussen	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hutchings	Iacono	St-Onge	Strahl
Idlout	Ien	Stubbs	Sudds
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Jivani	Johns	Thériault	Therrien
Joly	Jones	Thomas	Thompson
Jowhari	Julian	Tochor	Tolmie
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Trudeau	Trudel
Kelly	Khalid	Turnbull	Uppal
Khanna	Khera	Valdez	Van Bynen
Kitchen	Kmiec	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Koutrakis	Kram	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Vecchio	Vidal
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Vien	Viersen
Kwan	Lake	Vignola	Villemure
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Virani	Vis
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Vuong	Wagantall
Lapointe	Larouche	Warkentin	Waugh
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Webber	Weiler
Lawrence	LeBlanc	Wilkinson	Williams
Lebouthillier	Lehoux	Williamson	Yip
Lemire	Leslie	Zahid	Zarrillo
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Zimmer	Zuberi— 326
Liepert	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Majumdar	Maloney		
Martel	Martinez Ferrada		
Masse	Mathysen		
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanch—Gulf Islands)		
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)		
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty		
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)		
McLean	McLeod		
McPherson	Melillo		
Mendès	Mendicino		
Miao	Michaud		
Miller	Moore		
Morantz	Morrice		
Morrison	Morrissey		
Motz	Murray		
Muys	Naqvi		
Nater	Ng		
Noormohamed	Normandin		
O'Connell	Oliphant		
O'Regan	Patzer		
		Guilbeault	Pauzé— 2
			PAIRED
			Members
			NAYS
			PAIRED
			Members
			The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT**

The House resumed from April 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-351, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (maximum security offenders), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-351 under Private Members' Business.

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

● (1545)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Unfortunately, the member for London West's photo did not show up, so I do not believe her vote can be counted at this time.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for raising this point.

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 745)***YEAS**

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore

Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiple
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 120

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen

Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 208

PAIRED

Members

Guilbeault Pauzé— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

• (1550)
[English]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 25 minutes.

Privilege

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising on a question of privilege.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERS FOLLOWING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday I rose on a question of privilege related to foreign interference. I have come across—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising on a point of order. The Chair is having difficulty hearing the member. I will ask all members to please carry their conversations out into the lobbies.

The hon. member as the floor.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, on Monday I rose on a question of privilege related to foreign interference. I have come across some important additional information that I believe is critical to share with you and with the House as you undertake your considerations and prepare to make a ruling.

Stories have appeared in multiple media outlets quoting a person in your office, Mathieu Gravel, director of outreach and media relations. The statement includes the following:

The House of Commons' administration investigates all incidents brought to its attention by security partners. In this case, it determined that the risk-mitigation measures in place had successfully prevented any attack.

There were no cybersecurity impacts to any members or their communications....

I do want to observe that it is highly unusual for a media spokesperson of the Speaker's office to speak to the media about a question of privilege, when a ruling has not been made. When no follow-up inquiries have been made with members affected, it feels a bit like a judge sending a statement to members of the media in the middle of deliberations.

However, as you deliberate, I think it is important to take note of one additional piece of information.

The cyber-attack against me from APT31 did not target my parliamentary email account. While in many cases parliamentary accounts were targeted, in my case the cyber-attack targeted my personal non-parliamentary account. I have no idea how APT31 came to access my personal non-parliamentary account, because it is not publicly available.

I was attacked at my personal account because of my parliamentary activities in order to access information about and disrupt my parliamentary activities.

Fundamentally, the government has a responsibility to inform members of threats to them by foreign powers. It has said it would share such information, and it has not. If it is true that House of Commons IT blocked the attack, it remains true that House of Commons IT is not a security agency and is not itself responsible for informing parliamentarians of threats against them. Rather, it is the responsibility of the government to inform parliamentarians of threats against them.

Privilege

Parliamentarians still need to know about targeted threats against them, even when those threats do not succeed. If someone tries to hurt me but their attempts are thwarted, I would still like to know I have been targeted in order to plan to protect myself going forward. Moreover, your office is not at all able to say that these attacks were thwarted, because they evidently targeted members on both parliamentary and non-parliamentary emails.

We need to know so that we can take action to protect ourselves in all places and all situations. House of Commons IT, which is not an intelligence agency, clearly does not have eyes on cyber-attacks against us through personal accounts and does not have the same responsibilities as the Government of Canada.

Parliamentarians were under attack. The government now admits that it knew. The government did not tell us, and the government cannot say if the attack was successful or not.

Mr. Speaker, I am available to provide you with additional information as required so that your ruling, and any subsequent comments to the media, are informed by all of the relevant facts.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, and I do invite him to share all information he would judge important for the Speaker to know before making a ruling on a prima facie case of privilege.

I now recognize the hon. member for Lethbridge, who has given notice of a question of privilege.

ALLEGED UNJUSTIFIED NAMING OF A MEMBER

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege today regarding a significant discrepancy between what was published in the blues and what was published in Hansard yesterday.

The question of privilege I raise also has to do with how I was treated by the Speaker of the House and how I was further portrayed publicly. The discrepancy between the blues and what was published in Hansard involves the omission of two very important, documented words, an exchange between the Speaker and me during question period yesterday.

The blues recorded the following statement by the Speaker: “If the hon. member for Lethbridge has problems with the Chair, she should challenge the Chair in a respectful way, but as the hon. member knows, challenging the Chair is against the rules of this House. I ask the hon. member to please withdraw her remarks.” I replied, rising in my place to say this: “Mr. Speaker, I stated that the Chair is acting in a disgraceful manner. I withdraw.”

In the Hansard recording, two words are missing: the words “I withdraw.” That said, it should be noted that it is reported in Hansard that at least one member did point out to the Speaker that these words were in fact spoken. It says the following: “An hon. member: She withdrew it.” In the audio recording, many other members were heard drawing attention to this fact, asking for the Speaker to do the same.

These words are significant, because they demonstrate that I complied, Mr. Speaker, with your request to withdraw. It demonstrates that my withdrawal was not conditional; rather, it was proper and textbook. Therefore, it ought to have been accepted. However,

I was kicked out of this place for the remainder of the day as if I had not withdrawn those words. To put it another way, it is as if the Hansard recording of the event were accurate and true, when, in fact, we know it is not. If one checks the audio recording, one finds that it clearly picked up the two words that are also recorded in the blues.

It is worth noting that chapter 24 of Bosc and Gagnon states, “The Chamber is equipped with cameras operated from a control room, invisible from the floor of the House. The recording of the proceedings is governed by guidelines, intended to preserve the concept of the electronic Hansard, as adopted by the House.” The two words that were edited out of Hansard essentially rewrote history, making the Speaker’s actions and procedure appear proper and mine improper. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was removed from the chamber for the remainder of the day and prohibited from being able to participate in debate or vote on behalf of the constituents who sent me here. Therefore, the constituents of Lethbridge were robbed of having a presence and a voice in the House of Commons, which is their democratic right. This was especially egregious given the fact that there was a scheduled vote immediately following question period that day.

If one goes to the House of Commons site, unfortunately, the blues are no longer available. That is interesting; it makes a person curious as to why. If one attempts to access the blues today, one will get this message: “Blues are available while the House is in session until the Hansard is published.” The blues are taken down.

Luckily, though, I kept a copy of the blues that were sent to me at the end of the day yesterday, and I have them available to submit to you here, Mr. Speaker. I will just point out that, if we flip through them, on this page here, my words are kindly highlighted. Furthermore, we are fortunate to have access to the audio recording, which still exists and does not lie.

At pages 1228 to 1229, the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states:

The unedited *in extenso* transcriptions of the Debates, at one time produced on blue paper, continue to be known as the “blues”. Parliamentary Publications staff send to each Member who speaks in the House the transcription of the Member’s intervention. The blues are also published on the House of Commons’ internal website....

The availability of the blues on the House of Commons’ internal website permits Members and their authorized delegates to use the web page or email to submit suggested changes for Parliamentary Publications editorial staff to consider. Members may suggest corrections to errors and minor alterations to the transcription but may not make material changes to the meaning of what was said in the House.

● (1555)

I am going to read that part again, because it is really important: They “may not make material changes to the meaning of what was said in the House.” It is interesting, then, that the blues said one thing, but Hansard said another, and that I did not ask for those changes to be made.

The third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* goes on to say this:

Privilege

It is a long-standing practice of the House that editors of the Debates may exercise judgment as to whether or not changes suggested by Members constitute the correction of an error or a minor alteration. The editors may likewise alter a sentence to render it more readable but may not go so far as to change its meaning. Editors must ensure that the Debates are a faithful reflection of what was said; any changes made, whether by Members or editors, are for the sole purpose of improving the readability of the text, given the difference between the spoken and written word.

Clearly, I did not suggest any changes to the officials with regard to Hansard. Bosc and Gagnon state that the editors can make alterations but cannot make changes that go so far as to change the meaning of what was said. In the case I have raised today, the difference in meaning without these two words, “I withdraw”, being published in Hansard is obviously very significant.

On pages 1229 to 1230, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* goes on to say, “When a question arises in the House as to the accuracy of the record, it is the responsibility of the Speaker to look into the matter.”

In this case, the edit, with the deletion of two very significant words, is far more noteworthy than simply improving the readability of a sentence. I believe you will agree, Mr. Speaker.

The justification used by the Speaker to admonish and remove me from the chamber does not match the evidence presented in the blues and by the audio recording that we may also access. The Speaker's actions do, however, fit very nicely with the altered text published in Hansard.

On page 82 of *Bosc and Gagnon* is a list describing items to be considered contempt. On that list is “falsifying or altering any papers belonging to the House”.

At page 248, Joseph Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition, states that “the House of Commons of Canada remains prepared to entertain legitimate questions of privilege where false...or perverted reports of debates or proceedings are published.” While this passage refers to inaccurate media reports of what was published in Hansard, it is no less offensive and, in fact, perhaps more offensive that this happened right here in the House of Commons.

At pages 81 to 83, *Bosc and Gagnon* states:

Throughout the Commonwealth most procedural authorities hold that contempts, as opposed to privileges, cannot be enumerated or categorized. Speaker Sauvé explained in a 1980 ruling: “...while our privileges are defined, contempt of the House has no limits. When new ways are found to interfere with our proceedings, so too will the House, in appropriate cases, be able to find that a contempt of the House has occurred”....

Just as it is not possible to categorize or to delineate every incident which may fall under the definition of contempt, it is also difficult to categorize the severity of contempt. Contempts may vary greatly in their gravity; matters ranging from minor breaches of decorum to grave attacks against the authority of Parliament may be considered as contempts.

● (1600)

It cannot be debated or disputed that someone deliberately removed two words from the blues and that these words have great significance. This changed the meaning of the events yesterday and the way they would be interpreted, resulting in an inaccurate, negative reflection of me, which was then broadcast to my constituents and to all people across Canada. Furthermore, this inaccurate account of events resulted in my wrongful dismissal from this place

by you, Mr. Speaker, robbing me of the right to represent the constituents of Lethbridge here in the House of Commons and to cast a vote on their behalf, again robbing them of their democratic right.

That leads to another aspect of privilege: improper reflections upon a member. On October 20, 1966, the member for Edmonton—Strathcona rose on a question of privilege that came out of an article in *Le Droit* of October 14 by Marcel Pepin. He argued that the article imputed an improper motive to him and was a gross distortion of the facts of something that occurred in the House. The Speaker ruled the matter to be a prima facie question of privilege on October 24.

In my case, it is Hansard that has recorded a gross distortion of the facts, an act that can be substantiated by the blues and the audio recordings of the procedures I referred to from yesterday, April 30.

I will give another example. On March 22, 1983, Speaker Sauvé ruled on a question of privilege relating to false and libellous accusations against the member for Lincoln that had been published in the *Montreal Gazette*. The Speaker felt that a reflection upon the reputation of an hon. member is a matter of great concern to all members of the House and said at that time: “It places the entire institution under a cloud, as it suggests that among the Members of the House there are some who are unworthy to sit there. An allegation of criminal or other dishonourable conduct inevitably affects the Member's ability to function effectively while the matter remains unresolved.”

The matter I am addressing today is grave in nature and calls for your utmost attention. In summary, the matter I am bringing to your attention has three components: the Speaker's ruling to expel me from the House, the improper alteration of Hansard and the inaccurate reporting as to the role that I played here in this place.

If you rule this matter to be a prima facie question of privilege, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion today.

● (1605)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Lethbridge for raising this question of privilege. I encourage her to share all the information that she would like to have the speakership evaluate. Certainly, we take this question as having extreme importance.

I see the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on the same question of privilege.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order related to the question I raised last night just prior to adjournment.

There is a ruling from the former Speaker, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who is now the Conservative House leader, dating back to September 24, 2014. I will read it for the record. It states:

Another of our time-honoured traditions is that of respect for the office of Speaker. O'Brien and Bosc, at page 313, states that:

Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker—an allegation of bias, for example—could be taken by the House as breeches of privilege and punished accordingly.

The Speaker at the time, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, continued by saying:

Points of Order

I wish to conclude with an appeal to members on all sides. Needless to say, the kind of unsavoury language or expression that we heard yesterday does little to assist the Chair in managing question period proceedings, and I urge all members to be judicious in the expressions they choose to use.

Yesterday, I raised the issue of the tweet that was put out by the member for Lethbridge, who said the following: “How did partisan hack [the Speaker] respond?!” This is inappropriate and a very clear contravention of all of—

The Speaker: I thank the chief opposition whip. The hon. member is clearly not rising on the issue that was raised by the member for Lethbridge, but on a point of order he is raising.

An hon. member: Mr. Speaker, you recognized him, and he asked to speak on the same question of privilege. It even says it up on the screen.

The Speaker: This is clearly an error I made in presuming that the member was rising on the serious question of privilege that was raised by the member for Lethbridge. If there are other members who would like to comment on the question of privilege first, I will go back to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby afterwards.

• (1610)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to keep track.

On the question of privilege, I was very distressed by the additional information provided by the hon. member for Lethbridge. I am sure all of us in this place know how critically important it is that we have no question in our minds as to the accuracy of Hansard.

I want to stop for a moment to thank the various staff members who make it possible to have verbatim transcripts of everything we say in this place and who give us a chance, if we absolutely have been misunderstood, to correct the record between the blues, which is, for those who might be watching on CPAC, the unofficial transcript, and the publishing of Hansard. It is critical that there never be any question as to the accuracy of Hansard in recording our remarks in this place.

The hon. member for Lethbridge, who happens to be a friend of mine, which is neither here nor there, said there could be no other explanation for the changes between what she said she said, and I accept her word on that, and what appears in Hansard. I always leave open the possibility for an innocent explanation of somebody making an error, but I do not think we can leave this matter where any assumptions are being made about what happened.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to investigate this thoroughly to ensure that none of us can have any doubts in our minds that Hansard is an accurate reflection of what members have said and that there is no possibility of any interference, from any quarter, in the words spoken and the printed Hansard, that they are one hundred per cent in alignment with the truth.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and I share her perspective as well.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is also rising to comment on the question of privilege raised by the member for Lethbridge.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to first point out that I sit in rather close proximity to the member for Lethbridge, and I clearly heard her say that she withdrew her comment. I really am disturbed by the fact that someone went to the effort of withdrawing “I withdraw” from the Hansard itself. As a long-serving member, as someone who wants to make sure the historical record is correct, I think that should be reflected in the Hansard.

I encourage your office, Mr. Speaker, to dig down and find out who made that change. That type of edit does change intent. I can understand, with the raucousness that occurred yesterday in the House, that you may not have personally heard the comment “I withdraw”, but that does not excuse the fact that somebody edited out those comments, which had appeared in the blues, to not appear in the official Hansard.

That undermines our freedom of speech here, as well as our privilege as parliamentarians, and in my opinion, was done with intent. There is definitely a contempt of Parliament.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member.

I want to assure members that I have heard the issues that have been raised. I would encourage the next member to speak to please raise a new matter, if possible, because I do think this is extraordinarily serious.

I will pass the floor to the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock to make an additional intervention.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the chief opposition whip, I would like to add that I canvassed members on this side of the House this morning and at least eight members of Parliament heard the member for Lethbridge say the words “I withdraw”. I can provide that list to your office to look into this matter.

Otherwise, I concur with the members who have spoken so far that it is a serious matter, one where the intent has been changed and one that must be looked into.

• (1615)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock as well as all other members who participated. I do agree with the member that this is an important and serious matter.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

RESPECT FOR THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHAIR

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order about the same issue that I raised last night about comments that can only be considered as impugning the character and actions of the Speaker and an allegation of bias. I referenced earlier the September 24, 2014, ruling of the former Speaker, who is now the current member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and the Conservative House leader. That ruling indicated that respect for the office of Speaker is one “of our time-honoured traditions”, and he then quoted from O'Brien and Bose, which says:

Routine Proceedings

Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker—an allegation of bias, for example—could be taken by the House as breeches of privilege and punished accordingly.

The tweet that was put out last night by the member for Lethbridge is a clear reflection on the character and actions of the Speaker. There is no doubt that referring to the Speaker in such a disgraceful way is inappropriate. It appears that the member for Lethbridge has now erased that. I believe that she would need to confirm to the House that she has indeed erased or deleted that tweet, which clearly contravenes the rules of this place.

She should apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, for having issued that tweet, which very clearly reflects on a series of decisions that have been made by Speakers over time in this place, to ensure that the office of the Speaker is respected at all times.

I would come back to what I raised last night. I will not take the same time of the House in raising this issue, but it is very clear that this is a breach of privilege. It can be, I think, dealt with by having the member for Lethbridge fully and fulsomely apologize for having issued that tweet and confirming that she has deleted that tweet as well.

The Speaker: On the same point of order, I see that the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising to his feet.

Colleagues, this will be the last intervention on this matter.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night at 6:45 p.m., the NDP House leader rose in his place and said exactly the same thing that he just said now. Perhaps he was not happy with his performance last night or wanted another opportunity to try to get a clip. The fact is that I do not think it is in accordance with the rules for a member to be able to rise again and state the same point of order when he is perhaps not happy with how it sounded.

I understand that the member would have felt embarrassed last night because I responded to his point of order by pointing out that the NDP House leader has repeatedly used the word “wacko” in the House, in committee and, no doubt, in various other places. I encourage the member, rather than repeating the same argument, to consult his own conscience, to reflect on possible feelings of guilt he is experiencing. If he has decided that it is wrong to say “wacko” in the House, I invite him to reflect deeply on his own—

The Speaker: Colleagues, this matter has been brought to my attention. It was raised yesterday. The Assistant Deputy Speaker who was in the chair had engaged to come back to the House if necessary on this matter, and so we shall.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary 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 eight petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

● (1620)

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

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1700)

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

(Division No. 746)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Gainey
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Jen	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier

Routine Proceedings

Lightbound	Long	Kitchen	Kmiec
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Kurek	Kusie
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lake	Lantsman
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Larouche	Lawrence
Masse	Mathysen	Lehoux	Lemire
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)	Leslie	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
McGuinty	McKay	Liepert	Lloyd
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod	Lobb	Maguire
McPherson	Mendès	Majumdar	Martel
Mendicino	Miao	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Miller	Morrice	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Morrissey	Murray	Melillo	Michaud
Naqvi	Ng	Moore	Morantz
Noormohamed	O'Connell	Morrison	Motz
Oliphant	O'Regan	Muys	Nater
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski	Normandin	Patzer
Qualtrough	Robillard	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Rodriguez	Rogers	Perron	Plamondon
Romanado	Rota	Poilievre	Rayes
Sahota	Sajjan	Redekopp	Reid
Saks	Samson	Rempel Garner	Richards
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Roberts	Rood
Schieffe	Serré	Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Sgro	Shanahan	Scheer	Schmale
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Seeback	Shields
Singh	Sorbara	ShIPLEY	Simard
Sousa	St-Onge	Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Sudds	Tassi	Soroka	Steinley
Taylor Roy	Thompson	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Trudeau	Turnbull	Strahl	Stubbs
Valdez	Van Bynen	Thériault	Therrien
Vandal	Vandenbeld	Thomas	Tochor
Virani	Weiler	Tolmie	Trudel
Wilkinson	Yip	Uppal	Van Popta
Zahid	Zarrillo	Vecchio	Vien
Zuberi— 173		Viersen	Vignola
		Villemure	Vis
		Vuong	Wagantall
		Warkentin	Waugh
		Webber	Williams
		Williamson	Zimmer— 148

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genus	Gill
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna

PAIRED

Members

Guilbeault	Pauzé
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Vidal— 4

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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 Yellowhead, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Public Safety.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would like the consent of the House to respond to questions on the Order Paper.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2418, 2419, 2424, 2428, 2432 and 2434.

[Text]

Question No. 2418—**Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to police-reported hate crime data and the reporting of transphobic hate crimes: (a) what measures are being taken by the Government of Canada to create a specific category for reporting transphobic hate crimes rather than the current practice of grouping these hate crimes with those targeting sexual orientation or biological sex and gender; and (b) what other methods of collecting data on anti-trans hate and violence are used to supplement police hate crime data?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, Statistics Canada is responsible for collecting data through the uniform crime reporting, or UCR, survey. With respect to police-reported data, new categories have been created to allow police to report transphobic hate crimes.

As of October 2021, the UCR was updated with new hate crime motivation categories. Within the category of sexual orientation, a detailed motivation for crimes targeting the entire lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, or those who identify with another non-binary gender or minority sexual identity, LGBTQ2+, community was added; and within the gender category, the motivations were updated to include the following: man or woman, transgender man or woman, transgender target not specified, and non-binary.

It is now possible for police services to report more detailed information on hate crimes targeting the non-binary population and the transgender population.

These changes were undertaken following extensive consultation with hate crime subject matter experts and were made available to police services for reporting purposes through the UCR survey starting in October 2021.

The UCR currently has 44 police services that have these new categories available for coding and submission to the survey. Police services can begin reporting these new codes to the UCR survey as their records management systems are updated to the most recent version. Before data can be released, large enough counts are needed to allow for disaggregation without risk to privacy and confidentiality when disseminated.

In order to ensure reliable coding of the information for new categories, Statistics Canada provides training for police services.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Statistics Canada collects information on experiences of violent victimization, including incidents that are not reported to police, among Canadians 15 years of age and older.

The general social survey on Canadians' safety, regarding victimization, and the can be used to supplement police-reported data for several population groups. In addition to violent crime, these surveys also ask about other experiences, such as discrimination and unfair treatment or other unwanted behaviours.

Routine Proceedings

As of 2018, these surveys, and many others at Statistics Canada, include questions on both the sex at birth and gender of respondents, meaning that it is now possible to disaggregate the data for the transgender population.

See, for example, the following article: "Experiences of violent victimization and unwanted sexual behaviours among gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual minority people, and the transgender population, in Canada, 2018 (statcan.gc.ca)".

Question No. 2419—**Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to gender-affirming care: what actions is the Government of Canada taking to improve coverage of, and access to, gender-affirming care?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, health care is a shared responsibility between the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories. The federal government's primary role in supporting health care is to provide funding to the provinces and territories, while the provincial and territorial governments administer and deliver health care services.

The Canada health transfer, or CHT, is the largest federal transfer to provinces and territories. It is the main federal funding mechanism that supports Canada's health care system by providing long-term predictable funding to provinces and territories.

The CHT is legislated to increase each year, growing in line with the economy, with a minimum increase of at least 3% per year, while its equal per capita distribution across provinces and territories ensures comparable treatment for all Canadians, regardless of where they live. Budget 2023 outlined the government's plan to provide close to \$200 billion in health care funding over 10 years, including \$46.2 billion in new funding to provinces and territories through the CHT and other targeted funding.

The Canada Health Act establishes criteria and conditions that provinces and territories must fulfill in order to receive their full CHT cash contribution. Notably, the act does not stipulate specific procedures to be covered. Rather, the provinces and territories, in consultation with the medical profession and other health professionals, determine which services are considered medically necessary and therefore to be covered under their respective health care insurance plans. Any health service that has been deemed medically necessary by a province or territory must be delivered in a manner that meets the requirements of the act, on uniform terms and conditions, and without patient charges.

Routine Proceedings

Regarding funding for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and additional sexually and gender diverse people, or 2SLGBTQI+, Health Canada's sexual and reproductive health fund supports community-based organizations that help make access to abortion, gender-affirming and other sexual and reproductive health care information and services more accessible for underserved populations, including two-spirit, trans and non-binary, or TTNB, young people and their families. Through budgets 2021 and 2023, \$81 million has been committed to the fund over six years.

Since its creation in 2021, three organizations have been funded for projects focused on improving access to gender-affirming care.

Trans Care B.C. has received almost \$6.9 million for two projects that help address barriers to accessing gender-affirming health care and health disparities experienced by TTNB people. To address discrimination and lack of provider knowledge, educational resources have been developed for health care providers and TTNB people living in B.C. By sharing knowledge and research related to best practices, the ongoing project is also addressing misinformation and disinformation campaigns that are active in B.C. and across Canada, which affect TTNB children and youth and are a barrier to care for 2SLGBTQI+ communities and caregiver decision-making.

Hamilton Trans Health Coalition has received just over \$15,000. Their project, completed in June 2023, engaged Canadian gender-affirming health care providers to identify the scope of harassment, intimidation and threats they experience, and to highlight best practices and strategies to address them.

Sherbourne Health centre has received approximately \$569,000. Their project, completed in March 2024, addressed the gap in access to inclusive, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care for 2SLGBTQI+ communities by advancing the capacity of health care providers to competently provide safe, affirming and accurate information and service provision.

Canada's federal health research funding agency, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or CIHR, has invested over \$59 million in research, training and capacity building related to 2SLGBTQI+ health over the past five years, which includes gender-affirming care.

As an example, through the national women's health research initiative, enabled by a budget 2021 investment of \$20 million and launched in 2022, CIHR is leading a national, coordinated research program that aims to advance and mobilize knowledge to improve women's and gender-diverse peoples' health outcomes and health care. This initiative promotes an intersectional lens to research and care to tackle persistent gaps for all women, including for transgender, queer, intersex, and additional sexually and gender diverse communities.

For more information regarding CIHR research on gender-affirming care, please see its database of funding decisions.

Women and Gender Equality, or WAGE, supports organizations that serve 2SLGBTQI+ communities. Since 2021, WAGE has invested approximately \$10.5 million in 36 organizations that proac-

tively include transgender people within their reach of services and those solely working with this population.

As highlighted in budget 2023, the Government of Canada plans to introduce a new action plan to combat hate that incorporates addressing hate faced by 2SLGBTQI+ communities. This new action plan will include measures to combat hateful rhetoric and build safer, more inclusive communities.

Question No. 2424—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SRED) credits and Sustainable Development Technology Canada's (SDTC) decision to freeze funding to SRED recipients: (a) is the CRA targeting SDTC funding recipients for audits, and, if not, what is the CRA's explanation for the high rates of audits being conducted on such businesses; and (b) how many SRED recipients have had their SDTC funding frozen, and, of those, how many are the subject of a CRA audit?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question, what follows is the response from the CRA as of March 14, 2024, which is the date of question.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the CRA administers tax laws and various benefit programs for the Government of Canada and several provinces and territories. Audits are an important part of the CRA's range of activities aimed at making sure the tax system is fair for everyone. The CRA selects files for audit based on a variety of risk factors.

To safeguard the integrity of the tax system, the CRA does not comment on which factors it uses to determine the risk within a tax filing. Additionally, the protection of taxpayer information is of utmost importance to the CRA. To respect the confidentiality provisions of the acts it administers, the CRA cannot provide taxpayer information or comment on specific taxpayer files, which it may or may not be reviewing.

Regarding part (b), as part of the application process for scientific research and experimental development, or SR and ED, tax incentives, applicants are required to disclose the percentage of their funds resulting from federal grants, contracts and provincial funding. However, applicants are not required to identify the precise source of such funding. Consequently, the CRA is not in a position to comment on how many SR and ED claimants have received Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, funding or which SDTC recipients may be the subject of a CRA audit.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2428—Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario: (a) what was the total amount spent by the agency on advertising and outreach during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal years; (b) what are the details of the agency's advertising and outreach initiatives; (c) what metrics were used to determine the success of such endeavours; and (d) were the targets met?

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, FedDev Ontario, delivers programs and services to support innovation and economic growth in southern Ontario. Its mandate covers the region as defined by 37 Statistics Canada census divisions. Actively promoting FedDev Ontario programs and funding opportunities is part of the agency's core business, and therefore the total cost of this advertising and outreach is not systematically tracked. FedDev Ontario concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Details of travel associated with outreach activities by senior agency officials are proactively disclosed and published on the Open Government portal at <https://search.open.canada.ca/travel/>.

In response to part (b), FedDev Ontario makes use of free social media and regularly engages with stakeholders and communities across the region to promote programming and funding opportunities for southern Ontario businesses and organizations.

In response to part (c), FedDev Ontario tracks engagement and impressions on social media, traffic to the agency website, and application downloads.

In response to part (d), the agency does not have any specific targets associated with advertising and outreach. Reporting against FedDev Ontario's key targets and results can be found in the agency's departmental results report, DRR, at <https://feddev-ontario.canada.ca/en/transparency/departmental-results-report>.

Question No. 2432—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the letter sent to the Minister of Health by the office of the Member from Chatham-Kent—Leamington in December 2023, and the minister's mandate letter of July 2023: (a) why were representatives from Health Canada (HC) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) not made available to attend the CFIA Food Security Roundtable in Chatham-Kent, Ontario on March 24, 2024; and (b) what are the current best practices for industry and various levels of government, including HC, in the event of a pathogenic or contamination crisis, when importing and exporting Canadian greenhouse and mushroom products to and from the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement and the European Union?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA, has other means to engage with stakeholders, including with the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers and Mushrooms Canada. It engages regularly with stakeholders on regulatory, policy and program developments. This engagement helps inform proposed changes to CFIA policies and procedures, programs, services, regulations and legislation. For example, the CFIA met with the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers to proactively share information prior to the coming into force of the safe food for Canadians regulations and answer questions to help this group prepare their businesses.

The CFIA also collaborates with the industry to help them be prepared for emergency situations. For example, the CFIA met with a number of industry associations, including the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, in February 2023 to test a new notification process for various scenarios developed by the Canadian plant health council, CPHC, aiming to enhance inter-organizational communications amongst various groups.

On a more operational level, the CFIA conducts day-to-day interactions with various stakeholders during inspections. These stakeholders include individual companies, such as those involved in food production, processing, distribution and retail. During these inspections, stakeholders have an opportunity to speak with inspectors and ask questions to help them ensure they are complying with the regulations.

In response to (b), all food sold in Canada, whether domestic or imported, must comply with Canada's federal acts and regulations, including the Food and Drugs Act and the Safe Food for Canadians Act. This legislation includes prohibitions against contamination and misrepresentation of food. In addition, under the safe food for Canadians regulations, SFCR, importers are required to have a licence and a preventive control plan to import food into Canada. Also, the SFCR requires operators to conduct investigation when a food may present a health risk. Should a food be recalled because it presents a risk of injury to human health, the operator must notify the CFIA and implement their recall procedures.

When there is reasonable ground to believe that a food presents a risk of injury to human health, the CFIA initiates a five-step process in order to determine whether a food recall should be initiated. This process includes the following: trigger, food safety investigation, risk assessment, recall process and follow-up. The risk assessments are conducted either by the CFIA, in the form of technical risk assessments, TRAs, when risk-based guidelines, policies and standards exist, or based on existing Health Canada risk assessments. For instance, TRAs for listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat foods are conducted by the CFIA. In cases where no standard exists or during outbreak scenarios, Health Canada performs health risk assessments. The purpose of these assessments is to determine the level of risk a specific food presents to Canadians by evaluating the likelihood of exposure to the food and the potential severity of the illness or injury to inform risk management actions.

Routine Proceedings

Both the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement and the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement require parties to the agreement to inform each other in a timely manner of relevant food safety concerns related to a product traded under these agreements.

The following information is publicly available: “How we decide to recall a food product”, available at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at <https://inspection.canada.ca/food-safety-for-consumers/how-we-decide-to-recall-a-food-product/eng/1332206599275/1332207914673#a2>; “About CUSMA”, available at <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cusma-aceum/about-cusma-a-propos-aceum.aspx?lang=eng>; Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, available at <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/ceta-aecg/index.aspx?lang=eng>.

Question No. 2434—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to the government’s approval of the merger of the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) Canada: (a) was the Minister of Finance aware of HSBC mortgage fraud allegations before she approved the merger, and, if so, when was the Minister of Finance aware of those allegations at HSBC Canada; (b) were any recommendations given by the Department of Finance to the Minister of Finance regarding the allegations of mortgage fraud taking place at HSBC Canada, and, if so, who provided the recommendations and what were they; (c) has HSBC Canada reported any suspicious mortgage-related transactions to the Department of Finance since 2015, and, if so, what is the number of reported transactions, broken down by year since 2015; (d) how many of the reported suspicious transactions in (c) involved a mortgage borrower who is not a Canadian citizen; (e) were the allegations of mortgage fraud taken into account when the decision was made to allow the merger of RBC and HSBC Canada, and, if not, why not; (f) has the Minister of Finance received any concerns from any government departments, agencies, officers of Parliament, or the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments regarding the allegations of mortgage fraud at HSBC Canada, and, if so, what are the details, including (i) who raised the concern, (ii) what concern was raised, (iii) the date, (iv) the minister’s response; (g) have any suspicious transactions related to mortgages been reported by HSBC Canada since the RBC-HSBC Canada merger was approved, and, if so, how many; and (h) who will be responsible for paying any fines issued to HSBC Canada, following the completion of the merger, for failure to comply with anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing rules, the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, the Bank Act, or other laws in Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on acquisition applications subject to ministerial approval, the department relies on a rigorous review process undertaken by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, OSFI, to provide the Minister of Finance with advice on matters relevant to the application. The relevant matters for the minister’s consideration are set out in section 396 of the Bank Act. Given its role as a regulator, the Department of Finance will not comment on any supervisory or regulatory process.

Canadians must have confidence in the integrity and security of their financial institutions. In this regard, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, FINTRAC, and OSFI continue to engage with financial institutions to promote, monitor and enforce compliance with anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing and prudential lending requirements respectively. FINTRAC and OSFI engage closely and regularly to share supervisory insights and coordinate supervision of federally regulated financial institutions in Canada.

• (1705)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if a revised response to Question No. 2007, originally tabled on January 29, and the government’s responses to Questions Nos. 2420 to 2423, 2425 to 2427, 2429 to 2431, 2433, and 2435 to 2437 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2007—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the \$669,650 contract awarded to KPMG to provide advice on how to save money on consultants: (a) what advice did KPMG provide to the government; and (b) does the government consider the advice to be worth \$669,650?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2420—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to suicide among trans and gender-diverse Canadians: (a) are there any data collection efforts to measure the rate of suicide and suicide attempts among these Canadians; and (b) are there any policy initiatives to address the issue of suicide among these Canadians?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2421—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to the contracts awarded by the Government of Canada or any other government agency for the Canada Border Services Agency’s (CBSA) Assessment and Revenue Management project since February 7, 2018, broken down by supplier: what are the details of all these contracts, including, for each, (i) the date the contract was signed, (ii) the value of the contract, (iii) the title of the public servants who approved the contract, (iv) the start and end dates of the work, (v) a detailed description of the goods or services provided, (vi) specifics on the way the contract was awarded (sole source or competitive bidding process), (vii) the status of the contract, namely, whether the contract was delivered and completed and whether the deliverables met the requirements of the CBSA and any other department or agency involved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2422—Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné:

With regard to the awarding of non-competitive contracts, broken down by department, agency or body and by year, from 2006 to present: for each contract, what is the (i) total amount awarded, (ii) reason, if any, for awarding the contract, (iii) name of the organization that received the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2423—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): (a) what grading or scoring system is used by the CAF when determining whether someone gets promoted, including (i) what the scores based on, (ii) what importance or weight each item carries, (iii) what grade or score is required to be eligible for or to obtain a promotion; (b) what is the current breakdown of members of the CAF by demographic; and (c) how many and what percentage of members of the CAF received promotions, broken down by each demographic that the CAF tracks and by year, for the past five years?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2425—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the temporary public policy to facilitate temporary resident visas (TRV) for certain extended family affected by the crisis in Gaza, since January 9, 2024: (a) how many crisis web form applications have been received by the department, and how many sponsored individuals are represented; (b) how many unique reference codes have been issued and how many anchors and sponsored individuals are represented; (c) how many crisis web form applications have been rejected and (i) how many sponsored individuals are represented, (ii) what was the reason for the rejection; (d) how many crisis web form applications are still being processed and how many sponsored individuals are represented; (e) how many unique reference codes have been used to complete TRV applications; (f) how many TRV applicants have completed biometric processing at a biometric collection processing site prior to January 9, 2024; (g) how many TRV permits have been issued to those who have completed their biometrics prior to January 9, 2024; (h) how many TRV applicants have completed biometric processing at a biometric collection service point since January 9, 2024, and how many of them have been issued a TRV permit; (i) how many TRV applications have been rejected, and what was the reason for rejection; (j) how many TRV applications have been stamped and approved; (k) how many successful applicants were sent to the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) to be allowed to exit Gaza to migrate to Canada; (l) how many TRV applicants have had personal details, which were shared in the application process, other than a full name, date of birth, sex, passport or national ID details, mobile phone number, or current location by district, shared with Israeli authorities; and (m) how many TRV applicants have had information disclosed or additional background information forms shared with Israeli authorities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2426—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to application backlogs and processing times at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to date: (a) how many temporary resident applications, permanent resident applications, and citizenship applications are in backlog, broken down by individual stream, including pilot programs; (b) what is the month-to-month reduction or increase in the number of applications in backlog, broken down by each individual stream, including pilot programs for the previous 60 months; and (c) how many applications have been processed and accepted for each individual stream, broken down by year, and by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2427—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario: (a) what was the total amount spent by the agency on consultations and consultants during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal years; and (b) what are the details of all contracts related to the consultations or consultants in (a), including, for each, the (i) date of the contract, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount or value, (iv) description of the goods or services provided, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (i.e. sole-sourced, competitive bid)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2429—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to the government's provision of goods and services to irregular border crossers seeking asylum: (a) what items are provided to entrants at the time of crossing; (b) what items are provided to entrants once they are relocated to accommodations; and (c) what is the cost, per item, of provisions to entrants, broken down by each item with its associated per unit cost?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2430—Mr. René Villemure:

With regard to the technologies used by the federal government and its various departments, agencies and Crown corporations, notably the RCMP, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: (a) have they purchased Hikvision surveillance cameras, owned by the Chinese company Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co., Ltd.; (b) do they use Hikvision surveillance cameras, owned by the Chinese company Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co., Ltd.; and (c) if the answer to (a) and (b) is affirmative, have they conducted a privacy impact assessment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2431—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to legal services provided to the government, broken down by department or agency: (a) for each year since 2020, what was the total amount of ex-

penditures on contracts for legal services, in total and broken down by vendor; and (b) how many in-house lawyers or legal advisors are currently employed by the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2433—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, National Advisory Committee on Immunization and Privy Council communications in 2022: (a) were there communications between any of the entities or their personnel with the Ottawa Police Services Board or Ottawa Police Services personnel or the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, was any of the communication with respect to Detective Helen Grus, stillbirths or deaths of infants under one year; (c) if the answer to (b) is affirmative, what are the details of each communication, including the (i) date, (ii) type of communication such as memorandum, telephone conversation, fax, or email; (iii) subject, (iv) reports produced as a result of the communication, (v) names of people included or copied on the communication; (d) were any of the named entities above or their personnel included in communications involving one or more of the following individuals, Deputy Chief Steven Bell, Superintendent Heather Lachine, Hugh O'Toole of the Professional Standards Branch, Prosecutor Vanessa Stewart, or the Ontario Coroner's office; and (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what are the details of each communication, including the (i) date, (ii) type of communication, (iii) subject, (iv) reports produced as a result of the communication, (v) names of people included or copied on the communication?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2435—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to anti-terrorist financing, broken down by year since 2015: (a) have any federally regulated financial institutions reported transactions involving people or organizations with suspected or confirmed ties to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and, if so, how many were reported; (b) how many of the reported suspicious transactions in (a) are related to people or organizations with suspected or confirmed ties to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; (c) how many transactions involving people or organizations with suspected or confirmed ties to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have been investigated by the Government of Canada or its agencies, including the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and the RCMP; (d) how many people or organizations have been investigated for transactions involving the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or people or organizations with suspected or confirmed ties to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; (e) how many federally regulated financial institutions, credit unions, or lenders have been investigated for transactions involving the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or people or organizations with suspected or confirmed ties to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; (f) what are the names of each company or entity investigated in (e), and what is the current status of each investigation; and (g) why has the Government of Canada not listed the entire Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2436—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to the government approach to anti-money laundering: (a) how much money does the government estimate has been laundered through Canada, broken down by year since 2015; (b) how many individuals, companies, entities, or organizations have been convicted of money laundering offences in Canada since 2015, in total, and broken down by year; (c) how many investigations related to money laundering have led to (i) fines, (ii) incarceration, in Canada since 2015, in total, and broken down by year; (d) of the total number of fines in (c), how many are a result of plea deals or other agreements where charges were not filed or were dropped; and (e) has the Department of Finance, its agencies, or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation done an analysis on the impact that money laundering has on the housing market, and, if so, what are the details, including when the analysis was conducted and the results?

(Return tabled)

*The Budget***Question No. 2437—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:**

With regard to government statistics on homelessness in Canada: (a) how many homeless people are there currently in Canada; (b) how many homeless people have there been in Canada, broken down by year since 2015; (c) how many homeless encampments are there in Canada; (d) how many homeless encampments have there been in Canada, broken down by year since 2015; (e) how many homeless people have been housed as a result of Infrastructure Canada funding; (f) how many homeless people have been housed as a result of the National Housing Strategy; (g) how many homeless people have been housed as a result of the National Housing Accelerator Fund; and (h) what is the breakdown of (c) through (g) by province or territory and by municipality?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like to seek unanimous consent to have my vote counted. I heard that it was not counted, not the previous vote, but the one before.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: What is the hon. member's vote?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, my vote was nay.

The Deputy Speaker: The vote is recorded.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should have also requested that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 30 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be sharing my time with the member for Sackville—Pres-ton—Chezzetcook.

As always, it is a true honour for me to be speaking in the venerable House on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport. Today I am going to be speaking to federal budget 2024. It is a very important budget. It is 416 pages. I will not be able to go through all of it, but I will focus on a few key areas.

I will start by talking about what I think is the overall theme of our budget, which is fairness for every generation. We have been talking a lot about some of the pre-announcements that our government made before we introduced federal budget 2024. There is a huge focus, and rightly so, on the gen Zs and millennials, but I just want to reiterate that the theme is fairness for every generation. There is a lot in the budget that will benefit every single generation here in Canada.

The other question that we asked ourselves and that is important to note as we are going through a number of measures I will be talking about today is “What kind of Canada do we want to live in?”. The measures in our budget very much answer that question. I also believe that the measures we have comprise a plan that would meet the current moment, including the challenges and opportunities of the current moment.

On Friday, as I always do every single year, I hosted a town hall respecting federal budget 2024, with Davenport residents. They had a lot of questions, which took over an hour. I am going to speak to the top three issues that I heard at the town hall.

The first thing I want to talk about is housing. That is the top concern for Davenport residents. We receive a lot of letters and a lot of calls, and when I go to events, that is what I hear from millennials, gen Zs and also from parents and grandparents who are worried about their kids and grandkids being able to live in the city where they have grown up. Indeed, the core focus of federal budget 2024 is getting housing built as quickly as possible, getting as much supply as possible into the marketplace.

I do not know whether members noticed, but the week before federal budget 2024, we actually introduced our master housing plan, and there are three parts to it. First is building more single-family homes. Second is how it is that we are going to make it easier for Canadians to own or rent a home. The third part of our housing plan is helping Canadians who cannot afford a home, and that is by building more deeply affordable housing, whether for students, seniors or persons with disabilities. Part of the whole plan is also eliminating chronic homelessness in Canada.

There are a number of new measures that we have included in the budget. One that I want to focus on is using under-utilized federal lands for housing in Canada. I am very excited about this because in Davenport, something we have been pushing the federal government to look at is particularly using federal commercial lands in the hands of the government for affordable housing or for the use of local communities. We made a big push for Canada Post lands to be relooked at. Indeed, within federal budget 2024, we have introduced the whole concept of freeing up some of the lands that currently are under-utilized and available, and they would be used for affordable housing spaces.

The Budget

I want to thank Davenport residents very much for pushing this idea, and the ministers and the Prime Minister for ensuring that we take a serious look at the federal lands that are in our hands and making them available right across this country.

The second issue that is important for Davenport residents is affordability. We do have an affordability crisis in Canada. I have been very proud of our federal government, which has introduced a number of programs over the last few years that have been extremely beneficial, have strengthened our social welfare system, and have also made life more affordable. The national child care system, our national dental care plan, our Canada worker benefit and our increase in OAS payments by 10% are just a few of those programs.

• (1710)

In federal budget 2024, we also introduced the Canada disability benefit and the national school food program. I will speak to both very quickly.

On the Canada disability benefit, I am very happy that we have introduced phase one, which would be \$6.1 billion over six years, beginning in 2024-25, and would be \$1.4 billion ongoing. That would provide a maximum benefit of \$2,400 per person for low-income persons with disabilities. To me, this is great news. Every bit of money will help, particularly during times when we have inflation that is higher than normal.

This is phase one, and I know many Davenport residents are going to continue the work, including with me, to try to see if, in future years, we can get more money allocated to the Canada disability benefit. However, the dollars we have now are very much appreciated and would go a long way.

The second thing I want to mention is our national school food program, which would benefit more than 400,000 kids in Canada. It would save the average family with two children as much as \$800 per year in grocery prices.

Again, I am very proud of the affordability measures we continue to have in federal budget 2024. I know it would go a long way to help support not only residents of my riding of Davenport, but also Canadians right across this country.

This is the last area I want to spend a bit of time on. Looking at all the programs we have introduced to expand our social welfare system and to help Canadians with the affordability and the housing crises we have in Canada today, there are often those who ask me how we are going to pay for it. I am very proud to say that we do have an economic plan that would set up Canada and Canadians for future growth and prosperity. The measures we have introduced in our budget this year would very much build on a number of measures we have introduced over the last few years. I will speak to some of them now.

First, we put \$2.4 billion toward AI leadership. We would launch a new AI compute access fund and a Canadian AI sovereign compute strategy that would support AI adoption across the entire Canadian economy. It is very important for us to make this investment. It would help Canadian researchers start up and scale up businesses, and access the computational power and the digital

tools they need to compete, and it would help catalyze the development of Canadian-owned and Canadian-located AI infrastructure.

We also introduced the new investment tax credits to attract companies to invest across the electric vehicle supply chains. These are much-welcomed tax credits by the electric vehicle sector. We, indeed, have made huge investments. This continues to ensure we would have a very robust structure and would become global leaders in this area.

I want to note that in our fall economic statement, we introduced the clean technology manufacturing investment tax credits, which are very beneficial for the transition we are trying to make to a low-carbon future and a low-carbon economy.

There are two other great things I want to speak to. We have made a \$5.9-billion investment in research and scholarships, and also in new strategy research infrastructure. In my community, for many years, I have had a number of university post-docs and doctoral students come up to me and ask for more core research grants and more scholarships and fellowships. Indeed, we have made a historic investment in federal budget 2024. I am very pleased that it is there. It would bode well for a good economic future.

The last thing I will say may sound unsexy, but I think it is sexy because it is going to help our Canadian economy. We have introduced a national regulatory alignment. Essentially, we are trying to eliminate interprovincial and interterritorial trade barriers. When we do that, we make it easier for companies, businesses, non-profits, people and goods to move across our country. It is great for our current economy and for our future economy, and it would bode well for our future prosperity.

We have set up what I would call a “registry” so that we would have an idea what those barriers are and could start eliminating them systematically.

In 416 pages, we have something that would benefit every generation in Canada. I am very proud to stand here on behalf of Davenport residents.

I am now ready to answer any questions.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with this budget, the federal government is responding to a crisis, namely, the housing crisis.

The Budget

My question for my colleague is this: Does she agree that the money earmarked for housing should be managed by the people who understand the housing crisis? Here is an example: CMHC collects data. I have the honour of representing 39 municipalities. Out of those 39 municipalities, CMHC collects data on only one. The government wants to put out a fire, but it is only spraying water on part of the building.

Does my colleague agree that the money earmarked for addressing the housing crisis should be managed entirely by the Quebec government?

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I will say the following: I sit on the finance committee, and it is a privilege to do so. We hear, all the time, from experts across the country about how to resolve the housing crisis. One thing we hear, time and time again, is that it will not be resolved at just the federal level. All three levels of government need to work together to resolve the housing crisis.

For about 30 years, all three levels did not invest enough. We now have a lot of money in. We have a lot of input. We have a lot of great programs, and there is an opportunity for every level of government to have input and to do their part to ensure that every Canadian has a safe, accessible, affordable place to live.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was astounded, quite frankly, when I saw in the ways and means motion, which the Deputy Prime Minister and finance minister will be putting forward, an increase to the debt borrowing limit of this country of \$295 billion. That is astounding. I am troubled by the massive increases in spending that this budget sees and by the fact that there is an increase of \$295 billion.

Can the member try to explain to the House and to Canadians why in the world they need a \$295-billion increase to Canada's borrowing?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, here is what I would say: I think that sometimes we have to remind ourselves of this, even though we want to forget it. We, not just Canada, but also the world, have come out of a massive pandemic. I think all of our economies have been struggling to recuperate. Very blessedly, here in Canada, we have been very lucky that we have been able to bring back over 100% of all the jobs that had been lost and that we continue to have strong fundamentals in terms of our finances.

Our growth, right now, is predicted to be the highest this year and the next, according to the Bank of Canada and the IMF. We continue to have a AAA credit rating. Only 11 countries in the world have that. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and it continues on a downward track. Canada's balance sheet remains the best of the G7's.

Therefore, I would say that we have a good track record. We have a good balance sheet, and we have a lot to look forward to, in terms of prosperity, moving forward.

• (1720)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if I heard correctly, I believe the hon. member for Davenport said that it was great news that the disability tax credit finally came in, after years and years, without delay, leaving people with disabilities in

the lurch, only to find that in this budget, this lunch bag letdown, there was \$200 a month; that is \$2,400 a year or \$6.66 a day.

Is it the hon. member's testimony, here today in this debate, that a program with currently only 40% of disabled Canadians enrolled in it should be great news for the people of Davenport, for the people in Hamilton Centre and, indeed, for Canadians who have been legislated to poverty, living with disabilities from coast to coast to coast?

Is this her contention here today?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, if the member is asking whether I would have wanted it to have been fully funded to what the Canadian disability sector had asked for, I would say a resounding yes. However, I was proud that this is one of the largest line items in our entire budget. We have absolutely made this a priority.

I will also say that it is not the only thing that will be helpful to Canadians with disabilities. We have automatic tax filings. We have a national dental care plan that will benefit them. We have phase one of a national pharmacare plan that will support them. We have made historic investments in our health care program, both last year and this year. I think all of that, collectively, is going to support not only Canadians with disabilities but also all Canadians moving forward.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my constituents of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook on this very important budget.

The thing I want people to concentrate on is that this budget is a fairness to every generation, and it is a focused one. Before one can put a strong budget in place, one needs to have a strong economy. That is what it is all about. Right now, the economy in Canada is doing much better than most economies across the world.

First of all, our inflation rate is down to about 3%, which is in the target range of the Bank of Canada, which is very important. We have dropped that from 8.2% down to 3%.

Also very important is that we have the AAA rating, and we are one of two countries in the G7 to have that. That is another solid ground footing we have.

We also have an unemployment rate ranging around 5.4% or 5.5%, which is among the lowest ever in the history of Canada. That is, again, very impressive.

The International Monetary Fund is also indicating that Canada's net debt-to-GDP ratio remains among the lowest in the G7.

The Budget

Those make up the main foundation of why we can have a budget that would be fair to every generation. It is also why we are able to invest in a transformative enhancement of our social safety net, which is really important, and it is something I really care about, making sure the gap is tighter for Canadians. It is also why we are attracting the highest per capita foreign direct investment in the G7, and we are third in the world. These are very impressive numbers.

Let us talk about homes. Yes, we do have a crisis with homes, and every level of government has some responsibility behind that. The former Conservative government said that it did not have any responsibility for that, but it does. It is a partnership, and we need to work together. I am proud that there is going to be almost four million, believe it or not, homes built by 2031. When I say four million, I am not talking about four million people; I am talking about four million families, which is really what is important.

Some of the initiatives we started are going to be topped up and expanded. Let us talk about the rapid housing, the accelerator fund, the removal of the GST and the innovative modular homes. Those are key. We are also now looking at Canada Lands to make sure that we can access those lands and that some contractors or investors can lease the lands, so we can get more homes built. We are talking about 250,000 more homes, as we move forward, by 2031.

We are also looking at investing with universities, with student residences, which would allow us to get students from apartments and condos into residences. That would help us with the housing challenge.

Also, there is our investment in various organizations on the ground, working to prevent and to reduce homelessness and encampments. This is a co-shared investment with all levels of government, where we will see renovations and see more shelters and transition homes being built.

Those are some key issues under housing that are so important.

I also want to talk about our focus on youth. First-time homebuyers would have access to 30-year amortizations, which would be very helpful. Also, we know already that 750,000 young people have opened a tax-free account for first-time homebuyers. That is very impressive.

Kevin Lee, CEO of the Canadian Home Builders' Association, stated, "The Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and our members are very pleased to see the federal budget measures that will help the sector respond to the government's goal of doubling housing starts to overcome the housing [crisis]."

I am confident that, in the very near future, we are going to see vacancies as we move forward.

The third piece of my speech, which is so important, is a stronger social safety net and closing the gap. I am proud of that, and I will share some of the key items I am very proud of. One, in 2023, we added \$200 billion to the health accord, but now we are talking about a new disability benefit, with up to \$6.1 billion over three years that is going to help over 600,000 Canadians with disabilities.

• (1725)

Also very important is pharmacare. We are initiating the first phase of pharmacare, and we are going to see big support for women and people living with diabetes. When I go to the pharmacist, she often tells me, "You have to help people with diabetes, because it is costing them too much money." Well, we are coming forward on that one today.

On the dental care plan, nine million Canadians will have access to it. It is very important. We have it for seniors now, and we are running it for people with disabilities and young people 18 and under.

There is also the expansion of spaces in day cares. We have dropped the cost of day care. My daughters were paying \$1,800 a month, and it is going to be down to \$10 a day very soon in Nova Scotia. This is helping with affordability, which is really important as well.

The final one, which I am very proud of as a former educator, is that we are launching the new national school food program, which will help over 400,000 young Canadians.

Under safer and healthier communities, there are two areas I want to touch on. One is recognizing the volunteer firefighters and search and rescue individuals by doubling the tax credit. These individuals are doing exceptional and dangerous work. They are supporting Canadians every day. We need to recognize them, and this is the first step. Also, for rural health and social services workers, we are looking at making amendments, which is very important to attract more people into rural communities. How are we going to do that? We are going to look at adapting and adjusting the Canada student loan forgiveness program, which will attract key people in key areas, for example dentists, pharmacists, midwives, teachers, social workers and psychologists. I could go on and on. This will bring positive change.

How are we helping the small and medium-sized businesses? Again, we are helping them in many ways. The Canadian entrepreneurs' incentive will have a combined exemption of at least \$3.25 million when selling all or part of a business, which is very much a supportive investment for small businesses. We will also have the lifetime capital gains exemption increased from \$1 million to \$1.25 million, which is tax-free for the sale of small business shares and farming and fishing property. These are key areas in supporting small businesses. We are also boosting government procurement for small and medium-sized businesses, which will have access to those contracts that are so important.

To conclude, this is a balanced budget and a balanced approach. We are investing in Canadians and also ensuring that we are not overspending.

The Budget

I will finish with something from Deloitte, which speaks about this budget. It reads:

Budget 2024 attempts to navigate a fine line: invest enough to have an impact on key priorities, from housing, social programs, and affordability to growth and good jobs, while maintaining sufficient fiscal discipline to adhere to fiscal guardrails and support the continued easing of inflation.

● (1730)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, in this most recent budget, it is predicted that the interest will outstrip the transfers on health care. Does the member think that \$54 billion is a big number?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, but I am not sure I captured the beginning of it.

However, this budget will have about \$40-billion deficit. The focus is on maintaining, but we are continuing to invest in new programs, yet drawing in enough revenue so that the deficit will not be as high as predicted. We are now moving downwards on the deficit.

We will continue to do our work, and we will be there for Canadians. I talked about young people and people with disabilities, and we will continue to support—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The answers must have, more or less, the same time as the questions.

The hon. member for Shefford.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He addressed the issue of social housing and focused on homelessness in particular.

Last week, during our constituency week, I had the chance to attend the unveiling of the City of Granby's action plan for fighting homelessness. The city's request for the federal government is clear: The federal program that can help deal with homelessness is Reaching Home.

Granby is still considered a rural community, yet homelessness is on the rise throughout the entire region.

Is the government willing to review this program so that more communities like Granby can be deemed “designated communities” in order to address the needs of the homeless?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I believe it will be expanded, because this situation exists everywhere, not just in urban centres. We will need to do a little more, but the investments that we have made to work with organizations on the ground will help us overcome this challenge.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the member's energy and I am going to ask for some of it to come to Port Moody—Coquitlam.

I know that the member is the parliamentary secretary for Veterans Affairs. There is a piece of federal land very close to the legion in Port Moody, on 45 Mary Street. It was outlined in the budget. How can I get some conversations going around this piece of land?

I am getting a bit of a runaround. It is not in infrastructure and communities and now it is over to procurement.

Where am I supposed to find this information about 45 Mary Street, because we are very interested in Port Moody—Coquitlam?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I will share with my colleague that I am no longer the parliamentary secretary for Veterans Affairs. I am the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development. However, my heart and soul are still in supporting veterans.

This, of course, is a new initiative. My understanding of Canada lands is that we will have a drawing of all the vacant lands that belong to the federal government and conversations will be had. I believe the first step would be to speak with the minister about the possibility and identify that land, because that is exactly what we want. We want various people from the municipality and the province, or any member of Parliament, to share where they feel this would be appropriate and have those discussions so we can move forward very quickly. By 2031, we want to have 250,000 homes built.

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member about what his views are on the importance of some of the national programs we have rolled out, and continue to roll out, in the last few years. I am talking about dental care and pharmacare, but also the national child care plan, and how they meet the affordability needs of Canadians in this moment.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I stated in my speech how proud I was, as a member of Parliament representing my constituency but also representing Canada, of the investment in making our social safety net even stronger: supporting people with disabilities, who are the most impoverished; bringing in the first phase of the pharmacare program, which is extremely important; bringing in dental care that nine million people will have access to; talking about more spaces for kids in day cares, which is extremely important, and the national school food program.

These are major, fundamental investments in our country, and I am so proud of our government for moving forward on them.

● (1735)

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are talking about budget 2024. The Liberal government claims that its ongoing investments are making life more affordable for Canadians and improving access to housing. That claim is straight out of the budget report. I was very surprised to hear that, because what I have heard from people in my home community, as well as from Canadians right across the country, is exactly the opposite: that the government's mismanagement of the economy is leading to making life less affordable for Canadians.

The Budget

Think of the two million people who now regularly go to food banks. Food banks are even turning away people because there is so much demand. Those people do not think that life is becoming easier or more affordable.

How about improving access to housing? Housing is now twice as expensive as it was when the Liberal government first took office.

Munir is from my community. Together with his brother and his parents, they bought a house two years ago. With a low interest rate, their mortgage payments were \$4,000 a month. Just last month, they had to renew their mortgage for \$8,200 a month. They do not think that life is becoming more affordable.

Common-sense Conservatives have three demands to fix the budget and bring Canadians the relief that they desperately need. First, we say to axe the carbon tax on farmers and food by immediately passing Bill C-234 in its original and unamended form. Second, we need to build homes, not bureaucracy, by requiring cities to permit 15% more homebuilding each year as a condition of receiving federal infrastructure dollars. Third, we are demanding a cap on spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule to bring down interest rates and inflation.

The Liberals chose not to take our advice on that. Therefore, we cannot support this budget. There will be a non-confidence vote coming up, and we will vote non-confidence because we do not have confidence in the government.

We want an election. We are ready for it.

An hon. member: Canadians want an election.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, it is time to turn the hurt that the Liberals have inflicted on Canadians into the hope that they so desperately need.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are many pieces within the budget that speak to affordability issues. The member opposite brought up an issue from his own constituency where a family is going through a challenging time. Would he not agree that some of the affordability measures, such as the student nutrition program, the dental program, these pieces that we have built on, like child care in the past, are good for people in his community? How can he stand here talking about affordability and not support those measures?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the best support the government can give to Canadians is to make life more affordable again, bring interest rates down, bring inflation down. Munir and his family should not be paying \$8,200 a month for their mortgage; \$4,000 should be enough.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 5:40 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the ways and means Motion No. 20.

[Translation]

The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

● (1740)

[Translation]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I request that the motion be carried on division.

[English]

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, I think we should have a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

● (1820)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 747)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Gaheer
Gainey	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Green	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly

The Budget

Jones	Jowhari	Gallant	Garon
Julian	Kayabaga	Gaudreau	Généreux
Kelloway	Khalid	Genuis	Gill
Khera	Koutrakis	Gladu	Godin
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Goodridge	Gourde
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Gray	Hallan
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Hoback	Jeneroux
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Jivani	Kelly
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Khanna	Kitchen
Lightbound	Long	Kmiec	Kram
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Kusie	Lake
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lantsman	Larouche
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Lawrence	Lehoux
Masse	Mathysen	Lemire	Leslie
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
McGuinty	McKay	Liepert	Lloyd
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod	Lobb	Maguire
McPherson	Mendés	Majumdar	Martel
Mendicino	Miao	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miller	Morrissey	McLean	Melillo
Murray	Naqvi	Michaud	Moore
Ng	Noormohamed	Morantz	Morrice
O'Connell	Oliphant	Morrison	Motz
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor	Muys	Nater
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Normandin	Patzer
Robillard	Rodriguez	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Rogers	Romanado	Perron	Plamondon
Rota	Sahota	Poillievre	Rayes
Sajjan	Saks	Redekopp	Reid
Samson	Sarai	Rempel Garner	Richards
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Roberts	Rood
Serré	Sgro	Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Shanahan	Sheehan	Scheer	Schmale
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh	Seeback	Shields
Sorbara	Sousa	Shipley	Simard
Sudds	Tassi	Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Taylor Roy	Thompson	Soroka	Steinley
Trudeau	Turnbull	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Valdez	Van Bynen	Strahl	Stubbs
van Koevorden	Vandal	Thériault	Therrien
Vandenbeld	Virani	Thomas	Tochor
Weiler	Wilkinson	Tolmie	Trudel
Yip	Zahid	Uppal	Van Popta
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 172	Vecchio	Vien

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin

Garon	Généreux	Gill	Godin	Gourde	Hallan	Jeneroux	Kelly	Kitchen	Kram	Kurek	Lake	Larouche	Lehoux	Leslie	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd	Maguire	Martel	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Melillo	Moore	Morrice	Motz	Nater	Patzer	Perkins	Plamondon	Rayes	Reid	Richards	Rood	Savard-Tremblay	Schmale	Shields	Simard	Small	Steinley	Stewart	Stubbs	Therrien	Tochor	Trudel	Van Popta	Vien	Vignola	Vis	Wagantall	Waugh	Williams	Zimmer — 150
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PAIRED

Members

Guilbeault	Pauzé
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Vidal — 4

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre on a point of order.

Mr. Ben Carr: Mr. Speaker, I was having technical difficulties earlier this afternoon during the vote on Bill C-351.

I am asking for the unanimous consent of the House for my vote on the bill to be recorded as a nay.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

PRIVILEGE

NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERS FOLLOWING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to the question of privilege raised on April 29 by the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan regarding the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. I would like to offer some clarification as it is critically important that members have the facts about and chronology of this matter.

I submit that the facts of the situation clearly demonstrate that the government acted without delay to notify the House and Senate of suspicious spearphishing activity that targeted parliamentarians. I would also state that, since this incident occurred, the government has given clear direction to intelligence agencies that when there are threats of interference, influence or intimidation against any member of the House or the Senate, these agencies are to engage the affected member in an expeditious manner.

I will now draw the attention of members of the House to the facts and chronology of events that occurred respecting the matter raised by my colleague across the way.

In January 2021, the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security informed the House of Commons administration about suspicious spearphishing activity targeting individuals with parl.gc.ca and senate.gc.ca email accounts, beginning on January 22, 2021, and continuing into March 2021.

A series of reports were shared with the House of Commons about the activity. Only technical details were available and shared at this time.

On June 29, 2022, the FBI shared a report with the Communications Security Establishment, detailing cyber-threat activities targeting members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, including parliamentarians.

On June 30, 2022, the Communications Security Establishment shared all relevant technical information about the cyber-threat activity with security officials in both the House of Commons and the Senate, including the names of the impacted parliamentarians.

As there is a separation between the executive and the legislative branches of government, the Communications Security Establishment determined that it was appropriate to defer to the House of Commons and the Senate, as owners and managers of their IT networks and parliamentary email addresses, to address the threats. At the time this took place, it was felt that this was the appropriate procedure to follow in order to respect the independence of the legislative branch from the executive branch.

I cannot speak to what the House of Commons or Senate administration did with the information provided to them by the Communications Security Establishment, as this is for them to explain. I can only explain the actions of departments and agencies of the Government of Canada. I would therefore assert that there is no prima facie question of privilege in this instance, as the Communications Security Establishment properly shared the information that

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they were provided, including the names of the parliamentarians, with the House of Commons and Senate administrations.

I would like to point out that, since that time, procedures have evolved, and MPs have made it clear that they would like to be notified directly when they are targeted. Therefore, in May 2023, the then minister of public safety issued a ministerial directive requiring that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service will, where possible, inform parliamentarians of threats to their security.

As stated in my opening remarks, had this threat been raised today, I can assure members that the directive would have been followed and that security agencies would have proactively provided information on the threat to parliamentarians.

With a view to protecting our democratic institutions and representatives, our government takes matters of foreign interference and foreign influence extremely seriously. I can assure the House that our government will continue to take serious steps to address threats against our beloved country and the institutions that serve and represent our citizens.

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• (1825)

[English]

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON BRAIN INJURIES ACT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP) moved that Bill C-277, an act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is indeed a great and rare honour to be able to stand in the House of Commons to sponsor and present a piece of legislation for all of my colleagues to consider. With that being said, I am pleased to kick off the debate respecting Bill C-277, the national strategy on brain injuries act. Before I get into the details of the bill, I want to start by sharing three personal stories so members of the chamber who are listening can get a real sense of why the national strategy is so important.

I want to tell the story of Kyle Mockford from my riding, who in 2012 was brutally attacked from behind, being struck up to 20 times in the head before collapsing, unconscious. For months after, he experienced severe headaches, balance problems, fatigue, poor coordination, and reductions in reasoning skills, concentration and memory. This was followed by bouts of depression, anxiety, compulsive-aggressive behaviour and PTSD, all of which got progressively worse after the attack. In his words:

I expect I'll never get back to being completely normal, but I'm finally doing the proper things to get back to normal as much as is possible after falling through the cracks for so long. I want to shine a light on how serious brain injuries can be, and that they can and will have long-lasting consequences and effects on a person's life.

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I also want to tell you the story of Derrick Forsyth from Victoria, a man who has 85 criminal convictions and who was caught up in a vicious, repeating cycle of doing time in prison, getting out and doing time again. A series of undiagnosed brain injuries dating back to his childhood led to frequent interactions with our criminal justice system and to an addiction to drugs. However, with proper support, he has turned his life around. Derrick still faces symptoms of brain injury, including extreme fatigue, which will never go away, but he says that dealing with the injury has taught him how to be more giving, understanding and compassionate.

Finally, I want to tell you the story of Abbotsford resident and school trustee, Shirley Wilson, and her late son Jacob:

Jacob suffered a traumatic brain injury after he was struck by a pickup truck in August 2018 at the age of 21 while he was walking along Marshall Road in Abbotsford.

He was resuscitated three times by medical teams that night.

Over the last years of his life, the devastating injuries he sustained led to isolation, psychosis, drug addiction and [eventually] his death by an accidental fentanyl overdose on Nov. 11, 2021.

He was just 24 years old.

Here are the statistics. Brain injuries are often known as the hidden epidemic because the people who have them do not always bear physical scars. Acquired brain injuries can very generally be separated into the traumatic and the non-traumatic kind. Traumatic brain injuries can come from assault, from playing sports or from motor vehicle accidents. Non-traumatic acquired brain injuries can come from strokes, overdoses and aneurysms.

It is estimated that over 160,000 new cases of brain injury happen annually in Canada, and that there is an estimated national prevalence of over 1.5 million cases. Traumatic brain injuries are 44 times more common than spinal cord injuries, 30 times more common than breast cancer and 400 times more common than HIV/AIDS. In fact the incidence and prevalence of brain injuries surpass that of HIV/AIDS, spinal cord injury, breast cancer and multiple sclerosis combined.

We know that brain injuries contribute to homelessness, incarceration, substance use and mental health issues. We know that brain injury survivors face a 200% increased risk of struggling with addictions, and their risk of suicide increases by 400% after a brain injury.

Despite these stark statistics, funding for awareness, prevention and treatment pales in comparison with that of many other ailments impacting the health and well-being of Canadians. We all know about Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society, and the good work that they do, but knowledge of Brain Injury Canada and how common brain injuries are in Canada pales in comparison.

• (1830)

The rate of traumatic brain injury increases in older groups. We do have an aging demographic, and we know that those over 60 account for 29% of all head injury hospitalizations. We also know that seniors with brain injuries can experience accelerated aging effects and that there can be an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

In response to all of these facts and to the many champions who are working to get this strategy into place, I worked to introduce Bill C-277, the bill that we are considering this evening.

This bill did not develop in a vacuum. I want to single out a particular individual from my riding, from the city of Langford, Janelle Breese Biagioni. I have known her for quite some time. She is a very persistent constituent who is very passionate about these issues. It was through conversations with her that I first came to develop the idea of putting in place a national strategy to address brain injuries. Her story is very personal. Her late husband, Constable Gerald Breese, was once a member of the RCMP. While he was on duty on his motorcycle he was involved in a motor vehicle accident. He went into a coma and unfortunately, eventually, succumbed to his injuries. For her, this is very personal.

This eventually led to my introducing the original Bill C-323 in the previous 43rd Parliament. It was then that it got the attention of Brain Injury Canada. I really want to recognize the people at Brain Injury Canada, especially Michelle McDonald. It is a tremendous organization. It does such incredible work from coast to coast to coast. Through consultations with Brain Injury Canada, we developed the bill we see today. This bill was very much co-written with Brain Injury Canada. I cannot thank it enough for its valuable input and the stakeholders it has reached out to.

Truly, this bill has taken on a life of its own. There are so many people with lived experience and so many organizations and people working in research who have reached out to my office and who are mounting a campaign outside of my efforts inside of the House of Commons to raise awareness. I think of March of Dimes Canada, all of the provincial injury associations, the Cowichan Brain Injury Society from my own riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, the Concussion Legacy Foundation of Canada, but also prominent individuals like Dr. Gabor Maté, who has also lent his support to this bill. What an honour to have such a learned individual, who has been so active in this field, lend his support.

Now, to the language of the bill, essentially this is a national strategy that is going to require the Minister of Health to consult with representatives of provincial governments, with indigenous groups and with relevant stakeholders to develop this strategy to support and improve awareness, prevention and treatment as well as the rehabilitation of persons living with a brain injury.

The strategy includes a number of measures, 11 in total. I will not go through all of them in detail, but very briefly, they include measures like identifying the training, education and guidance needs of health care and other professionals who work in this field; promoting research and improving data collection on the incidence and treatment of brain injuries; promoting information and knowledge sharing; creating national guidelines on the prevention, diagnosis and management of brain injuries; and also fostering collaboration with and providing financial support to those associations that do this important work.

However, there are two items I really want to highlight. The bill would ask the Minister of Health to encourage consultation with mental health professionals, particularly in educational institutions, sports organizations and workplaces, to provide persons who are suffering from the effects of a brain injury, including mental health and addiction problems, with a support system within the community. It also asks the minister to identify challenges resulting from brain injury, such as mental health problems, addiction, housing and homelessness issues and criminality, including intimate partner violence, and to work to develop solutions in collaboration with stakeholders.

I think if we canvass members in the House, we can all agree that those are issues affecting all of our ridings and all of our communities within them.

Let us get to why we need this bill. I first want to apply a gender lens to this bill. Professional sports get a lot of attention with respect to head injuries, but I want to leave people with this startling fact: For every NHL hockey player who suffers a concussion in sport, more than 5,500 Canadian women sustain the same injury from domestic violence. Women in families also tend to have a disproportionately higher burden in terms of the responsibility of providing care to loved ones.

• (1835)

I also think we need to spend time talking about the intersection of brain injury with our criminal justice system. Brain Injury Canada has done a lot of work on this. Evidence shows that sustaining a traumatic brain injury increases the risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. There are many common cognitive, emotional and behavioural symptoms or impairments that can increase the chance of a negative interaction with police and the justice system. These can include anger management issues, challenges with processing information, engaging in high-risk behaviours, inappropriate emotional responses, lack of impulse control, memory impairments and poor judgment.

I know this from speaking to police in my role as the public safety critic. I have also spoken with members who work in our federal correctional system, both the program officers within and the parole officers who work on the outside. Certainly, their first-hand accounts of undiagnosed brain injury within our prison system was absolutely startling testimony to hear directly. Therefore, it is a very real problem, and if we want to be serious about addressing some major societal issues, such as criminality, addressing undiagnosed and even diagnosed brain injuries is going to go a long way to helping these people lead productive lives.

I also want to talk about the intersection with opioid use in our communities. One existing challenge with the treatment of substance use and brain injury at the same time is that current programs are not equipped to handle both. The majority of brain injury rehabilitation, community and support programs require participants to be sober. Similarly, the centres and programs that specialize in addiction support are not able to handle the complex needs of someone who has a brain injury. Again, these are two very real problems that are often interconnected, but we do not yet have adequate support and treatment systems to deal with them at the same

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time. I know this is an issue in the communities I represent, and I think it is the same right across Canada.

I want to wrap up by saying that there is very much a poor understanding of brain injury and its consequences in both the health and social care systems. I think it is well-known among some segments of the population, but I do not think we have a firm grasp on the situation policy-wise. I believe that, by legislating this requirement for a national strategy, we can truly start treating this major societal problem with the urgency and resources it needs. I hope all members will support me in this. It is a bigger problem than any one province or territory can handle on its own. We know that, with proper treatment and support, many people with brain injuries can return to productive and engaging lives.

It is amazing that I already have support from the cities of Victoria, Langford, Nanaimo and the municipality of North Cowichan. I think many more municipalities are going to follow suit, given the problems they are dealing with in their populations.

I sincerely hope all colleagues are going to join with me in supporting the principle of this bill and send it to the health committee where it belongs.

I want to end with a quote from Dr. Gabor Maté, who stated:

Brain injury is one of the hidden epidemics, too often unrecognized, that exacts a heavy toll on sufferers and their families and caregivers. It has many health implications, which may last a lifetime. Children with brain injuries, for example, are at elevated risk for depression. Other potential consequences of traumatic brain injury include loss of behavior control, aggression, memory loss, dementia and, potentially, substance abuse. Nearly half the homeless population have endured brain injury. A national strategy that entails the proper education of health personnel, teachers, social workers, law enforcement people, service providers and policy makers at all levels is urgently needed. Based on my clinical work and on my extensive reading of the research literature, I fully support this initiative.

I urge all members to listen to those wise words. I would ask the many people campaigning for this bill to give their support to send it to the standing committee. I thank all members in the House for their consideration.

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• (1840)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to work with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford in the House and on committees. I am very interested in the proposed bill and how it might be embedded in some of the work that I have always been involved in with Brain Canada and Dr. Viviane Poupon, such as the \$80 million over four years in budget 2024 for Brain Canada research looking at stem cell treatment for things like injuries or conditions that result in behavioural or other problems, and the Canadian Brain Research Strategy with Dr. Jennie Young and the work she is doing. I think the collaboration around the brain and our understanding of the brain could be enhanced by including the work that the member is doing on brain injury.

Might the member make a comment on how the bill could be embedded in some of the larger strategies in Canada?

• (1845)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I thank my Liberal colleague for his kind words. I do recognize that there are many organizations out there doing great work. There is funding available from private individuals, from non-profits and from government. I do not want this strategy to interrupt that but to add to it as a sort of legislative requirement, so that we do not suffer from policy lurch, because one of the key components of this bill is a reporting requirement to Parliament. It would put in an important accountability measure for parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, to ensure that this national strategy and all of its key components are being met and that we have those legislative requirements to promote knowledge transfer on a national strategy for how we best approach this.

I see this bill very much as a complementary thing, but also with key accountability measures so that we have those legislative guardrails against policy lurch, whenever we have a potential change in government.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I work well together on the agriculture committee, and this is something we have talked about before.

The one question I have is simple: Have there been conversations with the provincial health ministers and groups like that to make sure we can have this?

Obviously, health is provincial jurisdiction and we do not want to infringe on that jurisdiction. We should make sure we have those conversations, so that, if we do bring forward the national strategy, we have provincial buy-in. That is very important. Does my colleague have a couple of comments on that?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I have not yet had the time to consult widely with the provinces, but I do not see Bill C-277 as in any way interrupting their clear jurisdiction over health policy. This really would be putting in a legislative requirement for our federal Minister of Health. It is spelled out right in clause 2 that the Minister of Health cannot develop this strategy without consulting with provincial representatives, with representatives of indigenous government and with stakeholders.

What I am really positively influenced by is the sheer number of people with lived experience, their friends, their families, their

loved ones, researchers, provincial and national organizations, and people who represent retired athletes who are all clamouring for this bill to be passed. I think that kind of pressure is going to lend itself to the provinces doing the right thing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, is my colleague open to amending his strategy in order to respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces? Many of the national strategies that are being introduced in the House often overlook that vital requirement.

Is he prepared to consider that?

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I am certainly open to considering any and all amendments, should this bill reach committee. What I am asking for members to do now is to support the principle behind this bill. As I answered my Conservative colleague, I do not think this bill, as written, infringes on provincial jurisdiction over health. This is really asking the federal government to work with provinces, recognizing that this is truly a national problem that is bigger than any one province or territory can handle.

People in every single province suffer from brain injuries, and their effects are just as debilitating whether someone lives in Quebec or in British Columbia. I am certainly going to be open to any amendments. I am just hoping that we can have a unanimous vote in support of the principle of this bill, given the extreme importance it has for so many people.

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of the bill my hon. colleague for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford has presented. He has been a champion of this issue for a long time, and I believe that Bill C-277, the national strategy on brain injuries act, is an important piece of legislation that I hope all members of this chamber will be able to support.

By the time I finish my remarks in nine or 10 minutes, another three Canadians will have suffered a traumatic brain injury, or TBI. That is right. It is one every three minutes or 450 a day. These are estimates only, because these types of injuries, often known as “invisible injuries”, are recognized to be under-reported and therefore undiagnosed.

When we discuss injury, we are not just talking about falls in a bathtub or a trip on the ice. In addition to TBI and concussions, there are developmental brain injuries; physical trauma, including through intimate partner violence; toxic trauma, such as through destructive substance use; and then organic injuries like strokes.

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• (1850)

[*Translation*]

One of the challenges posed by brain injuries is that they are a silent epidemic. In many cases, there are no external physical indicators. There is no one test to prove with certainty that a person has a concussion or how serious it is. That means that people are not getting the treatment and support they need, which impedes their recovery and can sometimes even make their symptoms worse.

[*English*]

The issue is particularly marked in rural, northern and remote areas. Like many parts of the north, including the Yukon, it is estimated by Brain Injury Canada that concussions in rural areas appear more frequently than in urban areas, and I would like to add my thanks to Brain Injury Canada for its advocacy and for bringing to public notice the importance of this issue. However, given the lack of access to medical care, recovery supports and imprecise diagnoses available for some types of TBI to begin with, it may be that the incidence of under-reporting is higher in our rural communities as well.

We know that indigenous communities face these injuries with a higher risk for poorer outcomes, in part due to the socio-economic factors that continue to disadvantage many indigenous communities compared to their non-indigenous counterparts. We can add to that the lack of diagnostic availability as well as a lack of culturally appropriate treatment and care, particularly in remote communities.

Brain injuries, in sum, can occur at any time and do affect Canadians from all walks of life and all regions of Canada. However, because of how different these injuries are and how differently they can affect people, there is no single approach to manage and respond to this epidemic. It is critical that we move to develop a national strategy to both support and improve brain injury awareness as well as to provide treatment, so that those who experience brain injury and their families have the supports they need to live as active and productive a life as they can.

[*Translation*]

After a brain injury, many people have a hard time readjusting to normal life. As a result, they may resort to maladaptive coping strategies, such as self-medication, substance abuse and withdrawal from social circles, which we all need to thrive. All that does is make the suffering of these individuals and their families worse.

Fifty percent of people with a head injury suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues. The long-term complications can last for years.

[*English*]

There has been a growing realization across Canadian society over the past years that more attention needs to be paid to traumatic brain injury and related brain injuries. Brain Injury Canada and its provincial and local counterparts have long been advocates for this issue.

For more than 30 years, the Constable Gerry Breese Centre for Traumatic Life Losses has been working to support and service individuals and their families whose lives have been radically changed by brain injuries. Competitive sports and athletics, from

professional teams to peewee hockey, have also been integral in moving this issue forward by educating athletes and their families about the risks and by putting in reasonable measures to improve that education and reduce the risk of TBI. In 2013, for example, Hockey Canada implemented a new rule barring body-checking in younger age groups, resulting in a 70% reduction in the risk of concussion or about 5,000 fewer concussions amongst youth in Canada, who, along with seniors, are more vulnerable to experience concussions.

Rowan's Law, passed in Ontario in 2019, mandates that sport organizations operating in the province must ensure that athletes under 26 years, parents of athletes under 18, and all coaches, team trainers and officials annually review the Ontario concussion awareness resources and establish codes of conduct to support concussion prevention and establish a "removal from sport and return to sport" protocol.

Like many important steps forward, Rowan's Law was introduced after a tragic event. In 2013, a young high school rugby player named Rowan Stringer from Ottawa died of second impact syndrome, which is a swelling of the brain caused by a subsequent injury that occurs before a previous head injury healed. Rowan had not known about her risks and continued to play after her first concussion. The law was passed in her memory to raise awareness, educate athletes and others about concussion risk, ensure that the necessary measures were put in place to protect young people, and ensure they could get the help and support they needed after a brain injury.

One of my staff members has been an athlete at Carleton University, and he has had to participate in annual, mandatory training sessions, along with all other university athletes in Ontario and Quebec.

The associate director of the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit at BC Children's Hospital, Dr. Shelina Babul, who developed a widely used concussion awareness training tool, or CAT, said of the project "Athletes are starting to take concussion more seriously".

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

As I explained, this is not just about athletes. In fact, Canadian society still presents major disparities when it comes to education about and treatment for brain injuries.

There are a lot of things that we do not know. The absence of a comprehensive strategy means that we cannot educate the public and ensure consistency and continuity of care in every region and for every demographic.

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[English]

Brain Injury Canada can only offer us an extrapolation of data from the United States, as we currently lack the strategy to compile statistically important information about brain injury in Canada. One of my constituents, Lis Pilon, who founded and supports Concussion Cafe Yukon, has been struggling to pull together statistics on brain injuries in the Yukon. Because these are so often hidden injuries, it is not an easy task for researchers, advocates and legislators.

We need this information, and we need to act to educate and raise awareness amongst Canadians about this issue, as well as develop a strategy to respond to appropriate resource and treatment needs for our different communities, whether for large urban centres or whether small, rural communities like in my riding. We cannot afford not to act. Even based on the known incidence of brain injury, it is projected that hospitalization costs for TBI in Canada will increase to \$8.2 billion by 2031.

My colleague's bill calls on the Minister of Health to work with the different levels of government, indigenous groups and relevant stakeholders to support and improve awareness, prevention and treatment, as well as the rehabilitation and recovery of persons living with brain injury.

[Translation]

This type of strategy will contribute to guiding the response of health care workers and other professionals involved in the diagnosis, reduction and management of brain injuries and to promoting research and the collection of indispensable data.

Such a strategy can also contribute to coordinating resources, both for the response and for research and data collection on brain injuries and related conditions.

[English]

I hope the consultations undertaken as part of such a strategy will include people such as Lis, who recently joined a committee to establish a charter of rights for people with brain injuries in Canada. The text of the bill does recognize that the rights of individuals living with brain injuries will be protected, supported and accommodated in their lives.

I ask members to remember that three more Canadians have experienced a traumatic brain injury since I began this speech. Perhaps that includes someone members know or love.

I think this bill is a logical step forward on an increasingly critical issue. I will be supporting it in the House. I hope to be able to support its passage through committee and through the rest of the legislative process. I hope my colleagues from around the House will do the same.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to take to my feet today and talk about something that is pretty close to my heart. I have constituents who have lobbied for a national framework on a brain injury strategy. I would like to thank Barb Butler from Wilcox, Tammie Gall in Regina—Lewvan and, from when I was growing up, my babysitter in Rush Lake, Saskatchewan. They came to my office during the January break, when we were in our ridings, and talked about how

important this strategy was to them. They talked about their experiences and what happened with their accidents and how their lives were changed forever. I am grateful that they came to me.

With that being said, I am very happy that we will be supporting this bill going forward. I am happy to support the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. We work on the agriculture committee, and I am happy he brought this bill forward. He has outlined a lot of the numbers when it comes to how 1.5 million Canadians are affected by brain injuries.

It is not just the people who suffer the injuries. It is their families, their friends and everything that goes with these very traumatic injuries that happen and these accidents. It goes beyond that. Both speakers before me said that addictions happen with this. The member who brought the bill forward talked about the difficulties and the high price that professional athletes pay, as well as the 5,500 women who are suffering injuries to the brain from domestic violence.

Why I think this is so important is that two of my friends had very traumatic experiences. I grew up with Derek Boogaard. He was an NHL hockey player, and his dad was an RCMP member in Herbert, Saskatchewan. Derek and I played minor hockey together. I always thought I wanted to be in Derek's shoes. He made it. He played junior and then played in the NHL. He played with the New York Rangers and the Minnesota Wild. Derek was a monster of a man. He was six-foot-seven and 260 pounds, I think, on his lightest day. He was the team's enforcer.

When people get concussions and brain injuries, they walk around and nobody sees it. They wonder why the people are not playing and what is going on, because they cannot see the concussion. It is inside. That wears on people a lot also. It is very mentally draining, because everyone thinks, "Why aren't you on the ice?" What happened with Derek was that he was injured and then he got addicted to pills. I always really wanted to be Derek. I thought I might have really been able to take him back when we were young kids.

It really dawned on me when I was a staff member in the Saskatchewan legislature. I actually wrote the statement when Derek died, that the member delivered in Saskatchewan. That just struck home, thinking of his father, mother and brothers. Aaron is still in White City. It is amazing how someone so big, larger than life, can get tackled and taken down by something that no one can ever see. No one knew how much pain he was going through; that is what happens to some of these people. I am just so happy that we are able to come together as the whole House of Commons and realize that this is a silent killer, really, as it has been described to me before.

Another good friend I played hockey with is Rick Rypien. He was the captain of the Regina Pats and played for the Vancouver Canucks. He had similar experiences. Pound for pound, he was probably one of the toughest kids I had ever seen in my life. He had some injury problems and addictions took over for him as well.

We see these larger-than-life people whom this is happening to. I know it is not all about the professional athletes, as the member talked about. However, these people are going through so many difficult situations. When we can make this strategy a national concern and bring it to the forefront and bring more attention when there are injuries to people in our country, it means a lot, not only to the people who are suffering but also to their families. I have talked to lots of families that have had these experiences, and it is something we do not talk about enough.

The member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is right. We talk about cancer, and I am wearing my MS carnation today. Those are all very important. To finally have something such as this brought forward on the floor of the House of Commons is a good step forward, in the right direction.

• (1900)

Having Brain Injury Canada on board, and after looking at the statistics Tammy and Barbara forwarded to me, it is overwhelming to see how many people suffer with brain trauma due to car crashes, accidents and lots of times, as the member said, domestic violence. There is something that can be done to help these people if we come together.

My question earlier was about the provincial aspect of this. I know the bill proposes that the minister must consult with provincial health ministers, and that is so important to have in this piece of legislation. I believe health ministers across the provinces will more than engage. I talked to the Saskatchewan health minister previously, and I look forward to having a conversation with the new minister, just to make sure they also have the tools they need and to make sure they come together on this.

I hope that a federal-provincial-territorial meeting can be put on the agenda for health ministers. I hope the Liberals will bring that up in their next conversation to make sure they are talking about this. I love the idea that the minister has to report back to the House of Commons so there would be some accountability when this private member's bill is passed. Accountability is extremely important.

It is nice when we can work together in the House as a unit. This is something that should bring people together. We should be able to have fruitful discussions with health experts and take it to the health committee. I know there are doctors on the health committee. The Conservative shadow minister on health is very keen to help move this forward as well. I listened to the speech by the member for Yukon, and I appreciate his expertise when it comes to the medical field.

I want to bring a personal perspective to what this means to the people in my riding, myself included, when we have the opportunity to stand up and show our constituents that we can work together to move something like this forward. They are very passionate about this. The member who presented the bill said there was passionate advocacy across the country. So many groups came together

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to make sure this bill gets passed. I am happy that we can work together to make sure we get this done.

Hopefully, we can get a strategy in place that helps people such as Derek and Rick, so when people sustain those injuries, they can get the help they need and do not turn to self-medicating. That is something that people do way too much when it comes to injuries like these. The medication is what starts them down the road to a place where they sometimes cannot get back from.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will end the suspense by announcing right away that the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of the bill. Still, I would like to emphasize our reservations regarding the creation of multiple national strategies. First, they often disregard the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. Second, they sometimes seem to disregard, or at least fail to take into account, what is already being done in Quebec.

The bill seeks to make the federal government the puppet master, when Quebec already has its own unique approach to treating traumatic injuries, which include brain injuries. We did not wait for a federal brain injury strategy before taking action. Let us look at what is in the bill. Let us examine the points one by one:

(a) promote the implementation of preventive measures to reduce the risk of brain injuries;

That is a good thing. Specifically as an employer, but also as a contributor to a number of organizations and events, the federal government must ensure that brain injuries are prevented as much as possible.

(b) identify the training, education and guidance needs of health care and other professionals related to brain injury prevention and treatment and the rehabilitation and recovery of persons living with a brain injury;

Training health care professionals falls to the provinces, to professional associations. Furthermore, brain injuries are treated by hospitals, which are also under provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, the federal government cannot identify anything, but it can certainly help identify needs and participate in the collective effort to address the concussion epidemic.

In order to address brain injuries, Quebec has its own organizational model, known as the trauma care continuum. This model has four objectives: accessibility, efficiency, quality and continuity of care and services. The program was implemented in the early 1990s and continues to evolve by encouraging co-operation mechanisms, research and an assessment process implemented with trauma care continuum assessment functions. This involves collaboration between Quebec's ministry of health, the Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux or INESSS, the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, and the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail or CNESST.

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Regarding brain injuries more specifically, Quebec also has an action plan for the prevention and management of concussions in sports and recreational activities, and it has had a concussion management protocol since 2019. The protocol includes a tracking sheet for recording information to be shared with participants, parents, and recreational, school or sports organizations, as well as health care system personnel. It outlines the steps to take based on a participant's condition after an incident, though it should not be used to diagnose a concussion and is not a substitute for a medical opinion.

I also want to note that Quebec and its specialists, like all the provinces of Canada, train their workers and establish guidelines for their professionals in the treatment of brain injuries. For example, INESSS partnered with the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation to publish the Canadian Clinical Practice Guideline for the Rehabilitation of Adults with Moderate to Severe TBI. The INESSS even has a tool called "Decision Algorithm for Serious Neurological Complication Risk Management Following MTBI, Adult Clientele" to assist professionals with their decision-making.

(c) promote research and improve data collection on the incidence and treatment of brain injuries and on the rehabilitation and recovery of persons living with a brain injury;

Promoting research is an essential role for the federal government. It is something the government is doing and should be doing. One example is Université de Montréal's research centre in the psychology department.

● (1910)

This Canada research chair in paediatric traumatic brain injury does rather extraordinary work and she does indeed receive funding. The chair is trying to better understand traumatic brain injury in young children.

(d) promote information and knowledge sharing with respect to brain injury prevention, diagnosis and treatment and the rehabilitation and recovery of persons living with a brain injury;

The promotion of information and knowledge here and abroad is a mission the federal government is asked to do and is participating in. For example, it is working with the Parachute organization on the publication of the Canadian guideline on concussion in sport.

(e) create national guidelines on the prevention, diagnosis and management of brain injuries in all communities, including recommended standards of care that reflect best methodological, medical and psychosocial practices;

As previously mentioned, Quebec already does this with its own model. As long as the federal government is trying to collaborate and not establish or impose, then we support the initiative.

(f) promote awareness and education with particular emphasis on improving public understanding and protecting the rights of persons living with a brain injury;

For an awareness campaign to be effective, it must be adapted to its context. Given that the Quebec government provides the services and resources, it is in the best position to run those campaigns. In fact, it is already doing just that. There are many websites and brochures available to the public that are designed to prevent or recognize the symptoms of brain injuries.

(g) foster collaboration with and provide financial support to national, provincial and local brain injury associations and brain injury service providers to develop

and provide enhanced and integrated mental health resources for persons living with a brain injury and for their families;

If the federal government wants to use tax tools to help families facing additional costs or loss of income because of a brain injury, the Bloc Québécois invites Ottawa to do so. I would add that the EI reform promised by the Liberals has yet to happen.

(h) encourage consultation with mental health professionals, particularly in educational institutions, sports organizations and workplaces, to provide persons who are suffering from the effects of a brain injury, including mental health and addiction problems, with a support system within the community;

Encouraging consultation is all well and good, but where mental health is concerned, access is the problem. Quebec lacks the resources needed to train more psychologists and social workers. It also needs resources to provide better working conditions for its professionals to retain them in the public system and in community organizations. If the federal government wants to financially support our health care systems, it will come as no surprise to anyone that increasing health transfers is the way to go about it. The Bloc Québécois supports that.

The Bloc Québécois would remind members that one of the major problems with Canada's health care systems is federal government under-investment. The federal government needs to increase transfers to 35%.

(i) identify challenges resulting from brain injury, such as mental health problems, addiction, housing and homelessness issues and criminality, including intimate partner violence, and work to develop solutions in collaboration with stakeholders;

Health, including mental health, falls under provincial jurisdiction. The same goes for addiction, housing and homelessness. If the federal government wants to fund research on those topics, then we invite it to do so. When it comes to criminality and violence, that is an area in which the federal government can and should take action.

(j) maintain, in collaboration with Brain Injury Canada, a national information website providing current facts, research and best practices related to the diagnosis and management of brain injuries, as well as other relevant resources;

When I read that, I found it a bit strange that a bill would explicitly give an organization the responsibility to maintain a website on brain injuries. In any case, we believe that Quebec and the provinces are in the best position to inform people of the resources that are available and of the action they should take if they experience a brain injury.

(k) establish a task force to include policy makers, stakeholders, community agencies, brain injury associations and Indigenous groups, as well as persons who have experienced a brain injury and their families, to make recommendations in relation to the national strategy.

● (1915)

We agree on that, and as I said earlier, we look forward to taking this to committee so we can make some adjustments. Then we can vote in favour of the bill.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a huge honour today to rise and stand in solidarity in support of Bill C-277, a national strategy on brain injury. It is a bill that I have had the fortunate honour to be the seconder of. It was tabled by my good friend, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I am so grateful that he chose to move the bill in his order of precedence, because brain injury is such an important injury.

I also want to give a huge shout-out to the people from Brain Injury Canada for the important advocacy and work they do. I was fortunate to stand alongside them today at a press conference here, just outside the House of Commons, in solidarity with the important work they are doing in their advocacy.

We see again and again in Canada that justice issues are health issues and that health issues are often injustices in our country. The epidemic of brain injuries, with more than 165,000 traumatic injuries per year, is without question a significant health issue. Nobody can dispute that. What Canadians need to know is that brain injuries are an issue, like I said, of justice, but that we also need better treatment, better prevention and better information to keep people safe from these injuries and to help survivors, their families and others who love them to move forward.

We need a national strategy on brain injury, or we will really be turning a blind eye to an injury that affects the most vulnerable in our society and makes their lives worse. I have to say that it was just overwhelming to hear today's speeches from the Liberals, the Conservative Party and the Bloc, all in support of this very important initiative. I hope we will see unanimous support for the important bill before us.

We all agree that our health care system is a two-tiered system when it comes to physical and mental health. We need to achieve parity between mental and physical health; that is something that we have long been advocating for as New Democrats. When it comes to brain injuries, this is something that collectively we can work on.

We know that not all people who suffer brain injuries suffer them in the same way. I want to note that many of the most vulnerable Canadians, those who have been overlooked and underestimated by our government and society, are the people who are most likely to suffer brain injuries. Every year, thousands of Canadian women receive brain injuries from the abuse of their domestic partners. Fifty-five hundred Canadian women suffer a concussion from their partners for every NHL player who has had a concussion. That is unbelievable. We need to understand that brain injuries are a matter of gender justice.

Children who are the survivors of abuse are, likewise, more likely to grow up with a traumatic brain injury. They are less likely to attend university, and by the time they enter the job market, they are less likely to find well-paying jobs and are less likely to escape the very same cycles they were raised in. People with traumatic brain injuries are more likely to perpetuate physical abuse within their own families. Brain injuries are a matter of intergenerational justice.

Indigenous Canadians are disproportionately likely to have suffered brain injuries, and in most rural and northern communities, there are few or no resources available for people who have incurred concussions or other traumatic brain injuries. We know that brain injuries are a matter of reconciliation and indigenous justice.

Three-quarters of brain injury survivors are unemployed. That is totally unacceptable to every member of the House. More than half of Canada's unhoused population have suffered some kind of head injury.

The financial impact of a brain injury can be devastating. Canadians may lose the ability to commute to work, to perform their job or to move at all because of their brain injury. Also, survivors are more likely to live in poverty. Brain injuries are a matter of economic justice.

Canadians with brain injuries are twice as likely to succumb to addiction and to substance use disorder. Those Canadians are more likely to receive further brain injuries because of long-term poisoning from toxic drugs or immediate damage from overdoses. We know about the toxic drug crisis that is ravaging not just Canada but also the United States and the rest of North America.

I sat at the health committee last week and listened as leaders of Canada's police forces and the B.C. chiefs of police talked about the toxic drug crisis. The message I heard was clear and unequivocal: We cannot have justice without a health-based first approach when it comes to the toxic drug crisis.

● (1920)

The epidemic of brain injuries across Canada is not a problem we can ignore any longer. I want to thank Leonard Krog, the mayor of Nanaimo, who constantly talks about the impact of not supporting those with brain injuries on Vancouver Island. He has been a strong advocate. I want to thank Leonard for the important advocacy he has done.

We know brain injuries are the number one cause of death and disability for young Canadians. The Comox Valley Head Injury Society wrote me a letter, which reads:

As outlined by the World Health Organization, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is projected to surpass numerous diseases as a leading cause of death and disability by 2020. In Canada, the annual incidence of acquired brain injury (ABI) is alarmingly high, surpassing that of spinal cord injuries, breast cancer, and HIV/AIDS combined.

These are really terrible things, and they are big and important issues to all of us here, so members can imagine that combined. The letter continues:

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Despite the staggering statistics, the true scope is likely underestimated due to unreported cases stemming from concussions, intimate partner violence, violence among the homeless, incarceration, combat injuries, and survivors of opioid/stimulant poisoning.

We talk about veterans and the impact on veterans. We heard that today at the press conference as well. I want to thank those who spoke today and mention the importance of the words they used.

For decades, successive Conservative and Liberal governments have ignored calls for a coordinated response on this file. Hopefully, today we are seeing everybody come together. In that time, though, the cycles of inequality caused by head injuries has continued. We can no longer turn our backs on the most vulnerable Canadians. We cannot let these injustices continue. Again, I am grateful to my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for ensuring that does not happen by bringing forward this bill.

These issues cannot wait until the government finally decides to take action. Rates of brain injuries continue to rise. Our population is aging, and the toxic drug crisis, as I mentioned, is worsening. As a result of the number of Canadians living with brain injuries, this is rising.

Stephanie McGowan, the executive director of the Comox Valley Head Injury Society, told us that, if we do not get behind it now, it is going to cost a lot more people in the future, and their families, of course, who support them. If someone does not think this is an issue that affects them, I guarantee it does. According to Stephanie, everybody knows someone with a head injury, whether they know it or not. We heard about hidden injuries, and certainly brain injuries is an example of them. We heard that from a speaker today at the press conference.

Many people do not want to share their injuries. Women who have suffered domestic violence, for example, may choose to hide their injury for their own security. Certainly, this issue affects my riding of Courtenay—Alberni. Seniors, people involved in outdoor sports and the unhoused are all at higher risk of brain injuries, and those three groups are well represented in the population of the Comox Valley, which the Comox Valley Head Injury Society represents.

Again, one of my constituents in the Comox Valley has seen the injustices of traumatic brain injury first-hand. She lost her home after her injury put her into a position where she could no longer keep up with the cost of daily life. Now she has been in and out of shelters without a reliable place to stay. She has had her possessions stolen. Without a home, she has been unable to find bathrooms to safely use the medicine she needs for heart disease. She has been in and out of the hospital. With every single thing being more difficult for her as a result of her injury, she has been unable to escape from this cycle of injustice.

My constituent's story is not unique. In the same community, we have heard from survivors who are not able to rent an apartment because many landlords refuse to rent to someone without the money to pay upfront or with behaviour struggles. Other survivors have been exploited by their landlords, defrauded and stolen from because of their vulnerability. Some constituents leave the city for remote communities, where they can afford the cost of living but where there are no resources for brain injury survivors.

It is time for a national strategy on brain injuries. It is time for Canada to take responsibility for this issue and create a plan to tackle it. It is time for the federal government to start treating brain injuries as an issue of both health and justice. Again, Stephanie McGowan put it best when she said that, without brain injury resources, our unhoused population goes up, people self-medicate and our prison system becomes even more overburdened.

I have so many things I would like to continue to say. This bill would enable the development and delivery of enhanced and integrated mental health services for individuals living with brain injuries and their families. As the mental health and addictions critic for the NDP, I really do welcome this bill, and I want to thank my colleague again for bringing it forward.

• (1925)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for bringing forward Bill C-277.

I have been listening to the debate today, and to be completely honest, I had not informed myself much on the bill until this point. I certainly think this strategy the member is proposing is an important one, for many of the reasons I heard in the House today about how brain injuries, specifically, are not as visible as other injuries people might sustain have from time to time. I really took to heart some comments I heard from my Conservative colleague today when he talked about the experience he had with a particular friend whom he played hockey with, the realities of brain injuries and what he witnessed someone close to him go through.

Quite frankly, I think it is time that we get to the point where we can send the bill to committee so that the committee can look at this. I do appreciate some of the concerns from the Bloc that perhaps there are some jurisdictional boundaries here, but I am convinced that we can work our way through those.

I look forward to the second hour of debate on Bill C-277 and perhaps adding a little more at that time and, ultimately, seeing the bill go to committee so that it can be studied.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 7:29 p.m., the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

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[English]

● (1930)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am here today seeking clarity on unnecessary delays in passing the common-sense bill, Bill C-234, which is legislation critical for the financial health of our Canadian farmers. If passed unamended, this bill would save our farmers nearly \$1 billion by 2030, yet this potential relief is compromised by amendments pushed through by Liberal-appointed senators, who threaten to slash nearly \$910 million from these savings. They are attempting to gut this bill under the direction of the Liberal Prime Minister.

The changes proposed, specifically removing the exemptions for the heating of livestock buildings and greenhouses, directly undermine the bill and our agricultural stability. These amendments were defeated multiple times in the House and in the Senate before Liberal-appointed senators were told to push it through anyway. The amendments clearly do not reflect the will of the House and do not reflect the needs of Canadian farmers.

It is evident that the Liberal government has the power to pass Bill C-234 unamended. It could demonstrate genuine concern for our farmers by supporting this bill in its original, robust form. By not doing so, the Liberals show their true colours, showing that Liberals do not care about Canadian farmers.

When looking at the overarching issue of the carbon tax, the Liberals continue to make misleading statements. They claim that eight out of 10 families are better off with their Liberal rebates. It was a statement initially made in 2019 without full disclosure of how they came to this conclusion. When pressured, they scrambled, asking the Parliamentary Budget Officer to somehow validate this shaky claim, yet the latest reports from the PBO tell a different story.

The 2023 report titled “A Distributional Analysis of the Federal Fuel Charge under the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan” states, on page four, “Taking into consideration both fiscal and economic impacts, we estimate that most households will see a net loss, paying more in the federal fuel charge and GST, as well as receiving lower incomes, compared to the Climate Action Incentive payments they receive”.

This tax reaches into every aspect of our lives. It raises the cost of gas, hikes heating bills and affects grocery prices, all while reducing take-home pay as businesses are forced to pay more in taxes. The reality is depressing; the majority of Canadians are bearing a heavier financial burden under this policy.

It is not just a carbon tax; it is a tax on our lifestyles, on our well-being and on our economic freedom. The evidence is overwhelming, and the conclusion is clear. The carbon tax is a flawed policy, punishing the very people it claims to protect. Our farmers, our families, and our economy deserve better.

I call on the Liberal government to prioritize the welfare of Canadians, to support our farmers by passing Bill C-234 unamended and, better yet, to axe the tax entirely. A common-sense Conservative government would get rid of this useless carbon tax and would pursue environmental policies that would actually work.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in recent years, climate change has had unprecedented effects on Canadians and people globally. Impacts from climate change are wide-ranging, affecting our homes, cost of living, infrastructure, health and safety, the economy and economic activities in our communities right across Canada and across the world. That is why Canadians demand real action on climate change.

Canada has a strong climate plan. We released the 2030 emissions reduction plan, which describes in detail the many actions we are taking to support the global efforts to combat climate change and to meet Canada's 2030 emissions reduction targets.

Carbon pricing is a central pillar of the plan. As Canada's approach, carbon pricing reduces pollution at the lowest overall cost to businesses and consumers. It provides an incentive for climate action and clean innovation while allowing businesses and households to decide for themselves how best to reduce climate emissions. Giving back proceeds via the Canada carbon rebate keeps life affordable in the meantime.

Putting a price on carbon pollution works. It is unfortunate that, once again, we are hearing misinformation from the opposition on carbon pricing. As any economist would tell us, and as over 300 economists wrote recently in an open letter, people respond to prices. If something is more expensive, then individuals and businesses innovate to find ways to use less, while keeping the same quality of life and competitiveness.

This is just common sense and Economics 101. I would like to remind my colleague that study after study has shown that carbon pricing works. Five studies of carbon pricing in B.C. alone, when it was at much lower levels, showed a reduction of 5% to 15% in gasoline use. Dozens of studies on carbon pricing right across the world show similar reductions that increase as the price increases.

Of course, we are measuring the impact of carbon pollution pricing right here in Canada. Our most recent estimates are that it allowed us to avoid 18 million tonnes of emissions between 2019 and 2021 and that it is on track to deliver about one-third of the more than 200 million tonnes of emission reductions we are targeting by 2030.

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Let us not be nearsighted. Canadians want climate change and climate action, and the government owes it to them to be responsible and to use policies that will allow us to be effective and yet cost-efficient. Our approach ensures that Canadians are well placed to benefit from the opportunities created by the global transition that is under way.

• (1935)

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I have to admit that there was one truth in what he said, which is that Canadians want action on the climate crisis. Unfortunately, this is just a tax.

He talks about how they have reductions, yet there is no data to show that. There is actually data to prove that carbon emissions have gone up ever since the COVID situation. During COVID was the only time when the amount of pollution actually went down.

That is because people were not flying. There were no jobs at the time. Therefore, that is the only time.

Since that date, though, emissions have continually and steadily increased, which proves that this carbon tax is not working.

Can the member actually show the information? The Minister of Environment did not say they are collecting any data to prove that emissions are lowering or that the carbon tax is actually working. It would be quite interesting if the parliamentary secretary has information that the Minister of Environment does not have.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, the Canada carbon rebate returns fuel charge proceeds to Canadian residents through direct deposit and cheques. I want to remind my colleague that, every three months, he is receiving that cheque and that eight out of 10 Canadians are making more than what they are spending. The remaining proceeds return to indigenous governments and small and medium-sized businesses through other programs.

As Canada's approach, carbon pricing reduces pollution at a lower overall cost to businesses and consumers. Eight out of 10 households receive more money back through the Canada carbon rebate than they pay toward the fuel charge.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to expand a bit more on a question I asked on February 8. I ended that opportunity with a request of the government to axe the carbon tax. Let me first set the context of the situation.

Food inflation at the time had been running higher than general inflation for quite some time. It has moderated a bit, but people sometimes confuse a lower inflation rate with dropping prices. A lower inflation rate means that food prices are rising more slowly, but they are still rising. Food bank visits at the time were at about two million per month. Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, who has testified numerous times at committee, predicted another one million new visitors to food banks in 2024. The last number I heard was that we are sitting at 2.3 million visits to the food banks per month. Dr. Charlebois also predicted that food prices for the average family of four would rise \$701 this year.

The situation we are facing now is the same as when I asked the question. I stated in the premise of the question that both the

amount and the type of food Canadians were buying were decreasing. What does that mean? It actually means that the carbon tax is working. The carbon tax is designed by nature to change people's behaviour. That is its purpose. I think about taxes on smoking and tobacco products and taxes on alcohol. They are designed to curb people's behaviour, and that is actually what makes the minister of ECCC's response so bizarre. I asked him to axe the tax, and he responded as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Conservative member for Regina—Lewvan, who recognized that there is absolutely no data to support any link between the price on pollution and higher grocery pricing. In fact, there is no pricing on pollution in the United States of America, and its grocery prices are the same as we have here in Canada.

He said that there is simply no link between pricing on pollution and higher grocery prices.

First of all, the minister completely mis-characterized the member for Regina—Lewvan's comments. I was in the committee room when the member stated them, and what he stated was in response to the fact that third party data has yet to come up with a single global number for the impact of carbon pricing on our food systems, because we have so many different food value chains that the carbon tax impacts differently.

My history is as a processed vegetable grower. There are many greenhouse growers in my riding. There are fresh vegetables and processed vegetables. Even those two simple systems, which are but small examples in our food value chain, have the carbon price impact their inputs differently. Therefore the statement is taken completely out of context.

The carbon price is so interwoven in our systems that it is hard to tease out one number, but make no mistake: The carbon tax is driving food prices higher. It is embedded in our grocery prices.

I will close with this point. The minister stated that there is no food price difference between Canada and the U.S. I live in Leamington, very near the Detroit-Windsor border. I have talked to colleagues who live between Niagara Falls and Buffalo, Sarnia and Port Huron, and all along the 49th parallel in western Canada. Canadians come back into Canada with American groceries. Americans are not buying groceries in Canada and taking them back to the U.S. I am not going to state that every single food price is cheaper in the U.S. than in Canada, but the majority are, and that is why Canadians are bringing groceries back.

The price on carbon has to go, especially on our food system.

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• (1940)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, farmers are the backbone of our country. Their work is difficult, especially with climate change impacts heavily affecting their livelihoods. They face climate change's harsh realities. Drought, wildfires, floods and invasive species are all becoming more prevalent.

Most Canadians recognize what the Governor of the Bank of Canada has recognized: that putting a price on pollution is not contributing to inflation. The real cause of energy and grocery cost increases is not the price on pollution. It is driven by world market forces such as the massive supply chain shocks that took place during COVID-19 and Russia's illegal war on Ukraine. I would also remind members opposite that most of the emissions from the agriculture sector are not subject to pollution pricing.

We provide exemptions for gasoline and diesel fuel used by farmers in agriculture activities, and there is no price on emissions from livestock. There is also a partial rebate for commercial greenhouse operations. As well, we are returning a portion of the proceeds from the price on pollution directly to farmers in the backstop jurisdictions through a refundable tax credit. This would apply to farmers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland and Labrador. We are also creating economic opportunities for farmers that take further action to reduce emissions through Canada's GHG offset credit system.

We are standing with our farmers, who are on the front lines facing climate change. As responsible stewards of the land, Canadian producers can lead the way in our transition to a low-carbon economy while supporting food security and environmental sustainability. Just as important, some of these practices may generate positive economic benefits.

Canada's approach to carbon pricing reduces pollution at the lowest overall cost to businesses and consumers. It provides an incentive for climate action and clean innovation while allowing businesses and households to decide for themselves how best to reduce emissions. It is a win for farmers, it is a win for the environment and it is a win for Canada. Spreading misinformation will make it harder for us to deal with the real source of the problem, which is climate change. This is why carbon pollution pricing is key. It is one of many tools to address climate change. It cuts emissions. It addresses climate change head on. It sparks new ideas to cut down on pollution.

By putting a price on carbon emissions, we are signalling the environmental and societal costs associated with fossil fuel consumption.

• (1945)

Mr. Dave Epp: That is misinformation, indeed, Madam Speaker. I would invite my hon. colleague to fill the galleries of this hallowed chamber with the farmers who support the carbon tax. I have yet to meet one.

The member referenced the farmers in his rebuttal to me. Let me bring up Highline Mushrooms, which is headquartered in my riding. I raised it in my question on February 8. It competes directly with mushroom farms right across the border in Michigan. There is no exemption for mushroom farms, none. They compete head to head. Where does the cost go? It goes to the consumer.

The member mentioned the greenhouse industry. By 2030, the greenhouse industry will pay another quarter of a billion dollars in carbon taxes. Where does the hon. member believe that cost goes? That is at a partial exemption. The carbon tax is embedded into our food systems. Yes, on-farm diesel and gasoline are exempted. The rest of the costs are not. None—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, Canada's approach to carbon pricing is designed to reflect the true cost of pollution, incentivizing a collective move toward less carbon-intensive choices in energy production, home heating and transportation.

In provinces where the federal carbon pollution pricing system applies, the majority of fuel charge proceeds go right back into the pockets of individuals and families via the Canada carbon rebate, with the remaining proceeds returned through other programs to indigenous governments and small and medium-sized businesses. Residents in these provinces living in small and rural communities also receive a rural top-up, which Conservatives voted against in Bill C-59, which proposes to double the top-up from 10% to 20%. Our measures balance support and the environment together. It is through this approach that we will—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member's time is up.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill not being present to raise during Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice had been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:49 p.m.)

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