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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 27, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

BUILDING HOMES NOT BUREAUCRACY ACT

The House resumed from October 30, 2023, consideration of the motion that Bill C-356, An Act respecting payments by Canada and requirements in respect of housing and to amend certain other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour, as always, to rise in the House of Commons to debate and discuss the issues of the day. One of those issues, arguably the most pressing issue certainly in my community and in communities across the country, is housing. We have a private member's bill that has been introduced by the Conservative leader, which stands, as he has said, as the Conservative plan on housing. Unfortunately, for he and his party, it leaves much to be desired.

On this side of the House, we have recognized the crisis that exists. That crisis is underpinned by a supply crisis. Therefore, to understand what this means for the country and how we bring costs down both for prospective homebuyers and for renters, we have to find a way to add supply, and that is exactly what this government has done.

First, let me highlight the housing accelerator fund, which my friends on the other side would do well to learn from, with all due respect to them. This, at the very core of it, requires co-operation. It requires co-operation between the federal government and municipalities. Municipalities are central to this.

Last week in question period in the House, I was asked by a Conservative member about what they call “gatekeepers”. The Conservatives always use the term in the pejorative. They always want to insult and engage that way. The reality is that those whom they call “gatekeepers” are municipal councillors, mayors and public servants at the local level who are responsible for zoning.

As we know, zoning is fundamental to dealing with the housing crisis, because that is how we get more homes built, namely, adding more missing middle housing to the equation. That includes row houses, mid-rise apartments, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. All of these examples have a place in this discussion and debate. We need more supply and we will get more supply through embracing missing middle housing, and the housing accelerator fund does that. The reality is that while zoning is certainly not under the federal jurisdiction, it is completely in the municipal purview to deal with.

We are incenting changes across the country. No less than 179 agreements have been finalized with municipalities to push them so that we have more homes built. The reality is that in these communities, we will see more homes built. We will see federal dollars put on the table as a result of our saying to municipalities that if they change their zoning, there are federal dollars available for more affordable housing, for infrastructure for housing purposes and for public transit for housing purposes. In my community in London, let me highlight that office buildings that are vacant can now be potentially used for housing as a result of a \$74-million investment that this government has made in London. London has agreed to embrace a different approach when it comes to zoning.

I have talked about renters. We do need to increase the supply of apartments to make rent more affordable. That is why we have lifted GST from the construction of purpose-built rentals. With all due respect to my Conservative colleagues, one of the glaring weaknesses of this private member's bill is that it would keep the GST on the construction of purpose-built rentals. It is astounding to me that the Leader of the Opposition, who, throughout his very long career in public life, has campaigned to cut taxes at every opportunity, does not believe that. It is all a charade. It is all an act, because if he actually believed it, he would lift GST from the construction costs of purpose-built rentals, just like this government has. It is unbelievable that he would go in this direction.

If he does not want the advice of the government, that is fine, and I know he will not take it. However, he should listen to key advocates, like the Canadian Homebuilders' Association for instance, that has for years now called for this change. The government has moved in this direction and the Conservatives have not supported it. They have obstructed this measure, in fact, through a variety of ways, and they have not answered for that at all.

Private Members' Business

• (1105)

With respect to federal lands, we have an opportunity here to seize the moment when it comes to using more federal lands to build more housing to ensure greater affordability. As I said, this is about dealing with a supply crisis. What do we see? The government very appropriately recognizing that, between the two options of selling federal land that is either underused or not used at all or leasing it, a leasing approach would allow for something that is much more promising. In that case, we can ensure affordability as much as possible. With the other option, obviously, affordability would be out of the government's hands once the sale has taken place.

The opposition has said nothing about this at all. It has also said nothing about how it would deal with development charges, which, if we are honest, are attacks on home building. There is no doubt about that.

I see the housing critic for the Conservatives in the House today. We work well together at the committee that is responsible for housing. He has brought up, quite rightly, the issue of development charges at that committee. Unfortunately, there is no plan on the other side, and certainly not in this private member's bill, on how they would deal with development charges.

We have made clear to provinces that, as a condition of receiving infrastructure dollars from this federal government, there would have to be a freeze implemented on development charges according to April 2024 levels. Home builders have asked for that for a long time. Recently, I engaged with home builders in my community of London who were quite excited to see this change, because, as I said, development charges stand as an attack on home building. In the context of high interest rates and high costs for labour and construction supplies, among other factors that stand in the way of greater homebuilding, we have to put measures on the table that incent, that provide a green light to those in the construction sector so that they can build more, and this would do exactly that.

Finally, homelessness is absolutely fundamental in the discussion on housing. We cannot talk about housing without talking about the most vulnerable members of our communities, who unfortunately find themselves in a very difficult position now. The Conservatives have not brought up housing very much in the past few months, but they brought it up a lot last week, and that is fine. It is good to bring up the issues of the day, especially this one, in the House whenever there is an opportunity, but the Conservatives have tried to lay the blame of the homelessness crisis on the federal government, as if the federal government caused it.

Let us be clear on one thing. It is our responsibility to deal with homelessness. It is our responsibility to engage constructively and co-operatively with not-for-profit organizations that want to be part of the solution, with provincial governments that want to be part of the solution and with municipal governments that want to be right there working with us. There are many examples of where that can work and is working. I salute the efforts of Premier David Eby in British Columbia. I salute the efforts of mayors across the country who are part of this, and not-for-profit organizations. However, the opposition, by simplifying the debate, actually is not contributing to it in any meaningful way.

If opposition members actually go to the encampments that exist across the land, leave the camera at home and not politicize this issue, and talk to the people in encampments, they would find that years of trauma underpin the inhabitants' reality, trauma in the form of sexual or physical physical abuse that led to a mental health crisis has led to homelessness, or it is the pandemic. The pandemic and its impact with respect to increased costs and the lack of supply that we find has pushed many of our fellow citizens to encampments as well.

What do we do in that context? We can either politically profit off the unfortunate and unacceptable circumstances faced by people or we can put tangible solutions on the table to address the crisis. That is why this government has allocated \$250 million in the most recent budget to address homelessness, specifically encampments. There is nothing from the other side, zero.

Finally, if the Conservatives want to get serious about housing, let us work together. Are they capable of that? I do not think they are. I think the other parties might be, but I do not think the Conservatives are. When I hear the Leader of the Opposition describe co-op housing, and let us remember 250,000 Canadians live in co-ops across the country, as Soviet-style housing, that is unacceptable.

I see continued efforts to obstruct the government's agenda to get more homes built. I see, as I said, the fact that the Leader of the Opposition does not want to lift taxes, GST specifically, off the construction of purpose-built rentals for the middle class. At the same time, and maybe it is not surprising, when he was housing minister, he was responsible for the construction of six affordable homes; he lost 800,000 units.

• (1110)

The Conservatives do not care about housing. They care about profiting politically so that they can add to their fundraising or add to whatever it is over there. They are not serious. We are serious.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this morning to speak to Bill C-356, an act respecting payments by Canada and requirements in respect of housing and to amend certain other acts, introduced by the leader of the official opposition.

On reading Bill C-356, it is obvious that the bill blames the entire housing shortage on municipalities, but this crisis would not be nearly as serious as it is now if the federal government had not decided, under Harper, to withdraw funding for the construction of social housing.

Private Members' Business

The bill seeks to exercise control over the municipalities by preventing them from taking measures to protect their farmland, from setting a minimum percentage of social housing, or from protecting their built heritage, on pain of having their funding slashed, including funding for public transit development. This bill denies any federal responsibility in the matter and confirms that the Conservative Party will do nothing to address the crisis if it comes into power.

It is also a bill that offers no solutions. The market is not lacking in luxury condos. What is lacking is housing that people can afford. That is where the government should focus its efforts. This notion, however, is completely absent from the Conservative leader's vision. Bill C-356 gives developers the keys to the city so they can build more condos that rent for \$3,000 a month or more.

In short, the bill's solution to the housing crisis is to let the big real estate developers do anything, anywhere and anyhow. The populist solution offered by the bill ignores the fact that people do not only live in housing, but also in neighbourhoods and cities. That means they need infrastructure for water and sewers, for roads, and for public and private services, such as schools and grocery stores. Cities have a duty to ensure that their residents are well served and to lay down conditions.

This is also a bill that will cause bickering. As members know, since 1973, Quebec's Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif has prevented the federal government from dealing directly with Quebec municipalities. The Canada-Quebec infrastructure framework agreement reflects this reality, stipulating that the federal government has no right to intervene in the establishment of priorities. What Bill C-356 would do is tear up this agreement. Although it took 27 months to negotiate the agreement, Bill C-356 sets the stage for two years of bickering, during which all projects will be paralyzed. In the middle of a housing crisis, this would be downright disastrous.

If a municipality's housing starts do not increase as required by Ottawa, Bill C-356 would cut its gas tax transfer and public transit transfer by 1% for every percentage point shortfall from the target the bill unilaterally sets. For example, in Quebec, housing starts are down 60% this year rather than up 15%, so transfers would have been reduced by about 75% if Bill C-356 had been in effect. That is unacceptable.

Bill C-356 goes even further by withholding funding for public transportation if cities do not achieve the 15% target it unilaterally sets. This policy would encourage car use, since transit would only be built after the fact, not in conjunction with new housing developments.

It is clear that Bill C-356 is not a good solution to the housing crisis in Quebec and across Canada. As members know, the housing crisis currently plaguing Quebec, which was once known as one of the most affordable provinces, is not confined to large cities. It has been a problem in my region for more than 15 years. It has resulted in a shortage of housing units and restricted access to affordable housing.

In my riding, the housing crisis affects both availability and affordability. Prices are also limiting access to housing in the regions. Although the housing crisis initially affected mostly low-income

households, it is now increasingly affecting companies' ability to recruit and retain employees.

I cannot help thinking of Nunavik, in my riding. Half of all Inuit in Nunavik live in overcrowded housing, and almost a third live in homes requiring major repairs. This overcrowding created serious issues during the pandemic. We even had to bar access to the communities to protect them from exposure to the virus.

The housing crisis in southern Quebec is nothing compared with the situation of Inuit communities in Nunavik, in the north. It is not unusual for five, six, seven or even eight people to live in a two-bedroom unit. If one of them has social issues, it impacts the entire family.

• (1115)

The housing problem in Nunavik is nothing new. There has been a housing shortage since 1990, when the federal government stopped funding construction for five years. Nunavik currently needs around 800 more social housing units.

The housing shortage in Nunavik has also been a long-standing obstacle for students. Its impact on students who live in cramped accommodations can be severe, since they have no place to study or do their homework in peace. In addition to affecting young people, the housing shortage and lack of infrastructure in Nunavik are having a significant impact on every aspect of education, notably the working conditions of local staff, the ability of school boards to hire and retain teachers, and the ability to offer specialized programs.

Students are not the only ones affected by the housing crisis. Entire families are impacted by toxic cohabitation. This is not something that is tracked in housing statistics, and it is often neglected in analyses of the crisis. It refers to couples who are separated but continue to live together because they cannot find another place to live. It also refers to households in which one member develops an alcohol or drug addiction, which can compromise the safety of the other members of the household.

Bill C-356 will certainly not remedy all these problems. However, the Bloc Québécois already has a vast array of potential solutions to suggest.

Private Members' Business

Let me name a few: that the federal government gradually reinvest in social, community and truly affordable housing until it reaches 1% of its total annual revenue to provide a consistent and predictable funding stream instead of ad hoc agreements; that all federal surplus priorities be repurposed for social, community and deeply affordable housing as a priority in an effort to address the housing crisis; that a tax be placed on real estate speculation to counter artificial overheating of the housing market; that the home buyers' plan be reformed to account for the increasingly different realities and family situations of Quebec households; that the federal government undertake a financial restructuring of programs under the national housing strategy to create an acquisition fund; that Quebec receive its fair share of funding, without conditions, from federal programs to combat homelessness, while also calling for the funding released in the last year of the pandemic to be made permanent.

The Leader of the Opposition should have based his bill and its wording on these sound proposals by the Bloc Québécois. A simple transfer to the Quebec government with no conditions attached would be ideal. Had this been done in 2017, Quebec could have built and renovated a number of social housing projects three years earlier. It certainly would have mitigated the housing crisis we are facing today. Unconditional transfers would make the funding process much simpler. In contrast, the various agreements add to the associated red tape and increase the wait time for actually collecting the sums in question. I would point out that the programs enacted by the Quebec government are often innovative and effective.

It must also be said that the Bloc Québécois has reiterated the need for federal funding to target first and foremost all the myriad needs for affordable social housing, as this is where the most pressing needs are.

Bill C-356 is not the way to go if we want to build housing and cut red tape. That is why we must vote against Bill C-356.

• (1120)

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Rafah experienced the worst horrors of war again last night with atrocities that defy humanity. As human beings from across the globe protested for the terror to end, those in power did not stop it. Shame on every leader who has allowed this to continue. Innocent lives have been taken and maimed, and the scars of the children will not be healed. The trauma of war is now imprinted in their DNA and will be a reoccurring trauma. The last eight months have been unthinkable trauma for Palestinians and Jews in communities all across the globe. Their histories will be forever scarred by the inhumanity of man. No one wins in war.

I implore the Canadian government to stand up for humanity and peace. The drumbeat of war is spreading across the world to the point that the leader of the United Kingdom is now proposing mandatory conscription. There are nine days—

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Mr. Speaker, I am not entirely sure how this relates to the private member's bill before us right now, so I am wondering if you could help us out here.

The Speaker: The Chair has been very tolerant of the beginning of the hon. member's speech, but the Chair would appreciate it if

the member would draw all this together with the private member's bill before the House at this time, Bill C-356.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, there are nine days until the 80th commemoration of D-Day, and it seems that the leaders of this world have learned nothing.

Now, what we are here to debate today is the Conservatives' gatekeeper bill. The Conservatives do not like gatekeepers, unless it is them. The leader of the Conservative Party is the largest threat to Canada's freedoms since Confederation. A little known fact is that the leader of the Conservatives and I went to the same high school. Yes, I am a Calgarian. When I read this bill, it reminded me to revisit the far-right manifesto written in Alberta by the far-right mentors of the Leader of the Opposition, called the "firewall". It lays out a plan to gatekeep Alberta against Canada, punish those who believe in a strong, united Canada and reward those who will adopt and manifest its doctrine of power with exclusion.

As we speak, Danielle Smith, the leader of the UCP and the Conservative Premier of Alberta, is passing laws that come directly from this manifesto, making it possible to throw out municipal governments' decisions, throw out municipal governments she does not like, limit academic freedoms by gatekeeping the research funds and destroy the Canada pension plan to keep people down in retirement. The firewall manifesto envisions that decision-making processes that affect people's lives and freedoms—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lethbridge is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I understand that there is a great deal of latitude in terms of how we address different speeches in this House. The issue at hand right now is housing, Bill C-356, a private member's bill brought forward by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The member is currently talking about provincial politics. That does not seem to fit within the scope of this bill. Furthermore, she is talking about some far alt-right conspiracy theory. Again, I am not sure how that fits within the scope of this bill.

I would ask you to make a ruling, Mr. Speaker, that would be most appropriate for this.

• (1125)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam is talking about housing in general. The Chair has been pretty tolerant in terms of the latitude.

I will invite the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam to make her point on the bill that is before the House at this time.

Private Members' Business

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, the firewall manifesto envisions that decision-making processes that affect people's lives and freedoms flow through premiers' offices. This is exactly what the leader of the Conservatives wants to do when he says he will use the notwithstanding clause to pass his laws. The NDP is here to stop him. This right-wing ideology of Conservatives imposing their will on women and all Canadians is dangerous and serves only the corporate class who have controlled federal governments since Confederation.

This reality is so obviously true in housing. Governments at every level have overseen the financialization of housing. Instead of protecting our social housing stock for people, they have encouraged upzoning and gentrification in the name of density. Density dreams belong to developers, who have made millions and billions of dollars off the displacement of low- and middle-income Canadians. The financialization of housing is only working for the wealthy and leaving people behind. The well-being of persons with disabilities and seniors is sacrificed to millionaire CEOs.

Liberal and Conservative governments have ensured that truly affordable social housing has been sacrificed to create an asset class for the wealthiest people and companies across the globe. Right now in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, hundreds of affordable townhomes and apartments are being emptied and are sitting empty. There are entire blocks of homes boarded up, ready for redevelopment, and some of these homes have been empty for years. Developers choose not to fill them so they do not have to spend one cent on maintenance or pay tenants out when the time comes to begin their redevelopment. This is wrong.

During this housing crisis, governments have allowed wealthy developers to hoard housing, allowing perfectly good homes to sit empty to protect the profits of corporations over the well-being of residents. High-end sales centres for luxury condos exist in every neighbourhood across this country, right beside where low- and middle-income Canadians have been displaced. These corporate density dreams are not focused on local buyers; they are marketing their luxury product overseas. When a traveller arrives in the international terminal of YVR, they are enticed by posters of luxury housing to attract international investment.

The current housing crisis is a crisis of negligence in protecting precious housing supply that people call home. I hear the calls for supply in the community, but this is not what this bill is talking about. I need to clarify what that supply call needs to be: affordable housing supply. The federal government must put a laser focus on maintaining what is left of housing co-ops, purpose-built rentals and not-for-profit housing in the country. It has to put that before investment. The federal government needs to immediately reinvest in social housing, not in capital loans, which it so feebly continues to bring forward, but ongoing stable operating funds to get people housed now.

The need to act cannot wait, and the solution is not Conservative gatekeeping. Conservative policies are the ones that caused this problem. We cannot have one more person lose their home because they have been displaced by corporate capitalism.

Let me reiterate how Canadians got into a situation where homelessness is growing, rents are skyrocketing and property purchase is

out of reach for an entire generation. Conservative and Liberal governments encouraged the financialization of housing instead of protecting our social housing stock. They encouraged upzoning and gentrification in the name of density and profits. Density dreams are for developers. The financialization of housing is only working for the wealthy, and the most impacted right now are renters. We are losing rental homes at a rate of 15:1. For every new unit the government prides itself on building, an unaffordable new unit, it has not protected 15 other renters, who now have to find themselves evicted or demovicted from their homes.

The government must immediately act to end the financialization of housing before more Canadians lose their homes, before more children are displaced from their schools and their friends and before more seniors lose services as they are forced out of the community in which they live. I can guarantee that what the Conservatives have proposed in this bill would not do that. As a city councillor in Coquitlam, I saw how these types of policies played out, with the trading of density happening in the corner offices, while seniors, persons with disabilities and single moms were losing their homes.

● (1130)

I am going to tell the story about 500 Foster, a redevelopment in the city of Coquitlam. I went to see those folks before a public hearing, only to find out they received a letter from the developer, even before upzoning, telling them to start moving out. There was a single mother with a child who has a disability and a senior over 70, begging me to find him what he called an "old person's home" to move into. This is going on in every community of this country.

I will close by saying that New Democrats that know housing is a human right and that we will continue to stand up for people and block the harmful ideologies of the corporate Conservatives, who are attempting to roll back the clock so that the Leader of the Opposition can continue to act like a high school bully.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was relieved, when this debate began, to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing describe that we are in a housing crisis because, of course, a year ago, the Minister of Housing could not even use the word "crisis"; he could not be brought to do it.

Private Members' Business

Something obviously happened over the course of the summer, and the Prime Minister's Office woke up and recognized that we are in fact in a housing crisis and that the use of the word "crisis" does make sense. We know we are in a crisis because we see the results of what is going on. Rent has doubled in the last nine years. Mortgages have doubled in the last couple of years. Home prices have doubled. Mortgage rates have skyrocketed. Inflation is out of control. There are too few homes for too many people.

It is absolutely a supply crisis, as the parliamentary secretary mentioned. We see this with young people who are forced to stay at home and live in their parents' basements. They are not starting their lives as they normally would. The number of homeless people in this country continues to grow. We see tent cities in communities large and small all across Canada now. The cost of lodging, rent and mortgages is impacting affordability generally.

On top of that, there is the carbon tax. The carbon tax applies to the materials used to build homes, so the materials for homes are getting more expensive. Buying food and heating those homes are also getting more expensive. More people are struggling to maintain the homes they have.

We know that it is a supply issue, but it is also a housing affordability crisis. We have to think about what impacts the cost of a home. We know those materials I mentioned, like the two-by-fours and those kinds of things, cost more money. The carbon tax is applied to the production of those two-by-fours, to the delivery of materials to job sites and to everything.

There is a shortage of skilled trades and labour right now, which is adding to the problem as well. We need to make sure that we are attracting people to this country who can help us build homes. That is not really happening. The approval processes at the local levels are also slowing things down and are adding costs to the process of building homes. There are also taxes, fees and government charges.

Let us talk about that for a second. Who makes more money on housing than anybody else? The question is rhetorical, but Canadians would be horrified to know that it is not the big, greedy developers I hear the NDP talk about; it is government. In fact, between 2013 and 2023, the costs have gone up dramatically. The land value in this country has gone up about 34%, and that is due to the fact that we have a lot of land. We have a lot of land in this country, and there should be no reason that we have trouble building homes. Construction costs in that 10-year period have gone up 122%. That is the cost of materials. However, what have gone up the most are Government charges and taxes. From 2013 to 2023, government charges have gone up almost 250%. Those are charges at local levels. The HST charge on houses has gone up 221%. That means nobody makes more money on housing than governments. About 33% of the cost of the average home in this country is government.

What makes up those fees? HST is a big part of it; there is no question about that. However, municipalities are absolutely on the front lines of this situation, and they are also one of the biggest culprits of the problem. At the local level, we have infrastructure charges and development charges. Those are charged per lot, and they can be staggeringly expensive. We have planning approval fees, parkland and parking fees. We often have school charges that are charged by the school board. We have density bonusing fees in

some cases, building permit fees, and water and sewer connections fees. There are all kinds of fees.

At the provincial level, there are land transfer taxes when a home gets sold. There are sales taxes, like the GST and the PST. There is mortgage insurance, if someone cannot put down more than 20% on a home. These fees add up to over \$200,000 on average. They are all government charges that go right to the bottom line of owning a house. Now we know why house prices just keep getting more expensive; it is that the government makes so much money. The beauty of the Leader of the Opposition's private member's bill, which is actually a very simple bill, is that it tells the municipalities on the front lines of this, which charge the biggest fees, that they just need to get the job done.

• (1135)

The Liberals are happy to talk about their housing accelerator fund, which I am happy to take a moment to talk about right now. The parliamentary secretary was hopeful that I would learn something from it. I have learned something from it. It is a joke. That is the truth. It is a \$4 billion fund in the context of a government that is borrowing money. This \$4 billion is borrowed money that it is giving to municipalities based on the promise that those municipalities will be better.

I asked to see the agreements between the municipalities and the federal government several months ago. I did not get them. The best I could come up with was searching through each of these municipalities' staff reports to council and some of the media reports, which have been very interesting. All of them have language such as "we will do this" or "we will do that". They say that they will permit higher density, will look at ways to improve the process or will think about things. There is nothing definitive in any of the staff reports to council. They have been adopted, but not much of it has actually been done.

I will focus on something very specific. The Minister of Housing is incredibly proud of this housing accelerator fund. He is proud because he is focused very much on allowing four residential units as of right in any zone across the city. That means you could turn your single-family home into a fourplex without having to go to the municipality to get approval to do it. He thinks this is some kind of silver bullet, I guess, because the City of Windsor said it was not going to do that, but it had a proposal to do higher density around transit, where it made sense. It had a proposal to permit fourplexes around the university, for example, and things like that. It would have permitted thousands of units, but that was not good enough because the government wants fourplexes as of right.

The City of Toronto has had this rule in place now for just over a year, having fourplexes as of right. This is the great panacea the Minister of Housing is so proud of, having fourplexes as of right everywhere. Since May last year, when the government adopted this, there have been 74 applications in the City of Toronto, so clearly that is not the silver bullet the Minister of Housing thought it was. However, the Liberals sure have gone all over the country doing photo ops and press releases, being so proud of the \$4 billion they are going to spend on the promise of doing better, when they are not getting the job done.

On top of the affordability issues we face, the housing accelerator fund money is going to cities that are increasing their charges. Can members imagine, in an affordability crisis, that the Liberals are sending money to cities that are increasing charges? Case in point, the City of Ottawa is going to get \$178 million. It just approved an increase to its development charges by 11%. It will now cost an extra \$55,000 on a house in Ottawa. The City of Toronto got \$471 million. It increased its development charges this year by 21%. It is making housing more expensive in a housing affordability crisis, and what it got out of the Liberal government is a cheer-leading squad.

The Leader of the Opposition is not proposing to tell the cities how to plan what kind of housing they need, nor how to do their municipal zoning and approvals process; rather, Conservatives are saying that government needs to get out of the way. We will deliver that kind of result by tying federal infrastructure money to cities with results. It is the fundamental difference between a government that is long on photo ops, talking points and being proud of its parade, and a government in waiting that would deliver results and would pay for those results. There would be no more promises. Canadians deserve results; they are tired of the photo ops and the vacuous grandstanding. They need results. If the Leader of the Opposition becomes prime minister, they would get them.

● (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit much, listening to the member. He was the mayor of Huntsville, and he is talking about the costs and the percentage increases in terms of government costs. When he was the mayor, development charges went up 20%.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: That is a lie. That is not true. We cut them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it will be interesting to see. The member says it is not true, but that is the number I have been provided with. We will find out what is the truth. It might upset him, and justifiably so.

Let us take a look at the bill itself. Imagine the leader of the Conservative Party is trying to give the false impression that he actually cares about housing in Canada. What did he do when he was the minister responsible for housing in Canada, when we lost literally hundreds of thousands of housing units that went from low-income affordable to much more expensive? It was hundreds of thousands of rental units. When he was the minister of housing, and I need two hands on which to count this, he actually built six low-income housing units, and it cost him millions and millions of dollars to do that.

Private Members' Business

Now he comes in today as if he is going to be the one who fixes the housing issues in the Canada. He has to be kidding. How is that possible? Let us take a look at the record of the Conservative Party. Not only was the leader of Conservative Party a disaster when he was the minister of housing, but the Conservative Party also abandoned housing.

Contrasting that to today, there is a Prime Minister and a government that are working with municipalities and provinces, recognizing the importance of housing and investing not only time but also hundreds of millions, going into billions, of dollars into housing. We understand it is an issue of fairness. We must think about the millennials and generation X, and ensure that the housing dreams of Canadians will be there and alive into the future.

We have a government that cares about housing, in contrast to a government under Harper and the former minister of housing who is today's leader of the Conservative Party that did not care about the housing in our country. The facts are there. That is the history. Let us contrast that to the billions of dollars when the Prime Minister came up with the first-ever national housing strategy years ago, and the types of financial assistance we are providing to non-profit housing, whether the habitats or the infill homes, as well as supporting housing co-ops and non-profits. These are the type of investments we are putting into housing. That is not to mention working with provinces and municipalities.

There was a time when all political parties did not support housing, whether they were New Democrats, Liberals or Conservatives, in the early 1990s. We would have to go back generations before we found a prime minister and a government that have invested so much energy in ensuring that the federal government plays an important role in housing. We are demonstrating that and have been doing so ever since we tabled the national housing strategy years ago. The housing strategy is more than just paper; we have invested hundreds of millions, going into billions, of dollars.

We are working with governments at all levels, and non-profits, to ensure that affordable housing will continue to be a reality for Canadians. That is something we are doing in a tangible way. That is why I am totally amazed that today's leader of the Conservative Party is trying to give the impression he is.

● (1145)

The leader of the Conservative Party goes around Canada talking about how Canada is broken. He amplifies the fears and anxieties of people in regard to housing. Yes, it is a serious issue. While the leader of the Conservative Party goes around speaking to the extreme right, the Prime Minister has been working with the federal minister, along with the provinces and municipalities. A good example of that happened not long ago, maybe two months or eight weeks ago, when the Prime Minister was in the city of Winnipeg.

Private Members' Business

In Winnipeg, the Premier of Manitoba, the provincial minister, the federal minister, the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Winnipeg talked about how Manitoba is moving forward in dealing with the issue of affordable housing. The Mayor of Winnipeg, along with me and others, last December, talked about how the federal government is investing and encouraging municipalities to build more homes, not only encouraging but also providing financial support. We have seen cooperation in the province of Manitoba.

It is not just governments but also organizations. I often make reference to Habitat for Humanity, which across Canada does phenomenal work in ensuring that homes are affordable. Individuals who would otherwise never get the opportunity to have a home are getting a home. Over the years in Manitoba alone, we are talking about 600 homes. The contributions it has made to Winnipeg North, I would suggest, are very significant. From a non-profit point of view, they are probably second to no other.

The current government has not just opened its eyes, as the Conservative leader has said, on the issue of housing. We have been dealing with housing for years now, recognizing that it is not just Ottawa's responsibility. Ottawa has a responsibility to lead and be there, to assist where we can and provide resources where we can. We have been doing just that.

Contrast that to the attitudes that come from the leader of the Conservative Party or from the Conservative Party in general and the extreme right. What do they talk about? Conservatives criticize the municipalities. They argue in terms of having money and being prepared to give money, but such-and-such things must be done, and if they are not done, then there will not be any money given. There is no sense of cooperation coming from the Conservative Party, none whatsoever. It is either the Conservative way or the highway when it comes to the development of housing.

It is only in the last two years that I have actually started to hear Conservatives talk about housing, unlike the government, which has been talking about housing in terms of the housing accelerator fund for purpose-built apartments. Conservatives oppose that fund. Talking about the GST, the Conservatives would like to get rid of it. Some provinces like the federal policy so much that they are doing the same thing with the provincial sales tax. The Conservatives do not believe that the GST is a good policy either. Conservatives talk about the federal lands, but we have been talking about the federal lands for years. We have actually taken actions on that.

Think of Kapyong Barracks as an example, in the city of Winnipeg. With respect to development charges, we are funding literally billions of dollars to support provinces and cities while ensuring that the price of housing remains lower than it would be without that sort of fund. Again, we are looking for cooperation. There is \$250 million in the budget towards fighting homelessness; of course, the Conservatives are voting against that also.

The Conservatives seem to believe they have a nice shiny plan tied up in the bill before us. Welcome to the game. However, the Conservative Party has no credibility on the issue of housing, and that is the bottom line. As the Liberal government continues to demonstrate that it genuinely cares, the Conservative Party focuses on cuts. That is the difference: Liberals care; Conservatives cut.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-356 reiterates the Conservative leader's talking points about the housing crisis.

According to him, the municipalities are responsible for the housing crisis by tying up real estate development projects in supposedly needless red tape. One of the Conservatives' proposals is to set a target for increasing the number of housing starts. Beginning on April 1, 2024, the target would increase by 15% each year.

Bill C-356 places the entire blame for the housing shortage on the municipalities, even though the current crisis would not have been this severe had Ottawa not pulled out of funding for social housing under the Harper government.

Bill C-356 would in effect put municipalities under outside control by preventing them from taking measures to ensure a minimum of social housing or from protecting their built heritage, under penalty of having their funding reduced—including funding for the development of public transit.

In my riding of La Pointe-de-l'Île, I have met many times with seniors, families and community associations and that has helped me realize the enormity of this tragedy. Expensive condos are already largely available on the market. What is sorely lacking is affordable housing. The resulting mad scramble for rentals betrays people's growing sense of despair. They feel that the government is doing nothing to help them.

The pressing issue is not to continue encouraging big real estate developers to participate in this frantic race, but rather to address the housing shortage affecting most low-income people. The Bloc Québécois has already made a wide range of proposals and interventions. For example, it is proposing that the federal government reorganize its funding for the various programs under the national housing strategy to create an acquisition fund. This kind of fund would enable co-operatives and non-profit organizations to acquire apartment buildings currently available on the private market, keep them affordable and convert them into social, community or deeply affordable housing units. For example, in my riding of La Pointe-de-l'Île, Corporation Mainbourg, in association with the Quebec government and the City of Montreal, acquired Domaine La Rouselière. This is a 720-unit complex that will be protected from the speculative market to ensure its long-term affordability will be maintained.

Private Members' Business

The Bloc Québécois has long said that the provinces and municipalities are in the best position to know the housing needs on their territory. It is not the federal government's place to interfere. I would remind members that housing is exclusively under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Since 1973, Quebec law has prevented the federal government from negotiating directly with municipalities, and Bill C-356 would tear up that agreement. It would create a series of conflicts. It took two years to reach the agreement, and we cannot afford another two-year delay that will bring all projects to a halt. All of the interference brought in by Bill C-356 means that this irresponsible bill would create a breach that would foster sustained conflict and certainly paralyze every project, right in the middle of a housing crisis.

I would remind members that we welcomed the \$3.7-billion Canada-Quebec housing agreement signed in 2020. Half of that money came from the federal government, but the negotiations took three years. The funding that was supposed to go to Quebec was blocked until the two levels of government came to an agreement. Had that happened in 2017, Quebec could have built and renovated many social and affordable housing projects since then, which would have helped mitigate the current housing crisis.

In closing, the Bloc Québécois deplores the federal government's constant need to spend its money, interfere in Quebec's jurisdictions and tell Quebec how to spend its money. We are asking that the federal government transfer its share with no strings attached. That is why we will be voting against Bill C-356.

• (1155)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Leader of the Opposition has five minutes for his right of reply.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled since he took office. It is hard to believe, but on my last day as housing minister, in November 2015, the average rent in Canada's 10 biggest cities for a one-bedroom was \$973. Can members believe that? It is now \$1,893.

The average down payment needed for a new home then was \$22,000; it is almost quaint. Now it is almost \$50,000. The average mortgage payment needed on a brand new home was just \$1,400. It is now almost \$3,500. It took about 39% of the average family paycheque to make monthly payments on the average home. That number has now risen to 64%, a record-smashing total, meaning that one would not be able to eat, clothe oneself, own a vehicle or do anything other than pay taxes and one's mortgage if one is the average family buying the average home.

The Prime Minister did not care much about any of this until he started crashing in the polls, and then he panicked and appointed a big-talking housing minister to take the helm of the ministry of housing. This minister had already, according to Liberal admission, caused immigration to run out of control. Since that time, we have seen a flurry of photo ops and new government programs designed to generate media headlines. However, predictably, these headlines have not reduced housing costs or increased home building. Home building is down this year. The federal housing agency says that it

will be down next year and the year after that. Rent and mortgage payments continue to rise.

That is because the government, under the Prime Minister, is building bureaucracy rather than homes. My common-sense plan is the building homes, not bureaucracies act. It seeks to provide exactly what it says: less bureaucracy, more homebuilding.

In a nutshell, here is my common-sense plan to build the homes: First, we would require municipalities to permit 15% more homebuilding as a condition of getting their federal funds; second, we would sell off thousands of acres of federal land and buildings, so they can be used to build homes; and third, we would axe taxes on homebuilding. In this plan, we would get rid of the carbon tax, the sales tax and other taxes that block homebuilding.

This is a fundamentally different approach than what we see from the current Liberal government. What it currently does with its so-called housing accelerator program is to fund box-ticking. It puts together a bunch of boxes that municipalities have to tick for procedural and bureaucratic reforms. Once the boxes are ticked, the money is sent and we move on. The problem is that, even if those are the right boxes to tick and the municipality ultimately ticks them, when the feds turn their backs, the city can then put in place a bunch of new obstacles. For example, municipalities such as Ottawa and Toronto have actually jacked up development charges after getting federal housing accelerator funds. The City of Winnipeg got federal funding and then blocked 2,000 homes right next to a federal transit station.

That is why trying to manage process will get one nowhere. When one pays for bureaucratic box-ticking, that is what one gets. However, people cannot live in a box ticked by a bureaucrat; they have to live in a home. That is why my plan would pay for results. It simply requires that municipalities permit 15% more homes per year. If they hit the target, they keep their federal money. If they beat the target, they get a bonus. If they miss the target, they pay a fine. They are paid on a per completion basis, just as a realtor or a home builder is paid per home built. We want to pay for keys in doors and families sitting in a beautiful new kitchen, enjoying their dinner. We want families to be housed, healthy and safe, with money in the bank. That is the result we are going to pay for. Now let us bring it home.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion.

Government Orders

[Translation]

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.

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 29, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

**CANADA–NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

BILL C-49—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

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

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so that the Chair can have some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

• (1205)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can appreciate just how critically important the legislation is to Atlantic Canada in many different ways. It is about economic opportunities. I know my Atlantic colleagues are very anxious to see the legislation pass. I also understand that there are provinces that are waiting for the legislation to pass because of the mere necessity of seeing the provincial legislation ultimately pass.

Could the minister amplify how important it is that the legislation get through sooner, as opposed to later, because we have provincial governments, and even different political parties, that want to see the legislation pass quickly?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is extremely important that the legislation move forward. As folks who understand how the Atlantic accords work would know, we worked on this in lockstep with the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador: every word, every period and every comma. It requires mirror legislation to be introduced in both legislatures after it actually goes through the parliamentary process here in Ottawa.

I will quote the two premiers, in terms of their anticipation of this act. Premier Furey said, “Newfoundland and Labrador is perfectly positioned in the green energy transition. Part of that transition requires offshore wind so our province can become a world leader in green hydrogen. We continue to support the Government of Canada on Bill C-49 and urge the other federal parties to do the same.”

Premier Houston of Nova Scotia said, “Bill C-49 is a necessary...step in unlocking our energy potential. There will be many steps along the road but we are hopeful that Bill C-49 passes so we can get started.”

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot of concern from Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Nova Scotia, over the fact that the offshore industry is taking off and could leave Canada behind. We are the only Atlantic nation that does not have an offshore wind industry. We know the United States is moving ahead with substantive investments.

It is essential to get the legislation through, which is why New Democrats have agreed to support this extraordinary move. Throughout the committee hearings, the Conservatives said again and again that they were going to oppose this because it is about clean energy, even though, in Nova Scotia, there is no offshore oil work being done at all. The communities have asked us to get the bill through.

However, without the tax credit incentives to get these projects off the ground, we are not any further ahead. We see that Biden has managed to get the offshore industry up and running and is putting the tax credits in place. The states are going to leave us in the dust if we do not move quickly on this. Could my colleague speak about the ITCs?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, for all the reasons that my hon. colleague articulated, it is certainly important that we move forward.

Other countries are moving, and Canada also needs to move. We do not have a regulatory structure to enable offshore wind at the present time. We need to get that in place to enable the development of a hydrogen industry that will help our friends and allies in Europe to decarbonize and improve their energy security. I was recently in Germany and met with the vice-chancellor. We are very hopeful that we will be able to move forward with Germany, but we certainly need to have the regulatory structure in place.

We also need the investment tax credits, and we are certainly anxious to move the relevant bills through the House to ensure that they are, in fact, in place.

Government Orders

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, FFAW-Unifor representatives were at committee, representing 14,000 fishing industry stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador and a number of stakeholder organizations from the Maritimes. They wanted a framework built into the bill for meaningful consultation and for compensation where spatial requirements just do not work for the wind energy industry, where it competes against the fishing industry. We worked directly in consultation with Unifor's lawyers and created nine amendments, which put forward exactly what the fishing industry wanted.

Could the minister tell us how many of the amendments made it into the legislation that we are going to be voting on?

• (1210)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, the legislation was drafted in collaboration with both provincial governments. Obviously, they are very concerned about the perspectives of fish harvesters, as are we. Fishing activities can coexist alongside the development of an offshore wind industry. We just need to look at the example of the United Kingdom and many other countries around the world.

Proposed projects will have to go through a regional assessment that is ongoing now. That will certainly include significant input from fish harvesters as part of that process. In the development of the legislation, officials have engaged along the way with One Ocean, which I believe includes the FFAW, as well as the CNSOPB Fisheries Advisory Committee.

The views of fish harvesters are and will continue to be very important, but it is certainly within the bounds of what is being done in many countries around the world that a healthy fishing industry and healthy renewable energy can coexist.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the riding of Waterloo, there are a lot of connections to people in all provinces and territories, including the Maritimes, the east coast and Newfoundland and Labrador. I would like to hear from the minister about how the legislation would actually connect to the economic prosperity of Canada today and leading into the future.

This is something that is on the minds of constituents. They would like the legislation to go forward, but it is also important for them to understand how it would actually work when it comes to the economic abilities and prosperity for the country. How would this work with the government's plan?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, certainly this is integral as part of building an economy that is going to create jobs and economic prosperity in the future. That starts with actually accepting the scientific reality of climate change, which is something the folks across the way seem to have great difficulty doing. At the end of the day, climate change is real; it is a scientific reality. One needs to actually found our economic strategy on looking to seize the economic opportunities that will be enabled through the transition to a low-carbon future. That is net-zero petrochemical facilities in Alberta. That is ultra-low-carbon potash facilities in Saskatchewan. That is nuclear development in Ontario. That very much is the development of an offshore hydrogen industry that would help to ship hydrogen to our friends and allies in Europe. It would be an enormous economic enabler for Nova Scotia and for

Newfoundland and Labrador. It has been strongly endorsed by both provincial governments, including the Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia. It is time the Conservative Party simply got out of the way and let us build the economy of the future.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is no surprise to anybody that the Conservatives are blocking, yet again, legislation that would make a difference in the lives of people. We saw them oppose dental care, even though 100,000 seniors have already had access to a dental care program that the NDP forced the government to put into place. They have opposed pharmacare. They have opposed anything that has a net benefit.

It does not surprise me either that the Conservatives are opposing a bill that would provide benefits to Atlantic Canada, because the member for Carleton is on the record making disparaging, negative and derogatory comments about Atlantic Canada. It is no surprise to me either that Conservatives are opposing clean energy. That is really the wave of tomorrow, but Conservatives, because they want to drag Canada back to the 19th century, absolutely refuse to accept any portion of a clean energy strategy that would create potentially hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country. Therefore, I am not surprised. Is my colleague surprised by the Conservatives', yet again, blocking important legislation?

• (1215)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I am not surprised. As I said a minute ago, having a thoughtful approach to an economy that will create jobs and economic prosperity in every province and territory in this country requires, in this day and age, an acceptance of the fundamental reality of climate change. It requires having a plan to address the climate crisis. It requires, then, looking to seize the opportunities that will be enabled through the transition to a low-carbon future.

Unfortunately, the Conservative Party does not believe in climate change. Its plan is, effectively, to let the planet burn. It has no relevant economic plan for the future. Therefore, no, I am not surprised. Unfortunately, I am not surprised.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, the current debate deals with the fact that the House is being muzzled for the work that must be done on an important piece of legislation for the Canadian economy, particularly for the Atlantic provinces.

Government Orders

It should be noted that this bill was tabled a year ago and that the entire process unfolded normally, particularly in committee. I note that there were 12 meetings in committee to study this bill. That means that people are taking this issue seriously, and that it is having a direct impact on thousands of workers throughout the country, especially in Atlantic Canada. Amendments had been proposed hand in hand with the Conservatives and even organized labour. To put it simply, the work was done. Nine amendments were tabled and only one made it into the bill. As parliamentarians we have a job to do, and that job was done in parliamentary committee.

The bill was tabled in the House on May 2, so, about three weeks ago. We were ready to continue our work, but it was not to be. Today, the guillotine was used to shut down debate. It is unfortunate to realize that the government, which has absolute control over the list of political priorities, waited so long before calling the bill. Better still, the government granted itself the power to have the House sit late into the evening, whenever it wants. If we wanted to have a true substantive debate on this issue, the rules should have been followed.

Why is the government invoking closure while the process remains under way? It is our job as parliamentarians to debate in the House instead of being muzzled.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, the provincial governments, industry, environmental groups and local communities have all been clear: They want this legislation to pass.

The Conservatives, for their part, have done all they can to prevent Atlantic Canadians from benefiting from the huge \$1-million economic opportunity associated with offshore wind energy. The Conservatives invited climate sceptics to testify in committee. They filibustered for months. They proposed amendments to kill this bill.

This motion is the only way to overcome Conservative obstruction. My colleague opposite knows that full well.

[*English*]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I want to reiterate the importance of us looking at sustainable clean energy along with a vibrant fishing industry in Newfoundland.

Being from Newfoundland originally, I can speak first-hand to the incredible potential for a wind industry. I remember as a kid walking to school and my little body having to fight against the wind while trying to get myself to school. There is so much wind potential and real jobs.

I am wondering if the minister could speak to why it is that the Conservatives are against a sustainable, real-jobs plan for Newfoundlanders and instead are trying to block this important work from moving forward.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I have had a similar experience as my hon. colleague with being knocked over by the wind in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia have some of the best wind speeds offshore of anywhere in the world. It is highly competitive moving forward for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to compete on the international stage as we develop the offshore

wind and hydrogen industry in this country. As I said before, this has the full support of the governments of Nova Scotia and of Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, it is truly bewildering for the Atlantic Canadian MPs on the Conservative side of the House to be opposing the development of industries that are going to create jobs, economic opportunity and prosperity for both of those provinces. It is truly bewildering, and it goes back to the fact that the Conservative Party of Canada has no view about addressing climate change. The Conservatives' view is to let the planet burn, and they simply do not have an economic strategy that recognizes the enormous economic opportunities that are before us.

● (1220)

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad to rise today in the House to raise a question regarding the bill.

There is an expression that says, “Where there is uncertainty, there will be instability”. What we have heard from those who are going to be most affected by the implementation of the bill as it stands without the amendments, and very helpful amendments that were proposed by the official opposition, means that there is going to be continuing uncertainty and instability within the sectors, especially for the fish harvesters who have raised very legitimate concerns about how this will affect their potential livelihoods for the future.

Once again, this government is lending a deaf ear to the concerns of those whose livelihoods are at stake that would result from the implementation of the bill before us. If the Liberals had worked proactively with us to address the legitimate concerns of those whose livelihoods are affected, perhaps we could have gotten somewhere with the bill. However, there was no proactivity. Several of our amendments, in fact all of our proposed amendments, to my knowledge, were rejected out of hand. The consideration of those in the fishing harvest and the energy sectors in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as in Nova Scotia were ignored. Once again, people were not engaged properly, and the concerns of those most affected by these decisions were ignored.

Can the minister please provide some assurance that the government will start listening to the concerns of Atlantic Canadians on this matter?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, fish harvesters, and the views of fish harvesters, are obviously extremely important.

I would say to my hon. colleague that these kinds of industries coexist in many countries around the world. This is not rocket science. However, it is important to listen. It is important to ensure that we are addressing the concerns that are raised, which is exactly what the regional assessment and environmental assessment is for. It is to hear those questions. Fish harvesters will absolutely be directly engaged in those conversations.

However, it is rich for the Conservatives to actually stand up after filibustering this bill for seven weeks in committee, talking about muscle cars and a range of things that had nothing to do with the bill, simply to try to block its progress. It is a shame.

Government Orders

If the member wants to actually listen to Atlantic Canadians, let me read for him some of the comments from Nova Scotia Conservative Party, Minister of Natural Resources, Tory Rushton, who said:

Offshore wind is Nova Scotia's greatest economic opportunity since the age of sail. There are tremendous opportunities for our coastal communities, for our province and for our country. We cannot afford to wait.

He also said:

In years to come, I think people are going to look back at this. Once this gets moving along, once Bill C-49 is passed, people will look at this decades from now and say, "Here was a move that made Nova Scotia a capital of renewable energy in the world."

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his intervention. My NDP colleague asked him a highly pertinent question about Newfoundland's wind power potential.

Since we are talking about the Maritimes, Nova Scotia in particular, could the minister comment on the potential of tidal energy, which involves harnessing tides, the ocean, the power of the ocean and water, to generate energy? Could it create good jobs in the future?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, in the provinces and territories, and especially in Nova Scotia, tidal power offers many opportunities. It is something very significant. A few Nova Scotia-based technology companies are active in this field, particularly in the Bay of Fundy.

Of course, this could give us clean energy in the future. It is something that will gain momentum, just like our work with wind turbines offshore.

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I heard the hon. minister talk about the experience with wind energy in the oceans all over the world and how well it is working out. Those fishing industry stakeholders who came to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans pleaded with us to allow them to be part of the process, to make sure they did not get left out and to make sure wind energy did not push them off their prime fishing grounds.

If that minister knew what he was talking and about the experience the rest of the world has had in the conflict between wind energy and the fishery, he would know there are thousands of fishermen who have been displaced from their prime fishing. The same thing is going to happen in Canada. The big fear in Atlantic Canada is that the livelihoods of harvesters and the onshore jobs are all going to be destroyed if wind energy is allowed to set up on the same fishing banks the halibut and lobster fishermen depend so heavily on.

The question is whether the minister will listen. Will he listen to the 14,000 Unifor members who came to us with amendments, which we submitted and his party voted against? Will he have a change of heart and let those amendments go through?

• (1225)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as I have said before, this legislation was drafted alongside the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Nova Scotia, which also have a strong interest in and engagement with the fishing industry.

Certainly, I know the FFAW very well. I spent two years as fisheries minister and had a highly constructive relationship with the FFAW. It is very important to me the concerns of fish harvesters are heard and are addressed in the context of moving forward.

As I said, the fishery can very well and healthily exist alongside a healthy and robust offshore wind industry. This happens in the United Kingdom and many countries around the world. There is a regional environmental assessment that will look at all of these issues and ensure we are addressing these in a thoughtful and engaged way.

There is an opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador and for Nova Scotia to have a robust and healthy fishery, which is very important for coastal communities, alongside a robust and prosperous offshore wind and hydrogen sector that will enable jobs and economic opportunity and will enable us to help our friends and allies in Europe to decarbonize and to improve energy security.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it was pretty dismal to sit and watch the Conservatives make it clear they are going to oppose this legislation because it was about clean energy, just like Danielle Smith chased out \$33 billion of clean energy on ideological grounds in Alberta.

Through it all I was thinking of my grandfather, Joe MacNeil, a Cape Bretoner. Timmins was the Fort Mac in the thirties, forties and fifties, and all the Cape Bretoners worked in the mines. My grandfather would have gone home in a second if there was a job, but there were no jobs back home so they lived as exiles, bringing their culture, their language and their songs. They all wanted to go home.

We have a proposition, where we are hearing from Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia about sustainable jobs, and that not only we could have people back home but that they could export this and create a new economy, and yet the Conservatives are here to say they will stop that by any means necessary through all the filibusters and the amendments they keep bringing.

I want to ask the hon. minister about the need to tell people in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia that we are committed, through this program, to get clean energy jobs in the offshore.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, yes, it is important to talk to folks in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. It is important for the federal government. It is important for federal political parties to be engaging this conversation about the opportunities of the future.

Government Orders

It is also the case that the governments of Nova Scotia and of Newfoundland and Labrador have been talking about this very actively. I was in Nova Scotia just six weeks ago to celebrate the conclusion of the FEED study for EverWind Fuels, one of the leading developers of offshore wind. This is the first FEED study that has actually been completed anywhere in North America with respect to hydrogen from wind and offshore wind. Some 300 business leaders came to celebrate this in a restaurant in Halifax; it is extremely important.

However, as I said before, it requires that the parties to this House, and the Conservative Party in particular, actually have a belief in the reality of climate change and have a view about the economic opportunities that would be enabled through this transition to a low-carbon future. When the Conservatives brought a climate denier, Ches Crosbie, a friend and adviser of the Leader of the Opposition to the committee to actually say that climate change is not real truly reflected the view of the folks who sit across the way. It is a shame.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am so happy. I have been listening to the minister's reasoning for pushing this bill forward and bringing in time allocation. It is because the premiers of two provinces agree with his position. I am so glad that the Liberals support premiers when premiers have the same position as other premiers.

I would love the minister to apply that lens to the seven out of 10 premiers who are against a carbon tax. Will he apply the same lens to that as he is applying to Bill C-49, or is that only for special occasions when the Liberals agree with some provinces, while other provinces continue to fight tooth and nail?

• (1230)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, there is a bit of tortured logic there. This debate is supposed to be about Bill C-49, not about the price on pollution.

My hon. colleague might want to read the Atlantic accords. The Atlantic accords are a specific mechanism requiring that a province and the federal government agree on everything and that provinces introduce legislation that is exactly the same as what is going through the federal House. It is something on which we must collaborate. It is something that was attacked by Stephen Harper. It is extremely important for the people who live in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia.

With respect to the price on pollution, we have had this conversation many times. Provinces and territories are very capable of coming up with pricing systems that they can put in place in their jurisdictions if they think they can do it better, as Alberta does with the industrial pricing system and as British Columbia does with the retail pricing system. Provinces have flexibility.

My hon. colleague may deny the reality of climate change. He may continue to put his head in the sand and pretend that he is an ostrich. However, as I said before, at the end of the day, climate change is real. We have to take steps to address it. We have to work in a manner that will enable us to seize economic opportunities, as countries around the world are doing. The Luddite-type behaviour on that side of the House is shameful.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think we know there are two things going on here: The Conservative Party is against clean energy and the Conservative Party is against Atlantic Canadians. It is very simple.

Let me bring members back to 2007. In 2007, a Conservative member defended Atlantic Canada by voting against the budget. It was my friend Bill Casey. What happened to him? The Conservatives were going to rip apart the Atlantic Accord, so they threw him out of the party.

This is about sustainable jobs for Atlantic Canadians. The premiers want it and the people want it. It is our job to deliver for them.

Can the minister share his thoughts about the trillion dollars to be had in the next 16 years?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, there is an enormous economic opportunity for both of the provinces to pursue the work being done to enable offshore wind development and onshore wind development. As I said, I was in Germany recently. We are working very proactively with the German government to ensure there is a place for this hydrogen to go, that the commercial terms will actually work, that we see investment coming to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, and that jobs go to both of those provinces.

My hon. colleague is exactly right about the history. The attacks by the Conservative Party on the Atlantic accords were shameful then. Given the active support of both governments under the Atlantic accords and the attacks on the Atlantic accords now, it is unbelievable that the parties across the way are willing to say they are effectively opposed to the Atlantic accords.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier in the debate, my hon. colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame put a question to the minister regarding the amendments brought forth by the FFAW union and the fishers and families who are going to be impacted by this. At least from the television feed, the minister did not answer that question, so I am going to give him an opportunity to answer it once again.

Of the amendments that were requested by the hard-working fishers and families who are going to be impacted by this, the ones my hon. colleague says he is standing up for, how many were actually adopted by the minister?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, there was broad consultation with respect to this bill, and that work was done in lockstep with the governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. When we brought that bill forward, what we saw on the part of the Conservative Party was seven weeks of filibuster, seven weeks of wasted time, seven weeks of wasted taxpayers' money talking about muscle cars and other irrelevant things.

At the end of the day, we are moving forward in a manner that addresses the concerns of fish harvesters and others in both of these provinces. There is a regional environmental assessment under way, which will ensure that the concerns and thoughts of all relevant stakeholders, very much including fish harvesters, are heard.

There are many examples around the world of a robust offshore wind industry existing alongside a very robust fishery. It is shocking that folks have such a limited view about the capabilities of the people who live in the provinces they are supposed to serve.

• (1235)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

[English]

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

[Translation]

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.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

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

• (1320)

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

(Division No. 772)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau

Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gazan
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid

Government Orders

Damoff
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fillmore
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Fragiskatos
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Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
Petipas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
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van Koeverden
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NAYS

Members

Aboultai'f	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli

Government Orders

Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
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PAIRED

Members

Drouin	Dzerowicz
Gallant	Normandin — 4

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried.

THIRD READING

The House resumed from May 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I look forward to resuming my speech and to hearing what my colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon has to say, as I am splitting my time with him today.

I work on the natural resources committee, and we are the ones who went through the study of this bill. From that perspective, in my speech before, I was setting the record straight, because there was some misrepresentation as to how we went through the entire process of the bill.

Having gone through it, as I had said, and I will say it again today, the Liberal government has made a mess and it continues to refuse to clean it up. It did that with its Impact Assessment Act, which the Supreme Court said was unconstitutional, and now those same Liberals are once again right on track to interfere with local industry and provincial jurisdiction.

In this case, we are talking about the Atlantic fishing industry. We have heard from many fishing groups that are deeply concerned about a lack of consultation and a lack of protection for their livelihood. They do not feel that enough has been done to rule out the potential for major irreversible damage to their industry. The government is ignoring them, but we need to hear what they have to say for themselves. I am going to continue sharing what a few more witnesses told us at committee.

Michael Barron, from the Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association, said:

In an industry that is a major economic driver for Nova Scotia, the lack of consultation has not gone unnoticed by all fish harvester associations throughout Nova Scotia.

Dr. Kris Vascotto, from the Nova Scotia Fisheries Alliance for Energy Engagement, said:

Historically, members have relied on the federal government to protect the interests and viability of their enterprises. They have worked to support science and refine rules for the fishery, and they have tried to be part of the solution. In turn, they rely on the government to make good decisions.

Perhaps this is why members are surprised and dismayed by the content of the bill before you. Collectively, we understand that, as a planet, we are facing profound challenges related to climate change risk, and we realize that we all have an important role in finding a viable solution. However, rushing poorly thought-out legislation to govern an industrial marine development that remains largely in an experimental stage for Atlantic waters and lacks proper safeguards to ensure a viable and resilient coastal economy is myopic.

Government Orders

There are some important things that so many fishing groups mention consistently. They made it clear that they were absolutely not against renewable or wind energy per se, but they wanted acknowledgement that there were still many unknown factors and potentially negative impacts on ocean wildlife and their ecosystems. If that happens, it would devastate their industry and it may not be reversible. There is a witness who addressed this concern.

Dr. Kevin Stokesbury, dean of the School for Marine Science and Technology, shared his thoughts at the committee. He said:

Developing the wind farms will add hard structure, thousands of small islands, throughout these areas, islands that pull energy out of the system. This will change the environment: the sea floor makeup, the current structure, the acoustics both during construction and operation, and the electromagnetic field. All these will impact the associated flora and fauna of the areas. This will happen on the scales of the individual turbine, which is centimetres to kilometres; the wind farm fields, from tens to hundreds of kilometres; and the entire eastern seaboard. It will affect the fisheries. Some will be able to harvest within the wind farms; some will not. All will have to navigate through or around them.

Right now, some wind farms are beginning to monitor the marine environment and the animals associated with them, but it is a disjointed effort. There is no overall framework to coordinate the different scientific research or push for broader ecosystem understanding.

What we have heard from local witnesses in Atlantic Canada is that Bill C-49 has been rushed and lacks the necessary safeguards for the fishing industry.

• (1325)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as indicated earlier, Bill C-49 is all about economic growth and prosperity, and it provides a great deal of hope. I know that because many of my Atlantic colleagues talk about how important it is to see Bill C-49 pass.

We have many people wearing barongs today on Parliament Hill, recognizing that June is Filipino Heritage Month. Part of growth is seeing how communities have been able to participate in growing in Atlantic Canada. The type of growth that Canadians want to see, I believe, is of an economic nature, providing opportunities for all people to grow and be a part of a community.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, putting the livelihoods of tens of thousands of fishers and all the spinoff industry that comes from it at the behest of another industry is not the way we build an economy. It is not the way we get more people involved in the economy.

As the witnesses, who I referenced in my speech, talked about, they are happy to see more economic development in the region. They just want to see the process done properly. They want to see proper consultation. Many fisher groups, Unifor, talked about how there was a complete lack of consultation with the fishers and the different associations in the fishing community. They are worried that their livelihood will be lost because there is a lack of certainty and clarity in this legislation.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my time with the member on the natural resources committee. Like the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, who brought up her Newfoundland heritage, I, too, have a family heritage there. I lived there for three years while going to university. I actually lived in a lighthouse. I can attest, as well, to

the vast wind resource available in Newfoundland. I was blown around quite a bit.

Newfoundland and Labrador wants this. Nova Scotia wants this. Regional assessments will be done that will have full involvement of the fishing industry. Why does the Conservative Party still hold up this bill when everybody wants it? The Conservatives want to block it just because it involves sustainable energy.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, our desire in committee was to ensure that we passed a bill that was constitutional. When the bill came to us, it had over 35 direct references to the unconstitutional Impact Assessment Act, and the government gave us no timeline as to when it would deal with that. Therefore, to us, it seemed absolutely pressing and urgent to ensure that we passed a bill that was constitutional.

The Liberals and the NDP wanted none of it, so we ensured that we would set out to get a bill that would be constitutional so that investors in the wind industry would have absolute certainty and confidence when they looked to make proposals on building their industry.

Also, we want to ensure that the current users of the waters, the fishers, have the certainty they need so that their industry can continue and flourish. We do not need these two industries combatting each other. There needs to be a way to figure out if they can coexist, and this bill would provide no certainty for that.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, this divide-and-conquer approach seems very typical of the Liberal government. The Liberals say one thing, do another and it pits group against group and region against region. I wonder if my colleague could comment further on whether Bill C-49 is about that; not about building prosperity, but rather playing politics with our federation.

• (1330)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely true that we continue to see the divide-and-conquer approach, and it goes no further than with the Impact Assessment Act. We know how much devastation that has brought entirely across the country, and the Liberals continue to hide behind that and use that as a way to divide people on this bill as well.

I know the government said that it fixed that now in the budget, but there really was no effort for committees to get involved and for people to come to talk about what these changes needed to be. The Liberals are continuing to take a sledgehammer approach to a very important part of not just the renewable sector, but also the entire energy system and our nationwide economy as a whole. The Liberals are choosing to divide people over that.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of the Prime Minister, life is unaffordable. With energy bills through the roof, Canadians are struggling to afford to heat their homes and keep the lights on. Not only has the carbon tax driven up the cost of energy, but the government has launched a war on Canada's natural resources and energy sectors.

Government Orders

Bill C-69, which was deemed largely unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada last October, created burdensome red tape, drastically increased approval times and drove away resource exploration and extraction projects. Now the Liberals seek to revive parts of that unconstitutional bill through this attack on both traditional and renewable offshore energy projects in Atlantic Canada. Bill C-49 will drive away investment through more uncertainty, red tape and longer timelines.

In 2022, the environment minister reluctantly approved the Bay du Nord offshore oil project, calling it one of the most difficult decisions the government had ever made. This project will create more than 13,000 jobs: 8,900 in Newfoundland and Labrador, 2,200 in Ontario, 900 in Quebec and 700 in Alberta. It will also add about \$97 billion and change to our national GDP. However, thanks to the government's reckless deficit spending, costs have increased, and burdensome red tape has created uncertainty. Thanks to these factors, the project was delayed by three years, and it is still unclear whether the project will ever be completed at all.

In Nova Scotia, a private company was set to generate electricity from the massive tides in the Bay of Fundy. However, the project was eventually cancelled due to the mountainous red tape. That company shut down its operations in Canada entirely, costing jobs for workers and affordable renewable energy for Nova Scotians.

Over the last couple of years, multiple countries have pleaded for Canada to provide them with LNG to help end their reliance on Russian gas. What did the Prime Minister say to those countries? He told them that there was no business case for Canada to export LNG from our east coast. Germany went on to sign an LNG deal with Qatar and built a massive receiving port in just a matter of months. What could have been powerful paycheques for Atlantic Canadians turned into more dollars for dictators. That is shameful.

Of course, as a British Columbian, I would be remiss if I did not talk about the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, which Kinder Morgan at the beginning was prepared to complete on its own, without taxpayer funding. After the government made the project unfeasible, Kinder Morgan pulled out, and the government bought the pipeline. From there, costs exploded and taxpayers have now spent more than \$30 billion on a project that was estimated to cost just \$7 billion only a few years ago. This is the NDP-Liberal government's record on energy and resource projects: Delay, drive up costs, and eventually drive projects away.

I have talked a lot about the woeful lack of productivity in Canada's economy recently, because it is truly an emergency. Even the Bank of Canada said that. Canada produces just 79% of what the United States does per hour. That ranks us behind all of our G7 peers, maybe save for Italy right now. Adjusted for inflation, Canada's GDP per capita now sits lower than it did in 2014. Meanwhile, businesses are closing at an alarming rate, and the data does not even capture the full story for small businesses.

The most recent statistics from the superintendent of bankruptcy showed a 66.2% year-over-year increase in business insolvencies for the year ending March 31, 2024. A recent article in *The Globe and Mail* highlighted that many small business insolvencies are not even captured under business insolvencies, as many small business owners have to take personal liability on leases and loans. When

they go bankrupt, it is considered a consumer bankruptcy, of which Canada saw 33,885 in the first quarter of 2024, an increase of 14% year-over-year during the same period.

Driving away investment and development of energy and resource projects will only make things worse. In a time when businesses are struggling and Canadians cannot afford to pay their bills because their paycheques do not go far enough, the government is chugging ahead with another attack on energy, jobs, economic growth and even the Constitution.

• (1335)

Clause 19 of Bill C-49 would open the door to more red tape and lengthy delays. It would shift decision-making powers on licence approvals to the federal and provincial ministers, while tripling the amount of time that decision can take. Clause 28 would give the federal minister, with the approval of the provincial minister, the power to outright ban drilling in certain areas and even halt projects that are already approved and in progress. If this bill were to pass with clause 28 as written, it could put an end to offshore petroleum drilling in Atlantic Canada, killing good-paying jobs for workers and further strengthening eastern Canada's dependence on foreign oil imports from dictatorships like Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Clauses 61 and 62 bring the unconstitutional Bill C-69 into the review process, allowing the minister to attach any conditions they see fit to approval. I would be remiss if I did not mention that, back in 2016, I was a political staffer, and I went over this bill at the environment committee. At that time, it was very clear that the intention of the government with this legislation was to give the minister unilateral power. It was to give the government more control over the private sector. It was to give the government the ability to halt projects through delay tactics. We have seen that now, and we are living it now. The last thing we need to do is to include those measures in this legislation.

We have seen how the government treats resource projects in this country. Clauses 61 and 62 will invariably be abused by the government to attach so many strings to approvals that projects will indeed become unfeasible, as we have witnessed. Canadians simply cannot afford any more of the current government and its anti-energy, anti-job and anti-economic growth policies. The government has shown time and time again that it is dead set on killing Canada's natural resource sector. If the environment minister had his way, not a single resource would ever be extracted in this country again. He would take away people's right to have a gasoline car as well.

Government Orders

While the government is focused on killing jobs and increasing our dependence on foreign sources of oil, Conservatives are focused on creating powerful paycheques for Canadians and getting Canada's bountiful resources to market so that our people can prosper.

I will be joining my Conservative colleagues in voting against this NDP-Liberal attack on Canada's resource industries.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will say from the outset, because my colleague mentioned the oil industry, that I have family members who work in the oil industry in Newfoundland as well. I support the oil industry wholeheartedly.

He mentioned "powerful paycheques". Could you please give this House your definition of a powerful paycheque?

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

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, what does a powerful paycheque mean? It means that more of the money one earns stays in one's pocket and not in the hands of Ottawa. There is not a single Canadian who does not agree with that. That is what the Conservatives are set on doing by winning the next federal election.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, that was a hilarious way to spend my morning in the rabbit hole world of the Conservatives, who have spent weeks trying to shut down a bill about creating jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Nova Scotia, and who do not want any clean energy jobs offshore, even though the whole world is moving to clean energy jobs. Maybe the member does not understand the words "Atlantic Accord". If he knew anything about the Atlantic Accord, he would know that his leader tried to attack the Atlantic Accord, and Bill Casey had to stand up and leave the Conservative Party. Bill Casey was a dignified Conservative; of course he left the party.

However, here we see these guys once again attacking Newfoundland, attacking Labrador, attacking Nova Scotia, attacking the Atlantic Accord, all so they can shut down energy jobs. The Conservatives have the gall to come in here and say they are going to defend energy jobs. Like heck they are.

• (1340)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, my ears are burning with nonsense.

Let me recount a story from British Columbia. One of the first decisions of the NDP-Liberal government was to approve LNG in Canada. Why did the government rush to approve LNG off the coast of British Columbia? It was because it would not be subject to the constitutional discrepancies in the bill before us today. Bill C-69 effectively shut down resource exploration, development and exportation in Canada. That is why the NDP-Liberal government did not include the carbon tax when they approved that bill. That is why they did not subject the largest private sector investment to their unconstitutional laws.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. On both sides of the House, members are having discussions or heckling, and it is really inappropriate. I would ask members to please wait until it is the proper time to speak.

Rising on a point of order is the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I am concerned because it is impossible not to have nonsense in your ears if nonsense comes out of a member's mouth.

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

I want to remind members, again, that it was on both sides of the House, even before the hon. member asked the question. I would ask members to please be respectful and allow for questions and answers to be asked and answered without disruption.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, what Bill C-49 would do, which the member articulated very well, is bring the no capital bill, Bill C-69, into offshore energy in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. To give an example, every summer, as the member for Avalon would know, the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board puts out a call for exploratory licences, and every summer it gets applications. This past summer, four weeks after this bill was tabled in the House, how many applications did Newfoundland get? It got zero, because of the provisions in this bill already on the IAA, which is driving capital into the Gulf of Mexico, where all of those capital investments went.

I would like the member to tell us a bit about the experience he has had with how the IAA elements, the environmental review elements, of Bill C-69, which are now in this bill, have shut down jobs in his part of the world.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, when Bill C-69 was in the House a few Parliaments ago, the Mining Association of Canada came out very strongly in favour of the bill. I questioned the Mining Association of Canada in advance of the 2019 election as to why it would support this legislation. It has since rescinded its support for the approach taken by the NDP-Liberal government. It did that primarily because what the unconstitutional Bill C-69 does, and by extension its provisions in Bill C-49, is provide opportunities for the minister to make unilateral decisions that would create a level of uncertainty that most Canadian and foreign capital companies that want to invest in Canada are not willing to take a risk on.

What we need to do, and what this bill has shown us, is that we need to provide certainty. We do need to have strong environmental reviews, but that needs to be coupled with a degree of certainty to allow investment.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing time with the member for Nepean.

Government Orders

I am very happy to speak on Bill C-49. As an Atlantic Canadian, I am, of course, a strong supporter of this bill, which talks directly to the Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic accord and the Nova Scotia petroleum resource accord.

The first question I ask myself is: Why is the Conservative Party still, today, against Atlantic Canadians, against prosperity and against sustainable jobs for Atlantic Canadians?

I think of my colleague, Bill Casey, who was a Progressive Conservative, and not a Conservative that we see today. He defended Atlantic Canadians and the Atlantic accord. I will read what Mr. Casey, who was elected in 1988, said in an interview at the end of his career. The article said that “a rather significant hitch disrupted his career when, in 2007, he voted against the budget tabled by the Stephen Harper government,” progressive conservative government, “saying it broke the Atlantic Accord.” It was “the most unforgettable moment of his time in Parliament.”

He said, “I managed to get my vote in and a second later I was thrown out” of the party. He was expelled from their party. He had to sit, of course, as an independent and continue to fight for Atlantic Canadians as an independent.

Again I ask, why is the Conservative Party against Atlantic Canadians? Why is it against Nova Scotia? Why is it against Newfoundland and Labrador? It is because the Conservatives are doing the exact same thing. Here we are three days away from a year since the introduction and first reading of this bill, and still we are not able to get this bill done. Why? It is because the Conservatives spent seven weeks talking about everything else except the bill that was to be debated in committee. It was seven weeks wasted in filibustering, which is pretty sad when we think about the importance of getting legislation across to help Atlantic Canadians.

Why is this offshore renewable energy so important? It is important on many fronts. First, we are seeing emerging growth, twenty-fold since 2010. Clean energy is the way to the future, and the world is moving toward that future. Where is Canada? We need to get there.

The International Energy Agency is saying that, from now until 2040, the sector is going to attract up to \$1 trillion of investment. Canada has a major opportunity to be a leader in this renewable energy. Of course, it will also help us achieve our net-zero emissions by 2050, which is a very important piece of our work, but not the work of the Conservatives who are okay to let the planet burn. It is also going to give us good, sustainable jobs, which is very important to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

We want jobs. We have seen, with the Irving shipyard 30-year contract, that people are coming back home from various parts of the country. They know they can get good, sustainable jobs, which is really important for them to move back to Atlantic Canada.

It is also important because Canada has the longest coastlines in the world and the fastest wind speed in the world. This is the industry for Atlantic Canada. This is why we need to move quickly on this project. We are well positioned for local and international markets, and it is going to allow provinces to decarbonize the electrici-

ty grid. However, today, still, there is not a single offshore wind farm in Canada.

• (1345)

Is this a federal-led project or a provincial-led project? It is the provincial government asking us to move this bill forward as quickly as possible, because it represents economic growth. It is Nova Scotia's Premier Houston, and Houston of course is a Conservative, as well as the Liberal government in Newfoundland. They are asking us to move on this as quickly as possible.

The Premier of Nova Scotia, last year, said, that they are setting targets to offer leases to make sure that they are supporting offshore wind energy. He said, “Setting this target sends a clear signal to the world that Nova Scotia is open for business and becoming an international leader in offshore wind and green hydrogen development.”

Contrary to what the Conservatives are saying, we are taking every opportunity to develop our renewable energy market, not only to fight climate change, which Conservatives do not even believe exists, but also to create green jobs for Nova Scotians. Again, the provinces are asking us to move forward, and this government, working closely with provinces, intends to do just that.

It was not so long ago, last August, that I attended an announcement in Halifax about two companies, DP Energy and SBM Offshore. These global leaders in the world in this industry are set to establish Canada's first offshore wind farm, which is really important. Think about it; there are trillions of dollars to be had. It means great positioning in the world and an opportunity for sustainable jobs, and yet the Conservative Party is voting again against Atlantic Canadians. It is very difficult to understand. This bill—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1350)

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

There seem to be a lot of comments and questions being posed while the hon. member has the floor. I would ask members to please wait until the appropriate time. There will be a whole 10 minutes of questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, it is simple: The truth hurts. When Conservatives hear the truth, it hits them and it hurts, because some of these individual members care about Atlantic Canada, but their leader does not, so they cannot. It is a simple game. This is what we are witnessing as they keep screaming on the other side and not supporting our government simply because their leader does not support our government and does not support Atlantic Canadians.

Government Orders

Our amendments are very clear and very straightforward. We can get this done very fast. As a matter of fact, tomorrow afternoon Conservatives are going to get their opportunity to show their colours. I am asking for at least the members on the other side who are from Atlantic Canada to do like the former member Bill Casey did. He stood up for his principles and stood up for Atlantic Canadians. That is what I am asking them to do. It is not complicated. We are asking to modernize and expand the mandate.

By passing Bill C-49, both provinces would follow mirror legislation. They are ready to go. Nova Scotia will launch a call for bids in 2025. The federal government and the provincial government are working together to support Canada, to support Atlantic Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and the people of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was very comical to hear that the Liberal government actually listens to provinces; that will be a first for them. Let us talk about Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and New Brunswick. All four premiers are asking the government to get rid of the carbon tax. It is not listening to them very much when it comes to that.

I would ask this member if he knows what the levelized cost of energy is for offshore wind without subsidies. It is 15¢ a kilowatt for offshore wind right now and it is 4.5¢ for coal in Nova Scotia. Who is going to pay that two-thirds difference, ratepayers?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I was sitting in a meeting about four months ago when my colleague from across the benches made that argument in front of the Premier, a Conservative premier, of Nova Scotia. He made that same argument, and the premier said he was talking baloney. His numbers are not correct, and we can get this done.

• (1355)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The premier of the province never appeared in the committee—

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

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

The hon member for South Shore—St. Margarets had an opportunity to ask a question. If he has more, then he should wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, the baloney is clear, because it means the member is wrong. His numbers are wrong. He can go somewhere else and talk about it, but he should not come in this meeting and talk about it. That is what is happening.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

If the hon. member has another question, he should wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay has the floor.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member across the way's speeches are always passionate and entertaining, and I just want to give him—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am going to get the hon. member to start from the beginning, because there seems to be cross-debate. I would ask those members, if they wish to have conversations, to please take them out into the lobby.

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay has the floor.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, it is always entertaining to hear the member from Nova Scotia speak in this House about how he cares for the people of Atlantic Canada. The bill is important. It is essential for the people of Atlantic Canada, for Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia, to develop sustainable resources, which they have in spades, that will drive a real boom of jobs for the future.

I am just wondering if the member can comment on that and on how the provinces, as he mentioned, have asked for this, and yet the Conservatives have blocked it, have filibustered and delayed it. It is as if they do not really care about Atlantic Canada at all.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, because he is 100% right. I said it from the beginning. The Harper government did not care about the Atlantic accord. It wanted to take the royalties away. Now the Conservatives have a chance to make it up. They are doing the same thing, because the Leader of the Opposition does not care about Atlantic Canadians.

To the member's point, the provincial minister of Nova Scotia said that this is probably the greatest opportunity in decades that Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and P.E.I. have. We must take advantage of it, and I want to see the people who moved away from Atlantic Canada, probably because of the 2007 decision by the Conservative government, come back home. It is time to come home. It is 2024, and we care about Atlantic Canada.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Northern Affairs and to the Minister of National Defence (Northern Defence), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to express my support for Bill C-49 and say what a rousing speech my colleague just gave in the House of Commons. Bill C-49 is allowing Atlantic Canadians in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador to kick-start a new economy and to lead a new initiative that will bring jobs and wealth to our provinces.

Why are the Conservatives so dead against Atlantic Canada leading the way in this new technology and this new energy sector?

Statements by Members

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, the first thing that comes to mind is jealousy, but I guess that is too simple. The real answer is that the Leader of the Opposition does not care about Atlantic Canadians and does not care about us having good-paying sustainable jobs for Atlantic Canadians. That is what it is all about. People would come back to Nova Scotia. Many people have returned because of the shipyard contract. Many more will return now. These are opportunities for Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, P.E.I. and all of Canada. We are going to lead the world into this industry. The opposition should get out of the way and let us do our job.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Azerbaijan achieved its Independence Day on May 28, 1918. I had the pleasure of hosting its Independence Day celebration on Parliament Hill last Friday. On Saturday, I participated in an event, raising the Azerbaijan flag on Parliament Hill grounds.

Azerbaijan became the first democracy in the entire Muslim world, and it is also one of the first nations in the world to grant women the right to vote. Religious minorities, including Jews and Hindus, have equal rights to practice their faith in this Muslim-majority country, and they enjoy state support too.

Azerbaijan's geographic location gives it great strategic importance as an energy producer and transit hub.

I would also like to recognize the contributions Azerbaijani Canadians have made and continue to make toward our country, Canada.

* * *

● (1400)

VERNON SEARCH AND RESCUE GROUP SOCIETY

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend we celebrated eight members of the Vernon Search and Rescue Group Society for decades of search and rescue service and community safety in North Okanagan—Shuswap and across Canada.

At the ceremony we recognized Robert Cross, for 28 years of service; Geoff Vick, 31 years; Robert Hurtubise, 34 years; Coralie Nairn, 35 years; Don Blakely and Leigh Pearson, 37 years; James Viel, 50 years; and Pete Wise, 60 years, the longest-serving search and rescue volunteer in Canada.

These volunteers have committed their time to assist and often lead in the search and rescue of many Canadians no matter the time of day or the weather conditions. They also assist emergency services during evacuations and disaster response. Their families make sacrifices and contributions by supporting them. Employers give them time away from work, while sponsors provide resources.

I thank these volunteers and the thousands more across Canada who embody the professionalism, sacrifice and courage to the search for and rescue of Canadians across the country.

* * *

OCEAN SECTOR

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we approach World Ocean Day on June 8, it is timely to reflect on the ocean's profound contribution to our economy, climate and way of life, and to Canada's prosperity as a whole.

The ocean sector contributed close to \$52 billion toward Canada's GDP in 2022 and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs nationwide. There are opportunities to create many more jobs in the fisheries, aquaculture, shipping and tourism industries, as well as emerging industries like offshore renewable energy and marine biotechnology.

This evening, representatives of Canada's Ocean Supercluster will be hosting a briefing reception at the Shaw Centre to discuss Ambition 2035, its vision for fivefold growth in the ocean economy. I encourage all members to attend and learn more about how we can enable this vital sector.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LOISIRS ST-VINCENT-DE-PAUL/CHAMPLAIN-GAMACHE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that we learned of the closure of the community organization Loisirs St-Vincent-de-Paul/Champlain-Gamache, which has played a key role in the lives of hundreds of families in Longueuil since 1995.

I would like to especially thank Dolorès Vaudeville, who ran the organization with passion and dedication for 17 years, and Sophie Hébert, who greatly contributed to the organization's development thanks to her unflinching commitment and dedication.

Loisirs St-Vincent-de-Paul/Champlain-Gamache was located in a neighbourhood where people face daily challenges, but each action taken by the organization made a difference in the lives of many people in the community.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the volunteers, partners and community members who supported this cause over the years. We hope that the legacy of St-Vincent-de-Paul/Champlain-Gamache will continue to inspire other community initiatives in the future to help the least fortunate among us live with dignity.

Statements by Members

[English]

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do members know that the heart of Canada's Filipino community is located in Winnipeg North and that June is Filipino Heritage Month in Canada?

No matter where someone goes in Canada, they will be encouraged to participate in a wide spectrum of Filipino hospitality. One of the things they will notice is that it does not matter what kind of event they go to; they will experience hospitality, kindness, love and hard-working people. These are the types of things that are embedded in our Filipino heritage community.

Today, over one million people in Canada are of Filipino Canadian heritage. That is something all of us should be very proud of. I would encourage all members to get out and promote Filipino heritage in the month of June no matter where they live in Canada.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

ROGER BARBEAU

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to pay tribute to the exceptional commitment of Roger Barbeau, a citizen in my riding of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

An accomplished businessman in the shoe industry, Mr. Barbeau founded the first Caisse Populaire in Saint-Émile in his home in 1959. With the tireless support of his wife Aline and his sons Blaise and Gervais, he devoted much of his life to the service of his community while promoting the values that were so dear to him.

As a prominent member of the Knights of Columbus for more than 55 years, he was the embodiment of that organization's spirit of fraternity and solidarity. He was a model for us all, thanks to his compassion for the least fortunate and his commitment to the principles of charity and goodwill. He inspired those around him with his kindness, wisdom and ability to reach out to those in need.

I would like to thank Roger Barbeau for everything he has done and for everything he is. His legacy will live in our hearts forever.

* * *

[English]

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Filipino Heritage Month is just days away, and Filipinos from coast to coast to coast are ready to celebrate Filipino art, culture and food.

The Philippine Fiesta Extravaganza started in Scarborough under the leadership of Von Canton and Philip Beloso. This year it is expanding to cities across Canada, with fiestas this summer in Toronto, Surrey, Vaughan, Brampton, Lethbridge, Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Miramichi and Montreal. I encourage my colleagues in these communities and all Canadians to go to their local fiesta events and other events to experience Filipino food, music, and art as we cele-

brate Filipino culture and 75 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and the Philippines.

I was proud to sponsor the motion that made June Filipino Heritage Month in Canada, and I thank everyone who has taken Parliament's declaration and made it a month-long celebration.

Mabuhay Canada; mabuhay Philippines.

* * *

IAN SMITH

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Ian C. P. Smith was a tireless and passionate public servant for over 40 years. We lost this cherished member of Winnipeg's community recently.

Throughout the course of his distinguished career, Dr. Smith received numerous accolades for his hard work, including the Manitoba Order of the Buffalo Hunt, the Outstanding Achievement Award of Public Service of Canada, and both the Queen's golden and diamond jubilee medals.

He was an internationally respected biophysicist, having contributed to Canada's reputation as a leader in state-of-the-art medical diagnostic devices. Under his leadership, the National Research Council's Institute for Biodiagnostics has garnered a reputation for world-class research. It has generated and commercialized new, non-invasive diagnostic tools used in human and veterinary medicine, and continues his cutting-edge research on the early diagnosis of cancer.

Dr. Smith was an accomplished man, both professionally and personally. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him. His work in the field of biophysics will continue to have a lasting impact.

We wish his family all the best during this difficult time, and thank Dr. Smith for his lasting contributions to our country.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the hunger and homelessness.

The Salvation Army report showed that 75% of Canadians face challenges managing limited financial resources, poverty and food insecurity worse in every corner of the country. Twenty-five percent of Canadians eat less so their children and other family members can eat. It is staggering. Twenty-six percent of Canadians skip or reduce the size of a meal because they cannot afford to buy groceries.

Statements by Members

I was just at the food bank in Cranbrook. I was talking with a young couple and their two children. I have known them for many years. They were regular contributors. They were embarrassed as they told me they were there at the food bank to pick up some groceries for their family. The NDP-Liberal government hiked the carbon tax 23% last month, driving up the cost for food, gas and heating, especially hard-hitting in rural Canada.

Only common sense Conservatives will cap spending, axe the carbon tax, and bring home safe streets and powerful paychecks for Canadians.

* * *

NATIONAL SEAL PRODUCTS DAY

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite all my colleague to join me and others tomorrow as we celebrate National Seal Products Day, which is normally on May 16.

Inuit and coastal communities across Nunavut, Atlantic Canada and Quebec have relied on seal and seal products for subsistence and survival for millennia, and we continue to use seal for food, clothing and historical ceremony. Seal Day is about recognizing and honouring historical, cultural, social and economic contributions that seal represent for our communities and our people. It is a day when we can recognize and counter narratives about the seal that seek to delegitimize and have devastating impacts on indigenous and coastal communities.

I support the industry, and it is a strong industry that has sustained people for many generations. We must continue to work together to ensure the economic viability of seal for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1410)

PETS

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the current Liberal government, it is a cruel summer for Canadian pet owners. Life in Canada is now so unaffordable that the Calgary Herald just reported the following: “Calgary animal advocates say the increased costs of living, combined with a housing crisis, are forcing pet owners to make tough decisions between their needs and those of their pets.”

Animal shelters are overflowing, and Melissa David, founder of Parachutes for Pets, said that her organization is taking nearly 100 calls a day on average from people whose entire support network is their pet but who are considering heartbreaking decisions like abandoning their pets because inflation means they cannot afford them anymore.

The inflation caused by nine years of massive Liberal deficits and the ineffective carbon tax has led us to this place. At a minimum, the Liberals must cancel the carbon tax, the federal fuel tax and the GST on gasoline and diesel between now and Labour Day. This would save the average Canadian family \$670 this summer and could mean the difference between keeping their beloved furry family member or cruelly having to abandon it.

CARBON TAX

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, tax-and-spend Liberals are jeopardizing all that Canadians hold dear. The family vacation was the one opportunity to enjoy Canada's great outdoors, a chance to connect with fellow travellers and to see the sights and sounds of this great nation. Now, even a simple road trip is unaffordable as parents struggle with the basic necessities of life. A summer vacation is no longer an option for Canadian families.

Families will have to pay \$700 more for food this year than they did in 2023. Last year, food banks had to handle a record two million visits in a single month with one million more monthly visits expected in 2024.

In the middle of this historic cost-of-living crisis, the NDP-Liberal coalition decided to hike the carbon tax by 23%. This is just one step in its plan to quadruple the carbon tax over the next six years, making everything more expensive at the worst possible time. This has to stop. Our common-sense Conservatives can be trusted to axe the tax this summer and to give Canadian families the break they so desperately deserve.

* * *

NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is National AccessAbility Week.

[*Translation*]

I would like to recognize the incredible contributions made by people living with disabilities and the organizations that represent them.

[*English*]

Persons with disabilities, advocates and organizations work tirelessly to remove barriers. They ensure the full participation of more than eight million Canadians with disabilities. It is by working together with the disability community that we have made progress.

[*Translation*]

This year's theme is “Forward Together: Accessibility and Inclusion for All”.

[*English*]

Collective efforts are needed from all sectors of society. We need this in order to reach a barrier-free Canada by 2040. I invite my colleagues and all Canadians to celebrate the exceptional work being done by so many. Let us continue working toward a more accessible and inclusive society, a more accessible and inclusive Canada.

VOTING AGE

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, “If you can work, if you can pay tax, if you can serve in your armed forces, then you ought to be able to vote” were the words of U.K. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer just last week.

I mention his statement because this week, here in Ottawa, young people from across the country are gathering for the first-ever national Vote16 summit. The Vote16 movement around the world is growing because the issues being discussed in places like this have a profound impact on the lives of young people. It is growing because the evidence shows that when young people are empowered to vote, the voter turnout rate rises, which is a hallmark of a strong democracy. That is why the Northwest Territories' Chief Electoral Officer has recommended that the voting age be changed to 16 in that place, and it is why I tabled my bill, the right to vote at 16 act, here in Ottawa.

I want to wish all the young people gathering in Ottawa for the summit a productive session.

* * *

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

YVON PICOTTE

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Louiseville and Maskinongé have lost one of their most illustrious sons and a great leader: Yvon Picotte.

Mr. Picotte began his career as a teacher and principal. He also worked as a radio host and newspaper columnist and served in many volunteer positions in the community. Elected MNA in Maskinongé in 1973, he represented his riding in the Quebec National Assembly for 21 years. He served as the Quebec minister of recreation, tourism and municipal affairs and as the minister of agriculture, fisheries and food, where he made his mark.

After retiring from politics, he worked as the director of the Pavillon du nouveau point de vue addiction centre in Lanoraie and as the president of Groupe RCM in Yamachiche, a company that employs people with functional limitations. He also served as the president of the Louiseville buckwheat pancake festival for 15 years.

The Mauricie is mourning a man who brought people together and cared about his fellow citizens and his community. I thank Mr. Picotte for his commitment. We will remember him.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are experiencing pain and anxiety as rent and mortgage payments have doubled after nine years of the Prime Minister. Housing is a need, not a want, yet OSFI just made a report stating that 76% of Canadians are going to face trouble paying their mortgages. That is 34 million Canadians who have a mortgage, who live with a mortgage holder or who rent from a mortgage holder.

Oral Questions

Trust is a powerful word. It is an experience more than a statement, and Canadians are facing anxiety and pain, and are losing trust over the Liberal Prime Minister, who cannot take care of even the basic needs: housing, low taxes and an affordable cost of living. Trust does not require billions; it requires action. To make Canada right, we need change. We need a new prime minister who is going to restore trust, build homes for Canadians, and bring it home.

* * *

MEMBER FOR CLOVERDALE—LANGLEY CITY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I announce my resignation as the member of Parliament for Cloverdale—Langley City, effective May 31. I have had no greater honour than to serve for almost seven of the past nine years here in Ottawa.

During this time, I have worked with many incredible MPs and senators across parties on numerous legislative priorities. I also worked closely with colleagues at the provincial and municipal levels of government because many issues require collaboration between all levels of government.

I am proud to see that our community south of the Fraser has grown over the past decade, but I have also gained a deeper appreciation of family. I am so grateful to my wife, Elaine, and to my children Kai, Hattie and Kalani for their love and support over the past decade as I pursued politics in Ottawa, and, of course, my condo cuties.

As my time as a member of Parliament ends, I am so thankful to everyone who supported me over these past seven years, especially my staff and volunteers, but mostly, I thank the constituents of Cloverdale—Langley City for allowing me to serve them.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of mortgages, 76% of which will require higher monthly payments in the next three years, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, which monitors Canada's banks. This comes after the Prime Minister promised that interest rates would stay low for Canadians. Against this backdrop, the Bloc Québécois is voting in favour of a \$500-billion bureaucratic, inflationary and centralist budget that is causing interest rates to balloon.

Why does the Prime Minister not cap spending and reduce the waste in order to lower interest rates?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are not really worried about Canadians who are struggling to pay their mortgage. We know that because the Conservatives refused to support our Canadian mortgage charter, which truly provides significant support for Canadians. They are against 30-year amortization for new buyers.

The only thing the Conservatives understand is cut, cut, cut.

* * *

● (1420)

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course the Conservatives want to cut. We want to cut taxes.

The Journal de Montréal has declared that Quebec taxpayers are tapped out. It should come as no surprise that 75% of respondents to Léger-Québecor polls said that they were not getting their money's worth. The Liberal Bloc, however, wants to raise taxes.

Why not at least accept my common-sense plan to suspend the gas tax this summer?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Conservatives do not have a plan. The only thing the Conservatives understand is austerity. The only thing they can do is cut, cut, cut.

They want to scrap our dental care plan, which is very popular in Quebec. They want to scrap our school food program, another plan that is very popular in Quebec. Obviously, they are not going to support child care centres, another very important plan for Quebecers, including Quebec women.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost of mortgages, 76% of which will become more expensive over the next three years, according to the federal banking regulator, OSFI. This, after the Prime Minister said rates would stay low for long. We know that his massive government deficits have driven rates up two percentage points higher than they otherwise would be, according to Scotiabank.

Will he accept my common-sense, dollar-for-dollar plan to cap spending and cut waste to bring down interest rates so Canadians can keep their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the truth. The Conservatives do not actually care about Canadians who are struggling to pay their mortgages, and we know that because when we put forward something very concrete to support those Canadians, like the strengthened Canadian mortgage charter, they refused to support it. When we put forward a plan to help first-time homebuyers with 30-year mortgage amortizations, the Conservatives voted against it.

The fact is that the only thing the Conservatives know how to do is cut, cut, cut, and the only Canadians they care about are themselves.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have voted against everything the Prime Minister has done to balloon the cost of living of Canadians, to increase food bank use by 50% over three years, to send one-quarter of all young people to the food bank in three months alone, one-quarter of all Canadians skipping meals because they cannot afford a home, a 38% increase in homelessness since 2019, 50 new homeless encampments in Toronto, now a total of 256 of them in the biggest city in the country.

Why is it that the more they spend, the more Canadians hurt?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to supporting the most vulnerable Canadians. The fact is that when we formed government and when they left government, the poverty rate in Canada was 14.5%. It is now 9.9%. The Canada child benefit has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. The GIS helps 900,000 seniors. The only thing they know how to do is cut, cut, cut.

Tory times are hard times.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know how to cut taxes. That is why we reduced poverty and had affordable homes nine years ago when common-sense Conservatives were in government. Since that time, housing costs have doubled. Mortgage payments have doubled. Rent has doubled. The number of homeless encampments in Canada is up by hundreds per cent. We now have one in four Canadians skipping meals because they cannot afford the cost of food.

Will the government finally stop the policies that make Canadians poor, get off the backs of the working people and let Canadians keep their homes?

● (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know what the Conservatives really believe and what they really do. When that leader was in government, how many homes did he actually get built? There were just six homes. We know what Conservatives do to programs that support the most vulnerable: cut, cut, cut.

We have put forward a national school food program, a dental care program and national early learning and child care. They want to cut those programs. We will not let them.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on May 10, the immigration minister met with his counterparts. They announced a working group to address the distribution of refugee claimants.

Last Thursday, Minister Fréchette wrote to the minister again. She is getting frustrated because there has been no movement since that announcement. I would remind the minister that he said that the status quo was no longer acceptable, yet, since then, it has been nothing but the status quo. Our public services are overwhelmed; meanwhile, there is a working group that is not working.

I know they have made an announcement, but is there actually a working group? When will it meet and when will we see results?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that the group will be meeting over the coming week. That does not mean that there is no preparatory work being done. Obviously, a working group with ministers requires advance preparation, and that work is currently under way. I spoke to Minister Fréchette this morning.

I, too, am looking forward to some news because the status quo is unacceptable.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since 2017, Quebec has taken in over 50% of those seeking asylum in Canada, even though Quebec has 22% of the population. Let us also not forget that, for months, Canada's immigration minister denied something that was obvious. He denied that there was an imbalance. He even considered the concept of integration capacity suspect. When the immigration ministers met, he finally acknowledged that there were integration capacity issues. He saw the light. Only fools would say they get everything right.

Will the minister stop demonizing Quebec and trying to buy time, and will he finally ensure that asylum seekers are spread out among the provinces?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is confusing capacity and willingness to integrate newcomers. What I said very clearly to my Quebec counterpart was that we would work together to distribute asylum seekers across the country. Ontario and Quebec have an excessive burden in terms of the number of asylum seekers relative to their population. We need the rest of the country to follow suit.

That is what we are going to do.

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*[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to find the words to describe the horror of what is going on in Rafah. Women and children were burned alive in tents. They were told they were in a safe zone, in a refugee encampment, yet they were burned alive.

What will it take for the Liberal government to send a message to Netanyahu that what has happened is inexcusable? What will it take for the government to take actions to prevent this genocide from happening?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even in times of war, there are rules. The images coming out of Rafah are horrific and heartbreaking. Our position has been clear on Rafah. We have been repeating our position for weeks. Palestinian civilians do not have any safe space to go. The killing of innocent civilians is completely unacceptable, and the decisions of the International Court of Justice are binding.

The level of human suffering is catastrophic. That is why we need an immediate ceasefire.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the images coming out of Rafah are horrifying. Women and children were burned alive.

What will it take for the government to send a clear message to Netanyahu that what he is doing is inexcusable? What will it take for the government to finally take action to prevent this genocide?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even in times of war, there are rules.

The images coming out of Rafah are horrific and heartbreaking. Our position on Rafah is clear, and we have been repeating it for several weeks now.

Palestinian civilians have nowhere to go. The killing of innocent civilians is completely unacceptable. The decisions of the International Court of Justice are binding. The level of civilian suffering is catastrophic.

That is why there must be an immediate ceasefire.

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• (1430)

*[English]***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister, hunger and homelessness are up, as one in four Canadians is food insecure. It is because the carbon tax scam leaves Canadians with less money in their pockets, food in their bellies and fuel in their cars.

The Prime Minister and the carbon tax scam are not worth the cost. The Conservatives are calling for all federal fuel taxes to be axed this summer so that Canadian families can save an average of \$670.

Will the road-raging finance minister stop the road-trip wrecking and implement this common-sense Conservative ask, yes or no?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Conservatives believe in is austerity, and the only thing they know how to do is cut, cut, cut. That is why it is no surprise that they would like to cut the carbon rebates that are putting more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians. It is no surprise they want to cut a national school food program. It is no surprise they want to cut our national early learning and child care plan. They have no real plan, but they are letting the country burn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is no doubt that we will cut the carbon tax scam, which will leave more money in Canadians' pockets.

She wants to talk about a food program. That food program has no food in it. The only thing these guys have been feeding over the last nine years is the already obese government.

What common-sense Conservative governments are going to do is axe the tax for good. Why not just call a carbon tax election so we can show them how it is done?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly disappointing to see the misleading information that the hon. member puts forward. It is very clear, as 300 economists and the Parliamentary Budget Officer have said, that eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. Our approach is one that addresses the existential threat of climate change and does so in a manner that is affordable for Canadians. To be honest, his constituents should be asking him, and I am sure they are, why he campaigned on putting in place a price on pollution in the last election and is now taking such a hypocritical position.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sure to tell the people in my community, who are suffering under the NDP-Liberal government, that a bunch of well-to-do economists and some tenured professors are saying that life has never been so good. I will make sure I tell them that.

Common-sense Conservatives have put forward a plan. We are asking the government to axe all federal taxes on gasoline from today until Labour Day, meaning that the average Ontarian could save about \$600 this summer.

When will the Prime Minister adopt our common-sense plan and axe the carbon tax this summer so that families can take their kids on vacation?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that folks in the House are finally being honest. He is saying to just ignore the facts. Ignore the facts; make it all up.

At the end of the day, eight out of 10 families get more money back. Every reputable authority says that. It is only the Conservatives, who campaigned on the basis of putting in a price on pollution, have now changed their minds and have no plan for the climate except to let the planet burn, who would take a position like that.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food bank usage is at the highest level it has

ever been, and that is because of the policies of the NDP-Liberal government. In fact, this summer, my community, which relies on tourism, is being punished because the Liberals refuse to reduce their carbon tax. Canadians can actually save money. In Ontario, approximately \$600, from today until Labour Day, could be saved if the Liberals reduced the tax on all gasoline.

When will the Liberals accept this and give a break to Ontarians, who just want a vacation this summer?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, the Conservatives would not have been there for small businesses and people who were suffering. The Conservatives' response to the challenges around the globe is to say to people who are suffering to pretend those issues are not happening in our country. They can help them out by taking away their rebate check. They can help by taking away dental care from a senior, or help by taking away a diabetic patient's medication.

We do not help vulnerable people in a time of global turmoil by cutting their essential supports. We help them by standing up and standing behind them, and that is what our government does every day.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal government and its out-of-control spending, Quebeckers are facing a full-blown cost of living crisis and are in desperate need of relief. That is why we are calling for the elimination of federal taxes on gas to lower prices at the pump.

We need vehicles to get around during summer vacation, but instead of supporting us, the Bloc Québécois thinks everywhere is like Plateau-Mont-Royal and everyone can just take the bus. Will the Prime Minister agree to our request and axe the federal gas tax for the summer?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to go meet with economists at Université Laval to get a grasp of the very simple fact that eight out of 10 families are getting more money back than they are paying for the price on carbon.

The reason is very simple: The proceeds from the price on carbon are returned to Canadians. Wealthier Canadians pay more. Middle-class and lower-income Canadians receive more. It is as simple as that. In other words, eight out of 10 families are receiving more money back than they are paying for the price on carbon. This is true across the country, wherever the price on carbon applies.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister often spends time at the university. He still has a job there. It looks like he is expecting to get a new job after the next election.

Oral Questions

I would also remind the minister that no one in Quebec receives a compensation cheque. The excise tax, the GST and the 19¢-per-litre gas tax need to be axed for Quebecers, since they do not get reimbursed for them. Will the minister agree to axe the federal taxes for the summer so that Quebecers can go on vacation and pay 19¢ less per litre of gas?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my colleague does not like the economists at Université Laval, there are plenty of economists across the country he can consult. Three hundred of them signed a letter that explains to the Conservatives, who are a bit hard-headed, that eight out of 10 families get more money back from the rebate than they pay because of the price on carbon. It is not complicated: All the proceeds from the price on carbon are returned to Canadians. Wealthier Canadians pay more. Middle-class and lower-income Canadians get more back in their pockets. Plus, of course, it reduces pollution.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, some people think that Canada is too small to have any impact on climate change. On Thursday, Carbon Brief reminded us that it compiled data on greenhouse gas emissions dating back to 1850 to determine which countries are historically responsible for climate change.

Canada is in the top 10. It is by far the least populated country in the top 10, which means that Canada is the largest contributor to global warming per capita. Nevertheless, Canada continues to increase its oil production, particularly through the Trans Mountain pipeline. Encouraging harmful oil production means being responsible for climate change. When will the Liberals stop it?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I would like to remind her that Climate Scorecard gave Canada a grade of 70% in 2024 for our climate change performance and that our greenhouse gas emissions dropped by over 50 million tonnes.

That is the equivalent of taking 15 million cars off our roads. We are getting there. We need to do our part in fighting climate change. Every sector of the economy and every region of the country must contribute to the fight against climate change.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, again, according to Carbon Brief, Canadians have historically been the major contributors to climate change per capita. The Canadian Press investigated the sharp rise in infectious diseases linked to climate change. It found that there has been a 1,000% increase in Lyme disease cases in Canada over the past 10 years.

Public health is even concerned that wet weather may promote the emergence of mosquitoes responsible for diseases such as Zika virus and malaria. There is a human cost to being responsible for climate change. Is it not time for Canada to finally crack down on its abusive oil and gas production?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that in recent years, we implemented a clean fuel standard, which the Conservatives promised to do during the last election campaign, but they changed their minds.

We continue to move forward with carbon pricing, which the Conservatives promised to do during the last election campaign, but they changed their minds. We have put in place methane regulations and a zero-emission vehicle standard to ensure that Canada has only zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

We are taking action to fight climate change and protect Canadians.

• (1440)

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to Carbon Brief, Canadians per capita are historically primarily responsible for climate change.

Quebeckers are much less responsible. While an individual Canadian emits more than 21 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year, a Quebecker emits 9.8. That is less than half. Why? It is because we do not produce dirty oil in Quebec.

However, we pay for this dirty oil when the federal government invests our money in projects such as Trans Mountain. Ottawa makes us unwilling accomplices to those who are responsible for climate change.

Why not get out of dirty oil instead of getting Quebeckers into it unwillingly?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that more than half of the oil consumed in Quebec is Canadian oil and that as Quebeckers, we consume 360,000 barrels of oil every day.

Yes, our record is better than the rest of the country, but Quebec also needs to make an effort. No one is off the hook from fighting climate change. No one is better than everyone else. We must all work on fighting climate change.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the hunger or the homelessness. The Calgary Herald reports of a single mother struggling to feed her family. Edith said, "I pay all of the important things first, mortgage, utilities, insurance, condo fees. Then feeding the kids. If I have anything left over, they can do activities". She has resorted to feeding her family at the community kitchen.

Oral Questions

Far too many Canadians are in this sad reality. When will the government axe the carbon tax, give Canadians a break and allow people like Edith to feed their families?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take my hon. colleague's concerns as sincere, but it is ironic that he puts his question on the floor of the House of Commons just hours after a debate on his leader's bill, which proposes to cut many of the supports that will help people like Edith. The Conservatives put forward measures that are going to increase taxes on home construction. Their plan includes billions of dollars in cuts to support communities that are dealing with homelessness. They plan to cut the very funds that build affordable housing opportunities for families in need.

The government will continue to make the investments that will support vulnerable people in their time of need. I invite Conservatives to join us.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the government's failed policies that have doubled the cost of housing. We would cut the carbon tax and allow families like Edith's to afford to pay for groceries.

After nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the hunger or the homelessness. According to the Salvation Army, 26% of Canadians are skipping or reducing their meals because they cannot afford to buy groceries, and one in four Canadians is skipping meals so they can afford for their children to have food.

The government's out-of-control spending and the carbon tax are driving Canadians into poverty. When will it cut the carbon tax and give Canadians a break?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is disingenuous in the extreme for the hon. colleague to argue that the very measures that put more money in the pockets of vulnerable people are driving the concerns they are experiencing now. At the same time, he is putting forward a plan, standing behind his leader, that wants to make sure we cut programs that are building affordable housing, that cuts funding going to cities and that cuts programs supporting vulnerable families, whether they are programs to provide affordable child care, dental care or essential medicines to people in need.

It takes investments to support the vulnerable Canadians who live in our communities. We are going to make them.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are hungry and homeless. Two million Canadians are now visiting food banks each month. The Salvation Army just reported that one in four Canadians has skipped or reduced the size of at least one meal because they cannot afford to buy groceries. In Niagara Falls, Project Share served more than 13,000 people last year, or one in seven residents.

Instead of piling on more taxes and making life more expensive, when will the NDP-Liberal government axe the tax to provide the relief that struggling Canadians so badly need?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, when the party opposite was in power, there were over two million more people in poverty. It is a bit difficult to take

their protestations when they had the opportunity and did not talk about these issues.

There may be a senior who has had plastic plates to crush food in their mouth, but this week, will get dentures in their mouth for the first time in 41 years. My simple, direct question is this: When the Conservatives are dealing with such a senior, do they believe that senior should get dentures, and will they support making sure that she does?

* * *

● (1445)

[Translation]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is picnic and barbecue season, and people are wondering what they will be able to buy to eat.

While Quebeckers are racking their brains, CEOs are rubbing their hands together because the money is pouring in. They are laughing all the way to the bank because they know the Liberals will not make them pay their fair share.

Forget the Conservatives. They would never dare touch their donors' profits.

Will the Liberals finally admit what everyone already knows? As long as they are in office, there will be no break for people who can no longer afford groceries.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has an economic plan to ensure fairness for all generations. We have a plan to ensure tax fairness.

That is why our plan is asking wealthier Canadians to pay their fair share. With this revenue, our government will help Quebeckers with dental care, which will help children across the country.

* * *

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a recent report outlines the devastating impacts of the climate crisis over the next decade. We can expect ecosystems collapsing, our emergency responses overwhelmed and a scarcity of vital resources. In the face of this, the Liberals keep breaking their climate promises. In fact, they are still allowing big polluters to increase their emissions. Meanwhile, the Conservatives cannot even agree on whether climate change is real.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister is meeting with his Youth Council. Is he going to be honest about how he is fuelling the climate crisis and endangering their future?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct my hon. colleague. Since before the pandemic, our emissions have gone down in Canada, and we have one of the best performances of all G7 countries when it comes to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions since 2019.

However, I would agree with the member that more needs to be done, which is why we have put together the first-ever national adaptation strategy, working with provinces, territories, indigenous nations and municipalities to ensure that we are better prepared to help Canadians and their communities face the impacts of climate change. This is something that, unfortunately, the Conservative Party of Canada cannot even bring itself to mention.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government presented Canadians with a housing plan that will increase the housing supply across the country. A core measure of the plan is the removal of GST from new apartments, student housing and co-operatives.

Earlier today, the House debated the Conservative leader's housing plan, Bill C-356. The bill would actually put the tax back on the construction of middle-class apartments.

Can the Minister of Housing tell Canadians where the government stands on the Conservative leader's plan to reimpose a rent tax on middle-class apartments?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can just imagine the setting when the leader of the Conservatives sat down with the napkin he wrote his housing plan on and thought: "What can I do to address the housing crisis? Idea one, raise taxes on home construction."

I cannot make this stuff up, but that is not all. The Conservatives also plan to cut funding for affordable housing. They plan to cut funding for cities that build more housing, and they plan to cut the measures that are going to make it easier for people to buy their first home.

When we look at the Conservative leader's private member's bill, we will not find a housing plan; we will find a disaster.

* * *

• (1450)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the hunger and homelessness. A recent CBC report highlighted the reality for people living in Thunder Bay. There, neighbours are having to share groceries and other essentials just to be able to get by.

Now, realizing that Canadians are struggling and that the Liberals' plan has received a failing grade from the poverty report card,

will the Prime Minister finally axe the carbon tax and stop his inflationary spending to bring home lower prices for all Canadians?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a hard time accepting this question from the member, whom I respect and believe is here for the right reasons. He puts the question in a frame of homelessness, but he is willing to stand behind his leader's proposition to cut funding that serves homeless Canadians across this country.

I never hear ideas from the Conservatives about making more investments to support vulnerable people. I never hear ideas from the Conservatives that will actually result in more homes being built. It is cut, cut, cut every step of the way. They do not want to put measures in place that will help vulnerable Canadians. We absolutely will.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister can try to deflect and deny as much as he wants, but the fact of the matter is that, after nine years, it is his government's policies that have caused hunger and homelessness to rise. One in four Canadians is struggling to put food on the table. People are spending over 30% of their incomes on housing alone. This is the NDP-Liberal plan in action.

How can the government possibly believe its plan is working?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he wants to talk about our policies on affordability. How about the Canada child benefit, which puts more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families and stops sending child care checks to millionaires? His party voted against it. Let us look at the change that restored the age of retirement to 65 from 67. His party voted against it. Let us look at the guaranteed income supplement for low-income single seniors, which increased by up to \$947. His party voted against it. Let us look at the student loan forgiveness measures for health care professionals who work in communities such as mine. His party votes against it. Every time Conservatives have a chance to help someone, they say no.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government is receiving a failing grade in Newfoundland and Labrador. Back home, according to Food Banks Canada in its annual poverty report card, almost half are paying more than 30% of their earnings to house themselves and 40% are worried about feeding themselves.

After nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the hunger and the homelessness. Will he listen to the premiers who begged him to axe the tax, so people can feed and house themselves?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague opposite really wanted to do something for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and all Atlantic Canadians, he would vote to pass the fall economic statement, because that would mean \$1,430 to families of four in his riding. It would mean \$2,160 to families of four in Alberta, \$1,805 to families in Saskatchewan, \$1,440 to families in Manitoba, \$1,300 to families in Ontario and \$912 to families in New Brunswick. That is how we help Canadians.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find that a bit rich coming from my colleague from Long Range Mountains, who voted against Bill C-251, against the seal industry, against the fishing industry and against the people in her very own riding.

Back to the matter at hand, 45% of people back home have an inadequate standard of living, 35% have a severely inadequate standard of living and 26% are experiencing food insecurity.

After nine years, will the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, who is not worth the hunger and not worth the homelessness, axe the tax and listen to the premiers back home?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell members what we do on this side of the House. On this side of the House, we support communities and we support businesses. I would love to hear the member opposite comment on the 181 projects that ACOA has funded in his riding that supported 64 businesses and 43 not-for-profit organizations; he voted against every single one of those.

That is supporting businesses. That is supporting communities. That is what we do.

* * *

• (1455)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals were making headlines with their contradictions about French, the report of the Office québécois de la langue française slipped by almost unnoticed.

However, guess which sector heads the list of workplaces where working in French is often the most difficult? It is the federal government. The federal government is the worst economic sector in Quebec when it comes to Quebecers' right to work in their language.

Are the Liberals finally going to stop fostering the decline of French in Quebec?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are an asset for all Canadians. We continue to protect both official languages all the time, every month and every year.

Since 2015, our government has been committed to enhancing French and English after 10 years of underinvestment by the opposition. That is what we have done.

Let us continue to protect both official languages always.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to the Office québécois de la langue française, the federal government is the worst workplace when it comes to anglicizing workers. The impacts are catastrophic.

Take Gatineau for example, where the federal government is the largest employer. Between 2016 and 2021, the proportion of people working primarily in French fell from 77% to 62%, a drop of 17% in just four years. Quebec's fourth-largest city is being anglicized at breakneck speed with the help of the Liberals.

I ask again, are the Liberals finally going to stop supporting the decline of French in Quebec?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois forgot one thing. He failed to mention that he hates the fact that, as we speak, Quebecers are working to help build the best country in the world, Canada, using offices on both the Quebec and Ontario sides of the river.

Quebeckers also contribute in large part to ensuring that we have a bilingual country that respects its two official languages, and they are helping maintain and grow Canada.

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FINANCE

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, this Liberal-Bloc Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost.

The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of \$500 billion in spending because it wants to keep the Liberal government in power. Quebecers are homeless, starving and sleeping in dumpsters, and the Bloc Québécois supports the Liberals, who are responsible for this suffering.

Will this Liberal-Bloc Prime Minister stop his reckless spending and let Quebecers live in dignity?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague of something that she already knows and that is that her Conservative leader created only six affordable housing units, whereas 205 were built in her riding alone in recent months.

What I would like to ask her, however, is whether she agrees with her Conservative leader that the Canadian dental care plan does not exist, while in her riding, 9,000 seniors have signed up and hundreds of them have participated in the program and were able to receive care, sometimes for the first time in their lives.

The Conservative leader said in Quebec City that the Canadian dental care plan does not exist.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal-Bloc Prime Minister, Quebecers are living in unbearable misery because of the housing and homelessness crisis.

The more the government spends, with the Bloc Québécois's support, the more the Quebec nation struggles. The Bloc is keeping this Prime Minister in power.

Can the Bloc Québécois end this spectacle and think of Quebecers, instead of supporting the misery this Prime Minister is putting them through?

• (1500)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks about struggling, but the people in my region, the Quebec City and south shore region, are struggling to understand the Conservative leader who says that the Canadian dental care plan does not exist, when in her region 9,000 seniors have registered for it. Several thousand Quebecers in the Quebec City region alone have been able to access dental care, in some cases for the first time.

How can we struggle even more when we hear the Conservative leader say on Radio-Canada in Quebec City that the Canadian dental care plan does not exist?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nine years under this Liberal-Bloc Prime Minister is too costly. As a result, there has been an increase in hunger and homelessness.

By supporting every single budget appropriation totalling \$500 billion, the Bloc Québécois has increased inflation, the cost of housing, the cost of energy, the cost of groceries, the cost of bureaucracy and centralizing powers. Going hungry and sleeping on a park bench has become a daily reality for far too many people. Quebecers are struggling.

Do the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals have nothing better to offer Quebecers?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I see the Conservatives across the way talking about affordability, with their hands on their hearts, it is hypocrisy. They voted against the dental care program. They are against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They are prepared to take on women's reproductive rights and people with diabetes.

It is really shameful.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, the House is debating Bill C-356, the Conservative leader's housing proposal. In the Conservative leader's bill, there is no mention of students, seniors, workers or the most vulnerable in the country.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister please tell Canadians what our plan focuses on, how we are working to create more affordable

homes faster across Canada and how the Conservative leader's plan would slow down builders?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what the Conservatives are actually proposing to do on housing. They want to eliminate the renters' bill of rights and our plan to build more homes faster. They want to cut the infrastructure funding that municipalities need to get more homes built. They want to put the tax back on purpose-built rental construction. They do not have a plan; we do.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are in trouble. On Thursday, we learned from the OSFI risk report that Canadian homeowners who renew their mortgages in 2026 will be facing a payment shock. This means that as of February 2024, 76% of Canadians are in jeopardy of losing their homes.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, many Canadians are now facing the very real fact that they will be losing their homes. The Liberals are just not worth the cost.

Will the Liberals commit today to stop their inflationary spending to drive down interest rates and make housing affordable so that Canadians can keep their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have been making clear throughout question period, the only thing the Conservatives want to do is cut and cut, and actually put taxes back on home builders.

When it comes to fiscal policy, let me quote the Parliamentary Budget Officer speaking last week in the other place. He said that Canada compares "rather favourably on a debt-to-GDP ratio with G7 countries. We are probably the least or second least indebted country."

The Conservatives are absolutely wrong about everything, including fiscal policy.

• (1505)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the next election, we will let Canadians decide exactly who is wrong. If people listen to the Liberals talk about this, they would think they have never had it so good. That could not be any further from the truth. The fact is that we have tent cities from coast to coast. We have students who are living underneath bridges. We have workers who are living in their cars.

If the Liberals will not listen to Canadians and they will not listen to the Conservatives, they should listen to their own regulators. They should stop the spending and drive down costs so that Canadians can keep their homes.

Oral Questions

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be a next election and at that moment in time, Canadians will be able to look at who has the record of stepping up and supporting vulnerable people.

I can say that the record of the Conservative Party of Canada in our country in standing up and fighting for vulnerable people, fighting for people who do not have homes and fighting for people who are in poverty is abysmal, and that is just the plain facts. Every time the Conservatives had a chance to stand up and fight for those who were in need, they instead turned to ancient, trickle-down economics that do not work, and they will try it all over again.

People have seen the game, they know what is up, and I do not think they are going to buy it.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are hungry and homeless.

In the Minister of Housing's own backyard, 10 people are going homeless every single week. One in four Canadians feels they do not even have enough money to live. Canadians are spending 64% of their income on housing, which under the Prime Minister has doubled.

While tent cities become normal and the Liberals gaslight Canadians and tell them they have never had it so good, the Conservatives are fighting.

When will the Liberals wake up and vote in favour of our “build homes not bureaucracy” bill?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague would like to talk about my community. I want to take an opportunity to thank the service providers at shelters like Viola's Place. I want to thank our partners at Coady's Place, who are benefiting from a multi-million dollar investment to build more affordable housing. I want to thank the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society for partnering with us to build more units for vulnerable families in that community.

However, let us take a minute to talk about the member's community. She shows up for ribbon cuttings for projects that we have funded when she voted against them in the House of Commons.

It is important that our words match our actions if we are going to solve the housing crisis. I hope the Conservatives will do the same.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government tabled a plan to free up 250,000 new housing units by 2031 on federal, provincial, territorial and municipal public lands.

The Conservative leader has debated his housing plan, Bill C-356, which will sell federal buildings to the highest bidder with no guarantee of affordable housing.

Can the public works minister explain to Canadians how our federal land conservation plan will create affordable housing across the country?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle is right to talk about affordable housing.

Do members know how many affordable housing units the Conservative leader created across the country when he was the minister responsible for housing? That would be six affordable housing units.

The good news for us is that we are building 8,000 units in Quebec because municipalities are taking the lead. Unfortunately, the Conservative leader's bill would scrap those 8,000 housing units to be built by municipalities.

The other good news is that we will set up a \$500-million fund in the coming months to make more housing and public buildings available to serve the communities.

The Speaker: I am going to ask the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier to speak only when recognized by the Chair.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

* * *

YOUTH

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while Winnipeg Centre has among the highest rates of youth poverty in Canada, Resource Assistance for Youth, Inc.'s level up job placement and education program has been placed at risk by the Liberals' funding delays. After seven months of waiting, this has forced RaY to discontinue vital programming for youth and lay off staff. It is shameful.

Will the minister restore the funding, save the level up program and protect the livelihoods of marginalized youth during an affordability crisis?

● (1510)

Ms. Lisa Hefner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, youth employment and skills strategy has been hugely popular this year across the country. So many programs are looking for this funding to support our youth, to get them back into the workforce. Absolutely, I support these organizations getting the funding they need to continue.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, while the number of people living unsheltered is up across the country by almost 90% since 2018, in my community it is even worse. The number of people living rough has almost tripled.

A recent PBO report shows the government is investing less than one-seventh of what is needed to even cut the rate of chronic homelessness in half. The government seems to have billions to subsidize the largest companies in the country.

When will the government do better by those living unsheltered and commit the funds they need to close this gap?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his advocacy on behalf of the most vulnerable who call his part of the country home.

With respect, we are going to make the investments necessary to support some of the country's most vulnerable, including by partnering with communities that serve homeless Canadians, but also by making the investments necessary, worth billions of dollars, to build out the affordable housing stock so people have a durable solution.

There are no immediate solutions to solve the challenges that so many Canadians are facing, but consistent investment over time, as we have been doing and will continue to ramp up, is going to make a meaningful difference in lives of some of the most vulnerable Canadians.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FEDERAL INTRUSIONS IN THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTIONS OF QUEBEC AND THE PROVINCES

The House resumed from May 23 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:12 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Beloeil—Chambly relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1525)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 773*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultouf	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
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiplely
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 149	

Business of Supply

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste

Government Orders

Beech
Bittle
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gazan
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrisey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez

Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Bradford
Cannings
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen

van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 172

PAIRED

Members

Drouin
Gallant

Dzerowicz
Normandin— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion rejected.

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed from May 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-58, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-58.

• (1535)

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

(Division No. 774)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Berthold
Bezan
Bittle
Blanchet
Block
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Carrie
Chabot
Chahal
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Dancho
Davies

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bergeron
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Bragdon
Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carr
Casey
Chagger
Chambers
Champoux
Chen
Chong
Collins (Victoria)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Damoff
Dancho
DeBellefeuille

Speaker's Ruling

Deltell
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dowdall
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Fast
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Jivani
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maguire
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Michaud
Moore
Morrice
Morrisey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng

Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gaaney
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Jeneroux
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Majumdar
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Miao
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muy
Nater
Noormohamed

O'Connell
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rota
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schieffe
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan
ShIPLEY
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Small
Soroka
Steinley
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Thompson
Tolmie
Trudel
Uppal
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zimmer

O'Regan
Pauzé
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Raves
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Scheer
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Sorbara
Sousa
Ste-Marie
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thériault
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Virani
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo
Zuberi— 316

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

Drouin
Gallant
Dzerowicz
Normandin— 4

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED BREACH OF SPEAKER'S IMPARTIALITY—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on Tuesday, May 21, by the member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie concerning the Speaker's alleged lack of impartiality.

Speaker's Ruling

In his intervention, the member stated that the Liberal Party's promotional material used to advertise the Speaker's participation in an upcoming constituency event contained inflammatory partisan language targeting the leader of the official opposition. According to the member, this constitutes an unacceptable display of partisanship that calls into question the Speaker's impartiality. As such, this matter required immediate priority consideration. The member for La Prairie also intervened to support this position.

The member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie further contended that the standard procedure to raise concerns over the Speaker's conduct, namely through a substantive motion proposed during Routine Proceedings following the appropriate notice, is deficient insofar as its consideration can be easily adjourned or interrupted. Once interrupted, such a motion is then transferred to the Order Paper under Government Orders, leaving it in the hands of the government to reschedule a resumption of the item. The member posited that the government could forestall a decision of the House on such a motion indefinitely, potentially frustrating the will of the majority of the House on such a critical question.

The member for New Westminster—Burnaby also intervened on this matter. He challenged the premise of the question of privilege, which in his view was based on an incorrect interpretation of the events and of the rules governing motions on the conduct of the Speaker. The member also reiterated his concerns regarding the recent attacks on chair occupants. While this last issue is perturbing, I will not address it. My ruling will focus solely on the matter raised by the member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie.

● (1540)

[Translation]

While I did not expect to have to rule on another question of privilege regarding the Speaker, it does give me the opportunity to expand on my ruling of December 5. At the time, while I did find that there was a prima facie question of privilege on another matter questioning the Speaker's impartiality, I also stated at page 19501 of the Debates the following:

In the future, if members wish to take issue with the conduct of the Speaker, rather than raising points of order or questions of privilege, I would instead direct them to place a substantive motion on notice.

[English]

I did so to emphasize that there is a procedure in place to address concerns about the conduct of the Speaker. That process is outlined in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 323: "The actions of the Speaker may not be criticized in debate or by any means except by way of a substantive motion." This process is also in line with the precedents we have from June 1, 1956, which can be found at page 4540 of the Debates, and from March 13, 2000, at page 4397 of the Debates.

While it is true that the House has a process for withdrawing or reaffirming its confidence in the Speaker through a substantive motion, the current rules for considering these motions do not seem responsive enough to deal with this type of issue.

[Translation]

As members might imagine, few precedents exist in this area, besides those already cited and the December ruling. In another deci-

sion, rendered on March 9, 1993, on a question of privilege relating to the participation of a deputy Speaker in outside partisan activities, Speaker Fraser also stated that a well-established official procedure exists to reprove the conduct of chair occupants. While Speaker Fraser did not find a prima facie question of privilege, he did state that the level of impartiality expected of the Speaker should be higher than that of other chair occupants. While he could have insisted that members place a motion on notice, Speaker Fraser instead took the matter under advisement as a question of privilege. In so doing, he took the context into account.

[English]

I also believe it is vital to account for the specifics of each situation. Indeed, it may be necessary to separate grievances regarding the way chair occupants manage House proceedings from those relating to their conduct outside the House. Members no doubt regularly disagree with the decisions rendered in the House, and I could not allow every decision to rise to a question of privilege or point of order. However, outside activities that result in complaints are far less common and should therefore be dealt with in an extraordinary manner.

● (1545)

[Translation]

In December, I ruled that the House itself should as soon as possible pronounce itself on the Speaker's conduct outside the House and the doubts it could raise about his impartiality, and I am of the same opinion today.

In ruling on this matter, I would like to clarify that I am not passing judgment on the alleged facts but rather on the priority these allegations should be given. While a motion could indeed be moved during routine proceedings, such motions are subject to interruptions in proceedings that could delay a decision on them indefinitely. As for opposition motions, they depend on the allotment of a supply day.

[English]

Quite clearly, it is in the interest of the whole House to resolve this particular matter quickly and with all due seriousness. As a result, I find that a prima facie question of privilege exists in this case. However, I must point out that a substantive motion placed on notice remains the procedure required to address the conduct of chair occupants during proceedings. I will continue to apply this distinction until the House provides new instructions for dealing with accusations that the Chair is partial based on conduct that occurs outside the House.

I now invite the member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie to move his motion.

REQUEST FOR OFFICE OF SPEAKER TO BE VACATED

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):
Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Speaker's ongoing and repetitive partisan conduct outside of the Chamber is a betrayal of the traditions and expectations of his office and a breach of the trust required to discharge his duties and responsibilities, all of which this House judges to be a serious contempt and, therefore, declares that the office of Speaker shall be vacated effective immediately before the hour of meeting on the next Monday the House sits following the day this resolution is adopted and directs that the election of a Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 2(2), shall be the first order of business at that Monday's sitting of the House.

I regret to stand yet again to declare that the Speaker is a partisan Liberal. I do not say that as a critique or a criticism. While I might do that in a different setting, today I bring that up to say that those are the facts.

The fact is that the Speaker has a very long history of partisan Liberal political activity. As a young person, the Speaker was the president of the Young Liberals of Canada. He took an activist role in that position, building Liberal organizations and connecting with Liberals from coast to coast. I was involved in young Conservative politics, so I know a bit about what is involved there. I can tell members that nobody gets involved in youth politics because they are non-partisan. It is a very partisan environment.

He went on to be a staff member for several Liberal cabinet ministers. As a matter of fact, he was so well known within Liberal politics that Stéphane Dion appointed him to be the national director of the Liberal Party. After being elected, he took on what is probably one of the most partisan positions in the House of Commons, which is becoming the pit bull to defend the Prime Minister as the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary.

I say all of that simply to give context to why many in the House were concerned or had reservations about electing the member for Hull—Aylmer to become the Speaker of the House of Commons. It was evident that the member who is now the Speaker had a very partisan history, and he did it very well. As a matter of fact, often-times he would disrupt committees and agitate processes and procedures to try to defend the Prime Minister, especially when the Prime Minister was coming under scrutiny for the litany of scandals that he has now found himself in.

● (1550)

The Speaker has a very important role in the House of Commons. Yes, it is always going to be or, for the most part, throughout our entire history, it has been a person who is elected from among us. Moreover, we all get here because of partisan activities. We went and campaigned against other parties or other individuals within our local communities. We eventually got elected to this place. People who are looking to become the Speaker are not here through a different mechanism than the rest of us; however, the Speaker usually has a history of working well with other parties and with other members of the House. That is not the case for the member for Hull—Aylmer. As a matter of fact, he has aggressively defended the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office over the procedures and the rights and privileges of members in the House.

To give some level of context and contrast, I would like to draw to members' attention a bit of recent history. When the House of

Privilege

Commons, through its committees, had requested, in many ways, in different ways, information about the documents that had not been forthcoming regarding the firing of lab scientists from the Winnipeg lab, the predecessor to the current Speaker went so far as to sue the government, the Liberal government, to defend the decision of members of the House of Commons. He was elected as a Liberal member of Parliament. He did this because the Speaker serves as the servant of the decisions of the House of Commons. They are there to execute the will and the decisions of the collective House of Commons. I am sure that the former Speaker was uncomfortable with launching a lawsuit against his own party's government, but he did it, because that was the role of the Speaker.

To contrast that and to, I guess, draw the members' attention to comments made by the current Speaker, on November 16, 2020, I was serving as the chair of the ethics committee. The committee was reviewing the unbelievable revelations that had started to flow out, the allegations of huge amounts of money being given to the Prime Minister's friends during the COVID payouts, specifically with regard to up to a billion dollars that had been committed to the WE organization.

The ethics committee began a process of looking into that organization; in due course, it discovered that, previous to getting the commitment of nearly a billion dollars, this organization had given significant amounts of money to the Prime Minister's family. It was in these discoveries that the committee was looking for more information from the government, but the government was not forthcoming with that documentation. The members of the committee, including members of the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, came together and constructed a motion that was being debated at the committee. The Liberals, through a filibuster, were refusing to allow that motion to ever get to a vote on requiring the government to produce documentation. This documentation would either prove or disprove information about money given to the Prime Minister's family members from the WE organization, which later got a commitment of nearly a billion dollars.

● (1555)

In a lengthy intervention at that committee, the member for Hull—Aylmer, who is now the Speaker, was leading the charge on behalf of the Liberals. At the committee meeting, he said, "If this motion ends up passing, as the opposition holds majority at the committee, its validity will be immediately questioned and there will be serious questions about the ability to enforce it." He did not slip up: He went on to say, "Mr. Chair, this is very important. Let me repeat. If this motion ends up passing, as the opposition holds the majority at this committee, its validity will be immediately questioned and there will be serious questions about its ability to be enforced."

Privilege

It is not wrong for a member of Parliament to get elected and defend their government with all their ability. I hope to have the privilege to do that. What is inappropriate is for somebody who serves as the Speaker to continue that conduct. That is the part that seems confusing to the current Speaker. As a matter of fact, when he ran to be the Speaker, he acknowledged that he had had many partisan positions and played partisan games; he said that he wanted to be judged by his conduct going forward. He asked for us to trust him. He said that, effectively, the proof would be in the pudding. We have some facts that we should go through.

The other thing he said was that the Speaker should be a referee and not a participant in the game. I can tell members that he has had more headlines for his misconduct since he has been in the position of Speaker than have the vast majority of members of Parliament in the House.

We had other reservations about the fact that he had been found guilty by the Ethics Commissioner of a breach of rules with regard to ethical behaviour. However, those were secondary to what we believe needs to be a non-partisan behaviour of any Speaker of the House of Commons.

Unfortunately, the revelation of partisan activity has really been historic. This is a type of history nobody should ever want to make. I do not think there has ever been a Canadian Speaker who has been a legend and been found guilty of so many partisan involvements while in the Speaker's Chair. I will just go through a few. The list has now grown to such a length that it would take me much longer than my speech would allow to go through them all.

It was discovered that, last October, he called up a former member of Parliament, who is now an opinion writer, and asked that person to write an op-ed slamming the official opposition for its effort to hold the government to account.

Next, in November, it was discovered that he attended and spoke at an event for his provincial Liberal association in Pontiac, for his provincial counterparts in Quebec. They were soliciting support from the community for the upcoming election. Obviously, they were looking for financial support.

In December, and this is when it all broke loose and became national news, the Speaker undertook to videotape a partisan video tribute that was broadcast at the Ontario Liberal Party's leadership convention. The tribute was for the outgoing interim leader of the Liberal Party. However, it was wrong on so many levels: It was at a Liberal Party convention where they were obviously soliciting support for the next general election. Yes, the tribute was specific to an individual who was leaving an interim position, but he would also be seeking re-election, so it is not as though it was just some tribute.

• (1600)

However, far worse than just paying tribute to a Liberal candidate as a non-partisan Speaker is that the Speaker recorded it in his full Speaker's robe and in his Speaker's office. One would think somebody somewhere would have raised alarm bells. However, it gets worse: When it was all made public, his defence was that he did not think anybody was going to find out. He said that he did not

know it was going to be put on the big screen; he thought he could get away without anybody knowing.

Then the Liberal Party, again coming to his defence, said that, in fact, it was not clear to him that it was going to be exposed to the public. All of them in agreement believe that it would have been all right if it just had not become public. That in and of itself raises a massive question of conduct and of character.

In the days that followed the fallout of that scandalous video, the Speaker jetted off in the midst of a sitting week. It happens rarely, if ever, that a Speaker does so, but the current Speaker did. He went down to Washington. We would have imagined he was going there for some very important, high-level meeting that obviously would have required him to leave Parliament; however, we then found out he actually went there to pay tribute to a good Liberal he came to know while he was the president of the Young Liberals. He made another tribute to a Liberal while he was travelling on the Speaker's budget.

Now we have the revelations of this summertime evening with the Honourable Speaker of the House. The details of the event have been circulated, and they are interesting. They are very partisan. They attack the official opposition and the leader of the official opposition. I had the opportunity to actually go through other invites that were posted to the same website, the Liberal Party of Canada's website about events in local communities. By far the most partisan descriptor of any event posted on that entire website is attributed to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Then, of course, we have the cover-up. It is all fine because now the Liberal Party of Canada, obviously a disinterested and independent body, has come racing to the Speaker's defence. It says that he did not know it was going to be posted there. Therefore, it is okay, and the Liberal Party of Canada will take full responsibility. It says that was the party's doing and that this is a template it uses for all kinds of events on the website.

I went through all the events. There is only one other event that has the same text, and it was posted in the midst of this scandal. It is not as though it was there for a long period of time. It was just recently posted, and it is the only other event with the same descriptor. This is not a boilerplate template. This is another effort by the Liberal Party to cover things up.

However, the interesting part is this: If one looks at the fine print at the bottom of the website, it reads, "Team [Prime Minister] events are posted by local volunteer teams." There is also a "learn more" link, as well as a link to "submit a ticketed event." My party does not know when I hold a local event unless I tell them.

• (1605)

My local association is very effective at doing the good work of raising money and political support in my community. The Conservative Party of Canada does not organize these things; they are local events by local volunteers and other folks.

The interesting part is that the former PMO staff member and former president of the Hull–Aylmer Federal Liberal Association now serves as the Speaker's chief of staff. It does not seem to me that the individual would have been appointed because he was really well versed in parliamentary procedure. It is clear what his credentials were.

I say all of this to say that he knows how the system works. Nothing gets fed to the party without somebody at the local level sending it there. The event was clearly a decision of the local folks. Any member of Parliament in this place, when they are expected to show up at an event, does not have the event planned without their knowledge. Therefore the Speaker knew about the event, and there is a chief of staff who is very politically astute and has been engaged at the local association level who is now serving as the chief of staff to the Speaker. Nothing checks out about these revelations and the now new explanation that the Speaker has given.

The Speaker has demonstrated countless times that he is unfit to be a non-partisan Speaker. He is a very effective partisan Liberal. We have lost trust in his ability to govern this place.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting hearing the Conservatives, not once, not twice and not even three times, but constantly having it in for the Speaker.

I was not here on the day of the election of the Speaker because I was working on my daughter's campaign in a provincial election at that point, and I could not be here. Coming back, I heard comments in regard to the Conservatives' shock and surprise that the Speaker actually won. From day one, the Conservatives have actually not supported the Speaker. I find that unfortunate. I will not ask the reasons as to why—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I will tell you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The member says he will tell me why. Maybe he could expand on his heckle. Could the member tell me why?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, the majority of my speaking time was spent explaining why.

The evidence mounted even before the Speaker had taken the Speaker's chair. It is not a crime for somebody who has a very robust partisan political history to get elected. Many of us do. The issue is that the Speaker has continued his aggressive partisan behaviour throughout his time in the House of Commons, and everybody knows about it. I read testimony of where the now Speaker said that even if a parliamentary committee were to pass a request for information, he would disregard it. The Liberal government would disregard it.

He did not defend the interests of Parliament. He did not defend the procedures and the policies of transparency that ensure that Canadians get the information that their elected officials request in this place. The Speaker said he would ensure that it never saw the light of day. This is in direct contrast to his predecessor, who, I am sure reluctantly, sued his own party's government to get information that had been requested by the House.

Privilege

It was clearly evident that the present Speaker would always put the Liberal Party ahead of Canadians and ahead of Parliament every single time. That is why we did not vote for him.

• (1610)

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for stating the grounds on which we seek the removal of the Speaker of the House.

Can my colleague expand and provide some examples of the partisanship displayed by the Speaker of the House in terms of how he manages proceedings in the House itself?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, there have been many times. I have played a number of sports, and from time to time players get frustrated with the referee. I have been there and done that. When a call comes in the player's favour, they are happy, but when it does not, of course they claim that the referee is favouring the other side. However, the current Speaker, I believe, consistently in the House has heard one thing on this side of the House and not heard it on the other side.

Quite frankly, folks can decide for themselves, but the national media was seized with an episode of the demonstration of what I believe I have just described. When the Prime Minister used language that some would consider inappropriate, the Speaker asked him to withdraw it. The Prime Minister did not; he changed it up a bit and moved on.

The leader of the official opposition, in the same question period, did almost the identical thing. As a matter of fact, he stood several times to say that he would replace the word that had been used with an alternative word, which the Prime Minister had just done. The Prime Minister replaced the word he had used. The leader of the official opposition requested several times to do the exact same thing, and the Speaker had a different ruling for him to the one he had for the Prime Minister. He was clearly partisan in his rulings that day, and the media all saw it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment, rather than a question, for my colleague.

The current Speaker was elected on September 27, 2023, just eight months ago. The government is well aware that the Bloc Québécois called for the Speaker to step down after a second incident. Now, there have been three incidents. I have a question for my colleague. If the motion is not adopted, what should we expect?

Right now, the term that is being used and that we, the members of the Bloc Québécois, really like is “distraction”. The Speaker is a distraction that Parliament cannot afford. The Speaker is supposed to be the picture of impartiality in the House, so we are asking, for a second time, for the Speaker to step down. That is a comment, not a question, but I would be pleased to hear what my colleague has to say, if he cares to respond.

*Privilege**[English]*

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely clear that nearly half of the members of the House have already called for the Speaker to step down. Last time, following the video and all of the evidence that was provided to the NDP, the New Democrats said, yes, what the Speaker did was wrong, and, based on the information, they believed that the Speaker just did not know what his role should be. However, they did say that if it happened again, they would also have to vote to have the Speaker removed.

We know what the Liberals are going to do because the Liberals believe that the current Speaker serves their purposes very well. The question is this: What will the NDP do? If its members vote with the Bloc and the Conservative Party, the Speaker will be removed. Therefore, will the NDP be true to its word or will it find another reason to yet again support the corrupt Liberal government?

- (1615)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the role of Speaker and the neutrality of that role are fundamental to Canadian democracy. The people whom we all represent believe that this place can make laws and decide things like spending a budget fairly. We are now in a situation where the Speaker has lost the confidence of the House. To me, it appears as though the NDP and the Liberals are making a decision on whether or not he should go based on their supply and confidence agreement rather than on maintaining the dignity of the Chair.

What happened in the last instance is that a partisan event was advertised on the Liberal website. This is the third time. In sports, it is three strikes and a person is out. Can my colleague reiterate why it is so important, given everything that has been said here today, that the Speaker resign so the appearance of democracy can once again be restored for the Canadian public?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, I think the question is a very important one. I do not stand here as myself; I stand here as the voice of those who sent me here, as does every member of the chamber.

What an idea it is that the Speaker would in fact be engaging in partisan preferences in the House and not enforcing the rules as they are set out to ensure fair play, not ensuring that all members are treated equally and not ensuring that the procedures are conducted in such a way that we can be sure as to what the voices of Canadians are and what the outcomes are in terms of both.

The Speaker oversees all kinds of things, including votes in the House of Commons. He oversees the language that is used in the House of Commons. The Speaker oversees all kinds of administration that goes on outside the chamber in terms of the resources that are allocated to different members of Parliament as well.

The Speaker plays such a central role in defending our democratic institution. If the Speaker is deemed to be partisan in his role, how can Canadians have any faith in this institution anymore? We are their voices, and if we do not believe that the Speaker is conducting himself in a fair manner, how can Canadians? The Speaker has to go.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. 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 Langley—Aldergrove, Mental Health and Addictions; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for York—Simcoe, Carbon Pricing.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the comments that I have heard, both just in the last 25 minutes or so and previously, concern me a great deal. They concern me, first and foremost, as a parliamentarian. I have been involved at the provincial and federal levels of politics for over 30 years now, and I have had the opportunity to work with Speakers of all political stripes: New Democrats; Progressive Conservatives; Conservatives, here; and Liberals, here in Ottawa. They play a very important role in our whole institution of Parliament, for which I have grown, from the days in which I served in the military, to have a great deal of respect.

Our institutions mean a great deal, and we do need to be respectful of them and never take them for granted. There are going to be times that we will disagree with something that a Speaker might be saying. I know when I was in opposition in the third party in the far corner over there, I received treatment from the current opposition House leader when he was the Speaker that I did not appreciate. I think, for example, of concurrence motions, where a concurrence motion would be moved, and then I would attempt to stand up and speak, and be instantly shut down, even though today on concurrence motions, members are given all sorts of latitude and provided opportunity to speak.

I can recall a number of incidents from the Manitoba legislature when I would have real issues, even at times when there was an uproar a Speaker walked out of the chamber, and we continued to have debates, but I have always respected the Chair, even when I was asked to leave the chamber on one occasion. I respect the institution. We have witnessed over the last number of years that has not been the case coming from the Conservative Party.

There is a lack of respect for the institution, and that also includes the Speaker and the chair that the Speaker holds. The member spent so much of his time talking about the person, and justifiably so, given the very nature of the ruling that has been made, but the biggest problem I have with the comment is that he is talking about how, at the end of the day, they did not support this Speaker. The Conservative Party never supported this Speaker.

What was their argument? It was not because of anything that happened from the moment that he was elected as Speaker to today, but because they did not vote for the Speaker. They did not vote for him, because they did not like the Speaker. I made reference to that in my question. At the end of the day, the response was very clear: “We don’t like the Speaker. We didn’t vote for the Speaker, and nothing has changed.”

Privilege

There is no such thing as a perfect human being. Mistakes do happen, and we saw that mistake that had taken place with this particular Speaker. An apology followed, even before, from what I understand, a motion being brought to the chamber.

• (1620)

We had a debate at that time, with regard to the Speaker, which ultimately went to the PROC committee. Then the PROC committee came back with a ruling. The Speaker, again, apologized for what had taken place and the disruption.

That is what the opposition whip was talking about in criticizing the Speaker today. What is the offence that has led to the motion and the ruling that we have before us? The offence is for something that appeared to be inappropriately advertising, or whatever, communicating an event. The Liberal Party of Canada has taken full responsibility for that posting and apologized to the Speaker. The Conservative Party is so upset about that incident that it is introducing another motion of non-confidence in the Speaker, a Speaker who Conservative members voted against when he first put his name forward. They have been very clear about that.

The incident was based on something the Speaker had nothing to do with and a formal apology was provided.

To me what that speaks to the Conservatives' focus. Their focus seems to be more about telling Canadians that the institution here in Ottawa is broken. We can see that by their behaviour time and time again. Conservatives are trying to say that we cannot pass legislation, for example. They are trying to say that everything is a problem inside the chamber when, in essence, the problem is not the government. The problem is that the Conservatives, in opposition, are doing whatever they can to destabilize things or make an argument about the institution being broken when it is not broken. They know that, but it does not prevent them. Despite their heckling across the way, they cannot legitimately say that this institution is broken because it is not broken. That does not prevent the Conservatives from going out and about spreading misinformation. Now they are trying to say it is the institution of the Speaker's chair. The Speaker did nothing. The Liberal Party apologized for posting something that should never have been posted and made that a formal apology to the Speaker of the House of Commons. However, the Conservatives are trying to blame the Speaker.

There is something wrong with that picture, but the Conservatives genuinely do not care. At least, those in the House leadership genuinely do not care. Imagine if someone in the Conservative back room posted something on one of the Conservative MPs and then we started to challenge that individual MP for what was posted, and that MP stood up to say, "Oh, well, it's my fault so I will apologize, even though the Conservative Party of Canada apologized for doing something."

This makes no sense unless it is a personal, vindictive attempt at character assassination from the Conservative Party and the leadership. There is an argument to be made for that. That is why I posed the question about why they did not even vote. The opposition whip admitted that the Conservative Party had no intention of voting for the current Speaker. Why does that matter? The way I see it is that the Conservative Party was shell-shocked when the announcement

was made and based its argument on how political the Speaker was before he was elected to the position.

• (1625)

They said he was a parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister and he worked for the Liberal Party of Canada and that is the reason he should be disqualified to be Speaker. That is the reason they did not vote for him. Those were the red-flag warnings that they espoused as to why he would never be a good Speaker, saying he was too partisan. That is absolutely ridiculous, especially coming from the Conservative Party.

Let us think about it. The Conservatives have a gentleman who is the House leader for the Conservative Party. He was first elected in 2004. That is the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. Let us imagine this. He became the Speaker of the House in 2011. I will bet a McDonald's Happy Meal that at the end of the day I could pull out many quotes from Hansard where we would see the Speaker at the time, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, being very critical of the current government. I can guarantee that. I can guarantee that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle actually was a very partisan individual prior to becoming the Speaker of the House of Commons.

What happened after the member's little stint as the Speaker? After being the Speaker for a number of years, he realized that he might not win by running for the Speaker again, so he ran for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada. Therefore, oh my goodness, it is okay for a Conservative Speaker to be politically engaged, but it is not okay if we elect a Liberal member of Parliament who was politically engaged before he was a Speaker. That seems to be a double standard. Why is there the double standard? Why is it okay for a Conservative to be politically engaged, active, run for Speaker and be Speaker, but not okay for an active Liberal to become the Speaker? Let the Conservatives explain that one to me. Let them explain why the Conservative Party, as a collective whole, decided to vote against the current Speaker.

After the Conservatives have tried to justify that one, they can explain this to me. When the Speaker used bad judgment in terms of a video, upon realizing his mistake where what he thought was a video that was going to be shared internally ended up being shared in a public fashion, it did not take Conservatives, New Democrats, Greens or even Liberals for him to recognize that it was inappropriate. He came forward and apologized, but still, we had the privilege issue. The matter came before the House and understandably so. It actually went to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The procedure and House affairs committee dealt with the issue and came up with a series of recommendations. Let me read what those recommendations were:

That the Speaker undertake the appropriate steps to reimburse a suitable amount for the use of parliamentary resources that were not related to the performance of parliamentary functions.

That was done.

Recommendation 2 states:

That the House Administration be tasked with preparing, as part of the briefing binder, guidelines for any future Speaker of the House that presents clear boundaries for impartiality and non-partisanship.

Privilege

Recommendation 2 was something that was important to see happen. One would think that this would happen when we get a new Speaker in place and, as a result of the issue going to PROC, we learned something. It is going to happen, which is a good thing.

• (1630)

Recommendation 3 states:

That the Speaker issue another apology—

I underline the word “another”, because he did apologize already.

—clearly stating that filming the video both in his office, and in his robes was inappropriate, his remorse for the situation, and a clear outline of what he and his office will do to ensure this does not happen again; and that the principle of respect, impartiality, and decorum are values he will continue to prioritize as Speaker.

The member says that he did not. That is part of the problem, if one listens to nothing but the Conservative spin coming from the bench, from behind the curtains. The Speaker did apologize. I heard the apology, as many others heard the apologies. I saw the remorse that was there. I believe it was genuine, from the heart, not only the second time but also the first time that he apologized. Excuse me but, as I said, humans are not perfect. A mistake was made and was recognized, and an apology was given. He did that.

As one says: How many mistakes? This incident we are talking about right now was a party mistake. It is a party that made the posting. Do a Google search on it, if one likes.

I believe that the Conservative Party is being misguided. One of the questions that was put to the introducer of the motion itself was about how he “manages proceedings in the House”. I believe that is the quote. I was writing it down and was listening to some of the comments.

I have been on the opposition side for far more years than I have been on the government side. I can tell members that sitting in that chair can be a challenge at times. I know that. I see that. I have also witnessed that the Speaker who is being referenced today is nowhere near how the Conservatives try to portray him.

When they say “partial”, listen to the question periods. They get all upset, and they start yelling from the benches and all that kind of stuff. If the Speaker tries to calm them down, then, they will be yelling all sorts of things, even directed at the Speaker. We see challenges inside the chamber and outside the chamber, harassing and challenging the Speaker. I have never seen that sort of a challenge taking place, whether it is here in Ottawa or inside the Manitoba legislature, to the degree that I have seen this particular Speaker be abused verbally inside the House and outside the House, without justification whatsoever. There is a lack of respect toward the Speaker's chair, let alone toward the individual, that I have witnessed.

Does one think that one feels that the rulings of the Speaker are always on our side? More often than not, I always think the Speaker favours the opposition side because I see the uproar and the loudness of the opposition as they try to interfere with ministers asking questions, and then, all of a sudden, we will heckle once or twice, and we are told to shush, from the Speaker's chair. We would say to listen to the other side.

I believe this is something very personal for the Conservative Party. They did not support the Speaker when he was first elected. We know that. They do not support him today. They do not support anything that looks good here in the institution of Parliament. We see the behaviour that tries to demonstrate, as much as possible, that this Parliament, as an institution, is broken, when in fact it is not. I believe the Conservatives are dead wrong in the assertions they're making today.

• (1635)

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two quick questions for the parliamentary secretary.

First, if the Speaker does not do the honourable thing and resign, is the member going to vote to have the Speaker step down? If his answer is no, then I want to know how many strikes, mistakes or errors of judgment he expects the Speaker to be tied to before he would ask him to step down.

As for my second question, the parliamentary secretary has alluded to the fact that he somehow knows how I or all Conservatives voted when we elected the Speaker in the first place. I am wondering how he has access to secret ballots.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I guess I take the word of the committee member who introduced a motion that said we, with “we” being the Conservative Party, voted against the current Speaker. Maybe the member should tell his House leader or opposition whip that they should not be taking his vote for granted because that is what was definitely implied.

It was not the Speaker's direct responsibility for the posting that has ultimately brought forward this motion. It was the Liberal Party of Canada's administrative wing, which recognized its mistake and apologized to the Speaker. It is in the news; it was in the news, and even though it is not the Speaker's fault, it does not matter from the Conservative Party's position. It is like punishing someone for something they did not do, and that is what the Conservative Party is doing today.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague put a lot of blame on the Conservatives. He told us that there was a year where the Conservative Speaker was also partisan. That may be true. Perhaps there is a double standard here. However, that in itself is not an argument to defend anything unacceptable that is currently happening. I would like to ask my Conservative colleague the same question.

How many mistakes, how many lapses and how many partisan actions will it take before my colleague opposite finds the Speaker's behaviour to be unacceptable?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I understand the Bloc is going to be speaking next, so maybe it could provide very clear evidence or make a very clear comment on the Liberal Party of Canada taking full responsibility for the posting, apologizing to the Speaker and, ultimately, to all Canadians. It was publicized. The Speaker was given a formal apology because he had nothing to do with what we are talking about. It was the Liberal Party of Canada, and it has apologized for it.

Why would the Bloc then blame someone for doing something that he did not do? That is a legitimate question, and I hope we get a very clear answer on that.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is amazing how the member for Winnipeg North is so partisan that he defends a partisan Speaker with such veracity.

I will ask a similar question to the one just asked by my friend from the Bloc about this. There really are only two opposition parties because the third one is in a coalition with the government. Last December, basically, the Bloc expressed no confidence in the Speaker because of the partisan nature of what he did with the video. He did it a week later in Washington; the list grows. Apparently being a Liberal, generally, as we know from the Prime Minister, who sets the standard, saying “I am sorry” countless times makes up for all of one's mistakes, whether one breaches the Conflict of Interest Act or anything else, and there are no consequences.

What is the consequence to the Speaker, consistently, at least once a month now, it appears, for making partisan statements and for being part of partisan organizations, many of them about himself and some on behalf of others? What is that number? Is it 10, 20 or 30 apologies before the Liberals recognize that the neutrality of the Speaker has been destroyed by the Speaker?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Conservative caucus collectively needs to have a huddle on this. I do not think they have actually read any of the media stories. What took place is an incident, and the Liberal Party of Canada has taken full responsibility for that incident and has formally apologized to the Speaker, and through that, to all Canadians. It was not the Speaker, so it's almost like saying that we are going to punish little Johnny for stealing a chocolate bar, when it was not Johnny who stole the chocolate bar.

Why does the Conservative Party want to punish the Speaker if it was not the Speaker's responsibility for the incident that is being called into question?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, this business about chocolate bars borders on demagoguery. Can we get serious?

The member for Winnipeg North mentioned several times in his speech earlier that opposition members do not like the Speaker. It is not a question of liking or not liking him. We actually have a great deal of respect for the member for Hull—Aylmer. That is not the issue. The issue is confidence. It is not a matter of not liking him; it is a matter of having confidence in this fundamental institution upon which all the rest of the debates are based. In fact, we have an excellent example this evening: All of the government's work is

Privilege

once again being held up because there is a problem of confidence in the Speaker.

Is the member capable of differentiating between the two?

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let us simplify it even more. We are debating the proposed motion because of a posting, and that posting was issued through the Liberal Party of Canada. The Liberal Party has apologized to the Speaker and, through the Speaker, to Canadians. The Liberal Party is the one to blame. Why should the Speaker have to pay the price not for his mistake, but for the Liberal Party's mistake? I really hope the Bloc members will explain that as clearly as I have explained why we have the motion before us right now.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to give the parliamentary secretary another chance to answer my question. I asked him this: If the Speaker does not resign, when this comes to a vote, how is he going to vote? Is he going to vote for the Speaker to stay in the chair or not? If he is going to vote to keep the Speaker in the chair, how many more mistakes does he think the Speaker should be allowed? Is it one, two or 10 more? I just want to know the number. If the Speaker makes a mistake, how many more strikes does the member think the Speaker should get?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, based on the facts before the House, I would suggest that every member should accept the fact that the Liberal Party of Canada has taken full responsibility for this, and my vote will not be to punish someone who has not had anything to do with that particular posting. I think that is the responsible and respectful thing to do, given the fact that the Liberal Party of Canada has taken the responsibility for it.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are currently facing a crisis. I get that my colleague has no solution to the crisis except to vote against the motion under consideration, which is fine. I just find it funny how many gaffes a Speaker is allowed to commit.

There is also the gravity of those gaffes to consider. Although it is all well and good to see the third gaffe as relatively minor, I would say this to my colleague: We are in a crisis, not only because the Speaker has made serious errors in view of his status, role and office, but we have been in a crisis for several months. Respect no longer exists in the House. For me, this is one more factor that reinforces and lends credence to the motion calling on the Speaker to resign.

Does my colleague agree that the House is not functioning normally in terms of respect, order and language?

*Privilege**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe that the charge being led by the Conservative Party of Canada is very much politically motivated. At the end of the day, I would like to see members provide clarity on the issue of why the Speaker should be held responsible for something the Liberal Party of Canada has very clearly indicated it was responsible for and for which it has formally apologized. That is what I believe—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will have to leave it at that.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for La Prairie.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will begin by advising you that I will be sharing my time with my friend, the member for Salaberry—Suroît.

We have already been over this. We have discussed the situation with this Speaker again and again. For people who like stories and novels, let us just say they will be spoiled by the saga of this Speaker, who has made gaffe after gaffe and has always relied on the excuse that it was not his fault, it was just a rookie mistake.

The bottom line is that two things are clear. First, this is the worst Speaker in the history of this Parliament. Second, this is a Speaker who lost the confidence of 150 parliamentarians, which is no mean feat. These 150 parliamentarians, who make up 44.38% of the members, said that he no longer enjoyed their confidence, that they were done with him. On top of that, there are two parties keeping him in his post, namely the NDP and the Liberal Party. I can guarantee that if these two parties allowed a free vote in the House, it would mark the end of this Speaker's tenure. I am 100% certain.

What do we do here? We debate, we work and we try to improve the lot of our communities, of the people we represent. Now we have a Speaker drawing attention to himself again. We are delaying government business to talk about a Speaker who keeps stumbling. That is the reality. That is like going to a hockey game and spending the whole time watching the referee, who is not calling the plays right. Eventually, something has got to give.

I remember when the Speaker appeared before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to explain. Of course, he repeatedly said that it was not his fault. However, one thing struck me: He said that there is no instruction manual for being the perfect Speaker. I understand that, but every Speaker before him has done better than he has. Even if there is no perfect Speaker instruction manual, there is a way to get the job done. We are not asking him to move mountains. He should be able to do the job, but it seems he is the only one who has not been able to, so we have to wonder.

There are certain things I will never forget. When we say that 150 members have lost confidence in the House, we have to ask ourselves what the word “confidence” means. Does it simply amount to saying that we are no longer encouraging him? No, it is not only that we no longer think he is a good Speaker. It is that each time he makes a decision, we will have doubts as parliamentarians.

When the Speaker told the leader of the official opposition to leave the House, did he do that because there was a hint of Liberal red peeking out from under his robes? I will not say that I myself wondered, but some people may have. Did that have something to do with it, or did he truly make the right decision? The mere fact that we have doubts about him means that he cannot do his work properly. It is over.

When the problems with the former Speaker and the unfortunate visit by the former Nazi occurred, the NDP leader said one thing that struck me. In fact, I commended him on his remarks. He told the Speaker, who was in the chair, that members could no longer have confidence in him or know whether he had or had not made the right decision. I thought that was good, because that is what it means to have confidence in a Speaker who represents institutions. I do not know what his position on today's motion will be, but I hope that the flash of insight he had a few months ago will strike him again today in relation to this Speaker, whose position is once again in jeopardy.

He has made one blunder after another. I recall hearing my whip say at the outset that certain members were recognized for their vision and their intelligence in debates. Our whip has that intelligence. She told the Speaker he had been very partisan in his former life. It is as though the member for Winnipeg North decided to become Speaker. I would be a little frightened of that prospect. I would wonder whether it was serious or some kind of joke.

● (1650)

It is not that he is not a great guy. He is a great guy, but he is a bit partisan. We are talking about him right now and he does not know it. He is a bit partisan. It would be funny if he ran. We might question the result. It would be like asking Colonel Sanders to guard the henhouse. In any case, it would be a bit scary. That being said, he has come in too late, which is too bad.

We would say to the member for Winnipeg North that we believe him, that we trust him, but that we are keeping an eye on him. That is what the whip said. I remember it like it was yesterday. We like him as an individual. I think he is nice and I like him a lot. When I worked with him in committee, he was very good. He was partisan and he was very good. I just think this was a case of bad casting.

I am not a bad hockey player, but I would not be any good as a contortionist for Cirque du Soleil. No one is good at everything. These are jokes, but that is what it comes down to. He made the video wearing his Speaker's robes and recorded it in his office. He made a video to pay tribute to a former conservative leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, which is really closely tied to the Liberal Party of Canada. That is okay. That is fine. The Speaker was caught and he said he did not know the video would be used for that. Still, when someone makes a video like that, they should realize that it could lead to trouble. I do not know. Let us just say that it was not a good start.

When this matter was discussed at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, he was not there. He was not there until he testified, because he was in Washington attending a partisan event. Here we have two for the price of one. He does a partisan event in his office, wearing his robes, with the caption “House Speaker”. Then, when the matter is being discussed, he goes to Washington because there was a partisan meeting and event. That is two.

Then he said that there is no guide on how to be the perfect Speaker. I understand that people make mistakes, but there is a limit. There are two qualities that a person must have to be a good Speaker: impartiality and judgment. He messed up on both of those things right from the start, which is no small feat. At just one event, he messed up on the two things that are essential for the job.

Then, as I said, there was the trip to Washington. After that, he participated in a partisan event hosted by André Fortin of the Quebec Liberal Party. He was there. He was in attendance.

Now, we are talking about the invitation to his spring event. The Speaker of the House is a member of the Liberal Party, and Liberals stick together. The Speaker said that it was the Liberal Party that sent out the invitations that took aim at the Leader of the Opposition. He apologized. Once again, he apologized. It was not his fault. It is never his fault.

I do not know when that happened, but we saw it on Wednesday of the previous week. He saw it on Tuesday of the following week, six days later. He is not nervous. It took six days for him to catch on, when this is a huge deal and he was under scrutiny. Not only did he fail to exercise judgment and demonstrate impartiality, but he and his team were also somewhat incompetent. I will close by saying that, if he respects the democratic institutions that he represents, then he has no choice but to step down from his role as Speaker himself. Does he respect those institutions?

• (1655)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for those who are following the debate today, it is important to recognize that the first incident the member talked about received unanimous consent in the House. Not only did the government agree to it, but we also ensured that it would be given proper priority and resources so that the matter could be dealt with, because the Speaker made a mistake. Does the Bloc not realize that that was the Speaker's call and that the Speaker is the one who made the mistake?

In this situation, it is not the Speaker; it is the Liberal Party of Canada. The Bloc members are trying to punish the Liberal Party of Canada by censuring the Speaker of the House. How do they justify that? I do not understand.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, the video is no minor error. He is dressed in the Speaker's robes, he is talking to his buddy and he is being filmed in his office. While it may seem harmless, we can agree this was his first mistake.

Privilege

However, when he went to see MNA André Fortin, a member of the Liberal Party of Quebec, was he kidnapped in the night and taken to a back room for the photo? When he went to Washington for a partisan meeting, the same thing happened again. Did he get lost looking for his car keys and somehow end up there? Come on.

For six days, no one knew what was going on. The Speaker and his team were in their office, counting their fingers and toes, oblivious that a text bashing the Conservative Party of Canada had been written for the Speaker's event. Did no one clue in?

Mistakes can happen, but eventually it gets to be too much.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that was not the question.

We are talking about the incident that is before us today. The Liberal Party took responsibility, and the Bloc seemed to be content with blaming the Speaker for what the Liberal Party of Canada did and formally apologized for.

Why would the Speaker be punished for something the Liberal Party of Canada has taken responsibility for? That is the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I understand my colleague's question, but he is the one who did not understand my answer. I will explain again.

The Speaker of the House must take care to remain neutral. It is part of his job. He must guard his neutrality jealously, because it is one of the two pillars of his position. He has to keep an eye on everything involving himself and his events. That is his job. No one should ever have reason to think that he is being partisan. He must be as pure as the driven snow.

He organized an event to be held in June. The Liberal Party of Canada came streaming in and sent out a message to the public about a Speaker of the House event, while also bashing the Conservative Party. It took six days for the Speaker to clue in. How come our party and plenty of other parties clued in, but it took him six days? It is part of his job, after all.

He has proven time and time again that he is not neutral and that he lacks judgment. I like him a lot, I think he is nice, but unfortunately, this afternoon, I must add that he is incompetent.

What more will it take?

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives us no pleasure to rise in this debate. We would rather be discussing the problems confronting Canadians. Unfortunately, the current Speaker's misconduct has led us here.

Privilege

I am going to answer the question put by the member for Winnipeg North directly. The Liberal Party says that it accepts responsibility for what happened, but it forgets one thing. In the Liberal Party's apology, it said that direct attacks on the Conservative Party are part of every invitation it sends out for its events. However, the only time that this specific wording was used was after the member for Hull—Aylmer had used it. Therefore, this happened after the explanation for the mistake was given. As the Bloc Québécois member so aptly said, for six days, the current Speaker lacked the dignity and respect to point out the mistake and correct it.

I have a question for my colleague, who, like me, was once a member of the Quebec National Assembly. Does he think that the National Assembly would have tolerated a situation like this?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, my colleague knows the answer.

This behaviour is unacceptable. There is no doubt in my mind that if this person were in the Quebec National Assembly, they would have had to resign. There are others who have had to resign for lesser errors.

However, I do not want to imply that the National Assembly is better than the House of Commons, and I say that with all due respect. What I am saying is that what happens in the National Assembly should also happen here. I still have confidence that the House will realize that this Speaker can no longer continue in his position and that the House of Commons deserves better.

* * *

• (1705)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 midnight, pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28.

[*Translation*]

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

* * *

PRIVILEGE

REQUEST FOR OFFICE OF SPEAKER TO BE VACATED

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from La Prairie's speech, and I completely agree with what he said. I could try to give some more arguments, but I think that the Bloc Québécois's position is fairly clear.

I do have to say that I am deeply saddened to rise to speak today. It is sad that the member for Hull—Aylmer is once again in the spotlight, a distraction that is diverting attention away from the work of the House and slowing it down. I am trying to put myself

in his shoes and I can imagine that it must not be very pleasant for him to hear what we are saying today.

As the member for La Prairie said, we do not have anything against the member for Hull—Aylmer. On the contrary, as I said many times when he testified before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the member for Hull—Aylmer is certainly a good person. It is just that he does not have the right qualifications for the job. He is not the right person at the right time to preside over this House, a job that requires a high degree of knowledge, skill and judgment.

It is not easy to become the Speaker without first putting in time as a deputy speaker, without having learned the rules of procedure, without having learned how to do that job or give rulings first. That takes experience. It is not easy to become the Speaker overnight without having gained that experience, like the Assistant Deputy Speaker has been able to do. Thanks to all her knowledge and experience, she now has the ability to one day hold the position of Speaker. It takes experience.

At the risk of repeating myself, after today I do not want people to think that the Bloc Québécois is attacking the member for Hull—Aylmer. It is the complete opposite. We reached out to him several times to ask him to step down of his own accord and realize that he has lost the confidence of the majority of members in the House. After the most recent event that was the subject of the motion we are debating, the Speaker made some calls. He contacted me to say that what happened was not his fault and explained to me at length what really happened.

I told him that if I were in his position, given the situation and the fact that he did not have the confidence of 149 members of the House, I would not have taken part in that event to thank volunteers. I would not have publicized it or organized it. I would not have done so to prove to the members of the House that I wanted to finish out the parliamentary session on as good a note as possible. The fact that he went ahead with the event demonstrated to us once again that he showed a lack of judgment. If I were in his place, I would have said to my people that we would not hold the event to thank volunteers this year, even if the Clerk of the House had given me permission to do it.

As we all know, the Clerk of the House advises the Speaker. The Deputy Speaker knows this, because she herself has received advice from the procedural clerk and his team. However, the Clerk cannot advise the Speaker on his political judgment. He provides guidance on procedures and refers to precedents, but he cannot advise the Speaker on any political decisions involving any activities. Once again, the member for Hull—Aylmer, even as Speaker, has the right to thank his volunteers, because there will be an election next year. Let us just say that this was all very sloppy and unprofessional in terms of how it was organized and advertised and how communications were handled between his office and the political party leadership.

I think the member for La Prairie would agree that if one of us had been in the Speaker's shoes, our teams, the people around us, would have been monitoring the website where the information was going to be posted. From the moment an invitation or press release was imminent, my team would have been making calls and sending texts to ensure that what was published matched my intentions, so that this activity would not be seen as partisan or as an ad attacking the official opposition party. That was the mistake. It was not an error in terms of rules or procedure. Rather, it was an error in judgment.

• (1710)

In our discussion with the Speaker, he told me that meeting with volunteers in the middle of July or August was not easy and that is why he decided to do it in early June. That was a poor decision on top of all the other poor decisions that he has already made and that engendered mistrust.

We take no pleasure in having this discussion today, but we are all wondering what will be next. We are appealing to the judgment and the competence of his team to advise him well because the Speaker is walking a fine line, as the saying goes. He has reached the limit. There is no more room for error. He did not take the opportunity to cancel or postpone this annual event, even though he knew he was putting himself at risk. He is at risk. If we keep making the same mistake, at some point enough is enough. There is a limit, as the member for La Prairie said.

There was already a lack of trust, but to be quite frank, it is as though the Speaker and his entourage were doing everything in their power to once again make themselves the object of debate, the focus of discussion and a major distraction at the end of an intense busy session.

Earlier, a minister said that we would have to sit until midnight to get our work done. However, what we are doing today—debating and dealing with a motion asking the Speaker to step down and seeking to hold an election on Monday—is delaying the passage of bills and our legislative agenda. Members will be rising until midnight to support the motion moved earlier. As a result, we will be losing an entire day discussing the Speaker's errors in judgment.

I understand that this is a difficult situation. It is easy for the Liberals to point fingers at the Conservatives and say that, even if the Speaker had the wisdom to leave and another Speaker were appointed, the House would not change its behaviour. They would argue that no Speaker could manage the House as it currently stands because its members are so unruly and deeply disrespectful toward the Speaker and each other.

Personally, I do not subscribe to that theory. I think that if the Speaker wisely steps down of his own accord, members of the House will trust the new process and give the new Speaker a chance. It would be good to have a female Speaker to end the session, to have a woman with experience presiding over the end-of-session proceedings. The elastic has been stretched so thin for the current Speaker that, if a new Speaker were elected, I trust—and I do not say that often—that my opposition colleagues, mainly the Conservatives who, sometimes, find it hard to chill out, as the member for La Prairie would say, would understand that we are on

Privilege

the homestretch, and if a new Speaker took the chair, we would end the session much more calmly and with more discipline.

The government needs to realize that it has dragged things out for so long that the person who is suffering right now is the member for Hull—Aylmer, who feels judged and truly unliked. The truth, however, is that that is too bad for him.

• (1715)

He did not become Chair at the right time, in a context that suits the arrival of a new Speaker. We therefore ask him to leave the chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am going to quote a letter that came from the Liberal Party of Canada. It is addressed to the Speaker. It says, "I am writing to you today about an event that was posted to our Liberal website for your riding, which had language that was partisan in nature." It goes on, at the end stating, "The Liberal Party of Canada unequivocally apologizes to you for this mistake, and we take full responsibility."

The reason we are having the debate today is that incident. This letter is very clear as to who is responsible. Why has the Bloc made the decision already that because of this incident, because the Liberal Party made a mistake, the Speaker has to be censured?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I will try to speak slowly so that the member for Winnipeg North can hear the interpretation of what I am saying.

With respect to the latest events that have taken place, yes, the party president apologized for publishing an invitation to a volunteer appreciation event that had not been approved by the Speaker. What we do not understand, and what the member for Winnipeg North does not understand, is why the Speaker decided to organize this event. The second question is, why did he or his team only learn, six days after this invitation was published, that the Liberal Party had made a mistake and that it would be at the Speaker's expense because it proves that he was holding a partisan event? It seems that the team surrounding the Speaker and the Speaker himself were not paying attention; they did not sound the alarm bells. They did not explain that he was already in the hot seat and ensure that the invitation that got sent out was the one he wanted to send for the volunteer appreciation event. No, they sent out the press release and then did not pay attention. The wrong press release was published.

That is why we do not trust the Speaker. He lacks judgment and competence and he has surrounded himself with the wrong kind of people.

*Privilege**[English]*

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is quite a scenario when not just on this issue, but on numerous other issues that have been before the House the Bloc Québécois is doing more to support Canada and the institutions of our British parliamentary system than the NDP and the Liberals are. This is quite a situation we find ourselves in.

I do not know what my colleague's true intentions are. Perhaps she wants her colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel to be the Speaker twice in one session, even on a temporary basis. However, all kidding aside, because everybody likes Louis—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member cannot use the name of a member.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I know. I am sorry.

We all have EDAs, we all have riding associations and we all have care and control of these things. How hard is it as a politician not to do something, like not be partisan? How hard is that?

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, we shared the duties of whip when he was whip for the Conservative Party.

It is a combination of events. It is a string of events that have undermined and continue to undermine many parliamentarians' confidence in the Speaker. Things build up. We wonder how long the NDP and the government will tolerate these kinds of events. It is really becoming, and inordinately so, the most discussed topic in a Parliament that is supposed to finalize and complete a legislative agenda by June 21.

I will take advantage of my colleague's question to say that the Bloc Québécois wants this institution, Parliament, to work because it has the interests of Quebec to defend. Every minute that we waste, we are not present to move our issues forward and to move Quebec forward.

We have a profound respect for the institution. However, we have no tolerance for a Speaker in the chair who is not worthy of the office.

• (1720)

[English]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a pretty critical point in the legislative agenda that has come up.

[Translation]

I agree with the Bloc Québécois member and her argument that there are many bills we would like to discuss.

[English]

I appreciate that this is a critical time right now. We have a lot of legislation that we need to discuss in the House, legislation that our constituents have sent us to this place to get through. It is serious things that are so important, such as Bill C-49, Bill C-59, Bill C-70 and Bill C-64. We have two opposition day motions just this week. We are trying to deliver the help that Canadians so desperately need, including through legislation like the fall economic statement,

which the official opposition has filibustered at committee for months and which is something that would deliver a great deal of support in terms of housing.

Something I am particularly proud of as a part of that piece of legislation is actually the removal of the HST on psychotherapy and counselling services. It is something that would help those who are working within that profession, and something that I actually had a conversation about just yesterday with a psychotherapist who asked me when we would be getting the legislation passed. I said we are working on it and trying to make sure it goes through. The person I spoke to needs the fairness for the removal of the federal tax to occur. She spoke to me about how important it was for her clients to have equality within the services that are provided to them. We know, of course, that we are in a mental health crisis and that every bit of assistance helps in that regard. That is one piece of legislation that the official opposition has filibustered at the committee.

There are, of course, amendments to the Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia accord act that we need to get through. There is the foreign interference act, which is of course becoming more and more important as we move through this parliamentary session.

I do not know how many times New Democrats have to talk about how incredibly important pharmacare is. We certainly know that the official opposition does not believe that. I think about the millions of Canadians who rely upon that piece of legislation to help them afford the medications they need, diabetics in this country, and I believe there are 3.7 million of them, who need the legislation to go through so they would not have to worry about the cost of their diabetes medications and devices. So many constituents have written to me thanking me for moving that forward.

Those are the key pieces of law that we need to get moving in the House. Yes, we are sitting until midnight most nights to do that. New Democrats believe in that absolutely because it is for people that it is important. There is an opposition party determined to delay every single one of the bills. Time again, the Conservatives have obfuscated, filibustered, screamed and yelled in outrage and then attempted to delay and stall all of that progress, all of those supports. I find it unacceptable.

The fact is that what the Conservatives are now calling out, in terms of their outrage, is that the Speaker seems to have been caught up in supposed partisan activity that clearly was not of his doing. He did everything he was supposed to do, ran through the permissions that he was supposed to get, and yet mistakes were made. The partisanship that the Conservatives are so outraged about actually fuels their own partisanship fire of trying to find yet some other thing that they can hold on to, so much so that it will delay again all of the incredible supports that we need to get to people.

Privilege

• (1725)

I see this every day, whether I am at the procedure and House affairs committee or here in the House. The Conservatives are desperate to cling on to anything they can, and destroy whatever we are trying to do in the process, to show that this place does not work, because that fits into their communication strategy. I am sorry, but I am not going to allow something to fit into their communication strategy to disrupt what needs to happen for my constituents.

The member across the way for Winnipeg North did quote the letter, but I want to mention it again. We are here, in this case, over a tweet that was sent out by the Liberal Party without having consulted the Speaker. The letter is very clear. It is from the national director of the Liberal Party, apologizing very clearly to the Speaker. It states, “The Liberal Party of Canada unequivocally apologizes to you for this mistake, and we take full responsibility.”

Was there a mistake made? Absolutely. Is it horribly unfortunate? Absolutely. Are we punishing the right person in this instance? No. Should there be more vigilance on this issue? Absolutely, of course. However, calling for the Speaker's resignation is clawing to the communication strategy that benefits one group. It does not benefit the entire House. I do not agree with that. We on this side of the House do not agree with that.

We have to work on the legislation that the people have sent us to work on. We have a very important job, and I have no time for all of the bickering and squabbling. Canadians need this place to work. They need us to get to work. We can make this all about ourselves or we can make it about them. Canadians deserve that. New Democrats want to help deliver the supports they need. The work is urgent, and the official opposition just wants to delay. That is all I have to say on this matter.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member, I was thinking about programs. Through co-operation, the Liberals and New Democrats have been able to achieve some wonderful things for our constituents in dental, pharmacare, child care, disability and housing-related issues

Today we are supposed to be debating the fall economic statement, which has within it the doubling of the rebate top-up for rural Canadians. There are a lot of substantive things we could be doing to support Canadians. In good part, things are happening because of the co-operation we are getting from New Democrat members.

We can disagree on legislation, but can the member expand on why it is important to at least allow the majority of the House to get the important stuff through?

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Mr. Speaker, we are not in a unique situation in the House of Commons in trying to work collaboratively on legislation. It is not a wild idea. There are so many governments, legislatures and parliamentary institutions around the world that figure out ways of coming together to make things better. They do it through different forms of proportional representation, an issue I would love the government to have taken seriously. There is a partisan dig.

However, this is not unusual. I have said many times throughout my career that there are members within this place who think this is

about them. They are here because it benefits them. It benefits a very small number of people who already have a great deal of power and privilege. I am here in this institution to represent the people who do not have that power or privilege. I am here to try to redistribute wealth and power, because that is what democracy truly calls for. As lofty as those goals may be, and as difficult as I find incremental progress, those are the things we work together on to ensure that Canadians truly benefit.

• (1730)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know when I hear somebody give an intervention in the House and they have already arrived at a conclusion, that they fill it with blanks as to how they got there. The fact is that the New Democratic Party is an ally to the Liberal Party here in the House of Commons and is not going to vote it out at this point in time. It is not going to do anything against the party that is its lifeblood at this point in time, so let us not pretend there was any rationale there.

I will say that when I come into the House and look at the way it operates, it is ridiculous. There is a whole bunch of stuff that the government is getting completely wrong, and parliamentarians have much less input, in my opinion, than they used to have. That is wrong.

The main thing that we are talking about today is the person who sets the rules for the House. Our job as the opposition, and the member's job as part of the opposition supposedly, is to make sure those types of things, like the way this place functions, happen appropriately. That is not happening. Why will the member not admit that and try to get to a path of fixing what is becoming more and more broken? I say that with absolute clarity.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Mr. Speaker, there is a clear perspective I was talking about in my speech on what Conservatives believe is broken or what they are trying to make appear to be broken. This institution can run quite well if they allow it to do so.

What I find ridiculous is the insulting manner in which the member tried to ask his question. It is up to all of us to create the rules that govern this place, so he is wrong with respect to what he said about the Speaker's creating those rules.

We as a caucus will, absolutely, look at the motion. We will take it to caucus on Wednesday. We will discuss it. We will take the time to do so. What I find offensive is Conservatives' use, which I do not appreciate or agree with, of this institution for their own partisan games.

I am entirely clear in my mission here in the House to deliver what my constituents and the people of Canada need, and I do not believe that is the Conservative Party.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I agree with many of the things my colleague said.

Privilege

I especially agree with the fact that we are here to work for people and to get results. I am always saying that, every day. My colleague knows me well enough to know that I believe what I am saying. I am appalled by the fact that members are playing partisan politics.

However, we are currently dealing with a loss of confidence. I understood the explanations that she gave about the much-talked-about letter or message. Nevertheless, we had already lost confidence in the current Speaker because of the previous incidents that occurred. Once members' confidence has been shaken, that is a problem. We cannot look at this new situation and say that maybe it is just a little mistake because it is the first time that such a thing has happened. No. This is the third time, the fourth. With each new mistake, the doubt grows. Do we believe it when we are told that he did not see the message? I do not want to insult anyone, but I am going to give members of the House the privilege to have doubts. That is the problem.

I agree with the member that we need to get to work. Does she not think that we should deal with the confidence issue and elect a new Speaker to resolve this issue so that we can work for ordinary citizens?

• (1735)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question.

The Liberal Party of Canada made a mistake. That is what is at issue here. The Speaker did not make a mistake. The Speaker verified all communications related to this matter and got permission. It was an error made by the Liberal Party.

[English]

That is the crux of the issue today.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech. I know that neither she nor I normally likes sports metaphors, but we have something going on here that seems quite obvious: When the game starts to go badly, as it is for the Conservatives in the current Parliament, then one has two choices. In Parliament, one can either take the ball and try to disrupt the game by pulling the fire alarm or—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke has the floor.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, when things are not going well, in terms of getting things done in Parliament, we can try to up our game, make positive suggestions and seek co-operation with other parties; otherwise, we can grab the ball, pull the fire alarm, go for distractions and delay, and hope that we will somehow benefit from that in the long term. In her speech, the hon. member made the good point that, in the meantime, Canadians suffer from inflation, health crises and all kinds of other things. There is important work we can do here to help them.

As such, despite not liking sports metaphors, would the hon. member agree with me that what we have going on here is a failure to actually work on behalf of Canadians?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind sports metaphors. It is true that the Conservatives are trying to take their ball and bat and run home, but the member hit it out of the park in terms of his question. I was on the doorsteps in many elections, but in the last election, I promised my constituents that I would get real things done for them. While it is not exactly perfect, and I certainly do not love all the things that Liberals have put forward, we are doing some core, key work that will help people. Again, millions of Canadians will receive medications that they desperately need. Let us focus on that instead of ourselves.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Today is a sad day, because we cannot help but be disappointed. I will read part of the motion that was moved. It states, and I quote:

That the Speaker's ongoing and repetitive partisan conduct outside of the Chamber is a betrayal of the traditions and expectations of his office and a breach of trust required to discharge his duties and responsibilities, all of which this House judges to be a serious contempt and, therefore, declares that the office of Speaker shall be vacated effective immediately...

That is serious. We are not trying to figure out how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. This is something extremely important. The role of the Speaker of the House is the highest office in the House, so the Speaker must be beyond reproach.

For some time now, I have been hearing that the Speaker made a mistake, that these things happen. I think it could be x, y or z. The key word in the motion is "trust". What is trust? It is the ability to rely on someone else, and I will add without having to check constantly. Trust is an element of faith. Members should have faith in the Speaker. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

One mistake can happen. Three mistakes is a pattern. It is not the same thing. We have to be careful. Unfortunately, I believe that the Speaker did not understand what his role entailed. I think he wanted to take up the role and he is happy to be in it. However, I do not think he understood. We are talking about comprehension. I would like to provide a bit of background. I love to play with words. The word "comprehension" comes from the Latin "comprehendere", which means to grasp the whole situation. I do not think the Speaker has been able to grasp all that he is. His vision is a little narrow. He sees part of the whole situation, the partisan part. Having worked with the member for Hull—Aylmer on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, I can attest that partisanship is part of his terms of reference.

Members will not be surprised to learn that the Bloc Québécois is going to ask the Speaker to step down. We have not had any confidence in the Speaker since December. This is nothing new. Despite the fact that most members of the House are actively contesting them, the Speaker continues to make decisions that show a lack of impartiality and neutrality. Neutrality is rather demanding concept, but we should at least be able to expect the Speaker to be impartial. In this case, impartiality is the ability to choose for the common good. Unfortunately, we do not think that the Speaker has that quality.

We are talking about repeated errors. Let us make a distinction between three different words that deal with the same thing. What is a mistake? A mistake produces an unintentional result. If someone is following a path and takes a wrong turn and gets lost, they can backtrack and find their way again. That is fine. People can make mistakes once. It can happen once.

There is a difference between a mistake and an error. An error is when someone should have known. In these cases, the Speaker should have known. A person cannot be Speaker and assume that they can attend a function wearing their Speaker's robes without sending an implied message. That person cannot assume that a partisan message like the one recently sent by the Speaker does not have any consequences. They cannot do that. That would be an error.

There are things that are more serious than a mistake, like negligence. Negligence is when someone should have known better, but did not bother to know. They did not pay enough attention to know what they should have known. It is like saying that a doctor acknowledged symptoms, but did nothing about them. That is negligence. The Speaker's repeated negligence bothers me. As an ethicist, I am bothered by this. I believe that the Speaker, our supreme adjudicator, collectively brings us to make the right choices, to be guided the right way. Currently, because of the lack of trust, we are uncertain. The lack of trust turns into mistrust. Then we look at all of the Speaker's actions and we wonder if he is in the right place, on the right side. Mistrust does not make for a good environment. It is something that makes us too prone to looking at and questioning every action. We cannot doubt the Speaker's decisions every day.

• (1740)

I pay close attention to the Speaker's actions, and I find him extremely partisan. Some of his decisions are a bit hard to take. I am not saying that all of his decisions are partisan, I am saying that none of them should be. He is just not quite up to the task.

It always makes me smile when I hear him address members as his colleagues. A Speaker has no colleagues. The people under his authority are not his colleagues. His inability to elevate himself is exactly the problem. I am not blaming him for being partisan, but a person cannot be partisan and be Speaker at the same time. There is no overlap between the two roles. Depending on the circumstances, this would be a mistake, an error or negligence.

If we cannot trust the Speaker, or if we distrust the Speaker, what happens next? Distrust leads to defiance. Defiance is precisely what creates trouble, being unable to accept authority and then going a little overboard to compensate for too much partisanship. The issue at the centre of our debate is trust, or should I say, a lack of trust,

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which leads to defiance and, in turn, worsens an already tense situation.

I repeat that the Speaker holds the highest office and must therefore be beyond reproach. If I were in his shoes, I would be questioning myself when I stood in front of a mirror. I would be wondering if I were the right person for the job. I have a great deal of respect for the role of Speaker. It is a very important position, but one needs to be better prepared.

Earlier, my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît was saying that someone who holds the position of Deputy Speaker of the House may be in a better position to fulfill all the duties that come with the position. I think it is difficult to take someone who is very partisan, which is nothing to be ashamed of, and make them Speaker overnight. I can understand being partisan, but that is incompatible with the role of Speaker.

I think that the Speaker should make the only choice he has left, since his first choices were not very good, and decide himself to step down.

• (1745)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat disheartening how the Conservatives, in particular, along with the Bloc, have already predetermined that they want the Speaker, the individual, out of the chair.

At the end of the day, the Liberal Party of Canada has taken full responsibility for the incident that we are actually talking about. The Liberal Party of Canada apologized to the Speaker and, through that, to Canadians. It has already been done.

We are talking about punishing the Liberal Party of Canada by trying to censor the Speaker of Parliament. That is a bizarre and, in my opinion, bad thing to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North. I love to hear him speak, by the way. I feel he needs to know that.

The Conservative and Liberal members may have different motives in this case. In response to my colleague, yes, this latest oversight was the Liberal Party's fault, and it was acknowledged as such. Not every injury is fatal. There were two previous incidents. Then there are all the little, daily incidents that are not deadly sins but that still smack of partisanship.

I like the member for Hull-Aylmer. I have worked with him a lot, but I just do not think he is the right person for the job. I would think he is unhappy in this job too, because it cannot be easy being challenged like this every day.

Again, perhaps the solution is a serious dose of introspection coupled with a fairly firm invitation from our side to leave. I value the position enough to ask the Speaker to leave.

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Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and congratulate my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his remarks. Of course, when it comes to ethics, among the 338 members of Parliament, he knows a lot more than many.

As the member for Trois-Rivières said, the Speaker is not a colleague of members of the House of Commons. His role is above that. However, in the speech he gave when he became Speaker, the member for Hull—Aylmer focused a lot on the fact that we needed to elevate debates in the House and that we were here first and foremost for Canadians, which is true. As Speaker, however, is he here first and foremost for Canadians or is he also here, perhaps even first and foremost, to protect the right of all parliamentarians to express themselves properly?

We should also keep in mind that all the incidents took place outside the House. I counted five. Three specific ones were very serious, but there have been at least five.

What is, therefore, the Speaker's role in this place with respect to those he calls his colleagues?

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, things that happened outside the House nevertheless affected the Speaker's legitimacy to sit in the House. This is serious because, once again, the Chair is an important position that demands the most exemplary conduct. It is not a good look if the Speaker lacks legitimacy.

We are not the only ones who asked the Speaker to resign. Quite a few members here have done so. I realize that it may not be the majority, but even one is too many. When one person believes that the Speaker lacks legitimacy, that sends a message. When there are 100, that sends another message, and so on.

Even though the incidents occurred outside the House, I believe that the Speaker's legitimacy has been completely undermined. The conclusion is obvious.

• (1750)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as a number of speakers before us have said, we could clearly be talking about something that has more of an effect on our constituents. It goes without saying that this matter, this episode, must not be very enthralling for the public. In fact, they must be about as interested in this as they are in Denis Coderre hiking the Camino de Santiago, which says a lot.

That said, institutional mechanisms are still important. I think our colleague said that. If, in the very House itself, the Speaker no longer has the confidence of a large portion of this Parliament, it acts like a wrench thrown into an extremely precise spot in the works, causing them to break down.

Partisanship aside, the office of Speaker has some very high-level requirements. Correct me if I am wrong, but it seems to me that a Speaker cannot sit in their caucus and they must even give up their party membership. The requirements are that strict.

Why does my colleague think it is so difficult for some people to move from one role into another?

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, it is not easy being the Speaker. It is not easy to be impartial. It is not easy to strive for

neutrality. It is a hard thing to do, and that is why the position has such high-level requirements.

Although our constituents are not interested in day-to-day debate, I would say that this affects them a great deal because it affects the House, which is not working well.

Therefore, as my colleague said, I believe that the Speaker was unable to show that he had what it takes.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Because of the importance of this debate and the constitutional requirement related to members' participation, I would ask for a quorum call.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the clerk to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot now has the floor.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to emphasize—

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, recognizing the member opposite finally has Liberals and opposition members who can actually watch the member give his speech, I would encourage some of his Conservative colleagues to join in the—

The Deputy Speaker: No, we cannot underline whether someone is here or is not. The quorum call is as much as we can do. The hon. member, being a learned member of here and the Manitoba legislature, should know full well he is not allowed to do that.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech that my colleague for Trois-Rivières gave previously.

Not to suggest the presence or absence of any members, I would hope that all members take this very seriously. What we are talking about here is at the very foundation of, and the need to be able to trust in, our democratic institutions.

At committee the other day, I had the opportunity to talk a little bit about the importance of that process.

When it comes to the ballot, the election and the necessity of making sure every Canadian has that opportunity during a general election to go into that voting booth and mark a ballot, it is essential that there be trust in every step of that process. However, some things have been called into question. There have been instances of election interference, including the Communist dictatorship in Beijing pressuring members of the Chinese diaspora in Canada to vote in a certain direction. It is essential to ensure that we do everything we can to protect our democracy, and likewise in this place.

When the role of the Speaker was first contemplated in the 1300s in the United Kingdom, in the early years of the establishment of Westminster democracy, there was a deep understanding of the need for a moderating voice, so that there could be parley, so that we could have discussions and debate as opposed to simply fighting wars. The carpets are still green in the people's House of Commons. The Speaker plays an important role in that process, as it is his or her responsibility to facilitate that.

I talk about trust when it comes to ballots in a general election and how essential it is for each and every Canadian to have that opportunity to cast a ballot. That is, by extension, passed on to this place. Each and every member of Parliament has to be able to trust the institution.

Each one of us has to navigate the circumstances of politics and partisanship, while also ensuring that we serve every constituent. I have been vocal in support of the first-past-the-post system because of its simplicity and its legacy within the Westminster system. However, when constituents walk through my office door, I have never asked who they voted for. The expectation is that I will serve them and their needs and help them with casework. We may not always agree. In fact, there are many instances where I do not agree with individuals across my constituency, but never once would I put at risk that sacred obligation that I have to serve all of the people that I represent.

When there was discussion surrounding the establishment of a more formal role of Speaker, there was the acknowledgement that there had to be that moderating presence within the House of Commons to ensure that debates could take place, and for a moderating presence that could be trusted by both those who had the ability to make a change and those who would make up what we now know as the opposition; so government and opposition. Although it was not quite as formalized in those early days, and quite often ended up being the presence that pushed against, not necessarily a government, in the sense of a political party having won an election, but rather the direction that the Crown was moving the country, there had to be that voice that could be trusted by all. However, there are instances throughout the history of the Westminster system where that has not always been the case, but we have been able to build upon that history to the point where it highlights how important the role that the occupant of that chair plays.

● (1755)

It is not just in terms of the debate. That is a big part of it and that is what people see. For all of us in this place, that makes up a significant portion of the time Canadians get to know MPs, whether it be from question period, debates or the symbols that are associated with this. However, the foundation of it is trust. The privileges of members have been violated an unprecedented number of times. I have not yet had the opportunity to look into the specifics, but there have been many questions of privilege that have been raised in the current Parliament that call into question many things.

I will get to the troubling correlation that I see with that and the leadership that is attempting to guide our country right now, but Conservatives see how the sacred trust of the individual who sits in the chair as Speaker has been called into question. It is not for dislike of the individual. Many of us will have fights about policy and

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differences of opinion. In fact, I get so frustrated when I quite often hear my Liberal and NDP colleagues say that they are doing what is best for Canada and anybody who opposes them is wrong or is un-Canadian or something to that effect. That is not only insulting to me as a parliamentarian and representative of the people of Battle River—Crowfoot, but speaks to how we have to ensure that we take so seriously the obligation that we have as members of Parliament.

There has been a series of examples, and if this was the first instance, a beginner's mistake, I would understand that. I would hope that I and many others would take seriously the need to allow someone to grow in the role, but I am so concerned that this is a trend that seems to have continued over the course of the last number of months. Further to that point, these are the public instances where we are seeing a lack of impartiality. I have heard from constituents who have called that into question in other instances that have not necessarily made media attention.

Part of the sacred trust that is required for the chair occupant is that every parliamentarian needs to be able to trust that it is not only the words that are said while the Speaker takes his place in the throne at the front of Parliament, but every decision that the Speaker makes in the undertaking of those duties and many of the questions associated with that. For example, there were questions asked by the Speaker's chief of staff to the clerk to clear this in advance. There were questions asked about whether this would be appropriate. There has been a host of other concerns raised in terms of whether that partisanship can happen. We have the erosion of the ability of MPs to trust that the decisions the Speaker is making are, in fact, impartial and ultimately serve the interests of the institutions, which is what best serves, full stop, the interests of parliamentarians and, ultimately, Canadians.

I will conclude with this. One of the concerns that I certainly highlighted in the discussion after the previous Speaker's resignation, when there did not seem to be many Liberals running to the previous Speaker's defence, and who was taken to court by the Prime Minister, is that we see excuses being made. We see members quick to jump to their defence saying it is sorted, but it is not their fault. I would suggest that the Prime Minister and the leadership that he has presided over during the course of the last nine or so years has led to an erosion of trust in the very foundation of our democratic institutions.

As a result, I would suggest that we have to all take it upon ourselves to so diligently rebuild that trust that has been broken. If we do not, my fear is that so many Canadians will stop seeing themselves represented by those who take their seats in this place, and that would be an absolute travesty. We need to take this issue seriously. We need to ensure that we restore trust and, ultimately, ensure that the Speaker is able to operate in an impartial manner.

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• (1800)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like for people to do a comparison. Imagine the opposition House leader being the Speaker in Parliament and attending a Conservative fundraiser. What did the Conservative members back then say? There was not a word, zero. Looking at what was said, the Liberal Party of Canada admitted it made the mistake, not the Speaker, and fully apologized, and now the Conservatives are demanding that the Speaker be censured and kicked out of office.

The question I have for Conservatives is why they are questioning this particular Speaker, but were not prepared to question the ethical misjudgments of their current House leader when he was Speaker. A lot of people are very suspicious as to why the Conservatives are really doing this.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that more Liberals are not seized with this debate because I suspect their opinion is like that of the many within the benches of the opposition who have seen this troubling erosion of trust. The reason I can say that confidently is because I have been hearing increasingly from constituents of Liberal members who are saying that they have lost trust in the ability for the government to listen to its people.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, the member is heckling that she doubts it, but I believe there is even an email in my inbox from someone in the city of Waterloo. My question to all Liberal MPs is whether they care about power first or the institutions to which we should all serve?

When it comes to the issue we are debating here today, as the old saying goes, “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” We have seen this pattern repeated time and time again, and it is too bad that the Liberals seem so desperate to hang on to power that they refuse to acknowledge how their attempts are eroding trust in the very institutions we serve. They are ultimately eroding the trust of the Canadians we serve.

• (1805)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a thoughtful speech. He referred to this tawdry situation as being unprecedented, and he is so right. It is unprecedented in Canadian history that a Speaker would face a prima facie case of privilege in the House not once, not twice, but three times in a short period of months.

Given the fact that there have been so many Speakers in the past who, in many cases, have served for many years who have never had this kind of a case brought forward, is it not shocking that we find this to be the third time it has taken place with the current occupant of the chair? Is it not shocking that the Liberal government, the Liberal members of the House and their NDP coalition partners would not call the Speaker on this and finally agree to fire him?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I would look back at the beginning of this Parliament, and the previous Parliament, when the then Speaker was even taken to court by the Prime Minister and the

government for upholding the needed impartiality of the Chair. These questions were not asked during the 42nd Parliament, although the Liberal Party was the third party at the time, way in the back corner, but its members did not have questions about impartiality during Stephen Harper's majority government. In the three minority parliaments prior to that, where there was a Liberal Speaker presiding over two Conservative minority parliaments and a Liberal minority parliament, they did not have these questions about the impartiality of the Speaker.

I implore all of my colleagues, especially those from the Liberal benches, but specifically those from the New Democrat benches, for the sake of our institutions and for all Canadians, to let us make sure the chair occupant is able to conduct themselves in a way that is truly impartial.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I take very seriously the responsibilities bestowed upon me to represent the good people of the riding of Waterloo. The member who just spoke shared about an email he received from a constituent in the riding of Waterloo, and I would ask that he share with me those concerns because I represent the diversity of opinions—

The Deputy Speaker: That is descending into debate.

Continuing with debate, the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I will be splitting my time.

It is heartbreaking for me to have to rise in the House today to speak to a very unfortunate subject. It is heartbreaking because there are so many subjects we should be talking about in the House right now. We should be talking about public finances, the housing crisis, the fact that Canadians cannot afford groceries. Canada is a G7 country where one-quarter of people have trouble feeding themselves. However, we are here this evening to talk about the Speaker of the House of Commons. Unfortunately, in the last eight months since the member for Hull—Aylmer became Speaker, he has not been up to the task.

Frankly, it breaks my heart to say that because, if there is anyone among the 338 MPs that I like, it is the member for Hull—Aylmer. We were elected at the same time in 2015. Like it or not, MPs have a certain amount of fun with the people we are first elected with—in my case, it was my first time in the House of Commons. Every debate I have had with the member for Hull—Aylmer since 2015 has always been a passionate argument marked by great deal of mutual respect.

Unfortunately, the facts show that, since he became Speaker, he is not where he should be. I clearly remember discussions I had with him about local concerns, as he is my member of Parliament when I am in Ottawa. I specifically spoke with him about the tramway project between Ottawa and Aylmer, as well as the sixth link. We talk a lot about the third link in Quebec City, but we also talk about the sixth link here, between Ottawa and Gatineau. The Speaker is a good person, but he is not in the right place.

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Everyone here remembers that he was elected following a particularly painful event, at a time when everyone felt the need for a strong authority figure. It would be an understatement to say that he has been anything but a strong authority figure over the last eight months. Once again, I take no pleasure in saying that. There have been five incidents, all of which, in my opinion, lend themselves to scrutiny and, above all, contribute to our current lack of confidence in the member for Hull—Aylmer.

The first incident is the following. Shortly after being elected Speaker of the House of Commons, the member for Hull—Aylmer got on the phone and called a former Liberal member of Parliament to ask him to write something attacking the Conservative Party in his regular column in an English Canada paper. That is the first incident, because it is not up to the Speaker to influence partisan political debate, and especially not to call a journalist or columnist in order to influence his or her point of view. The former MP was Glen Pearson.

Then, and this is the second incident, the member for Hull—Aylmer attended a Liberal Party of Quebec partisan event with MNA André Fortin, a guy I served with in the National Assembly of Quebec. He is a man of great character whom I respect and hold in high esteem and who had a perfect right to hold a partisan event, as anyone in a political party does. The member for Hull—Aylmer, Speaker of the House of Commons, attended that partisan event. That makes no sense. A Speaker of the House of Commons must remain absolutely neutral and not attend partisan events, whether at the municipal level, the provincial level, or any other level.

Then a third, even more serious incident happened. The member for Hull—Aylmer produced a video here, in the office of the Speaker of the House of Commons, dressed in the Speaker's robes, to pay tribute to one of his Ontario Liberal Party friends. We see a lot of variation in his breach of the ethics involved in the Speaker's role. He asked a columnist to attack the Conservative Party. Then he went to a provincial Liberal Party event. Then he took part in paying tribute to a friend of the Ontario Liberal Party, and did so here, in the House, while wearing his Speaker's robes. He was found guilty and paid \$1,500—really? In my opinion, it is not about money, but about honour. He failed at the task. That was the third point.

● (1810)

The fourth incident was the following. He went to Washington to pay tribute to an old friend whom he had known through his activities as a young president of the federal Liberal Party. That was inappropriate. He could have picked up the phone to send his regards, to tell him that it was a pleasure to speak with him and wish him all the best in the future. On top of that, he went to Washington on the taxpayers' dime while the House was sitting. That was inappropriate. This did not happen in July or in early January, but while the House was sitting. We know that when the holidays come around, things are pretty busy here, but the Speaker went to an event in Washington. This was the fourth unfortunate incident.

The fifth incident occurred recently, when his riding association sent an ultra-partisan invitation to federal Liberal Party supporters in Hull—Aylmer with his name on it. He was fiercely attacking the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative Party's political ideas. That is a perfectly healthy thing to do in a political debate,

but not for the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Speaker does not attack his opponents in the last election. Unfortunately, that is what he did.

In a very short space of time, this Speaker, who should be above any reproach and partisanship, chose to dive head first into partisan politics. That has no place in this role. Three questions of privilege have been raised, but I feel there have been at least five incidents.

I also have to add the fact that he ejected the leader of the official opposition after asking him to withdraw his words, which the opposition leader did by adding words he wanted to use to replace the words he had withdrawn. That was not enough for the Speaker. He kicked him out when, a few minutes earlier, in an attack on the Conservative Party, the Liberal leader had used a very harsh word against the opposition and the Speaker simply asked him to rephrase his attacks. The Speaker has a double standard.

Today, we are grappling with very serious doubts about the Speaker's legitimacy. Unfortunately, all trust has been broken. As the Bloc Québécois members said so well earlier, more than 44% of members of the House of Commons have already publicly expressed opposition to keeping the member for Hull—Aylmer as Speaker of the House. That is almost 150 members. Unfortunately, trust is like brain cells. When they go, they are gone for good. Nothing is more important to parliamentary work than trust in the Speaker.

It gives us no pleasure to conclude that the member for Hull—Aylmer is no longer worthy of the position of Speaker. He is an honest, interesting and highly partisan man, which in and of itself is not a flaw in politics. We are all partisan. We all got elected through a team, a leader, a party and a platform. That is the very basis of partisanship. We are here to speak on behalf of the people who voted for us and the people we represent, including the ones who did not vote for us. That is one thing.

However, there is a difference between being ultra-partisan when we debate in public, and keeping only a glimmer of partisanship when taking on the role of Speaker.

I will close my remarks with the following. I will never forget what one of my friends told me. He told me that we must always seek advice from our loved ones when we are in trouble and that when we respect someone, we should not tell them what they want to hear, but what they need to hear.

I would tell the member for Hull—Aylmer to step down as Speaker of his own accord because, unfortunately, he no longer has the confidence of the House.

Privilege

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative House leader, when he was Speaker, attended a Conservative fundraiser, and there was not one word from the Conservative Party about that being wrong. Members can contrast that to a letter sent to the Speaker regarding the incident that has caused the discussion today. It reads, "I am writing to you today about an event that was posted to our Liberal website for your riding, which had language that was partisan in nature." It goes on to say, "The Liberal Party of Canada unequivocally apologizes to you for this mistake, and we take full responsibility."

I would suggest to members that there is a fundamental flaw in the Conservative argument. The real reason behind this is that Conservatives have never liked the Speaker. Their ultimate goal is to try to demonstrate, in whatever way they can, that the Parliament of Canada is dysfunctional. The only thing that is dysfunctional in this chamber is the Conservative Party of Canada.

• (1820)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, if I may say so, what the member said is flawed; he forgets something quite important. With respect to the argument of the Liberal Party, he said that it was the party's full responsibility because it uses those kinds of words when it invites people to an event. That is fair enough. However, we checked that out; one invitation was produced in exactly the same pattern, but it was only after the Hull—Aylmer Federal Liberal Association invited people. The argument was created after the fact. I say shame on the Liberal Party.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his pearls of wisdom. It is always appreciated. He demonstrated through his argument that the legitimacy is not there, that the confidence is not there, and he suggested that the Speaker can use his wisdom and make the only choice left to make.

Now, if he does not want to make that choice, what should we do then?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is a university ethics professor, and I must say that he had raised a serious question about what should happen next.

Again, I hope that the member for Hull—Aylmer does the right thing. The main winner, if he leaves the position of his own accord, will be the member for Hull—Aylmer himself. He will have broken free from a job for which he has no natural aptitude. It is not that he does not have the natural aptitude for it, but he has shown that he does not have what it takes to be the Speaker instead of an ultra-partisan MP. That is part of the political debate. He defended things that, in my view, made no sense, such as the Jody Wilson-Raybould affair, the WE Charity scandal and the Winnipeg lab debacle. That is all part of public debate.

If, by any chance, the member for Hull—Aylmer does not leave his post and does not do what needs to be done, which is step down as Speaker, there will be a vote. Hopefully then parliamentarians

will realize that when there are two parties representing 44% of members who do not have confidence in the Speaker, the only thing to do is get a new one.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have just one question for my friend opposite concerning a clarification.

He said at the end of his speech that the Speaker does not have the confidence of the House. I understand that the Speaker does not have the confidence of the Conservative Party. Is that what he meant?

As far as I know, I do not think we have voted on that yet.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, I am not one to read a prepared speech. I use notes and refer to them while I am speaking. If by any chance my remarks misled the House, I gladly and honourably withdraw them. However, in my view, once two of the four parties have stated their opposition to allowing the member for Hull—Aylmer to remain in his position, the die is cast and the burden is a heavy one.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the conversation and the debate today. I really appreciate the comments from our Conservative Party colleague. I think this is an opportunity to truly have a conversation about what we should do. It is natural for members who sit in the House to be a bit partisan. I wonder this.

The Conservatives pull the fire alarm every chance they get. We have to find a way to move forward that will ensure that the House can work properly to represent all the diversity of our country. I want to ask the member if he has any ideas. How can we improve the way we operate in the House? Does he have any ideas for ensuring that the Speaker does his job in a manner that is satisfactory to everyone?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I want to say two things. First, I say congratulations and thank you for my colleague's excellent French. I also want to tell her that to have a truly good start, we need a new Speaker.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with some sobriety that I stand and address the House today. I am rising on a question of privilege that has been raised with regard to the conduct of the main Speaker of this place.

We have yet another display of public partisanship that has been put out there for folks across the country to witness, which is that the Speaker of this place is actually featured as the main guest at a Liberal fundraiser.

We know that the individual who occupies the chair has been given a trusted position. He has been elected by those in this place to make sure that the rules here are adhered to in a non-partisan and an equally applied fashion. This individual has been put in that spot, yes, through an election in this place; however, just as importantly, there is a historical precedent that also needs to be taken into account.

Based on that historical precedent and based on what we call the green book in this place, which are the Standing Orders that govern it, the Speaker is called upon not only to function in an impartial manner and but also to avoid any instance of even appearing not to be impartial.

The fact that the Speaker was stated to be the focus of this fundraising event, making him the main draw of fundraising dollars for the Liberal Party of Canada, is actually incomprehensible to some extent. However, it is the Liberal government in power, and this is certainly not the first breach. It is disheartening, for sure, but it is also altogether disgusting, actually, to see this individual function in that capacity, when he has been given such trust by this place.

In Canada, we believe that no one is above the law. Likewise, in the House, no one should be treated as though they are above the rules and practices of this place, especially the Speaker. The Speaker is the individual who applies the rules of the House. Therefore, the Speaker should be modelling those rules for other individuals who occupy a seat in this place. When he fails to do so and, instead, actually exploits his position, it is called an abuse of power. We have to call him to account on that.

As Conservatives, we are standing today, and I know that we have the support of the Bloc and, I am hoping, the NDP, to hold the Speaker to account with regard to his actions and call him to a higher standard.

Members will recall that this is actually not the first time we have had to do this; there have been a number of other times. Let us explore the most recent one, shall we?

We know that the Liberal Party of Canada was advertising something they called “A Summer Evening with the Honourable [Speaker].” The promotional material for this event used very partisan and even inflammatory language toward the Leader of the Opposition. I will read it into the House record, so we all know what I am talking about. The invitation said: “Join us for an event in your community - you don't want to miss it!

“It's an exciting opportunity to join fellow Liberals and talk about the ways we can continue to build a better future for all Canadians - because a better future starts with you.

“While [the Leader of the Opposition] and the Conservatives propose reckless policies that would risk our health, safety, and pocketbooks our Liberal team is focused on making life more affordable for Canadians and moving forward with our bold plan to grow an economy that works for everyone, protect our environment, keep our communities safe, and so much more.

S. O. 57

“Especially in a minority Parliament, we can never take our progress for granted. Together, with your hope and hard work, we can keep Canada moving forward.”

This was a direct attack on the Leader of the Opposition and a celebration of the Liberal Party of Canada. Could it be more partisan?

It was the Speaker of this place who was put as the lead, in terms of the promotional material that was put out there. This is an individual who has been trusted to guide this place and to make sure that we are adhering to the rules; however, he himself cannot do so. Again, I will highlight the fact that this is not the first time.

● (1825)

Interestingly, since Conservatives raised this concern, the invitation has been taken down. It can no longer be found, because the Liberals must conduct themselves in the way they always do. That is, they deny it until they can no longer do so. They then try to cover it up and pretend it did not happen.

However, it did happen, and it is not the first time. Another time, just a couple of months ago, the Speaker was at another fundraising event. It was a cocktail fundraiser. It was a dinner that time—

● (1830)

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. government House leader.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food:

That the debate be now adjourned.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food:

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

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the consideration of the motion on the question of privilege raised by the member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie on May 27, I wish to give notice that, at the next sitting of the House, a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

Government Orders

[English]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House resumed from May 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we came to Parliament this morning, we had anticipated that we would be able to talk about some of the needs that Canadians have, and what we see day after day coming from the official opposition are ways in which it can prevent the government from passing important legislation.

It is interesting. Right now, we are dealing with Bill C-59, which is the fall economic statement. I would like the members of the Conservative Party to start looking in a few mirrors, and they would see that they are not reflecting something that Canadians truly want to see take place. As opposed to the Conservative Party's wanting to have a proactive chamber that helps, assists and supports Canadians, they want to prevent virtually any and all legislation from passing. The only way in which the government can get the Conservatives onside with legislation, where they will actually look at any form of seeing it go through without great opposition to it, is if they are shamed into doing it. If the Conservatives are not shamed into doing the responsible thing, more often than not what we will see is a Conservative Party that will do whatever it takes in order to prevent legislation from passing, and we see that in many different forms. We saw some of that even earlier today, when the Conservatives' focus was more on the issue of character assassination than on dealing with the important issues.

What would Bill C-59 do, as an example? One would think that the Conservatives would be a bit more sympathetic to the needs of rural Canadians. Within this legislation, we have the doubling of the top-up for the rebate. That is within the legislation. This legislation should have passed late last year. It is interesting that the Conservatives will stand up and say that we cannot pass legislation and, at the end of the day, it is the Conservative Party that has not realized what Canadians expect of an opposition party in a minority situation.

At the end of the day, we recognize the importance of Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. We recognize the importance of generation X and the millennials and the needs that they actually have. Whether it is the budget or the fall economic statement, which we are debating today, the Conservatives, day after day, continue to do what they can to prevent the legislation from passing, as opposed to a government that understands and brings forward legislation that is truly reflective of the values and the needs of Canadians.

I have had the opportunity here and there to add some thoughts in regard to that issue and how we bring forward a budget or the budget implementation bill in the manner in which it is brought forward. We have a Liberal caucus with members of Parliament who consistently are in the communities we represent, often bringing

ministers into the constituencies, not only where we represent but even beyond that, so we can funnel back into Ottawa the ideas and the thoughts that we are hearing from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Therefore, when people look at the important legislation, like budget implementation acts or budget bills in general, people will see that they are a reflection of what we have been told when talking to Canadians and the different stakeholders throughout the country.

• (1835)

That is one of the reasons why we find, more often than not, that Conservatives will actually avoid talking about the substance of the legislation in many ways. They try to cheapen the policy debates and discussions that we have inside the chamber in favour of talking about things like, let us say, bumper stickers and the ideas that they have going forward into the next election. How often do we hear the Conservatives saying they are going to axe the tax? That is it. That is their number one bumper sticker.

We had a party annual general meeting in downtown Winnipeg this past weekend, and I was on one of the MP panels. I was asked a question about how I, as a member of Parliament, would respond to the Conservative Party's simple message of axing the tax. In responding, I said that people need to realize that as a Liberal government, we talk about how we care about Canadians. We talk about things like the dental plan and the pharmacare plan. We talk about the first-ever disability program. We talk about how we are investing in housing. Liberals talk about caring for people. We talk about caring; the Conservatives talk about cutting. If I was to try to amplify that to my constituents, I would be emphasizing the contrast: Conservatives cut; Liberals care. That, to me, is the contrast that we need to say to Canadians is very real and very tangible. I do not say that lightly.

We negotiated with the different provinces about the issue of child care. As an example, going into a federal election, we had a number of signed agreements, and the Conservative Party said it was going to rip up those agreements. Conservatives did not support the child care program. Shortly after the election, we continued to push the issue of child care. At the end of the day, every province and territory came on board. As a direct result, we have a national child care program, as a result of this government. It is reflective of what we were hearing, not only at the doors during the election, but also in between elections. That is a message, as I said, that we brought here to Ottawa. That is how we formulate budgets and fall economic statements. The Conservatives do not support the child care program that we have put forward. They do not support \$10-a-day child care. We saw that in terms of going in and going out of the last federal election, because they said they would rip it up. When I spoke to Liberals in the province of Manitoba, that was the type of thing that I talked about. We need to talk about that contrast.

When the Conservative Party says it is going to axe the tax, what it wants to do is misrepresent the facts. There is a rebate. There is a doubling of the top-up rebate for rural Manitobans and rural Canadians. That is there. They are not receiving that because the Conservatives refuse to pass Bill C-59, the fall economic statement. Take a look at the amendment the Conservatives proposed. I think this is the bill where they proposed to delete the short title or some silly thing like that. Why? It is not only because they want to be able to hear me speak more on the issue. It is because they do not want the bill to pass.

● (1840)

There are other aspects within the legislation and within budgetary measures. Let us do the contrast. Let us talk about the misinformation and that whole doubling of the top-up for the rebates. It is a major issue. It is about the environment. It is about getting more money in the pockets of 80% of Canadians, but that is not the messaging that the Conservatives talk about. Even though it is the truth, it is not the messaging. Instead, they say they are going to get rid of the price on pollution or the carbon tax; they are going to kill the carbon tax. Not all provinces have the carbon tax. There is British Columbia, as well as the Province of Quebec; that is a fairly significant percentage of the population in Canada. For those that do, like my home province of Manitoba, 80% of the constituents in Winnipeg North will receive more money as a direct result of the price on pollution. What does that really mean? Sure, there is a carbon tax component to it, but there is also the carbon rebate, and 80%-plus of my constituents are going to receive more money back through the rebate than they are actually paying out in the tax. Why have the program? It is time that polluters paid.

There is a certain element there that we need to amplify, in terms of how we care about the environment and the Conservatives do not. They do not have an idea. They used to. In fact, 95% of the Conservative Party that is sitting over there today, in the last federal election, knocked on doors with a Conservative platform. Inside that platform, if people read it, they will see that the Conservatives actually supported a carbon tax. It was the Conservative Party and its former leader, not the leader before this leader, but the leader before this leader's leader, Erin O'Toole. When Erin O'Toole was the leader, it was a part of his election platform. In his election platform, he went around telling Canadians he was going to have a price on pollution or he was going to put in a carbon tax, but that has changed.

Let us take a look at other things where we can contrast the Government of Canada and the Liberal Party with what the opposition is actually saying. We have a dental care program, which started off with children. Legislation was brought in to support that, whether it was the economic statements or the budget statements, and we appreciate the support that comes from the New Democrats on this, as they have been very strong advocates.

At the end of the day, the dental program is a program that is helping a lot of children. When I spoke on the legislation dealing with this, I can recall talking about how this program would help prevent children from having to go into emergency because of dental-related issues and not getting those issues dealt with. This is going to enable so many more children to get the type of dental services they need, at least in part. The Conservatives opposed that.

Government Orders

We expanded the dental program. The dental program is now also for those 65 and over. I believe that is what it is at right now, and for individuals with disabilities. It is all being rolled out. We are talking about thousands of people who have already benefited from this particular program, and the Conservatives are going to take it all away.

These are the types of examples that I use when I talk about how Liberals care and Conservatives cut. That is the reality.

● (1845)

I cited a couple of examples. I could have talked about housing-related issues and the initiatives the Liberal government has taken. I would challenge any member opposite to tell me another national government that has done more in terms of supporting Canada's housing industry. I can save them the research and tell them, quite frankly, that it has not happened. The government has led the way in working with municipalities, provincial governments, non-profit groups and indigenous people in ensuring that we have a better future with respect to housing and the crisis that we are having to face. Contrast that to the cuts that the Conservative Party is proposing. These are the types of things that really matter to Canadians.

We are aware of the concerns in regards to affordability. When the world was facing inflation, throughout, Canada did reasonably, actually some would argue exceptionally, well in comparison to the G7 countries or even the G20 countries. We did exceptionally well, but we still hit, I believe in June 2022, just over 8%, and it caused a great deal of pain and concern across the country. We reinforced the importance of the Bank of Canada. At the time, the Conservatives were critical of the Bank of Canada. They do not see what is happening around the world and the impact, yet they jump up so easy like jelly beans, and they yell and blame and say how Canada is broken. In reality, they should do a comparison to other countries around the world. From the point of being over 8% back in the summer of 2022 to today, we have now had four consecutive months of reasonable inflation, and it is going down. I think it is down to 2.7%, which is going to help Canadians. It will hopefully lead the way to getting some sort of interest relief in the coming months. However, they try to give a false impression, which is what Conservatives do all the time, but Canada is not broken. Compared to other countries around the world, we are doing well, but we need to continue to improve where we can.

Putting this budget implementation to the side, we can look, from my perspective, at one of the most powerful statements from the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister, which was when she talked about foreign investment coming into Canada. Canada, on a per capita basis, is number one in the G7, and of all the countries in the world, we were number three on foreign direct investment in the first three quarters of 2023. There is a reason for that.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was just heckled, and it was not parliamentary.

Government Orders

However, I would tell members that we are creating opportunities that would not be there if the government was not prepared to get involved. I am thinking about the tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs, green jobs, dealing with things such as Volkswagen, Honda and Stellantis, and that is just here in Ontario, in eastern Canada. This industry is being highly motivated to expand because of, in part, the Douglas Ford provincial government, which is a Progressive Conservative government, and I underline the word “progressive” as opposed to the Conservative reform we have here in Ottawa. Working with the government, we are creating those types of opportunities because we are committed to working for Canadians and to having their backs, building a stronger, healthier economy. We have a government that genuinely cares and that is not focused, like the Conservatives are, on cuts.

• (1850)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Winnipeg North on his inaugural speech in the House. I laugh because he talks so much about delaying legislation, but I do not think anyone has delayed more legislation in the history of the House than the member has with the amount of time he takes up when speaking.

The member talked about foreign direct investment. Today, at the government operations and estimates committee, also known as the mighty OGGO, we heard testimony that one of the problems Canada is facing is that for every dollar of foreign direct investment, we are seeing two dollars to three dollars flee the country in divestment. I wonder if the member opposite can tell us what the Liberals are doing that has damaged the country so badly that for every penny coming in, the government is scaring three pennies out of the country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one has to always be somewhat careful when talking about statistics. Let me give an example. Stephen Harper was prime minister for 10 years of government, and just under a million or maybe a million jobs were created. We have created over 2.1 million jobs in the same amount of time that Stephen Harper did. That is more than double in the same amount of time as Stephen Harper had in government. That is a pretty important stat, I would suggest.

It is also important to ask why. If we are number one on a per-capita basis in the first three months last year, there has to be a reason. I would suggest that, at least in part, it is because Canada is recognized as a real leader when it comes to trade. No other government in the history of Canada has signed off on more trade agreements with countries than this government. We see the value and the benefits of trade. The Conservatives, on the other hand, were the only ones who voted against the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, interestingly enough.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-59 includes more than \$12 billion for carbon capture by western oil companies. It also includes \$18 billion to help oil companies buy nuclear power plants, known as small modular reactors, to replace the natural gas used to heat the oil sands with polluted water, so that they can save the gas and export it instead, particularly through the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

Bill C-59 gives the oil industry about \$30 billion. Is that the Liberals' environmental plan?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one thing we have recognized since 2015 is that we need to, as an economy, look at ways to build greener jobs and to make those types of investments. The Government of Canada has done astronomical work in being successful at doing that, in terms of investing money. In working with different levels of government and with different stakeholders, there are so many examples I could give to demonstrate that.

Having said that, there are things today that we need to at least respect, to continue to develop and to work on going forward. When we look at the oil and natural gas industry, I believe we are in fact on the right track. We provided a lot of subsidies, for example, for orphaned wells, cleaning up the environment. Do Bloc members consider cleaning up the environment and dealing with orphaned wells a subsidy? If so, would they then say that we should not be cleaning up orphaned wells? I think it is healthy for the environment to do that and to invest in that sort of thing.

• (1855)

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member mention many investments. I am happy to talk about housing at all times. There is a rapid housing initiative breaking ground in Richmond, British Columbia, and I would like to know if the member can talk a bit more about what the impacts of housing investments will be across Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I started to talk about how important it is, as members of Parliament, that we get a sense of what is happening in our communities and that we bring those concerns here to Ottawa. I appreciate that it is exactly what the member has done on the issue of housing. As a result, what we see is a government that is looking at not only supporting one area but also supporting a multitude of areas where we recognize housing as being an issue.

We need to work in our communities to bring in programs such as the accelerator fund. We need to be able to ensure there is affordable housing. We need to ensure there is infrastructure being built. We do this, in good part, by working with the different levels of government and by looking at communities, like the City of Winnipeg, which I think is investing around \$122 million to help the city to look at zoning and look at ways in which it can make modifications to hopefully build homes faster.

The government is looking at ways we can use federal land banks to build homes faster and looking at ways we can provide purpose-built rentals that are GST-free so that more apartments can be built. These are the types of things being done because we have members like the one who just asked the question and raised this very important issue.

Government Orders

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned orphaned wells. When a company goes under, I can understand potentially helping communities clean that up. However, I am curious why the government decided to give out money to companies that are actually making record profits right now and that could be cleaning up their own orphaned wells and why it has also refused to put in the conditions that would make polluters pay. Making polluters pay is a principle the government should stand behind, but instead, it actually pays polluters. It hands out billions of dollars to profitable oil and gas companies. The government is not getting support for the oil and gas industry right. It is buying pipelines, handing out fossil fuel subsidies and missing every single target.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I probably do not have enough time to answer the question in the detail I would like, with regard to having a price on pollution and so forth, but I will pick up on the point about orphaned wells. We all need to recognize that there are orphaned wells and that it is very damaging to our environment. These wells have been there for generations. It is a question of whether we collectively, here in Ottawa, want to take some sort of action that is going to ensure that those orphaned wells are being addressed. If that means the federal government needs to be able to contribute in order to make that a reality, I think it is money well spent. There does need to be a higher sense of accountability from some of our oil companies. I have full confidence in our ministers, whether it is the natural resources minister or the Minister of Environment, to ensure there is a higher sense of accountability going forward on issues such as orphaned wells and the ways in which we can continue to diminish emissions.

● (1900)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thought the member for Victoria said “Orson Welles”, and I found a quote from Orson Welles on politics, which reminds me of the member for Winnipeg North: “I have all the equipment to be a politician. Total shamelessness.” I think that is my colleague across the way.

Coming back to the actual issue being debated, Bill C-59, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, in his commentary about the fall economic statement, commented about the lack of transparency from the Liberal government being a concern. One issue I have noticed in the departmental results, which are part of the estimates process, which is eventually part of the statement, is that we see various departments such as the Department of Indigenous Services did not have 67% of its goals set for its priorities. For Veterans Affairs, it was 70%, and for Environment, it was 40%. I wonder if the member could comment on the lack of transparency from his own government on this important issue.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question but I am going to deviate from it and talk about how important it is that the Conservatives actually reflect on just why it is that they feel the particular piece of legislation before us should never see the light of day. They continue to filibuster it endlessly, and I am very grateful that we have some opposition parties that recognize the importance of getting the legislation through the House so Canadians could benefit by its passage.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise tonight to talk about the fall economic statement. I came in here actually prepared to talk about the question of privilege. I am shocked that the government would shut down debate in the House on a question of privilege over the partisan activities of the Speaker. Our House of Commons, our institution, is being discredited and undermined by the Chair, the Speaker of the House of Commons. We have to continue to have a fulsome discussion on that, so I am disappointed that the government would use its power to force debate on Bill C-59, the fall economic statement. Last time I looked, it was May 27, and here we are talking in the summer about the fall economic statement from 2023.

I am going to be splitting my time with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

As Conservatives, we have said all along that we want to make sure that we build the homes, axe the tax, fix the budget and stop the crime. The government has no intention of doing any of that. We know that housing in this country is in a desperate situation, that in the nine years under the Liberal-NDP coalition, the cost of rent has doubled, the cost of mortgages has doubled and the number of housing starts is below that of what we did in 1976.

We say we want to axe the tax, and that is very important to my riding. I was just meeting with some cattle producers from Manitoba, including from my riding, and they were telling me over and over again that every time they have to pay the carbon tax, every time the carbon tax is hidden in all the supplies they buy, it all trickles down, and that means that they are getting less and paying to the government more. Of course when they sell their cattle, for which right now, thankfully, the price is at record highs, people are complaining about the price of beef on the store shelf.

One has to remember that the coolers that store shelves have their beef in are often powered through thermal electricity or natural gas. We know that this adds an extra cost to the price of beef. We know that in the transportation of that beef from the farm to the packer and from the processor to the retailer, it all gets added in and consumers are paying more. Of course, they cannot afford it.

We are going to fix the budget because the government continues to run up huge national debt and larger-than-ever deficits that are actually going to hurt each and every one of us. We know that the Governor of the Bank of Canada has said that this has not been helpful in controlling inflation. It has not been helpful in its being able to bring down interest rates. Of course every time we have a Trudeau as prime minister, we pay record-high interest rates.

With my first farm, which I bought back in 1984 under the former Trudeau, the interest rate on my mortgage was 21%, which was pretty high and pretty impossible, almost, for a 19-year-old young farmer to get going. I had to eat that at the bank because of the out-of-control spending by the Liberal government at the time, from 1980 to 1984. Our young people today are paying the cost because of out-of-control spending and little care for the economic performance of the country under the Liberal-NDP coalition.

Government Orders

Of course, we have to stop the crime. The government has, for nine years, ignored the plight of Canadians who are dealing with increasing criminal activity, including violent crime, which has gone up by over 32% across the country, including in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman and including in the city of Winnipeg, where the member for Winnipeg North resides.

We see, over and over again, repeat offenders generating 90% of the crimes that are being committed against Canadians. We want safer communities, and that is why as Conservatives under the leadership of our leader, the member for Carleton, we will implement jail, not bail, and keep violent repeat offenders, those who are perpetrating crimes, behind bars and actually reduce crime across the country.

As members know, I am the shadow minister for national defence. I am very concerned by the way the government has ignored our Canadian Armed Forces and how it has gone from a proud, honoured institution to where it is now, again, in a decade of darkness, which occurred, of course, under the Chrétien era. We are living that again. Members and veterans of the armed forces have told me that they are actually in a decade of disaster because of the dithering and delays being carried out by the current government.

• (1905)

We know for a fact that the world has gotten much more dangerous. We know, and it is not just because of Russia's invasion in Ukraine, that we are seeing increased sabre-rattling by the Kremlin with NATO members in the Baltic region, which we just witnessed this past week with its redrawing of boundaries along Estonia and Russia and between Finland, Sweden and other Baltic nations with Russia. That type of aggression and provocation by President Vladimir Putin and his kleptocrats in Moscow continues to undermine our security.

We know that the Communist regime in Beijing and the People's Liberation Army continue to sabre-rattle with Taiwan. The rhetoric coming out of Beijing this past week after the inauguration of Taiwan's new president was deplorable. We know that its ongoing aggression against the Philippines in the South China Sea and around the Second Thomas Shoal continues to undermine security co-operation and peace and prosperity within that region. We know that Japan, South Korea and other Indo-Pacific countries are more and more concerned about China's growing disturbances in the region.

We know that the government has failed to make the investments in the Canadian Armed Forces to meet our NATO target, and the Washington Summit is coming up. There has been a lot of concern expressed by our allies, especially since the defence policy update came out, that there is no plan to meet the NATO target.

The Minister of National Defence has said that the Canadian Armed Forces is in a death spiral. He has said that our equipment is worn out and unsustainable. At committee today, the Minister of National Defence said that our Victoria-class submarines are no longer serviceable. We know that the greatest proliferation of weapons systems in this country outside of air-breathing missiles, which are hypersonic; intercontinental ballistic missiles; and the advancement of more cruise missiles and drones, outside of that domain, the next biggest growing proliferation of weapons is submarines. The best way to defend against a submarine is to have a

submarine, and the minister is saying today, essentially, that we no longer have serviceable submarines to defend Canada in our maritime approaches.

We have to make sure that we are standing up for our troops. The minister said that we are short 6,700 housing units. We hear stories of members of our Canadian Armed Forces living rough. They are living in cars, tents and campers. They are couch-surfing in places like Halifax, Esquimalt and Toronto. We know that they need to have proper housing.

We cannot recruit because the government, under the NDP-Liberal coalition, has not put the troops first and foremost in its minds, making sure they get the kit they need. The government will say that it gave a recent raise, but in giving that raise it also increased the rent of military housing. We actually passed a motion here just two weeks ago calling on the government to reverse that decision. Of course, the Minister of National Defence and the Liberals voted against it. This has affected our recruitment capabilities, and that is why we are still short 16,000 troops.

We know that readiness continues to be undermined. All of us remember Gen. Andrew Leslie, a former army commander who was also the whip for the Liberals for some time. He has come out and stated that he is “not aware of any other [NATO] army, which will be deploying troops to the front line of a possible confrontation with Russia, who are not 100 per cent trained according to a variety of battle test standards.”

He is saying that the defence policy update, the most recent budget by the Liberals and the main estimates that we are dealing with at committee have undermined our overall readiness. We are now at only 61% standing ready. We are not training our troops like we are supposed to be at CFB Wainwright in Alberta before we deploy to places like Latvia. We are no longer doing fighter pilot training in this country. We have farmed that out to places like the United States and Italy. We do not have base training here. We do not even have enough pilots in the Canadian Air Force to fly our current fleet of fighter jets.

I would just say that based upon the comments we heard just this past week from multiple U.S. senators and from the ambassador, Canada is an outlier in NATO. Eighteen percent of the countries will meet the 2%, and 13% have a plan to get to 2% within the next couple of years. Canada is the only country that will never make it, and that is because we have a Prime Minister who actually said that we will never be at 2%.

Government Orders

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-59, the government is creating a new department, the department of housing, infrastructure and communities. None of those areas fall under federal jurisdiction. This means the minister can interfere more, impose conditions on the provinces and municipalities, and cause more bickering and delays.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau already tried this in 1971. He created a similar department, and it was a total failure. During the department's existence, there was nothing but bickering until it was shut down in 1979.

Does my colleague agree that when the Liberals do the same thing over and over again, it really seems like a farce?

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that everything the Liberals have done on housing has been a joke. They have not built any new homes. We have seen that housing starts across this country have failed. They continue to reward gatekeepers rather than getting them out of the way. They refuse to work with provinces, and they continue to tread on provincial jurisdiction. The one place where they can actually make investments is in military housing on military bases, which is on federal land. They have not done that.

In the budget that we have before us right now, the government says that we are short 6,700 houses. The government has built only 38 military homes in the last two years, and the budget has zero dollars for military homes. In the forecast for the next budget, under the DPU, there are zero dollars for building military housing. We know that, going forward in the next five years, the government has only \$8 million to build houses. How would \$8 million over five years build 6,700 homes? We will be lucky if it builds 20 houses. It is a joke.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the member could reflect on his comments. He said that we have not used military land to build houses. There was something called Kapyong barracks in the city of Winnipeg that he may want to reflect on. That was on military land.

He talks about a government that is not investing in housing. That is mind-blowing in terms of the degree to which we have invested in housing. He also said that we do not work with other governments. I cannot believe the member said that, as we have had so many announcements with municipalities and provinces. Where has the member been sleeping? There has been an incredible amount of work and cooperation that we have been getting from different levels of government.

Why should Canadians believe what the member is saying if he is so factually incorrect in a very short answer?

• (1915)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see Kapyong barracks under the control of Treaty No. 1, because I know the first nation will get houses built. It will be doing it on its own without any

assistance from the federal government. It can do it under its own rules and regulations and build the homes.

That is what we are seeing right across this country, including in places like Vancouver. The government continues to reward gatekeepers rather than get them out of the way. Despite all of the announcements the government has made, and it makes great announcements, the government has not built one single home. I actually used one of the government's announcements to build a really nice paper home, and that is about the only home that the government has been able to build, thanks to my hard work and its piece of paper.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague brought up the issue around crime. Last month was the tragic one-year anniversary of a young mother and her young child being murdered on the streets of Edmonton by a man who had just been released on bail after assaulting a young girl and another person while he was out on parole after stabbing someone randomly and charged with attempted murder. He was out on parole after also trying to stab someone to death while also out on bail on four different violent assault charges.

The Liberals introduced Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, soft-on-crime bills. I wonder whether the member could perhaps give some feedback on why he thinks the Liberal government is prioritizing the rights of criminals instead of innocent victims.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I just have to express my sympathies to the family that lost its loved ones in that murder. The government has never put victims first. It has always stood up for the criminal, and it is trying to reduce the number of incarcerations. We know that those who work at Corrections Canada do great work in making sure that we are kept safe and that people who are incarcerated are getting the support and help they need to reintegrate into society when they have served their sentence.

However, the government continues to do bail instead of jail, and that has undermined our country. It has made us more unsafe, and our communities are being terrorized by repeat violent offenders whom the Liberal-NDP coalition continues to put on our streets instead of behind bars.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budget impacts people, as do the decisions being made here by the Liberals and the NDP. They impact everyone in this nation, and it is not for the great, at all. The Governor of the Bank of Canada, who was appointed by the Liberals, said that this is “the worst budget since...1982”. Why would he say that?

Government Orders

I can tell members that the people I am talking to on the streets, in their homes and at their businesses are having a tough time. I think of Tyler. He bought a place and was paying \$1,600 a month for his mortgage. Now that he has had to renew, it is costing him \$4,000. He has no choice but to sell his home.

I think of Candis, who told me that she cannot afford to buy new clothes for her kids. Even signing up for sports is a challenge. That is just because of how much more difficult things have become financially for millions of Canadians.

I think of Shaffi, who showed me on his app what his payments are now. He is a worker at Seaspans in North Vancouver. He told me that his mortgage has gone up astronomically. It is now \$7,528. He says he has no freedom. He is working seven days a week, 10 hours a day and cannot give his body a rest, or he will lose his home. He said that it is not a fancy home, about 30 or 40 years old. However, the consequences of the Liberals' out-of-control spending is being felt.

It was not that long ago that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance asked what the problem was with borrowing money as it is pretty much free. The interest rate was at 0.25%. Now it has gone up to 5% or 6%, and the Bank of Canada rates are being passed on to the people who are renewing their mortgages. Those who were first affected, immediately affected, were those who had variable rates, but those who now have to renew their mortgage are having to make really tough decisions as to what to do.

I know in British Columbia, 37,000 people moved to Alberta because of the cost of living, the cost of housing, the cost of gas and the cost of everything. They are finding it very hard. That has a lot to do with the Liberals, supported by the federal NDP, and the decisions of the B.C. NDP government under David Eby. It is tough. People only have so much disposable income and only so many hours of the day to be able to work.

I talked to one lady, who has a business, at an event with the Rotary last week. She said that she has never seen it so bad. Her clientele is shrinking, and it is much worse now than it was even under COVID, as people do not have that income.

Conservatives have brought forward a motion to axe the tax and give Canadians a break over the summertime. The NDP and the Liberals have voted that down. In B.C., gas is hovering about or just below \$2 a litre. That is money that is a very scarce commodity at this point with the cost of housing and everything else.

● (1920)

Let us not forget the tremendous increases we have seen over the past few years with inflation in the cost of food. As well, people are not going to restaurants like they used to. A restaurant near where I live here in Ottawa just closed. It has been there for many years and it just does not have the clientele anymore. It is because people do not have the disposable income that they used to have.

I have gone on a number of visits to work sites throughout British Columbia where the leader of the Conservative Party has spoken. There are blue-collar workers there. The response from them is that they are very attentive because of the Conservative

plan. Our leader is aware of and is speaking to the issues they are facing.

I was on Vancouver Island, and I was talking to a gentleman. He actually was a cabinet minister under a previous B.C. NDP government. He now has a Conservative membership, and not only does he have a Conservative membership, but he is also on the board. He said that the NDP has totally left the working-class people. It has become so woke on issues, and it is not talking about the bread-and-butter issues Canadians are facing.

Ahmed Yousef was the Liberal candidate I ran against in the last election. He recently told me he will be voting for me in this election. He says the Liberals have just lost it. They have gone so far in their mismanagement, in their spending and in the decisions they are making, that the candidate I just ran against will be voting for me.

A previous president in my riding told me a few days ago that he will be writing a cheque for the riding association. Why is that? He says this is not the Liberal Party of Chrétien or of Martin. This is a Liberal government that has gone right off the rails. It has gone right off the rails economically and right off the rails considering where Canadians are at.

The Canadian standard of living is going down. If we look at the numbers for past years, our per capita income is going down as opposed to going up. We are now at, I believe, two-thirds of what the per capita income is in the United States. Why is this? A lot of this is because of the bad decisions made by Liberal and NDP members, and poor priorities. One example is waste. They have been a tremendous basket case for waste.

I think of the TransCanada pipeline. This was a pipeline going from Alberta to the coast, and it was under the private sector. It was not going to cost taxpayers anything. However, through delays and everything else, Kinder Morgan was going to be paying about \$7 billion to have it done. It sold its share, and the Liberals have now spent approaching \$35 billion to \$40 billion of taxpayers' money to get a pipeline through. It should have cost taxpayers nothing. All of that is taxpayers' money.

This sort of thing impacts us. We are spending as much in interest on servicing the debt as we are on health care. We are spending more than we are on national defence. That waste and that overspending has led to increased deficits and debt, which means we have less money to put toward things that are important to Canadians, and we have to service the debt.

One thing is for sure. Conservatives will be voting against the fall economic statement as well as the budget, and I hope the other parties will as well.

Government Orders

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

• (1925)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member, in his very last thought, really shows a contrast. The Conservatives are going to vote against the fall economic statement, and they are going to vote against the budget. The Conservatives are all about cuts, and let us be very clear that, as the Liberal Party of Canada continues to show clearly that we care and provide substantial supports to Canadians in all regions of the country, all the Conservatives want to do is put on their bumper sticker “We cut”. Whether it is taxes or the programs that are going to help seniors get medications and dental care, these are the types of programs they are going to be cutting.

The question is this: Does the member feel confident? He was bold to say he was going to vote against these budgets. Does he feel confident that his constituents feel comfortable in him providing these types of cuts?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, what the Liberals are about is increases, such as increases to the food banks, where in one month we saw two million visits, and now we have more than 1 million people going to the food banks. Why is that? It is because they are not only incompetent in their fiscal management, but also destroying our economy with their anti-resource drive. There has been a loss of jobs and a loss of investment happening across the nation.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, on the question of cutting things, we are being told by our constituents that the thing they want cut is the number of Liberal government seats, but the reality of what people are telling us is that the costs are significant and the carbon tax is really brutal. As the government, in its budget, continues to want to increase it, I am hearing from my constituents about cutting the carbon tax. Is that something my colleague is hearing about with the challenges of a redistribution wealth scheme versus an environmental plan?

• (1930)

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, certainly the residents in my community, and across British Columbia and Canada, are saying they have had enough of this carbon tax, and they want to axe the tax. I cannot say how many people are phoning my office or meeting me and saying that they were voting for the NDP, or were voting for the Liberals, and they are not doing it again because of their poor management. The carbon tax is a case in point. If one looks at the facts and they realize that things are not working, they change their way of going.

There is a carbon tax, and we are against that because it is not working. It is not a climate plan; it is a tax plan.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

From what I understand, there has been consensus among the parties for unanimous consent for me to present the questions on the Order Paper. If we can get that affirmed, I will do that.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2517 and 2523.

[Text]

Question No. 2517—**Mr. Gerald Soroka:**

With regard to the impact of the carbon tax on school boards, divisions, and educational institutions across Canada, since 2019: (a) how many school boards, divisions, and educational institutions have been consulted or met regarding the impact of the carbon tax on their financial situation, and what are the details of each such consultation, including (i) the date, (ii) who did the consultation, (iii) who was consulted, (iv) the location, (v) the type of consultation; (b) of the 10% of carbon tax revenues earmarked for funding programs aimed at reducing emissions, how much has been allocated to school boards, divisions, and educational institutions, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) year, (iii) recipient, (iv) project description; (c) what is the total amount of carbon price revenues collected from school boards, divisions, and educational institutions since 2019, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) year; (d) what is the government's estimate of the annual amount of carbon tax collected on gasoline or fuel purchased for school buses; (e) if the government does not have any estimate for (d), why has this not been studied; and (f) has the government conducted any analyses to determine the total financial net cost of the carbon tax on school boards, divisions, and educational institutions, and, if so, what are the details, including, for each, (i) the name of the study, (ii) who conducted the study, (iii) the date, (iv) the findings?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate action is critical to Canada's long-term health and economic prosperity. Carbon pricing is widely recognized as the most efficient means of reducing our greenhouse gas, GHG, emissions, which is why the Government of Canada continues to make sure that it is not free to pollute in Canada.

Pollution pricing applies broadly throughout Canada. The federal fuel charge is generally paid by fuel distributors.

The federal price on pollution is revenue-neutral for the federal government; the direct proceeds from the federal carbon pricing system remain in the province or territory where they are collected. Put simply, every dollar collected from the carbon price is returned.

In provinces where the federal fuel charge applies, over 90% of projected direct proceeds are returned to residents of those provinces through the quarterly Canada carbon rebate. Most households receive more in rebates than the costs they face from the federal pollution pricing system. The other projected fuel charge proceeds are used to support small and medium-sized businesses and indigenous governments. Proceeds relating specifically to the use of natural gas and propane by farmers are returned directly to farmers via a refundable tax credit.

*Government Orders***Question No. 2523—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:**

With regard to the government's response to the April 1, 2024, "Axe the Tax" rallies across Canada: (a) did the Minister of Public Safety issue any directives or advice to the RCMP or other police agencies in relation to the rallies, and, if so, what are the details, including the directive or advice; and (b) did the RCMP issue any directives or advice to RCMP officers assigned to the rallies and, if so, for each instance, (i) who provided the directive or advice, (ii) what was the directive or advice, (iii) what location or locations was the directive or advice intended for?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Minister of Public Safety did not issue any directives or advice to the RCMP in relation to the rallies.

In response to (b), the RCMP did issue directives and advice to RCMP officers assigned to the rallies.

In response to (i), the director general and acting director of national criminal operations, contract and indigenous policing, RCMP national headquarters, did provide advice and directives.

In response to (ii), the advice and directives were the following: (a) Command for the "Axe the Tax" rally response will be led by the appropriate commander of the RCMP in the province or territory where the RCMP have police of jurisdiction status and in accordance with their local situational factors; operational direction will not be issued by RCMP national headquarters; (b) national criminal operations will facilitate communications between RCMP provincial and territorial commanders as well as their external police counterparts in order to share information and best practices; (c) national criminal operations facilitated the dissemination of legal advice produced by the legal services unit, RCMP; the content of that advice is protected by solicitor-client privilege; (d) national criminal operations facilitated the dissemination of intelligence and information across various RCMP jurisdictions in real time.

In response to (iii), the directives and advice were intended for the RCMP who have police of jurisdiction status in British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nunavut, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the RCMP in Ontario and Quebec also participated in the communications in order to maintain situational awareness in participation with their external police counterparts.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, furthermore, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2509 to 2516, 2518 to 2522, 2524 and 2525 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2509—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to the Public Service Pension Plan, as of January 1, 2024: (a) what is the number of (i) public sector employees, (ii) retirees, (iii) former employees, in Group 1 of the Public Service Pension Plan; (b) what is the number of (i) public sector employees, (ii) retirees, (iii) former employees, in Group 2 of the Public Service Pension Plan; (c) what is the projected surplus in the Public Service Pension Plan; (d) what percentage of the plan is funded; and (e) what plans, if any, does the government have to distribute funds over the permissible surplus level?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2510—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:

With regard to Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC): (a) what is the total amount of grants and contributions provided by ECCC to (i) not-for-profit organizations or charities, (ii) academia, (iii) international non-governmental organizations, broken down by year since 2019; and (b) what are the details of each grant or contribution in (a), including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) purpose of the funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2511—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the Deficit Reduction Action Plan, between January 1, 2011, and January 1, 2016: how many jobs were cut or eliminated from the federal public service, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) department and agency, (iii) job type?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2512—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to federal investments in Canada's telecommunications sector, since January 1, 2006: how much federal funding has been provided to (i) Rogers Communications Inc., (ii) BCE Inc., (iii) Telus Mobility, broken down by company, year and type of funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2513—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to bonuses paid out at government departments or agencies in the 2023-24 fiscal year, broken down by department or agency: (a) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses; (b) how many and what percentage of officials (i) at or above the executive (EX) level or equivalent, (ii) below the EX level or equivalent, received bonuses; and (c) of the amount paid out in bonuses, how much went to officials (i) at or above the EX level or equivalent, (ii) below the EX level or equivalent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2514—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to bonuses paid out at Crown corporations in the 2023-24 fiscal year, broken down by Crown corporation: (a) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses; (b) how many and what percentage of officials (i) at or above the executive (EX) level or equivalent, (ii) below the EX level or equivalent, received bonuses; and (c) of the amount paid out in bonuses, how much went to officials (i) at or above the EX level or equivalent, (ii) below the EX level or equivalent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2515—Mr. Glen Motz:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency, broken down by month since January 2022: (a) how many requests for technical assistance have been received by (i) income tax service providers, (ii) the general public; and (b) of the requests in (a), what is the breakdown by the (i) type of tax filer, (ii) type of issue requiring assistance, (iii) forms, (iv) tax measures involved?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 2516—Mr. Glen Motz:**

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and evaluations (hereinafter referred to as "deliverables") prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by McKinsey & Company since December 1, 2020: what are the details for each deliverable, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2518—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and evaluations (hereinafter referred to as "deliverables") prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by Deloitte since December 1, 2020: what are the details for each deliverable, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2519—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and evaluations (hereinafter referred to as "deliverables") prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by PricewaterhouseCoopers since December 1, 2020: what are the details for each deliverable, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2520—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and evaluations (hereinafter referred to as "deliverables") prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by Accenture since December 1, 2020: what are the details for each deliverable, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2521—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and evaluations (hereinafter referred to as "deliverables") prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by KPMG since December 1, 2020: what are the details for each deliverable, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2522—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to funding allocated to Pathways to Recovery's Safer Supply Ottawa Program through Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP), since 2016: (a) what specific measures, if any, were implemented to ensure that companies owned or operated by members of Pathway's board of directors did not financially benefit from the funding; (b) prior to receiving the SUAP grants, did Pathways disclose any conflicts of interest to the government, including whether or not any of their board of directors would profit from funding provided; (c) do any of the terms within the funding agreements include prohibitions on conflicts of interests and personal profit from the grants, and, if so, which agreements include such terms and what are their summary; (d) what are the details of all funding provided to Pathways, broken down by the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) project description; and (e) what specific safeguards, if any, are in place to ensure that substances provided by Pathways do not end up trafficked by drug dealers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2524—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the communities which comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, since fiscal year 2005-06: (a) what are the federal infrastruc-

ture investments, including direct transfers to municipalities and First Nations, for the communities of (i) Tofino, (ii) Ucluelet, (iii) Port Alberni, (iv) Parksville, (v) Qualicum Beach, (vi) Cumberland, (vii) Courtenay, (viii) Deep Bay, (ix) Dashwood, (x) Royston, (xi) French Creek, (xii) Errington, (xiii) Coombs, (xiv) Nanoose Bay, (xv) Cherry Creek, (xvi) China Creek, (xvii) Bamfield, (xviii) Beaver Creek, (xix) Beaufort Range, (xx) Millstream, (xxi) Mt. Washington Ski Resort, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (b) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the regional districts of (i) Comox Valley Regional District, (ii) Nanaimo Regional District, (iii) Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, (iv) Powell River Regional District, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (c) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by fiscal year, and total expenditure; (d) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the (i) Ahousaht First Nation, (ii) Hesquiaht First Nation, (iii) Huu-ay-aht First Nation, (iv) Hupacasath First Nation, (v) Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, (vi) Toquaht First Nation, (vii) Tseshaht First Nation, (viii) Uchucklesaht First Nation, (ix) Ucluelet First Nation, (x) K'omoks First Nation, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (e) what is the infrastructure funding of Pacific Rim National Park, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (f) what is the funding of highways, including, but not limited to, (i) Highway 4, (ii) Highway 19, (iii) Highway 19a, (iv) Bamfield Road, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; and (g) what other infrastructure investments are provided through the funding of national parks, highways, the Building Canada Fund, Infrastructure Canada, the Gas Tax Fund, Small Crafts and Harbours, BC Ferries, etc., broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2525—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's AgriCompetitiveness Program, broken down by year for each of the last ten fiscal years: (a) which organizations applied for funding through the program; and (b) how much did each organization in (a) (i) request, (ii) receive, in funding?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time.

I am glad to have the chance to rise to share more about why Greens cannot support this amendment, but we will continue to support Bill C-59, the fall economic statement, despite its imperfections.

Government Orders

Let us be clear: The amendment is essentially saying not to move forward with Bill C-59 at all in its entirety and, instead, to just repeal the carbon tax under the guise that this would help people across the country deal with issues with respect to the unaffordability of day-to-day life. Well, we cannot support the amendment, because repealing the carbon tax will not do any good for the vast majority of Canadians who are having a difficult time with the cost of living. There is a reason for that.

There is a lot of talk of food banks in this place, but has any parliamentarian taken a look at what food banks are actually calling for? For example, what was the Daily Bread Food Bank calling for in its pre-budget submission? It actually has three recommendations, and all three call for increasing and moving quickly to put in place the Canada disability benefit. This would provide support to people with disabilities, who are disproportionately living in poverty across the country. Forty per cent of people living in poverty are people with disabilities. Groups such as the Daily Bread Food Bank have been joining in solidarity with the disability community to call on the government to put in place a Canada disability benefit that would bring people with disabilities above the poverty line. There is no mention of that in the amendment, which would just get rid of everything else that is in the fall economic statement. Not only that, but repealing the carbon tax would mean removing the rebates that go with it, which leave lower-income Canadians in my community better off; it is true.

The carbon tax went up two cents a litre last year, and rebates went up along with it. The pure profits of the oil and gas industry in the same period of time went up 18¢ a litre. There were no rebates for any Canadian on that gouging, and that is not just the total profits, it is only the increase. It went up from around 26¢ a litre to around 42¢ a litre or so. This gouging of Canadians is leading to the \$38 billion a year in profits in 2022 alone for the five largest oil and gas companies operating in Canada. This is after share repurchases and dividends are all issued. It is why folks such as myself and others have been calling to put in place a windfall profit tax on the excess profits of the oil and gas industry, the way many other jurisdictions already have all around the world.

In fact, the government put in place a windfall profit tax on another sector already. In the midst of the pandemic, banks and life insurance companies had an extra 15% tax on profits over a billion dollars. It has been done before in this country. We could do the same when it comes to the oil and gas industry, and if we did, we could use those dollars to invest in real solutions to help address the unaffordability of day-to-day life for Canadians who need this the most. For example, we could increase service and reduce fares for public transit across the country; we could make it cheaper and provide more incentives for Canadians who want to retrofit their homes. These are the kinds of measures that would actually help address affordability. Repealing the carbon tax will not do anything to help Canadians who are struggling with day-to-day life.

On the subject of the fall economic statement itself, while it is imperfect, Greens have been supporting it; it includes many measures that will help folks in my community and others across the country. The first I would like to talk about is when it comes to making psychotherapy and counselling services more affordable. There was a long-held promise and commitment that was followed

through on in Bill C-59 to remove GST and HST from those services. It is a small measure that would make it more affordable for Canadians across the country to access mental health services.

● (1935)

I would expect all parliamentarians in this place to agree that we need to do more to make mental health services available. Admittedly, the government actually committed \$4.5 billion in the last election campaign for mental health transfers. The Liberals have not followed through on that, but they did put in place this measure to remove GST and HST from psychotherapy services. It is an important, good measure that, as Greens, we want to see made available to Canadians as soon as possible.

There are also really important tax credits that would help bring along support for renewable energy across the country. There are tax credits that would benefit companies in my community, such as VCT Group, which is designing and building the future of solar energy. In fact, in conversations I have had with VCT Group executives over the last year, they have shared with me directly how contracts that they would like to see move ahead are being held back because these tax credits are not yet in place; prospective customers of theirs do not have the business case to move ahead unless they see them in place. Even with the tax credits, the payback period for certain projects is still particularly long, but there are far more potential customers of theirs who would be open to moving ahead should we see Bill C-59 and the clean manufacturing tax credit included in it move ahead. This is one reason Greens have been so keen to finally get to the end of the day when it comes to getting Bill C-59 passed.

Again, this is the fall economic statement. We are in the late spring months now and have yet to see it move through. We are keen to see measures like this moved ahead. In fact, it was at committee where Greens even tried to improve on this to have that tax credit. As it stands right now, these tax credits are only available if both the manufacturing happens in Canada and the equipment is exclusively used in Canada. As Greens, we attempted to amend the bill at committee to allow for solar-powered lawnmowers, for example. A company in my community called Swap Robotics manufactures those. However, they are used in Canada only half the year, and they are used in Florida half the year. Because they are used outside Canada half the year, companies such as Swap Robotics would not be eligible for that tax credit. As Greens, we would have liked to see that expanded further. We were not successful with that at committee. However, what is in the fall economic statement is still an important and good measure; we are still going to support it.

Government Orders

I would like to close, though, with the one piece of Bill C-59 that we are most concerned about, and that is another fossil fuel subsidy. It is a massive tax credit for a false climate solution called “carbon capture and storage”. The tax credits in Bill C-59, which have been rolled out for the last three years, amount to \$5.7 billion. All this could be redirected, for example, to actually funding the Canada disability benefit and to building public transit infrastructure; instead, it is being wasted on this false solution technology that, more often than not, emits more carbon than it captures around the world. In closing, I will read a quote from Environmental Defence back in 2021. These are the words of Julia Levin, warning the government not to create the tax credits it did create, including in Bill C-59. She said:

Carbon capture is being used as a Trojan horse by oil and gas executives to continue, and even expand, fossil fuel production. It's a dangerous distraction driven by the same polluters who created the climate emergency. The Government of Canada should not use any kind of financial support or tax incentive to prop up false climate solutions that only serve to delay the necessary transition off of fossil fuels.

I could not agree more with Ms. Levin. Climate scientists around the world have been warning us to get our dollars focused on the most efficient use of funds. There is certainly not such as focus with this subsidy to carbon capture and storage. However, on balance, Bill C-59 has measures that we need to see move ahead, and Greens will be supporting it.

● (1940)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member referenced at the end that there are many benefits within the legislation and that those benefits would help Canadians, yet we have seen the discussions and the debates through second reading, now third reading, and at committee stage. In third reading alone, we are actually debating an amendment to third reading of the bill. There is no reason we should not have been able to get the bill passed long ago; until the legislation passes, the delay is denying people the benefits and supports that would be there. Could the member provide his thoughts regarding the fact that we are actually debating an amendment to the legislation at third reading, which again is meant to postpone its ultimate passage, and it is the fall economic statement?

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, as the parliamentary secretary knows, the amendment in front of us is, of course, not a substantive amendment. It is one of the tactics that is available to parties in this place, in this case, to delay legislation.

I would also point out that it is the governing side that has the legislative power and calendar to set the agenda of the House. Greens' view is that we would have liked to see the fall economic statement move along more quickly and earlier. We can empathize with the fact that there are various delay tactics being put in place to slow the legislation down. However, we would also encourage the governing side to ensure that, when they have the legislative calendar available to them, they do what they can to move ahead important pieces of legislation. This is of course one of them. It certainly is a bit odd that we are this late into the spring and still talking about the fall economic statement. Our interest would be for parties to come together, agree on legislation that could move ahead and ensure that this happens.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I really enjoy working with him. We often see each other in committee meetings. I thank him for his work.

He said some different things, but I agree with him on the fact that carbon capture is not really a way to fight climate change.

Canada has a bad track record, as members have mentioned today. One member referred to a study by Carbon Brief that shows that Canada has been the worst polluter in the world per capita since 1850. That is a big deal. The Liberals continue to make investments. According to an International Monetary Fund study, the government has directly and indirectly invested \$38 billion U.S. in support to the oil industry.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. Carbon capture is not effective. The government needs to stop investing in the oil industry. That is for certain. The carbon tax is one worthwhile measure. What are two or three other measures that a Green Party government would put in place to fight climate change?

● (1945)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, first of all, we agree with the Bloc Québécois on the fact that the government needs to eliminate all oil subsidies, including those pertaining to carbon capture and storage.

As a Green Party government, we would be much more ambitious. We would move more quickly and take this issue more seriously. We are in a climate crisis. That means that we need to make significant investments in public transportation. We need to electrify our grid across the country and we need to eliminate all oil subsidies.

[*English*]

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to believe that my hon. colleague is sincere when he talks about false climate solutions. I mostly agree with him, but there is an issue I have to bring up. The Auditor General, through her office, has the commissioner of the environment. One of his most recent reports commented that about \$7.4 billion of government money was spent on the net zero accelerator initiative with no oversight, no due diligence before the money was given out and no ability to track if any carbon emissions were reduced with this spending.

If he is sincere about his belief in ending the false climate solutions, will he commit to voting against future initiatives such as this instead of voting for them, as he has in the past?

Government Orders

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, I can start by saying that I appreciate the member for Edmonton West's bringing up something we agree on, which is how poorly rolled out the net zero accelerator fund is. I raised that at committee. What is a qualitative GHG reduction? It does not make any sense at all. That \$7 billion could have gone towards true climate solutions. It is disappointing that it has not.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, because this bill is time allocated, I will use my time to dedicate my opposition to this hot mess of inflationary and ineffective spending to Kelly Pascoe, who was the subject of a Calgary Herald article four days ago with the headline, "‘You just can't afford to be a single parent anymore': Working mom struggles to afford necessities". In the article, Kelly talks about how her rent has almost doubled and she cannot afford to pay for groceries anymore.

Everybody here is talking in academic terms, but Kelly is living the reality of irresponsible deficit, hot mess, inflationary spending and we have to oppose this. Whenever the Prime Minister and the Liberals get up and talk about actual solutions to Kelly's problems, they talk in academic terms. They do not talk about getting food for her kids, the music lessons she cannot afford anymore or the fact she is trying to find a roommate to potentially live in a basement suite.

This mess that people are actually considering voting for is making the lives of people like Kelly a million times worse. The fact the government has not done anything at all to address their out-of-control waste on things like the arrive scam app, the We Charity scandal and the billions on consultants, and it does not even know how much it is spending on consultants, means that Kelly has to pay for that. I want to say this. The Prime Minister said years ago that the government was taking on all of the spending so that Canadians did not have to. Now Kelly has pay for this.

I think it is atrocious that my time has been curtailed by the Liberals and the NDP on this speech. However, I would say to Kelly that I see her, that everybody on this side of the House sees her and that we will stand up, oppose and do everything we can to ensure that people like her who work hard, and she works hard with her own small business cleaning houses, have that dream of affordability and are able to live a life free and full of prosperity once again. I have hope that we can get there, but this one is for Kelly and I will oppose this bill.

● (1950)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 7:50 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, May 9, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[English]

The question is on the amendment.

If a member participating in person wishes that the amendment 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. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Tuesday, May 28, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

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**CANADA-NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always wonderful and an honour to rise in this most honourable House to speak on various pieces of legislation. I am honoured to stand in the House tonight, on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe peoples, to emphasize the importance of Bill C-49 and the offshore wind industry.

The global industry is rapidly expanding, and it is crucial that the government seize the opportunity it presents to Canada, including in the provinces of Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Last fall, the executive director of the International Energy Agency said that "of all the power plants built in the world, more than 80% is renewable electricity. And this is not coming only from Europe, it is coming from China, India, Latin America, United States. It is a big move. So it is feasible to have a tripling of renewable capacity in the next seven years." Investors around the world are racing to develop clean energy sources, including in the offshore wind industry. This represents a \$1-trillion economic opportunity globally.

That brings us to Bill C-49. With this legislation, Canada has a chance to demonstrate to domestic and international investors that we are completely committed to the growth of the low-carbon economy, and to ensure it is Canadian workers who can seize this opportunity. When putting together this bill, the government worked closely with its provincial partners in Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador, who fully support Bill C-49.

In collaboration with the provinces and their respective premiers, the government worked collaboratively with Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and found consensus and moved forward with Bill C-49.

Government Orders

Andrew Furey, the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, who is on record talking about his support for this particular piece of legislation, said, “The possibilities for renewable energy are endless in our province, and I look forward to this significant step forward in achieving our shared goals and diversifying the economy.”

Nova Scotia's Progressive Conservative government has also vocally supported this legislation, calling it necessary. It is therefore shocking that the federal regressive Conservatives are holding back this vital piece of legislation that would benefit Nova Scotian communities, and that includes benefiting indigenous communities.

Attending a committee hearing on this legislation, Chief Terry Paul of the Membertou Development Corporation of Nova Scotia stated, “Traditionally, indigenous Canadians were not invited to participate in major industry projects. I am proud to say that is changing. When we all work together, great things happen. We truly believe that an offshore wind industry can coexist with other industries in a sustainable manner.”

Outside of our provincial partners, this legislation was also influenced by meaningful engagements that were carried out with many stakeholders who contribute to Canada's success every day, such as fishers, the energy industry and environmental groups. We will continue this engagement and seek feedback as we work toward the implementation of the legislation.

During the committee process, we worked across the aisle and strengthened the legislation in consultation with both provincial governments that need to pass identical, mirror legislation. I would like to speak briefly to those amendments right now.

The amendments strengthen this legislation. The amendments enable specific clauses related to the Impact Assessment Act in response to the Supreme Court of Canada's October 2023 decision. The amendments also reaffirm federal and provincial governments' joint commitments to considering the impacts of offshore energy projects on fisheries.

I can assure members that, unlike the official opposition party, the Conservatives, who mismanaged the offshore and tried to rip up major investments, this Liberal government has great respect for the fishing industry and it is our intention to continue to support this sector as Canada's renewable energy industries continue to grow.

More specifically, the fishing industry-related amendments would add a new paragraph to the two Atlantic accord implementation acts, reaffirming the need to consider the effects on fishing activities during the land tenure process. These amendments recognize the potential impacts that offshore renewable energy projects could have on fishing, and we take this very seriously.

Lastly, on the amendments, the government made a few administrative adjustments, in consultation with our provincial partners, which would improve general consistency and clarify agreements with regard to boundaries.

- (1955)

The amendments made at committee stage have the full support of both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. It is time for us to move forward with this legislation and unlock the potential of

the Canadian offshore wind energy industry. The longer that Parliament waits to designate a new regulatory body for permitting offshore wind, the more opportunities Canadian workers will miss out on.

Major offshore wind projects are already being developed in the North Sea and on the American east coast, attracting significant investment. Countries like the U.S., Taiwan and several European nations, including Poland, are making significant progress in the offshore wind industry. France recently increased its goals for deploying offshore wind farms, while Ireland has published its national plan for offshore renewable energy. The global scenario is evolving rapidly, and Canada cannot afford to wait.

Costs are coming down. The price of electricity generated by offshore wind has dropped significantly. The cost curve, as we say in economics, is broken, making it more affordable. Countries like Germany, the Netherlands and Japan have all expressed interest in buying clean energy, including hydrogen, from Canada. Germany and the Netherlands have put their interest in writing, including through the Canada-Germany hydrogen alliance, an exciting alliance.

Canadian businesses are more than ready to get involved when Canada is ready to launch this industry. They are already investing in offshore wind projects abroad and are eager to participate in the industry domestically. One Canadian company, Northland Power, is currently building offshore wind off Poland.

To be clear, this bill is about establishing the legislative and regulatory framework so that an offshore wind industry can be developed in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. It is the catalyst. Central to this bill is the establishment of regulatory bodies for this industry using boards that are already in place to oversee oil and gas activities in the Canada-Nova Scotia and Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore areas. They have both indicated they are ready to change their name and enact a broadened mandate. They are more than ready to get the job done, as both have decades of experience in offshore energy regulation to ensure all legal and regulatory criteria are met.

Other allied nations such as the U.K., Denmark, Norway and the U.S. have gone before us in this type of strategy and have incorporated offshore wind into the authorities held by existing offshore petroleum bodies. Unfortunately, the climate deniers in the Conservative caucus are willfully ignoring the opportunity for communities across Atlantic Canada. Their tactics are aimed at delaying the passage of this bill, which means risking a greater portion of the trillion-dollar industry that is at stake.

Government Orders

As the government strives for a future that is focused on generating and using increased amounts of renewable energy so that we can stand up to climate change and create thousands of jobs, there is no reason to turn down Bill C-49. The fact is that the only roadblock to unlocking massive new economic opportunity for Atlantic Canadians is the Conservative Party of Canada. Just like its ideological opposition to EV manufacturing in Ontario, solar development in Alberta or even investments in natural disaster response, it is clear that the Conservatives will always vote against any measure that is related to fighting climate change, which is a shame, even when it has a clear and significant economic benefit. Unfortunately, the Conservative leader would rather sit back and watch the planet burn while investment and opportunities pass us by. It is baffling and, yes, shameful, but not surprising.

On this side of the aisle, we are rolling our sleeves up and getting to work. It is time to pass this bill so we can get to building the Canada we know exists. It is out there.

● (2000)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge for what is probably his best-read speech ever written by the PMO to date.

He quoted the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Andrew Furey. I take this bill a bit to heart because I lived in Newfoundland for several years. I quite love the province and miss it very much. He quoted the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Andrew Furey, but here is a quote I would read in return. Premier Furey said, “I have asked the Prime Minister to convene a meeting to discuss alternatives to the carbon tax”. When will that meeting be?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Edmonton West, whom I consider a colleague and a friend.

Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts is a lifetime opportunity because it is a catalyst for investment in an offshore wind industry to take hold off the east coast of Canada. It represents economic opportunity. It represents jobs, investments, fighting climate change and helping middle-class Canadians in that area. I am so excited to support it on this side of the House, and I ask my Conservative colleagues to join in supporting this great piece of legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-49 has passed the committee stage. We now see that the government has chosen not to implement a real environmental assessment process for future energy projects. These offshore projects ought to undergo robust, effective, transparent environmental impact assessments to ensure that they are part of proper marine spatial planning to identify and prevent adverse cumulative effects and contribute to sustainability.

Does my colleague believe that the government should adopt such a measure? Why was it not done in Bill C-49?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, it is very important that it be done as part of this legislation in an effective and transparent manner.

● (2005)

[*English*]

I do not agree in terms of the impact of the assessment that is mandated within this piece of legislation. It does take into account, from my understanding in reading over it, and I did sit on the Natural Resources Committee for a period of time, the assessment on marine life and on the fishing industry, working in collaboration with fishing the industry.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier today we heard the minister speaking to this bill, and he was talking about the importance of having sustainable, clean, renewable energy move in that direction as well as aligning that with a thriving fishery. We have heard some concerns from local fishers that this wind energy will result in a loss of fishing areas for some of the fishers.

Can the member speak to what plans are in place to support fishers who may be impacted through this transition to have further sustainable clean energy?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for the question. It is a very beautiful part of the country that she is blessed to call home.

As an individual who grew up on the west coast of Canada, near Alaska, and who worked at a cannery during his high school years, along with my mother and a number of my aunts, those industries no longer exist. However, there needs to be transition for all industries as we move forward. We see that in many industries in Canada. In this case, there needs to be collaboration and consultation with the fishers. Obviously, we want a vibrant fishing industry on both coasts, on the west and the east coast of Canada. We must maintain that dialogue, transparency and accountability with those sectors of the Canadian economy and ensure that any workers who are injured on any contingency are obviously taken care of with proper skills retraining and compensation.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House and speak to Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act, which also makes consequential amendments to other acts.

Government Orders

One cannot say much for the government, but it sure knows how to write a catchy little title, does it not? Personally, I would have opted for something more straightforward, like “Bill C-49, the confuse, delay and deter investment in Canada act”. I agree that it is a bit too on the nose, especially for the Liberal government, plus, I think that it has already used that one several times over.

Bill C-49 would build on the existing petroleum regulatory scheme to establish a new regulatory scheme for offshore renewable energy projects in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, through their respective accord acts.

I want to be clear. As Conservatives, we are not opposed to this legislation in principle. Despite the nonsense that we so often get from others in the House, Conservatives are not opposed to renewable energy. We are actually in favour of protecting the environment. In fact, to that end, I would remind members of the House of the numerous occasions when Conservatives have called out the Liberal government over its policies regarding pollution. One of its very first acts when they formed government in 2015 was to allow the City of Montreal to dump 8 billion litres of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River. There was no price on pollution there. Conservatives have called out the government on sending our garbage overseas. There are lots of different examples. The difference here, though, is that when it comes to environmental protection, Conservatives are driven by pragmatism and not by fear.

We love our planet, the good creation that God has blessed us with, and we recognize, as does, I think, any rational person, regardless of creed, that we have a responsibility to be good stewards and to preserve it for future generations. However, rather than give in to alarmism and ideologically motivated climate extremism that we see from many others in this chamber, we recognise that the role that Canada plays in overall emissions and pollution is globally very minor.

If one would take every car off the road, shut down every factory, shut down our entire energy sector, solar panel every roof, heat pump every house, “veganize” every kid and “diaperize” every cow, we would have reduced global emissions by a whopping 1.5% because 98.5% of the problem, or at least the perceived problem, would still exist in other countries. Moreover, the so-called green policies of this and other western governments do nothing to stop climate change but are, in fact, a smoke-and-mirrors job to help governments and wealthy investors get even richer. They do that off the backs of not only the shrinking middle class but also the poorest and the most vulnerable people on our planet.

That being the case, I am always shocked to see the NDP giving the government its full-throated support on these exploitive and unjust policies. Rather than giving in to climate alarmism and enacting these policies that really just make global billionaires and Liberal insiders richer and make everyone else poorer, Conservatives believe in measured, common-sense environmental protections that actually address pollution in proportion to Canada's role in creating it and that protect our beautiful planet. I think that is the common-sense approach, and I think common-sense Canadians agree.

Secondly, we do not entirely oppose this legislation in principle because the provinces are largely in favour of it. The affected premiers, Premier Furey in Newfoundland, Premier Higgs in New

Brunswick and Premier Houston in Nova Scotia, of which the latter two are both Conservative, by the way, have all expressed their support for this bill's overarching aims, and we want to respect that.

Unlike the Liberal government, Conservatives respect the Constitution. We recognize that some things are provincial jurisdiction, and as much as we at times would like to meddle, it is not the federal government's job to do so: work in partnership, yes; but dictate, no. I am sure the majority of our premiers are very excited for that wonderful day next fall when that kind of relationship can and will exist again.

• (2010)

However, in the meantime, the question of constitutionality is where this bill falls short. Conservatives agree that there are economic, social and net environmental benefits to promoting alternative or, in some cases, transformational energy sources. We believe government should allow for arm's-length regulatory processes to ensure safe and environmentally responsible development of these resource, including in our coastal waters.

That is all good, but here is the problem. The bill makes these decisions subject to the environmental Impact Assessment Act, also known as Bill C-69. This creates two problems. Number one is that the Supreme Court has ruled that Bill C-69 is unconstitutional; that is a problem. Number two, the fact remains that any relationship between the two bills will lead to inevitable delays because there are going to be court challenges.

Bill C-49 directly references clauses 61 to 64 of Bill C-69, which are precisely the clauses that have been ruled unconstitutional. I don't know, but maybe if the Liberals had bothered to read paragraph 163 of the majority Supreme Court of Canada decision, they could have avoided this type of blunder, or maybe it is intentional. However, Bill C-49 has also incorporated the Minister of Environment's proposed decision-making scheme into several clauses. Given that this decision-making power and the entirety of the designated project scheme are also unconstitutional components of Bill C-49, they are likely to be ruled, or at least challenged, as unconstitutional as well.

It is inevitable that, in its current form, Bill C-49 will be challenged in the courts, and we have said this throughout the committee study and throughout all the debates. The bill is not watertight. We have tried to amend this legislation so that we could work together on it. The Liberals have always complained that Conservatives will not work with them, yet here we have tried, but the Liberals would not hear any of it. It is part of the Liberals' agenda; they want to control.

Government Orders

In the meantime, while these delays are taking place, what happens to the traditional energy sector jobs in the region? Mining, oil and gas account for 31%, or approximately one-third, of Newfoundland and Labrador's GDP. This bill, as it is, could end traditional petroleum drilling in Atlantic Canada. What happens to those economies? We already had, in Bill C-55, a provision where a fisheries minister can unilaterally designate a section of ocean as a development-prohibited area, an MPA, a marine-protected area. Now, the government sneaks in provisions in clauses 28 and 137 of this bill, allowing for cabinet to end offshore drilling and, for that matter, even renewable projects.

Even if we give the government the benefit of the doubt, which we should not because it has a proven track record over the last nine years of trying to destroy everything in our energy sector, and even if we ignore the unconstitutionality of this bill, this legislation is still deeply flawed. Like with our traditional energy sector and resources, which we absolutely still need if we want to invest in our success and in our renewable sector or any other sector, there needs to be clarity and efficiency, and right now we have neither. This bill would impose uncertainty and would extend timelines that, regardless of court challenges, could and would hinder the development of that sector.

It takes 1,605 days. That is almost four and a half years, and that is about what it takes to get an approval done. That is ridiculous. Imagine someone wanting to start a small business, willing to invest millions of dollars in a community, to create jobs and to spur the economy, and the government comes along and says that it would be great, that it would love to have them do that and that they could start in four years. They would not come.

The bill also comes with royal recommendation. It would require some level of federal funding, but no specific funding has been allocated. Therefore, now, on a separate piece of legislation that will need to be tabled, debated, studied and passed before this thing can get rolling, again, we are going to see uncertainty and delays, but it is going to take another bill to actually implement this.

There are questions over the consultation requirements with indigenous peoples, and again, we have learned that this is almost a guarantee of court challenges, equalling more delays and more uncertainty. We need to have a reasonable and a responsible regulatory framework in place, but too often what the government gives us are gatekeepers, folks who just want to delay and to create confusion so that nothing ever gets done.

● (2015)

Ideologically motivated decisions, as more and more authority would wind up with the minister, is what we can expect from the bill. Unlike the NDP and Liberals who roadblock, make traditional energy more expensive, and drive out new opportunities, Conservatives are committed to getting rid of the gatekeepers. We will reduce approval timelines and remove unnecessary, restrictive red tape and taxes so companies can and will invest in Canada, and major energy products can actually get built in Canada again.

When we look back at how the government has handled past energy projects, we just have to shake our head. We have to look no further back than the TMX. Kinder Morgan had the wonderful idea of expanding the pipeline. We needed an additional pipeline that

would run to the west coast, to bring it to tidal water, so we could export more of our energy. What happened with that? The government had its initial approval through the National Energy Board. Then, of course, it was challenged, and a further delay of two years was added. That brought up the cost by another \$2 billion. The initial cost of the TMX was pegged at \$5.4 billion, and the two-year delay brought it up to \$7.4 billion. Then along came Bill C-69, which just put more uncertainty into the whole equation.

Kinder Morgan threw up its arms, went to the government and asked it to buy the pipeline. Kinder Morgan could not get it done because there was going to be way too much going on for the company to accomplish that. The government said it was going to be an energy hero and buy the TMX, the expanded pipeline project, and get it done. The government paid \$4.5 billion to Kinder Morgan to buy the rights for the pipeline. In addition to that, the government was committed to spending another \$7.4 billion in constructing the pipeline. That would have been a cost of \$12 billion.

That is what the government told us at the time: "For \$12 billion, we got ourselves a pipeline. The Government of Canada is going to be in the energy business. We are going to be claiming all of these royalties from energy companies. This is a good deal for Canadians." Guess what? That was in 2019. We are in 2024. The pipeline has now cost \$34 billion. From the original estimate, before there were any delays, it should have been a \$10-billion project. Now it is a \$34-billion project. That is an additional \$24 billion of cost into the TMX pipeline.

Who else but a Liberal government could screw up things so badly as to increase construction costs by 500%? That is right. Members do not have the answer either. I cannot figure it out. Who else could do that? The government says it is due to construction costs. It says it is due to unforeseen terrain. Is the government kidding me? It did not know where the pipeline was going? Liberals should give their head a shake, because they knew all along that the pipeline would have to cross the Rockies and make its way down to the west coast, yet that is what they are blaming some of the costs on.

The government is also attributing some of the delays and cost increases to inflation in contractor expenses and construction costs. I know that. I am in the heavy construction business myself and understand that costs have gone up probably 50% in the last five years, but 500%? I would only dream of being able to charge those kinds of numbers. Who got rich in this scheme? Who got rich building the TMX pipeline? To go from \$12 billion to \$34 billion without explanation, there is something wonderfully wrong with that.

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The NDP has put a motion forward at the natural resource committee right now, exactly where Bill C-49 was discussed, for it to be a priority of the committee to study the TMX pipeline, to find out what went wrong and how the government could end up with a \$34-billion pipeline. Only a Liberal government could do that. I think that is what the study will clearly show, that somebody has gotten rich here and that something is way offside.

Bill C-69 created the kind of uncertainty such that a company like Kinder Morgan took its \$4.5 billion, marched it south of the border and used the \$4.5 billion to invest in an environment that was more friendly and more conducive to energy projects.

● (2020)

The member for Vaughan—Woodbridge stated that the Netherlands, Germany and Japan have been begging for cleaner energy. What he neglected to say is that they have been begging for LNG, liquefied natural gas. Our government has turned them down. There was an opportunity to develop LNG projects. There were 18 of them on the drawing board when the Liberal government came into power, and not one of them has been completed to the point where it is exporting any liquefied natural gas.

In the meantime, we have turned away all kinds of opportunities for Canadians, the Canadian taxpayer and the Canadian citizen, to benefit from receiving royalties from the sale of our LNG. We could have created thousands and thousands of jobs, and we could have solidified our economy and many of the communities that have suffered. However, no, we let the opportunity pass and instead are trying to convince them they can buy renewable energy from our wind turbines that hopefully will produce hydrogen gas that they can put into storage and ship over to some of the economies begging for our cleaner energy.

We will have to actually wait and see whether that happens, because so far today, we are way behind the eight ball when it comes to actually being able to export any energy. Countries have been begging for energy, and instead we actually continue to import energy from dictators and despots from the Middle East and from places like Venezuela. We keep bringing their oil here, and that is the oil fuelling our economy when it could be our own natural resources fuelling our economy. We could be keeping the wealth right here in Canada, and we have not been doing that.

Bill C-49 is another tool the government can take full advantage of to continue to stress out our existing oil and gas economies not only in Atlantic Canada but also in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and of course Alberta. We agree with Bill C-49 in principle because the premiers want it, and what the premiers think it would do for them is allow them to develop renewable energies in coastal waters.

While we were in committee, many witnesses were there, and many witnesses were not there. Most notably, the testimony we were not able to properly process as a committee was testimony from lobster harvesters and from fishers in the area who would be affected. The bill would provide the government, by decree of the minister, the ability to declare the MPAs, the marine protected areas, which would in fact sterilize fishing opportunities and lobster harvesting opportunities. A significant portion of Atlantic Canada's economic benefit, economic revenue, is from those two industries. They are closely related; they are under the fishing umbrella, I sup-

pose, in the fisheries, but the two industries are very concerned there would not be adequate protection for their resources.

We all know that lobsters and fish like to hang around shelves. As well, we know that is where the turbines that the proponents are talking about are also going to be constructed, because that is the closest place to a solid base that they can be built. The least amount of construction is in areas where there is a shelf, and we know that is where the fishing is often very good.

Bill C-49 is a flawed piece of legislation. It references Bill C-69 several times. Bill C-69 has been proven unconstitutional, and we tried to argue that at committee. We need to take Bill C-49 back to committee and fix it. We are in support of the bill, but let us fix it. Let us not have something that is not going to be constitutionally compliant. I would urge the government to continue to do that; let us fix the bill where we know it is not watertight, and let us make it right.

● (2025)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always get a kick out of listening to Conservatives say, "But Canada's emissions are just a tiny drop in the bucket globally." The unfortunate reality for the member, is that despite the fact that maybe the claim helps him sleep at night, Canada has among the worst GHG emissions per capita. As a matter of fact, if we look at the average GHG per capita emissions in Europe, we see that Canada's are three times those. There is only one country in the entire world that has worse GHG emissions per capita than Canada, and that is Australia.

What I found really interesting about the member's speech is that he talked at the beginning about how Conservatives like renewable energy, but then spent just about his entire speech talking about fossil fuel extraction. I am wondering whether the member could share with the House what his favourite type of renewable energy is.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, what thrills me the most about the member's asking me the question is that he actually listened to my speech. He was actually impacted by what I said and he actually conceded that Canada contributes only 1.5% to global emissions. He went further to say that we are one of the highest per capita contributors to emissions.

However, what he fails to take into consideration is the vastness of our country and how much distance we all need to travel to drive our economy, to move our goods and services across the country and to move our food. He also never talks about the carbon capture of our many forests and our grasslands, which is something that is woefully missing from any discussion on that side.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I had the pleasure of working with him at the Standing Committee on Finance a while ago. My question is on the process during the study of a bill.

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The Bloc Québécois voted in good faith in favour of the bill at second reading stage. We hoped to be able to study this bill in committee to improve it so that it would meet our needs. We proposed several amendments to the bill, but the representatives from the party that forms the government systematically rejected every one of them to prevent things from moving forward.

Does my colleague think this is a good approach to take when studying a bill in committee, especially when the government is in a minority situation?

• (2030)

[English]

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, we, including the Conservatives, in good faith sent the bill to committee for study. In good faith we brought in witnesses, and we listened to witnesses provided by the government and by the other opposition parties, expecting that at the end of the day, based on witness testimony, the government would consider amendments brought forward to improve the piece of legislation, because we did all want to see it move forward. We think it needs to move forward. There needs to be a regime that allows for renewable energies, and so in good faith we brought forward amendments.

The member is right. The member across the way for Vaughan—Woodbridge before in effect said, “Oh, we allowed for amendments to come forward and to be part of this bill”. However, the only amendments the Liberal Party passed and added to the legislation were amendments from the Liberal Party. It is a little disingenuous for the member across the way to insinuate that the Liberals were open to amendments, because the Bloc member in our committee brought forward many good recommendations, and we brought forward good recommendations—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by my colleague from Manitoba, and it was interesting because it reminded me of other times when we have had bills in the House for which Conservative after Conservative got up and spoke against and then somehow all voted for. What kind of jolted me awake midway through the member’s speech was when he said that he supported the bill, because everything he had said prior to that gave me the indication that he would not be supporting it. However, that is not my question.

Partway through his speech, the member raised the concern about importing oil from jurisdictions like Saudi Arabia, and he said that really we should be able to use our own oil for domestic use and not have to import oil from jurisdictions that we do not support for one reason or another, which is actually a premise that I support. However, my question, and the reason I think it gets raised time and time again as a red herring, is on why the former Conservative government and the current Conservative Party has never brought forward a single proposal to ban or add tariffs to the importing of oil from countries like Saudi Arabia. Why is that?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley was right. Almost all of my speech was critical of Bill C-49. It was intentionally that way because there is a lot to criticize. At the end of the day, I made it very clear that we would be sup-

porting the legislation, but there is a lot of opportunity to improve it. I wish that the Liberal government would listen to and accept the amendments that were presented not only at committee but also here on the floor. Therefore, absolutely, my speech was focused on the criticisms of the bill, because it is deeply flawed. However, in principle we support it.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the conversation taking place when it comes to the constitutionality of legislation and ensuring that we are not perhaps having unnecessary conversations. I really do appreciate the work that was done at committee.

My question concerns his regard and respect for the independence of the judicial system and the important work that it does. We know that the Supreme Court of Canada did uphold a woman’s right to choose, so would he reaffirm his commitment of respecting that decision and the constitutionality that every woman should have the right to choose?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I was delighted when I heard the member for Waterloo express her jubilation on the floor of the House that we would be supporting this bill. I thought it was very appropriate for her to do that.

On the issue of constitutionality, Bill C-69 has been found wanting. There is a term “*mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*”, which means “numbered, numbered, weighed, divided”. The Supreme Court of Canada has studied Bill C-69 very carefully and determined that it is not constitutionally compliant. The Supreme Court of Canada has made a decision on Bill C-69.

• (2035)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, my former deskmate talked a lot about what is going on in Newfoundland. Tonight there was a by-election in Newfoundland, in Baie Verte-Green Bay. I want to congratulate the winner, Conservative Lin Paddock. The Liberal vote dropped from 52% down to 24%, and the Conservative vote went from 48% up to 79%, which is a number we do not even see in Alberta. It is an overwhelming change.

I wonder if my colleague would comment on the Liberal Party collapsing in Newfoundland, and if he perhaps sees it as a sign of what is to come.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Edmonton West for bringing that to the attention of the House and Canadians this evening, who are probably engrossed in watching the proceedings here tonight. I know that pretty soon they are going to be flipping over to the Edmonton game. We are going to all be cheering hard for our Canadian team, and our Canadian team is going to win.

The only poll that matters is on election day. Today was election day in Newfoundland, and we saw what happened. The polls are accurately predicting what is going to happen right across Canada. The Conservatives and their common-sense approach are resonating with Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauport—Limoilou.

I am very pleased to be here this evening to once again debate Bill C-49. I already spoke to this debate during another stage of the legislative process. We have come to the end of the process in the House. It should be said that the Bloc Québécois has acted in good faith from the start. It has contributed to the debate. In any case, it tried to contribute to improving the bill, but its efforts were not fruitful.

As a reminder, Bill C-49 seeks to modernize the administrative regime and management of the marine energy industry in eastern Canada. This mainly concerns oil and gas development, which the Bloc Québécois regularly denounces, but also future activities related to the renewable energy sector, namely, offshore wind power off the east coast of Canada.

As I was saying, we were in favour of the principle of the bill, provided that marine biodiversity conservation requirements were met. We therefore supported the part concerning the development of renewable energy in eastern Canada. We were also in favour of tightening the rules around oil and gas development, although in my humble opinion, oil and gas development should no longer exist. From an energy transition perspective, the offshore, non-renewable energy sector needs to decrease, and decrease fast.

It is quite simple for the Bloc Québécois. We believe that no new offshore oil and gas exploration or development projects should be approved, regardless of any specific conditions that might accompany them. That is the approach that Quebec has chosen to take, and we believe that the other maritime provinces should follow suit. The Quebec nation has put a definitive end to oil and gas exploration and development in its jurisdiction, notably by passing an act that puts an end to both those activities and an end to public funding for them as well. This is not the first time I have said this in the House: Quebec was the first government in North America to ban oil and gas exploration and development in its jurisdiction. We obviously think that Canada should follow Quebec's example; however, it is still failing in its duty to protect marine ecosystems by authorizing dozens of new drilling projects in ecologically sensitive areas, particularly drilling inside marine refuges. We know that offshore drilling can and does threaten marine life.

Despite its commitments to marine conservation, the Liberal government continues to promote offshore oil development and authorize drilling that it knows could harm marine biodiversity. This government has a double standard when it comes to protecting marine biodiversity. There is one vision for oil and gas development and a completely different vision for the fishing industry, for example. Just last week, when a right whale was spotted off the north coast of New Brunswick, Fisheries and Oceans Canada immediately announced the closure of lobster fishing areas to Acadian lobster fishers. Understandably, this sparked complaints from lobster fishers. They threatened to demand the resignation of the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. They also decided to defy the department's decision by leaving their traps where they were in the water, against Fisheries and Oceans Canada's in-

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structions. Once the government realized what was happening, the Minister of Fisheries called an emergency meeting with the lobster fishers. Afterwards, she gave a statement that I will read, considering its bearing on our context.

Following the sighting of a North Atlantic right whale in shallow waters off the northeast coast of New Brunswick last week, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) instituted a 15-day temporary fishing area closure in Lobster Fishing Area (LFA) 23 C. This decision was based on DFO's sighting data at the time, and in consideration of our international commitments towards marine mammal protection, which are in place to ensure Canada's world-class seafood products continue to be recognized as sustainable and export markets remain available.

● (2040)

Since the initial sighting, DFO has reviewed various data sources to determine the whale was in slightly deeper waters than previously thought. With this new information, I am pleased to see DFO has adjusted the closure requirements and harvesters can now set their traps up to the 10 fathom shallow water protocol management line for the remainder of the 15-day period.

I have asked DFO to convene a meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on North Atlantic Right Whales which includes representatives of the industry and whale experts to review the existing protocol.

That decision just created an interesting precedent, because this is not the first time that right whales have been seen in the gulf or that their presence has had an impact on fishers. Usually, the result is that fishing areas are closed. However, this time, the minister appears to have backed down. Perhaps she heard the rumours that lobster fishers in New Brunswick were going to call for her resignation. Perhaps DFO made a mistake in its study and did not see the whale at the depth it thought it did. That raises questions about the process that is in place when a whale passes through fishing areas.

Members of the Bloc Québécois are forward-looking. We thought about this issue well before last week. In 2022, we organized a round table on marine biodiversity and another one on fisheries and the right whale. We also made recommendations to the government. We consulted fishers, fishing industry representatives, scientists and experts like Lyne Morissette to get their recommendations. We decided to create a document setting out those recommendations and hand it to the government on a silver platter. The Liberals could do what they wanted with it, but these are worthwhile recommendations that actually come from the industry. When I see that the Minister of Fisheries is currently calling an advisory committee meeting to discuss this subject, I thought that it would be a good idea to bring up the recommendations that we made in 2022, because they are still relevant. I am going to read them.

With respect to the first proposal, my colleagues will recognize our hand in this. We asked:

That the Government of Canada abandon all offshore oil and gas exploration and development effective immediately, both in the North Atlantic and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and halt any such operations that are in progress or that have been announced.

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This relates back to what I was saying earlier. The second recommendation is as follows:

That the government authorize a pilot project for the snow crab fishery to open on April 1 each year, on the understanding that, given the abundance of this resource and the certainty of meeting quotas, this measure will reduce the amount of time during which the fishery and whales in transit use the same space north of the Magdalen Islands on their way to the feeding grounds at the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula [and that icebreaking operations to open harbours in New Brunswick be studied];

I will mention it anyway, although I know that improvements have been made in this regard. The crab fishery on the Gaspé Peninsula, at Matane, opened at the end of March this year. I know that icebreaking operations took place in New Brunswick. At the same time, there was not a lot of ice in the gulf or on the St. Lawrence this year. We also have to adjust to the new climate reality.

The third recommendation is the following:

That the government reduce the closure period for marine sectors (quadrants) during the transit passage of right whales to the north of the Magdalene Islands, given that it has been established that the duration of the whale's presence there is roughly 24 hours and that the closure is two weeks, and that the mandatory removal of fishing gear within 48 hours be reassessed since it poses more of an increased risk of disruption than a reduction in the risk of entanglements;

That is entirely true. Often, when the DFO tells fishers to remove their fishing gear, the whale has already gone by, but for two weeks, the fishers cannot continue to fish even though the whale is already gone. There is this whole question of timing that needs to be respected in this case.

Unfortunately, I see that my time is up. We made other proposals in 2022 and they are still relevant. I will be sure to forward them to the Department of Fisheries for inspiration.

• (2045)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the comments that the member shared. I found them interesting. I always hear members of the Bloc Québécois talking about provincial jurisdictions. The legislative measure that we are examining will advance the work of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia.

Today, from what I understand, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this bill. They are always talking about provincial jurisdictions, but they are opposing this bill, which seeks to help a provincial jurisdiction to move forward. I just want to understand why.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, it is quite simple, really. As I said at the beginning of my speech earlier, the Bloc Québécois worked in good faith when studying this bill. It brought forward a number of amendments. It proposed several changes to the bill. Unfortunately, the Liberal government rejected them all. Consequently, we feel that the bill, as it currently stands, is unacceptable from an energy transition perspective. We want to put an end to oil and gas development. It is quite simple. This is in line with our values of defending and doing more to fight climate change.

In our view, this bill does not go in that direction, unfortunately.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very interesting speech.

This bill makes it clear that it does not end oil and gas exploration in Atlantic waters. However, fishers are being asked to do more and more to protect the right whale.

My colleague had started to list some potential solutions that could be put in place. I invite her to continue with that list, for the benefit of all our colleagues.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the opportunity to continue with my remarks.

We also recommended that the government provide funding for research and technology transfer projects to develop and test both mechanical measures, like underwater buoys, reduced breaking-strength ropes and other operations, and IT measures such as electronic buoys, triangulation, and the tracking of individual whales by ships or radio tags in order to prevent and reduce the impact of fishing on the movement of marine mammals.

This recommendation comes from the industry. It comes from the fishers themselves, who say they are ready to make the effort. They want to protect marine biodiversity too. When we talk about it, we can really see that they care more than anyone about conserving biodiversity and protecting the ocean floor. Owner-operators in the Gaspé, for example, always prioritize sustainable fisheries over big industries that simply scrape the ocean bed and endanger other species. Fishers say they are ready to do more, but they need a little help from the government.

Yes, it is a good idea to invest in research. I encourage the government to do that. Otherwise, the government can send departmental administrators and marine biology researchers to the maritime regions of Quebec and Canada to analyze and make recommendations on conserving marine biodiversity. That recommendation is evidently related to the fact that people in the Gaspé always say they feel very far removed from Ottawa and its towers full of public servants. We get the impression that they do not understand the environment in which we live. We invite them to come directly to our maritime regions to see how much energy coastal communities have. I think it could have a very positive impact.

Madam Speaker, I have other recommendations but I do not want to take up too much of your time.

• (2050)

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the member will agree with the fact that building renewable energy and electrifying Canada's energy grid is critical to meeting Canada's climate targets. We also know that the bill is a small step to facilitate renewable energy development. The member spoke a bit about the Bloc's amendments and so on. I am wondering if she could share with me today what the Bloc Québécois would like to see the government do to invest in the renewable energy economy.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, robust, effective and transparent environmental impact assessments should be conducted for every offshore renewable energy project. Unfortunately, what we are seeing is that the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Environment are refusing to include these types of environmental assessments in this bill.

For us, it is quite simple. We cannot support such a bill.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, 275 years ago, humankind went from using primarily wood-, peat- and coal-based energy to using steam energy, though it was often still produced using coal. That enabled first England and then other countries to enter the industrial age. The steam was mainly produced using coal. Oil was discovered and mainly used by industry. Today, other energy sources are available, thanks to the ever-changing state of knowledge.

Bill C-49 seeks to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act. We are talking here not only about offshore oil and gas development but also about the implementation of offshore energy sources that could accelerate the energy transition. The second part has the potential to be useful.

Nonetheless, it is disappointing too. Our role in Parliament is to study bills, improve them in committee and pass them at various stages. I hope I am not telling anyone here anything new. The purpose of studying bills is to hear different points of view on how to improve the bills so that they meet the needs and realities experienced by our constituents. We represent all the constituents in our ridings, not just those who voted for us. As much as possible, the ideas that are heard have to help in reaching a consensus.

A minority government is wonderful because it is the most democratic of governments. Under such a government, everyone must sit down at the table and negotiate in good faith, and that is what we did. We negotiated in good faith. We voted for Bill C-49 at second reading so we could improve it to create a vision for the future, a gateway to the future. Unfortunately, during the study in committee, the supposed benefits of a minority government did not pan out. The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of the bill at second reading, but all our amendments were rejected in committee.

Admittedly, the bill puts forward some interesting energy transition ideas. However, the oil and gas elements remain problematic for us. Some say that Canada is just a tiny drop in the world's ocean

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of greenhouse gas emissions, but our oil and gas are intended for export. They are intended to encourage the rest of the world to waste even more resources and further pollute the atmosphere. That is not how we envision the future, and that is one of the problems.

I would like to point out some other problems. Some examples include clause 4, which changes section 2.1 in the original act, and paragraphs 5(1)(a) and 5(1)(b), which give powers to the Governor in Council, including “amending the definition *offshore renewable energy project*” and “prescribing lines enclosing areas adjacent to the Province”. This can be done without consulting the elected representatives of these provinces, particularly if they are not part of the government of the day. These decisions can be made by the Governor in Council without any democratic consultation, either with parliamentarians or with the provinces concerned. That lacks transparency.

How can anyone believe that this is going to be done transparently? The government can tell me that this process will be transparent, but during the pandemic, drilling permits were issued in protected areas without consultation. What is more, the government said that it was going to resolve that problem by changing the boundaries of the protected area. From what we have seen in the past and from what we can read in the bill, we know that we will be seeing the same things today.

There are also some consistency issues. Perhaps I can expand on the answer that my colleague gave earlier.

• (2055)

This government claims to be green. It says that it will plant two billion trees and that it is encouraging the country to make the transition, and yet it continues to invest heavily in petroleum development and open the doors to that industry.

I think that we can all agree that we will continue to need petroleum because hospitals, especially, cannot do without it. It is used to create plastics that have helped us to save a tremendous amount of time when it comes to sterilization and safety in hospitals.

However, just because we still need petroleum does not mean that we have to continue with large-scale oil development until we are down to the last drop, just so we can make a pile of money. The day when we can eat money instead of food, then we can talk about it. Perhaps money will become more important than everything else, but that is a long way off.

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Quebec, on the other hand, was the first government in North America to ban oil and gas exploration and development in its jurisdiction. It was a societal choice. Was it an easy choice to make? Of course not. Every government wants royalties and more money, but at some point, being a statesperson means protecting the dignity of the weak. There is no one weaker than a fetus, than an unborn child, than the future generation or generations to come. There is no one weaker than that. We must ensure they are protected. We must ensure they have a future. If we develop every last drop without consideration for the next two, three, four and five generations, we are no longer worthy of being called statesmen and stateswomen.

I am still talking about consistency. On the one hand, the government wants to implement slightly greener energies. On the other, it wants to continue developing oil and gas. Developing oil and gas to send to international markets will cancel out any transition efforts. If the government want to be consistent, it needs to invest in the transition first and in oil and gas if necessary.

It is of the utmost importance, but I am not sure that people understand that. Speaking of inconsistency, Ottawa and Newfoundland and Labrador have a plan to double oil and gas production beyond 2030 to 235 million barrels a year. That is nearly one million barrels a day. That takes 100 new wells. How many offshore wind turbines will it take to make up for that? It simply boggles the mind. I could point to Bay du Nord, Trans Mountain and so on.

Offshore wind turbines, yes, but not just anywhere or any which way. There needs to be impact assessments and those assessments need to be done by independent organizations that are free from influence. Where is the promise to protect 30% of the oceans? How are we going to protect them, by drilling wells? How are we going to protect them when the definitions can be changed depending on which influences are being exerted on the governor in council or according to ideologies that are not based in facts?

Our role is to prepare and protect the future for future generations. Bill C-49 could have lined up with our role of preparing and protecting the future, but it is unfortunately rooted in the past. It is a flying Dutchman that will cripple future generations and their quality of life.

● (2100)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments that were made. I agree that the energy transition is very important. I agree that we need to fight climate change, and I understand that the amendments have been rejected.

As I said a little earlier, we know that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador supports this bill. Should we respect its will and its ability to promote its economic prosperity? Should we respect its jurisdiction? I get a lot of feedback from my constituents in my riding of Waterloo. They ask me what the Bloc Québécois's position is. Is it the same for all the provinces and territories or does it just apply to Quebec? Newfoundland and Labrador supports this bill.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, every province has the right to grow its economic prosperity. Every province has the right to see to what it believes to be best for the future. We are talking about a future of five years, 10 years, or two, three, four or five generations. It is also a question that every parliamentary needs to ask, either here in the House or in another legislature.

That being said, it is the river that feeds the waters of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. One needs to have basic knowledge of oceanography and coastal geography to understand that if there is a disaster in Newfoundland and Labrador, then the tidal waters and the currents will bring that disaster to Quebec. We want to avoid that too.

Despite our independence, we are interdependent through this river.

[English]

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I rise on a bit of a point of order. I indicated earlier that I would be supporting Bill C-49 in my speech. I support the amendment, but I will not necessarily be supporting the bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is duly noted.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I apologize if I missed it, but my question for my colleague is around marine protected areas. We know that it is vitally important that we look at sustainable renewable energy sources as we move forward, and in conjunction with that, the marine protected areas. We are having incredible biodiversity loss in our marine ecosystems. Could the member share her thoughts around the importance of those two issues coinciding?

● (2105)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, as I was saying in my previous response, a concerted effort needs to be made to protect marine areas, because the Gulf of St. Lawrence is a common environment to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, the Magdalen Islands, Quebec and Newfoundland. We need to work together on protecting these areas from drilling. These are highly fragile environments with a rich biodiversity. The currents could well allow for an oil disaster to reach as far as Quebec City.

At that point, we would literally end up with a dead river. We want to prevent that from happening.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, since I have some time this evening, as the spouse of a U.S. Army combat veteran and as the stepmother of someone who is currently active within the U.S. Army, I would like to extend my gratitude to the United States of America for its strong allyship towards our country. I do so as the United States observes Memorial Day today.

It is about to get technical in here. Are members ready?

Government Orders

My colleague from Provencher just noted that we are debating an amendment to Bill C-69. I want to read the amendment and then make arguments to colleagues in here, as well as potentially any legislative staff from affected departments who might be listening to this, on why I think the House should avail itself of the opportunity to accept this amendment and do what the amendment says it should do. The amendment reads:

Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada—Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for the purpose of reconsidering Clauses 61, 62, 169, and 170 with the view to prevent uncertainty and a lack of clarity caused by the inclusion of similar provisions contained in Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, which would insert unanticipated conditions and requirements beyond existing legislation and regulations...

The reason Conservative members have put the amendment forward is that a substantive part of Bill C-49, which this amendment refers to, contains sections of Bill C-69, which were deemed largely unconstitutional.

There is something I do not think anyone has raised in debate in this place, as to why this amendment should go forward. Bill C-49, the substantive bill, was tabled on May 30, 2023. The Supreme Court ruling on the relevant sections in Bill C-49, which could be impacted by the relevant sections in Bill C-69, happened in October of last year.

Something else happened since this was put forward. The government tabled the budget implementation act, which we have been debating. In the budget implementation act, on page 552 through page 577, there are amendments to Bill C-69, the Impact Assessment Act, that the government says are in response to the Supreme Court ruling, in an attempt to bring that piece of legislation into alignment with the Supreme Court's decision. The district I represent is in Alberta. The Government of Alberta does not think that the amendments will be constitutional.

However, there is a problem. Everyone needs to consider supporting the amendment for this reason: Although the amendments to the Impact Assessment Act are in the budget implementation act, I cannot find any coordinating or harmonizing amendments between those amendments and what is in Bill C-49. There is a problem with that. Let us put all the debate on the topic aside for a minute. If the budget implementation act is rammed through without our going back and reconsidering the clauses that are in Bill C-49, what is going to happen to the bill? Everybody should do the math on this. It is going to be unconstitutional.

• (2110)

What happens in that circumstance, where there has not been a harmonization of one set of amendments to another? What happens to anybody who is looking at potentially investing in these projects? What would they say? They would say that this is a huge risk and that it is going to be held up in litigation. Therefore, this is the reason the House should support the amendment.

Everybody should put their feelings on the topic of the bill aside and think about House procedure for a second. Unless the bill goes back to committee to consider harmonizing two things, we are go-

ing to be in a battle. These things are, first, whether the bill actually captures the spirit of what is in the budget implementation act and, second, whether the provinces deem it constitutional. The government is going to be in a battle over this, and that is antithetical to what the bill is supposed to do, which is to attract investment in these projects.

What has happened here, I think, is that the government members did not think that the Supreme Court was going to rule against the government; that is why they tabled Bill C-49 in May 2023 with the same type of language that was deemed unconstitutional in the original bill, Bill C-69. However, the Liberals are now trying to fast-track the bill through the House of Commons without its going back to committee to consider that harmonization, and that is a huge problem. At the very least, the government members should be doing a technical briefing to show how the amendments they have proposed in the budget implementation bill would impact the relevant sections that are mentioned in the amendment. That is the bare minimum that they should be doing. I am not sure about anyone else in here, but I did not get the invitation to that briefing. I do not think it happened, because I do not think that the Liberals have actually done this work.

Therefore, the rationale that I just set out here is poor planning on the part of the minister. Beyond that, the reason I would like to implore some of my colleagues from the Bloc, perhaps the NDP and perhaps even members of the Liberal Party is that the minister and their parliamentary secretary should never have let it get to this stage. This is a failure in their parliamentary affairs component. Beyond that, there is another component, which is that now we are going to gear up for another fight with the provinces. This is not just about Alberta; we know that all the provinces had concerns with Bill C-69.

In fact, in debate on the Bloc opposition motion earlier this week, Bloc members talked about the fact that they wanted clarity on ensuring that the government was not going to reach into the jurisdictional area of Quebec and of other provinces. I want to read to members a statement from the government of my province of Alberta on what was in the budget implementation bill. This is the statement, titled "Impact Assessment Act remains unconstitutional: Joint Statement":

Premier Danielle Smith, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas Rebecca Schulz and Minister of Justice Mickey Amery issued the following statement on the federal government's amendments to the Impact Assessment Act:

Alberta has completed its review of the federal government's recently tabled amendments to the Impact Assessment Act.

For colleagues who are following along, that is what is in the budget implementation bill. It starts on page 552; that is what they are referring to in the statement. The statement continues:

Even with these amendments, the act is still unconstitutional.

The [federal] Minister of Environment and Climate Change...still has the ability to meddle in projects that are within provincial jurisdiction.

That is how they are describing the amendments. They do not find that constitutionality. It continues:

This will put projects [and they list a bunch of different resource projects and highways] at risk.... This is simply unacceptable and Alberta, when it comes to intra-provincial projects, will not recognize the Impact Assessment Act as valid law.

Government Orders

The situation could have been avoided if, following Alberta's Supreme Court victory, the federal government agreed to meaningfully consult with the province, rather than sending vague letters and blank templates. The federal government did not even inform Alberta when they were tabling these amendments in the House of Commons.

This failure to work collaboratively with Alberta is a choice made by [the] Prime Minister...and [the environment minister].

Choices have consequences. Alberta has won in court twice in the past year and we are ready to win again.

We are not at a point or a juncture in our nation's history where we can afford to be purposefully and knowingly picking battles with the provinces when our economy is barely sputtering along on life support.

● (2115)

We need investment into major natural resource projects. We need clarity in this type of legislation. We do not need more fights with the provinces.

What I see here is a hot mess that has not been adequately vetted by the parliamentary affairs people of the minister, and it has clearly not gone through cabinet with this type of scrutiny. When I was a cabinet minister, one of the things I always thought about when considering proposals for new legislation was how it would impact other areas of proposed legislation so that we would not get into harmonization issues that would create instability for investment.

That is exactly what we have here. Again, I know that people have issues with the Alberta energy sector. Members can park all of that for a second and put that aside. If this was the Government of Quebec or any other province, I would still feel the same way because it is counterproductive for the government to ram legislation forward knowing that there is going to be a fight on their hands, particularly when the province likely has a valid case.

I will just back it up to explain why this amendment to send it back to committee should be supported. If Bill C-49 is sent back to committee, it could be reviewed very quickly in coordination with the amendments that are in the budget implementation bill to ask if they harmonize. Does one equal the other?

We can argue whether or not they are good amendments, but the reality is that I do not think that exercise, in and of itself, has happened in any substantive way. Certainly, Parliament has not had the opportunity to do that, which is crazy. It is actually crazy that these are changing. If people have never sat around a board table, if they have never evaluated political risk in terms of making a major capital investment, this is the exact type of instability that people look at and say, "No, the capital is not going there."

Number one, Parliament should have the right to scrutinize whether or not these major pieces of regulatory changes actually harmonize with one another. Number two, to the case that my colleagues from the Bloc just made, we should be discussing whether or not they are good.

The budget implementation bill is also being rammed through the House of Commons by the Liberals and the NDP. This is a major substantive piece of legislation. There are so many other pieces in here that there is no possible way that the finance committee is going to be able to get into the granular details of this component of the legislation to see if they harmonize with each other.

I am looking for colleagues that are on the finance committee here. Are they going to have time to do this? No, of course not. It is not going to happen. That is a huge problem. By not having this happen, it is basically sending a message to the entire legal community and the entire investment community that we do not know what we are doing. We need to just back it up and take it to committee.

The last reason this exercise would be good is that it would be an opportunity to do meaningful consultation with the provinces on this very topic. Here we have a very heated statement from the premier and the environment minister of one of the top grossing economies in the province, and they are saying that the government did not talk to them. Instead, they sent "vague letters and blank templates." Do members know what vague letters and blank templates say to the investment community? They say, "Do not invest here."

There needs to be meaningful consultation with the provinces. Again, it should not be one province or another. Particularly if my colleagues from the Bloc are going to argue for provincial sovereignty within the area of their jurisdiction, then the principle of meaningful consultation with every province should apply. If this went back to committee, it would give an opportunity for meaningful consultation with the provinces on the areas where there needs to be harmonization and discussion, so that we do not end up in another protracted constitutional battle. This is what our job is.

● (2120)

The last thing I want to emphasize is that the clauses the amendment refers to are not minor clauses. It is not like the short title of the bill. These are substantive clauses that were already found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. Clause 62 deals with "The Regulator may, on application containing any information required by the Regulator or prescribed, issue an authorization with respect to each work or activity proposed to be carried out in relation to an offshore renewable energy project." These are substantive clauses that I am not satisfied, as a parliamentarian, are harmonized.

Often when I stand here in this place and talk about stuff like this, I feel like Cassandra, that Greek myth of the woman who is doomed to know the future and nobody believes her. I want to be proven wrong on this, but if we do not walk this back to committee and sort this out, I guarantee members that there will be a constitutional challenge on both of these bills, there will be less investment, and this is going to end up in the Supreme Court anyway. Why would we not just do our job as parliamentarians and get it right to begin with? That makes a lot of sense to me.

Government Orders

This does not have to take a lot of time. I mean, this is what parliamentary committees are for. It should be to consider these exact things. We should be getting the officials who wrote the relevant segments in the BIA into committee to ask, “Hey, do these jive with each other? Show me how. Walk me through this.” That would also give opportunity for the provinces to have input, and then consider it in clause by clause.

Now, why is getting this right so important? It is because the bureaucrats should not run Parliament. That is our job, right? What I have seen here is a lack when ministers do not do these sorts of things. Right now, the minister should be reaching out to party leaders or House leaders and saying, “Hey, you know what? Let’s go do a quick study on this. Let’s get this right.” However, what is happening is the ideologically rigid idea that we have to ram this through. I think that comes up through the bureaucracy because they are just not on top of parliamentary affairs, and procedure matters. The rule matters. At the end of the day, one of our key functions as members of Parliament is holding the government to account on technical things like this. When we do not show the public that we have the capacity to do this, they do not want to invest here. They do not have faith in us as parliamentarians.

That is why this amendment is common sense. We have gotten it to a certain point of debate in the House. There’s various viewpoints on the subject matter and the outcomes, but at the end of the day, there is a legitimate Supreme Court ruling that Parliament needs to consider in the implementation of this bill, which may not have been considered.

If we do not do this, and this does end up in a fight with the provinces, and this does end up in a Supreme Court fight, and we do chase investment away, what does that mean? It means that our economy continues to shrink. It means that we are not getting on top of renewable energy projects. It means that we are not developing the economy at all, and we cannot afford to do that.

Our country is broke right now, right? We cannot afford to make mistakes, or allow the government to make mistakes like this, and that is why we have to support amendments for additional legislative scrutiny, which is exactly what this amendment is calling for. It is very neutrally worded. It is not even referring to the whole bill. It is referring to the specific clauses that could be impacted by the Supreme Court ruling on Bill C-69.

I ask members to please let sanity prevail. Let us take the bill back to committee. Let us show the legal and investment community that Parliament is serious, that we can do something that resembles work, and let us get this right.

• (2125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her very interesting speech. She raised some important issues.

I sit with other colleagues on the Standing Committee on Finance. Introducing mammoth bills, budget implementation bills that affect a whole bunch of different acts, seems to be the government’s way of doing things at the moment. It is positioning itself

above the provinces, above other jurisdictions, above other governments and telling them how things are going to be done.

The latest example is Bill C-69, in which the government legislates on the whole issue of open banking. Institutions under provincial jurisdiction must ask the province for permission to opt in to federal regulation if they want to be able to compete with federally regulated banks. That always seems to be the way. This government does not seem to understand that the compromise of the federation was to create separate governments, each of which is sovereign in its own areas of jurisdiction. In the House, the government always says that it conducted consultations, but when we talk to the governments, we find out that it did not, or that the consultations were too little, too late and always conducted with a paternalistic approach. Ottawa knows best and decides what the naughty little children should do.

Is that acceptable?

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, it is not acceptable, and that is why I supported the Bloc’s motion on provincial jurisdiction this week. The other point that my colleague made is about the enormity of the budget implementation bill. The budget implementation bill, and I am not sure if he would agree, has become the government’s magic eraser. When its members realize that they have done something wrong, they try to ram it into a budget implementation bill, hoping it is not going to get any scrutiny, and then oftentimes they make it worse, particularly on the issue of provincial jurisdiction. That is why this amendment is common sense. It is not even partisan. We might have a major problem here with provincial jurisdiction and with a Supreme Court ruling. Let us walk it back. Let us look at these specific clauses and then proceed forward.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Calgary Nose Hill for a pretty novel critique of the bill that we have in front of us and the amendment that has been put forward by her party. I have not followed this as closely as some, but it would seem that, if there were infringements into provincial jurisdiction, that premiers, such as the Premier of Nova Scotia and the Premier of Newfoundland, would be concerned about that. I would also note that my understanding is that the Supreme Court ruling ruled that Bill C-69 was unconstitutional as far as it infringes into areas of provincial jurisdiction, and that offshore, of course, is clearly a federal jurisdiction. When we talk about offshore projects, they do fall under federal jurisdiction.

Government Orders

However, my question is really around the timing, and the member noted the timing. The Supreme Court ruling came out in October of last year, and the bill before us was in committee starting in January. I did not follow the committee hearings as I have two other committees I have to track. I am curious if these arguments came up at committee, and if so, what the response was, particularly by government witnesses or department officials who appeared at committee. This is out of honest curiosity.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, my understanding, and I would have asked my colleague to avail himself of the opportunity to look through the committee evidence from those meetings, is that this concern did come up. I also want to say to him that this is all fresh. This is actually what debate should be about in the House of Commons. The government's tabling of its amendments to respond to the Supreme Court ruling did not come out until the budget implementation act was tabled, which we are all in the middle of reviewing. I am not even sure. I am looking at my colleagues from the finance committee. I do not think they are in the middle of that yet.

The fact is that at finance committee, the BIA amendments on the Impact Assessment Act have not been debated yet, so when the member is saying he is sure that other provincial governments would have raised this, how would they have? This is super fresh, and I am not sure because the government has not made a statement. I do not think it has thought of this. I do not think that its members have said how the Impact Assessment Act could harmonize with the relevant sections of Bill C-49.

My colleague is right. It is not every part of Bill C-49 that is impacted by this, but there are material sections that are, so because the amendment is tight in scope to those relevant sections, he should be able to support it.

• (2130)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am on the natural resources committee, and there were two bills that came to our committee. There were Bill C-49 and Bill C-50. Bill C-49 came to us first. The government and the NDP were adamant that we had to do Bill C-50 first and then Bill C-49, but we knew that the Supreme Court had made its reference ruling that C-49 had unconstitutional elements to it, so we proposed to get the Impact Assessment Act right first and do that first and foremost. That way we could pass Bill C-49 because we know that the provinces are looking forward to getting something like this done, and then move on to Bill C-50.

The Liberals basically programmed the committee so we had to do Bill C-50 first and then do Bill C-49. It was done in such a fast fashion. We had industry representatives come in to say that they were not consulted. It is a complete dumpster fire.

I am wondering if my colleague has any explanation as to why the government would want to ram forward something rather than doing our job as parliamentarians, which is to make sure that we get the bill right and make sure we pass a constitutional bill in the first place.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I will be partisan for a minute. To me, and I think to any observer, this looks like a government that is chasing one issue. I would hate to be the

PMO issues manager. That must be a heck of a job these days, but the government is so focused on this that they do not have the intellectual or physical capacity to think about how to properly structure bills so that they do not have a path that careens towards an obvious Supreme Court ruling.

This is where the legal community, the investment community and the natural resources community just say no, and we cannot afford that. We cannot afford, as a country, that type of instability on investment right now, so it does behoove Parliament, when the government is getting it right, to do our job, hold the government to account and ask to walk it back and do everything in the right order so that we are not having another unconstitutional ruling and chasing away investment.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members will be familiar with the expression “casting pearls before swine.” Looking across the way, I wonder if it was more casting pearls before an empty pen tonight.

I do want to recognize the points the member made about how this bill would make it more difficult for greener projects to proceed as well. This bill is bad for energy development, for traditional energy and for green energy. The government likes to talk about green energy, but when one piles red tape on new development, it affects all sectors. I wonder if the member wants to comment further on that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity at this late hour to commend my colleague for his wonderful turn of phrase. He always has a nice quip. He is right, at the end of the day when a government tinkers with regulation, it naturally creates uncertainty in the investment community.

The job of Parliament is to ensure when the government is proposing regulations, that risk is diminished so we do not have the effects he talked about. Again, speaking narrowly to this amendment, this bill absolutely needs to go back to committee in the tight scope, at the very least. I have my objections on the overall content of the bill, but if there is agreement that some parts of this might be good, then it behooves the government and Parliament to get it right.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not to be outdone by my colleague, I would say that given the numbers on the other side, the member for Calgary Nose Hill who might be tilting at windmills in terms of having members listen.

This bill would bring, as the member pointed out, four sections from the Impact Assessment Act into it. I wonder if the member could comment on how effective those have been at getting capital projects done in western Canada, because it would bring that same speed, I expect, and same diligence to getting things done to Atlantic energy projects.

Government Orders

• (2135)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, woe betide Atlantic Canada having to face the impact assessment woes of western Canada. It has not been easy over the last nine years. Provinces should have the right to develop projects within their jurisdiction. The federal government should not stand in the way. There is the whole constitutional and federal structure issue we need to discuss, but when the government stands in the way, it also puts a chill on investment. It says that if different levels of government cannot sort their things out and act civilly, then there is no point in investing. Again, we cannot afford that. Canada is now seen as a jurisdiction of high political risk. Can members believe that? It is because of problems like this, so I implore everyone in the House to support the amendment and to do due diligence so we do not see that investment chased away.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask everyone up front to excuse my west coast tired brain, but I am happy to stand on this important issue.

First and foremost, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Skeena—Bulkeley Valley.

We know this bill provides a framework for regulatory approvals of offshore wind energy projects and updates the current legislation to help facilitate the development of offshore renewable wind power, which will, in turn, greatly enhance the ability to decarbonize the electrical grid in Atlantic Canada. It is much needed. We also know that this necessary regulatory framework will kick-start the development of a significant green hydrogen industry in Atlantic Canada.

As we know, Atlantic Canada has enormous potential to develop a renewable offshore wind industry that will create good, local jobs, lower energy bills and fight the climate crisis, three issues that we know are vitally important to people across Canada and on the east coast. We know that offshore winds are generally stronger and more consistent than onshore winds and offshore turbines tend to be larger as well. That means that offshore wind projects generally have a greater overall power output than onshore equivalents, while also providing a more consistent stream of energy. This is good news for East Coasters. We know that updating the Atlantic accord is an important step toward the development of offshore renewable energy.

I know members are very aware that my roots are in the east coast, St. John's, Newfoundland, in particular. I am certain anybody who has been to Newfoundland knows first-hand that there is no shortage of wind. I spoke a little earlier about my experience there. It is funny because I remember hearing my parents talking about having to walk to school with snow up to their armpits in a blizzard, the stories about the hardships of childhood. In fact, I had to walk to school with tremendous wind blowing. I remember having to lean into the wind as a kid and grab onto items not to get blown backward. There is an incredible resource in wind, and we need to utilize that resource.

We know there are incredible opportunities with wind-powered energy. We also know that we need to do this right. As somebody who lived in Newfoundland, I know first-hand how important the fishing industry is. We know that right now there are many working

in this vitally important industry who are already struggling to make ends meet, so it is paramount that, as we move forward in this work to provide renewable energy, with good jobs for Newfoundlanders, we are also looking at potential implications for fishers that may come from wind turbines. My hope is that we will see a clear, real jobs plan for any fishers who may be impacted. This is so important for coastal communities.

I will make one last point about myself. This is far from being about me, but it is my frame of reference, I guess I could say. When I grew up in Newfoundland, the cod moratorium had happened and my family owned a small business in St. John's, Newfoundland. We were not fishers, but the economy and community that we depended on were very much impacted by this cod moratorium. This cod moratorium, along with a few other factors, is the reason my family sold everything, packed up our vehicle and drove from the east coast to the west coast to start our new lives in Nanaimo, which is, of course, where we call home today.

• (2140)

My point to this is that it is vitally important that we are supporting coastal communities. If there are industries that need supports and people whose livelihoods depend on it, who require supports to transition through these changes, the government needs to be stepping up and providing the leadership to ensure that this is happening. We definitely do not want people to have to leave their homes, leave their home provinces or leave the country to find that economic stability. We have a wealth of opportunities right here in Canada, particularly on the east coast. This is another example of an opportunity that can be provided.

Another piece that I wanted to mention is around the importance of us moving forward in a way that considers potential environmental implications, in particular when we look at marine protected areas. This is a concern that has been brought to my attention around ensuring that we are looking at continuing to protect marine protected areas. Biodiversity in our marine ecosystems is dwindling, and we know that our marine ecosystems need to remain diverse. We need to see species flourishing in order for our marine ecosystems to thrive. These are the same marine ecosystems that fishers depend on for their livelihoods, and the same marine ecosystems that we rely on for our planet to function and to capture carbon.

We know that Canada, unfortunately, is failing to meet targets to combat the climate crisis. The Liberal government has failed to meet any of the commitments or targets it has made since first getting elected in 2015. It is sad to know. CO2 emissions have only recently flatlined after many years of rising under the government's tenure, and we still do not have an emissions cap on the oil and gas industry, as promised by the Prime Minister two years ago at COP26. We are in a climate crisis and we need to see actions being taken at a much faster rate than this.

Government Orders

Canadians are experiencing first-hand the devastating effects of the climate crisis. We have had days upon days of air quality warnings in cities across the country due to smoke. I know in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, people with asthma struggled tremendously. People without asthma questioned whether to take their kids outside and play. The impacts are horrendous. We know people in Fort Nelson, for example, are just returning home today, which is the last update I received, after being evacuated from their homes for two weeks due to wildfire concerns. We are only in May. We are not in June yet.

It is not just me saying this issue needs to move forward, but those who live in Newfoundland and Labrador are saying it too. We know, for example, that the Newfoundland premier, Andrew Furey, said, “The significance of these amendments to the Atlantic Accord cannot be understated. This will echo loudly now and be heard for years and years to come. Much like the original Atlantic Accord, we again take stewardship of our natural resources. What we can aptly describe as the winds of change are upon us all here today. Today, we start towards a new frontier for future generations. This is a gigantic win for every Newfoundlander and Labradorian.”

It goes on from here. We know that Tim Holman, the Nova Scotia environment minister said, “If you’ve ever visited us or Newfoundland, you know we have lots of water, you know we have lots of wind, and we’re gearing up to take advantage of those natural resources in a clean, sustainable way. We’re paving the way for projects such as offshore wind and green hydrogen production.”

It is time that we support the provinces in moving forward with clean energy and with real jobs for people who live in these Atlantic provinces, and have the resources in place that would help lower the greenhouse gas emissions that we so desperately need to see happen.

● (2145)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her remarks. It is a pity the benches across the way are so devoid of activity. The member talked about this bill and the impact on green energy.

Does the member think that some provisions of this bill are actually an impediment for the development of green projects?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that we cannot be stalling on real solutions to the climate crisis and on moving forward with renewable energy. As a matter of fact, I have in front of me an article put out by CBC News quoting the Premier of Newfoundland, Andrew Furey. It says, “Newfoundland and Labrador is positioning itself as the primary benefactor and regulator when it comes to offshore wind developments in the province—but the deal hinges on federal legislation passing in Ottawa.”

The federal legislation that is pending is the bill that we are debating this evening, Bill C-49. It is time that we see this go through so that we can see these projects move forward.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about common sense in opposition to this bill from the Conservatives. Meanwhile, I see a lack of common sense. We know that there are places in B.C. that are being evacuated. I know that in northern Manitoba, there are places that are being evacuated

as a result of catastrophic climate change. Every time there is a bill put forward that even attempts to address the climate crisis, the Conservatives violently oppose it. I am wondering if my hon. colleague thinks that the Conservatives are offering any common sense. I find that their analysis is complete nonsense.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to my colleague's question, I was reflecting on, if I could be frank this evening, the deep sadness that I feel, sitting in the chamber and hearing the Conservatives continually deny that we are in a climate crisis, continually try to stall any legislation that will move us forward in the direction that our children need, the direction that we need today, to see a sustainable future for Canadians and for people around the world. I feel sad to see that. My hope is that with legislation like this, with the support of premiers and with the support of people in provinces across Canada, we will see the changes necessary to have renewable energy, to see our greenhouse gas emissions reduced, to see caps finally placed on big oil and gas, and to see a future that my children and all of our children can be proud of, moving forward.

● (2150)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, with whom I serve on the fisheries committee. I know that she has a deep understanding of the region, since she was born in Newfoundland and raised in Newfoundland.

I would like to ask her if she is aware of the projects that are going through the IAA process in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia right now, and the fact that most have taken more than seven years and still have no end in sight, and how she thinks applying that process to offshore wind is going to get any offshore wind built in any timely manner in the next decade or two in Atlantic Canada.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the fisheries committee with my hon. colleague, and I enjoy our work together. We may disagree sometimes, but it is important for us to have respectful dialogue, and I have that with the member, so I appreciate that.

My response to that question is that I agree that there are many delays in vital projects being moved forward, and we need to see timely projects being put into place to ensure that we see this energy being delivered. My hope is that we will see all members coming together to see this legislation pass and to work alongside premiers who are asking for this work to move ahead.

Government Orders

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of the people of Skeena—Bulkley Valley and speak to what I believe is a Conservative amendment to Bill C-49, which in turn amends two other pieces of legislation, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act, and makes consequential changes to other acts.

I see my friend from Nova Scotia is already yawning. I promise the speech is about to get quite a bit more exciting.

We are talking in part this evening about renewable energy, about this really exciting industry that is growing in leaps and bounds and is going to very quickly take over as the primary energy source, powering countries and economies around the globe.

I thought I would start by first going back to my home province, to the west coast. Tonight we are talking about Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. If we go some 4,000 kilometres westward, we get to the islands of Haida Gwaii. I was there just a couple of weeks ago and met in Masset briefly with the folks from the Swiilawiid Sustainability Society, which is a grassroots organization on Haida Gwaii that, among other things, is working on a project called Project 0% Diesel. Being a remote archipelago, Haida Gwaii gets most of its energy from diesel generators. This, of course, produces a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions and is something that folks on Haida Gwaii want to move off through the generation of renewable energy.

The folks at Swiilawiid are going to be hosting this year's renewable energy symposium on September 21-22. That is an opportunity for Haida citizens and people living on Haida Gwaii to come together and talk about the myriad options and opportunities for renewable energy generation as part of tackling the climate crisis, as well as creating economic development, jobs and innovation right on Haida Gwaii.

There are two other projects I will mention. Haida Gwaii has emerged as a real leader in northern British Columbia when it comes to renewable energy. There is a really exciting tidal power pilot project that is moving ahead, I believe, with some federal funding. The village of Masset has installed what was at the time the largest solar installation in British Columbia, a two-megawatt solar farm at the Masset airport. I had a chance to see it when I flew into Masset about a month ago. This is exciting stuff on the west coast.

However, the bill we are debating this evening is dealing with the east coast and the development of, among other things, offshore wind, which is a tremendous opportunity. I will just briefly review that. I know we have been debating this for some time, so people know what the bill does. I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are nodding that we have been debating it for quite a while, because there are certain people who would rather that this bill did not pass through the House in a timely manner. However, I digress.

Essentially, this bill is going to update legislation and help facilitate the development of an offshore energy industry. This is something that the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador have been calling for. There are agreements between

those provinces and the federal government to do just that. My understanding is that the premiers of those provinces want this to happen in a big way, because there is a tremendous economic opportunity at stake here, and it is something that is going to come with a huge number of benefits. That is not to say that there are not important questions to be asked.

I, for one, am not a member of the natural resources committee, so I was not party to all of the discussions that have taken place there, but I have been present for some debates about offshore energy and tidal energy. The member down the way will remember when we sat together, I believe at the environment committee, where we talked about a certain tidal project in the Bay of Fundy that was withdrawn by the proponent in part because of government processes. I see that he is shaking his head, so maybe I got some of the details wrong, but at the time Conservative members were bemoaning the loss of this project and calling for the government to do more to incentivize these renewable energy resources. Here we have a bill that, at least according to those provinces and the industry in those provinces, does precisely that, yet we do not see that same call for things to move ahead.

● (2155)

I have listened with interest to all of the speeches this evening. They have covered a bunch of ground. I listened with particular interest to the remarks made by my colleague from Provencher. Several Conservative speakers have indicated that they support this bill in principle, and I think that is admirable if, in fact, it is true. The reason I question whether that is indeed the truth is that if we go back to the vote at second reading, which is a vote on the principle of the bill and a vote to move the bill ahead to committee, where it can be studied and amended, my recollection and the information I have suggest that they voted against it at second reading. Perhaps they could correct me if that is wrong.

It does seem that this is a bill that will move things ahead, and it is something that we support. There are, of course, questions that have been raised about the impact of offshore development on the marine ecosystem. This is a matter that is of utmost importance. My understanding is that the government has suggested that issues related to the impact on specific areas should be properly dealt with through the assessment process on a project-by-project basis. Similarly, there are questions about the impact on fish harvesters who rely on areas that could be developed in the offshore for wind resources, and those are very valid concerns that must be addressed in a proper way.

My hope is that the government would do just that, that it would take those concerns seriously and seek to mitigate those impacts and compensate any fish harvester who is affected by the development of any offshore resources.

Government Orders

What we are talking about is tapping into an area of economic development, an area of renewable energy generation that is burgeoning around the world. If we look at some of the statistics, in January of this year the International Energy Agency report said that wind and solar are going to generate more electricity this year than hydro power, and by 2025, renewables are going to surpass coal as “the largest source of electricity generation” around the world. By 2028, renewables are going to “account for over 42% of global electricity generation”.

This is a massive opportunity. It is an energy revolution that is happening, a transition that is happening. It behooves Canada, our federal government and us as parliamentarians to ensure that the frameworks are in place so that we can take advantage of this as a country, so that provinces like Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador can get good projects moving ahead as quickly as possible, can offset or reduce their reliance on fossil fuel sources of energy, and can pursue other opportunities for export, like green hydrogen. We heard about Germany's desire to have green hydrogen exported to it, and if there is a surplus of electricity beyond domestic needs, that is something that should be investigated thoroughly and delivered on.

Again, we hear frequent protestations about the constitutional jurisdiction of provinces. I was at committee when several premiers were invited to attend and talk at length about the perceived infringement on provincial jurisdiction. This idea that every province has a right to determine its economic future is something that we have heard from the Bloc as well. However, in this case, we have maritime provinces that very much want to move forward in an accelerated way with renewable energy development. They want the kind of legislation that is before us to set a predictable framework so that the industry can, in an efficient way, move forward with developments, produce renewable electricity, address the climate crisis and develop the economy all at the same time.

I am pleased to rise tonight and speak to this legislation. I look forward to the questions from my colleagues.

● (2200)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing I have been struck by in the debate around the government's response to the challenges associated with climate change is the praise of intentions, as if intentions are what matters most. It has been said, “It is not enough to do your best; you must know what to do, and then do your best.”

When it comes to offshore energy development, this could be a great opportunity to support European energy security, to displace dirtier forms of fuel in other parts of the world and to allow the development of green projects with less red tape. However, the government is piling red tape upon Canadian projects, the likely effect of which is actually more greenhouse gas emissions, because we are missing an opportunity to displace less secure, dirtier fuel around the world.

Does the member not think that good intentions are not enough, that we have to look at the results? In this case, the development of Canadian energy with less red tape is good for the environment insofar as it displaces less environmentally friendly sources of fuel around the world.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question, but there are several parts to it.

Of course, we need more than good intentions and hopes and dreams; we do need results. However, I think the argument that somehow Canadian energy is going to displace dirtier forms of energy around the world has not been substantially validated and, in many ways, Canadian energy has a higher GHG intensity when we are talking about oil products than many other sources of oil around the world. So, it is a bit of a problematic argument when you look at the energy mix that we are exporting as a whole, but certainly there are opportunities to export. British Columbia exports renewable energy south to the United States, and there are opportunities for exporting green hydrogen, for instance. So, we need to look at that opportunity.

However, one of the biggest things we need to do is meet the targets that the federal government promised the Canadian people that Canada would meet, and doing that means reducing our domestic emissions. One way to do that is to get off diesel power, get off coal power, and ensure that renewables are powering our electricity grid. I think that offshore wind and solar are ways that we can get there. It is a huge opportunity, and it is one we should not miss.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the Bloc Québécois studied this bill in good faith. The same can be said for a lot of Canadians and organizations that made serious, carefully-considered and reasonable recommendations.

Unfortunately, the Liberals rejected all of the improvements proposed by environmental groups, energy experts and lawyers specializing in environmental governance. At the end of the day, the government decided against implementing any real environmental assessment process for future energy projects.

I know that New Democrats want to do more to fight climate change. They want the energy transition to move in the right direction. Does my colleague agree that new projects should not be subject to any environmental assessments?

● (2205)

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly, listening to the interpretation, it is: do I believe that no environmental assessments should be carried out for new projects?

Government Orders

I am missing the question a little bit, but I think that the member and I share a desire to have a strong and effective environmental impact assessment process. If good-faith amendments were brought forward at committee that led in that direction, and they were not carried as part of the bill, then that is certainly disappointing. However, when it comes to the overall thrust of this legislation, I think it is to get the renewable energy industry off the ground in the maritime provinces and, overall, that is something that is heading in the right direction.

Now, the details, of course, are always what matter. When it comes to the impact on the environment, there is a lot of talk about streamlining, cutting red tape and all of these things, but that cannot come at the cost of the integrity of the review process.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise tonight with respect to Bill C-49, which would amend, in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, the offshore petroleum board's mandate from petroleum to regulating overall energy. We have proposed an amendment at this stage to deal with the fact that parts of this bill would implement elements of the Impact Assessment Act, IAA, that have been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

I would like to start by addressing some of the concerns that I have heard over the last few weeks from Liberal members from my part of the world in Atlantic Canada. One of them, the member for Kings—Hants, has an agriculture riding, so he is expert at spreading manure. He has very much pushed the envelope on what this bill is about. It almost makes us believe that maybe he had not read it.

I am going to talk a bit about the issue of tidal energy to start, which was mentioned a little earlier by one of my NDP colleagues. The good news is that the first North American tidal project that was able to produce actual electricity without being destroyed by the tides of the Bay of Fundy worked. The bad news is the project is dead. Why is that project dead? It is dead because of the natural virtue-signalling tendencies of the current Liberal government; the Liberal government killed it, if members can believe it.

Sustainable Marine Energy started developing the alternative energy project in the Bay of Fundy. If members do not know, I will tell them that the Bay of Fundy's tides, every day, push more water in and out of the Bay of Fundy than all other rivers in the world combined in their flow in one day. That is the power of the Bay of Fundy. Many attempts have been made to put turbines at the bottom of the ocean, millions and millions of dollars in the Bay of Fundy, and within about 48 hours they are blown apart by the actual power of the sea and those tides that rise 48 feet and drop 48 feet every day. They are the highest tides in the world.

Sustainable Marine Energy developed a different approach, basically put the turbines on the top of the water, and that energy project in the Bay of Fundy was licensed in 2012. Who was the government in 2012? I think it was the Conservatives. The first energy tidal project producing clean, renewable energy was approved by the Conservative government in 2012. That is when the green energy bonanza, which could have been a bonanza, was started in Atlantic Canada. What happened? The tidal project would have provided nine megawatts of clean, green energy to Nova Scotia's

electrical grid and could have generated up to 2,500 megawatts while bringing in \$100 million in inward investment and eliminating 17,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, which is the equivalent of taking 3,700 cars off the road. It sounds pretty good to me and it sounded pretty good to the Harper government, and that is why it was approved to go ahead with the experiment.

If the Liberal government really cared as much about combatting climate change and about green energy as the Liberals claimed to, one would think that they would have continued to license this project, to develop it and to draft this offshore power that we have. However, they did not; one would be wrong.

For its trail-blazing efforts, this is what happened to Sustainable Marine Energy. It was awarded, I would say, a red tide. In the ocean, a red tide kills everything. A blue tide, everything lives in; and the red tide in the ocean actually kills all fish. The company was awarded a red tide of red tape from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. For those familiar with the energy projects out west and the power of DFO in preventing energy projects in western Canada, the government of course decided to use this in the ocean as well when it came to Sustainable Marine Energy. The government repeatedly delayed the permits and rejected permits, even after being provided reams and reams of science about how the fisheries were not impacted by this project.

● (2210)

The last project, which is the straw that broke the camel's back, was last year. After five years of the regulatory challenges by DFO, the project in Digby county, and I know the Speaker is very familiar with it since Digby county is in his constituency, that would have gone a long way to fighting against climate change was cancelled by DFO.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rick Perkins: No, Mr. Speaker, it was not withdrawn, as a member said, by the company. It was cancelled, and that company now has shut down.

At the time when this happened last year, the CEO said that the company put in \$60 million and five years of work into the turbines, which were the first to return power to the Nova Scotia electricity grid, and DFO actually shut it down anyway. As I said, Sustainable Marine shared a video with a news organization that showed the tidal power working and how it was connected into the Nova Scotia grid.

Government Orders

The CEO said, “We’re the first ones to actually deploy and put power onto the grid and actually receive payment from Nova Scotia Power for power.” He said, “so it’s quite bizarre” in relation to what DFO has done. He continued, “We don’t know how they’ve made that determination despite the fact we’re using very conventional technology and there’s over 20 years of experience with this technology internationally, and no one’s ever seen a single marine animal or fish harmed in any way, shape or form.” DFO shut this company down.

In the era of puffery and imagery of the government, it brings in input, but when it comes to actually executing on it, it lets a department like DFO shut it down. That is before this bill. Let me explain now how bad it gets with this bill, because if the system that gave DFO this power now was not bad enough, this bill would give DFO way more power.

This bill would give DFO the power, if it thinks at some point in the future it might want to do a marine protected area in the ocean in an area where there might be a development of oil and gas or a wind energy project, to veto without having to talk to anyone. It could just veto the project. It would give more power for DFO to shut down projects in the ocean.

However, this bill includes four sections from the Impact Assessment Act, and those four sections are designed to slow down energy projects. They were designed by the Liberals to stop energy projects from happening, to delay to the point where mines take 15 years to get a permit in Canada. That great success rate is what the government wants to impose now on offshore wind. Why would it impose a process on offshore wind that has been so detrimental to the energy industry out west and think that somehow the result of how it would be implemented in the ocean would be different?

I will give an idea of some of the projects in Atlantic Canada going through that particular process. The Tilt Cove exploration petroleum drilling project in Newfoundland in the Jeanne d’Arc Basin was started in 2019 and has been extended for a couple of years. It is already five years through the process, with no end in sight and was extended on the latest phase out to 2025 for more study.

The Cape Ray gold and silver mine in Newfoundland, which started in 2016, is now eight years through that process, with no end in sight. The Joyce Lake direct shipping iron ore mine in Newfoundland is now 11 years through the process, with no end in sight. These keep going on. The Fifteen Mile Stream gold mine, which I believe is in Nova Scotia, has been six years in the process. The Beaver Dam gold mine in Nova Scotia has been nine years in the process.

Anyone who thinks this IAA process works in an expeditious way has not actually looked at any of the impacts of the process on getting energy projects actually approved through the system. Taking that great success of five years, six years, seven years, eight years, nine years, 10 years and 11 years to go through a project, the government wants to put that success into offshore wind. If anyone believes the offshore wind projects off Nova Scotia are going to be done before Centre Block opens again in 2035 after construction, they are living in a different world.

• (2215)

Our opposition is not an opposition to “technology, not taxes”, as some members seem to always imply, and they abuse the line. It is our line. We believe that we can do these things. We just think they actually have to get done, and that imposing unconstitutional provisions in the act, and enforcing and pushing those down on the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, would only lead to failure.

We are a party that believes in success and that we have to get these projects done. The government seems to actually believe that the process it has put in place will actually get things done. I do not believe that the Liberals believe that, but they seem to spin it. However, getting things through in 10, 11 or 12 years is not getting them done. Fifteen years for a mine is not getting it done; that is driving capital to other places.

Every year in Newfoundland, the Newfoundland offshore petroleum board, whose mandate the bill would amend, does a call-out for bids for exploratory oil and gas drilling wells off Newfoundland. Every single summer, it gets bids and people explore. Companies from around the world explore. I understand how expensive it is to do exploratory drilling in the ocean. It is \$100 million to \$200 million-plus per drilled hole, minimum, to do that, so these are big global investments that happen. Every single year, the board has had bids for them.

The bill before us was introduced in 2023, in late May or early June. The Newfoundland offshore petroleum board went out with its bids. Guess how many bids it got last summer? Colleagues would be right if they said none. There was not a single bid. Year after year it got bids, but the bill got introduced, and the very threat of the IAA on the offshore petroleum business in Newfoundland sent the money elsewhere.

Guess where the money and the drilling permits went. They went to the Gulf of Mexico, because the mere idea that the process would be imposed sent capital elsewhere in the world. That is what it would do to offshore wind. The offshore wind money that is being proposed now, for the most part is not coming from Canada. It is coming from elsewhere to be invested in Nova Scotia, and it will fly away just as quickly as a Liberal promise. As soon as the bill were to come into effect, it just would not happen under the process. That is what we object to: a process that would not work.

Liberals believe in the output but have not even actually read the bill to understand what the four provisions are from the IAA that they have put in it. I would like all of the Liberals whom I can see from the vast number of them on the benches across from me to raise their hand if they can cite the four sections that have been pulled out of the impact assessment thing. I hear nothing. I do not see a hand going up. This is a very awkward silence indeed because I can cite the provisions if they like.

Government Orders

I will inform the members which sections are there. Clauses 61, 62, 169 and 170 are all from the Impact Assessment Act of the government. All of those are the clauses that would impose the IAA on offshore wind approvals in Atlantic Canada. All of them have resulted in zero projects being approved in Atlantic Canada. All of them have resulted in zero projects being approved in the energy industry out west. The outcome of those will be exactly the same for offshore wind, and that is why we oppose the bill.

We support the technology. We support offshore wind. We support using the Bay of Fundy tides to generate clean electricity. Unfortunately, the government does not, because it vetoed the only real functioning project. By the way, there is no offshore wind project or windmill anywhere in Canada up now, but we had one that was going to use tidal Bay of Fundy energy, and the government shut it down.

We will continue to oppose bad legislation that would bring in anti-capital processes that drive investment out of Canada, which is what the bill before us would do.

● (2220)

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his wealth of knowledge of history, not only in his province but also in this country.

It is probably not in the Standing Orders for me to do this, so I want to be careful, but I will make a bet or a wager. Several Conservative members have consistently stood up and made a case based on the government's history, based on Bill C-69 and based on many of the same provisions that are in Bill C-49, which we are dealing with. There is an amendment that would send the bill back to committee to fix some of what I think is going to be deemed unconstitutional, dragging the process out and creating an investment climate in this country that is going to go in the wrong direction.

I want to make sure one more time that my colleague can get on the record again, as the Liberals and the NDP seem to be blind to the idea that this could even happen. Can the member talk about what he predicts would happen in the future if the bill passes in its current form and does not go back to committee?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I will answer my colleague's question by saying that, like the value of most Liberal campaign promises, the number of projects that would result in offshore wind would be zero. The ability for energy infrastructure to get approved under this is proven. It is not new. We are not making this up; it is proven. It has happened out west and it has happened in the seven or eight mining projects that I just outlined between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador that have been going for anywhere from five to 11 years through this process, which is designed not to happen.

We know that the average mine in this country now takes at least 15 years to get approved. No one with private capital is willing to wait that long when there are other parts of the world willing to get projects approved much more quickly, in less than two years or 18 months, and approved in an environmentally sustainable way.

I do not know whether we are allowed to talk about wagering, but I would make a wager with most of my colleagues on the Liber-

al side about what happens if the bill goes through in its existing form without the amendments that we have put forward to send it back to committee. I know the government finds democracy totally messy. The whole thing about parliamentary debate is bothersome to them. However, Conservatives are going to continue to push forward on these things and bother the government with the democratic right that we have to push back with a different perspective, with the facts and not with fantasy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his very interesting speech. I especially liked the part about the tidal energy industry in the Bay of Fundy, which has the highest tides in the world. As for the bill before us, we supported Bill C-49 at second reading because we expected a collegial approach, and we thought we would be able to discuss it and improve it in committee. However, the government rejected all of our amendments.

In the hon. member's opinion, is that how this government operates, even with a minority of seats? Is that not the same way it behaves toward its provincial counterparts?

● (2225)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I think it obviously was that way. I attended some of the natural resource committee hearings and meetings on that, and it seemed that the government members there were totally opposed to considering any other additions that could fix, help or improve the bill. That is obviously not the experience I have had in some other committees. In particular, I am vice-chair of the industry committee, a very collegial committee on Bill C-34, which amended the Investment Canada Act, and the government agreed to many of the amendments the opposition made.

Right now there are many amendments to Bill C-27, perhaps one of the most consequential bills that Parliament has dealing with privacy and artificial intelligence, a complete replacement of our Privacy Act, and we have already passed six amendments to the bill from all parties. The government is operating in a very different way in very different committees, which surprises me, but maybe it should not surprise me that it does one thing in one place and says another thing in another place.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I get concerned every time I hear the Conservatives speak, especially right now, hearing the news. There are communities in B.C. that are being evacuated. Any time we talk about a plan to deal with the climate emergency, the Conservatives have a problem with it. I am not saying that the bill is perfect, but what I am saying is that the Conservatives are consistent in their climate denial or in having a real plan to deal with the climate emergency. I am wondering, besides sound bites like "axe the tax", what my hon. colleague is willing to do to axe the climate emergency.

Government Orders

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, the province with the longest-standing carbon tax is British Columbia, and it does not seem to have slowed down forest fires out there, and in my province, there have been forest fires; two of them were in my riding last year, and they were both man-made. I know that the NDP likes to pretend that all forest fires happen by divine intervention, but they do not. A lot of times they happen because they are man-made, and they put our communities at risk.

I would like to hear the NDP once in a while acknowledge the fact that not every forest fire is caused by some sort of natural cause that they see, and that most of the time they are caused by man-made intervention, either by mistake or intentionally.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we hear the Liberals all the time on the other side of the floor claim they are investing in Canadians, and we know at this point they are running out of Canadians' money, printing it and borrowing it. Whatever we had is pretty well gone. They are taxing it as well. Could you explain to the Liberals the true definition of investment in Canadians?

The Deputy Speaker: I am not going to explain it, but the member for South Shore—St. Margarets will.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, there is an Ottawa-speak that happens, in which every time somebody spends a tax dollar, the government calls it an investment. Investment is really only when we buy equity in something, and equity generally is ownership of a company, so an investment is that kind of thing. When we spend money that leads to \$40 billion deficits and that leads to \$800 billion of debt being added, that is called an expenditure with very little result, as we have seen from the government.

We have the poorest productivity in the OECD, thanks to the government's expenditures. There is now a 40% gap between Canada and the United States in per capita income because of the expenditures, which the government calls investments. The purchasing power of our dollar is dropping, and our individual paycheques are dropping dramatically because the government's expenditure investments are producing very little in the way of economic benefit. In fact, they are hurting our economy, because the increased debt and increased spending have increased interest rates, which have increased the cost of everything to everybody and are causing an affordability and housing crisis in Canada.

• (2230)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I understand the answer to the last question, the member is saying, that because of his definition of what an investment is, things like \$10-a-day child care, investing—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I should not use the word, but this is what I mean. The Conservatives will be critical of my even saying that. This is the irony of where I am going with this: Any kind of expense, as it relates to a national school food program, for example, is not an investment; it is just an expenditure. That was the member's word. He said that there is an investment and there is an expenditure, and apparently we can invest only if we are investing in something that is going to build us equity. The concept of a social equity is just going to be completely foreign to him.

If I understand this correctly, an investment cannot happen in people; it can happen only in a company. Is that what he just said?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, the government's expenditures are not in people; they are in bureaucracy, but I know the government likes to build up the bureaucracy. In Ottawa, 106,000 new bureaucrats have been hired since the current government came to power. Those are called expenditures. Day care with over 80,000 people in Quebec waiting on the list is called an expenditure. There are dental expenditures that have eight dentists total in Nova Scotia signed up for it; the inability of the program to actually work is an expenditure. A food care program that does not deliver food, just a bureaucracy to look at and manage food in Ottawa, is called an expenditure.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to address the House this evening, as always, and to follow my esteemed colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets, who knows a bit more about Atlantic Canada than I do. Nonetheless, I am pleased to support his view and the view of my Conservative colleagues that Bill C-49 needs to go back for further study, that it is a deeply flawed bill.

Fundamentally, for those who are just joining us at home, Bill C-49 is about furthering the government's anti-energy, antidevelopment agenda. In that context, let us talk a little bit about the state of this beautiful country. We are here because we are fighting for Canada, this country that we love and believe in. Canada is a cold frontier nation built on hard work. People who came here as immigrants or people who have been here since time immemorial did not come here or stay here because of the weather. They worked hard in a cold frontier nation to build beautiful things that lasted for themselves and for future generations. They have always taken pride in their hard work. Canadians have understood that it is not the easy life we seek, but it is through striving and struggle that we build and expand a beautiful country for those who come after us.

When I talk to people working in this country, that is what they want. They want to be able to work hard, to use their God-given creativity and genius to create new things for their families and for the future. The government, unfortunately, gets this country totally wrong. This is evident in the way it has approached economic policy and so many other areas over the last nine years. It thinks Canadians are just waiting for that next handout from government. While some Canadians do need to rely on social supports and assistance from time to time, the desire of Canadians is to be able to work, produce, and provide for themselves and their families and, indeed, for posterity.

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The government's approach to energy policy, then, is completely disconnected from the desires and aspirations of the people of this country. Canadians want to be able to work, produce and create. People who work in the energy sector, in some cases, face cold, harsh elements, working outside and striving for opportunities for themselves and their families. However, they do this with joy and relish because satisfaction comes from that production; this gives them joy, strengthens their sense of meaning and purpose and allows them, again, to be connected to something greater than themselves.

The government does not believe in the energy economy. It does not think that it is part of the future of the country's economic potential. It has come up with this concept, a so-called just transition. It wants to sell people on the idea that they might no longer, under the managed anti-energy transitional policies of the government, be able to work in these highly productive sectors of the economy. Instead, the government promises that there might be social assistance payments available to them.

This misunderstands the realities of our fiscal situation and the fact that one cannot promise endless spending on borrowing and think it is just going to go on forever. Of course, we see the effects of the government's economic policies with the accumulation of debt and deficit as a result of more and more spending promises. There is no meaningful fiscal anchor, just continuous expansionary spending promises. This has been the hallmark of the government.

Moreover, these promises of moving people out of productive sectors of the economy and onto social assistance ignore the essential nature of the Canadian worker and the aspirations that have defined this country. People do not just want to work for the money, although the money helps. People derive a sense of value and meaning from their ability to produce, create and contribute constructively to the economy. That is why so many have come to this country and built our country into what it is. Nonetheless, after nine years of the policies of the NDP-Liberal government, we are, of course, weaker than we have been for a long time.

• (2235)

The government has more than doubled the national debt, if we can imagine that. The Prime Minister is responsible for more than half of this country's national debt. We see crime, chaos, drugs and disorder reigning in our streets, as many people feel a sense of desperation.

Many Canadians feel that doing the right thing, working hard and living a good life no longer pays in this country. People who are trying to take advantage of the system are getting ahead, whereas those who are trying to work hard and do what is right fall further behind. This has increasingly become the reality in this country after nine years under the Prime Minister.

However, the good news is that this is not truly what we are as a country. It is not what we are as Canada. It is not what we were before 2015, and it is not what we will be after we have restored the kind of responsible leadership this country needs.

The economy is not just about money. It is really about providing people with the opportunity to engage in meaningful work and to have the joy, sense of purpose and mission that comes from work-

ing hard and providing for the next generation. With that in mind, we have an agenda.

The Conservative Party is proposing an agenda that is based on restoring the country's enthusiasm for development. We are a country that has, in the past, undertaken great nation-building infrastructure. We are a country that builds things. In the process, we give jobs and opportunity to each other, and we strengthen our sense of national unity and purpose.

In the 19th century, it was our cross-country railroad. Today, in the 21st century, we need to become a country that builds great things again. We need to build homes and national energy infrastructure. We need to support the development of energy infrastructure in all parts of this country, and that includes, of course, in Atlantic Canada.

However, instead of recognizing the urgent need to once again become a country that builds things, the government continues to propose antidevelopment, energy-blocking legislation, such as Bill C-49.

Our plan is based on axing the tax to unleash the creative potential of the economy and building homes at a micro level. We are not building enough homes in this country. I do not mean "we" as in the state, I mean "we" collectively. The government has put itself in the way of new home construction. It is time we axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget so we do not have inflationary spending getting in the way of development and, of course, stop the crime that is holding back our communities from reaching their full potential.

Our plan to restore Canada is based on axing the tax, building the homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime. It is an agenda that seeks to build beautiful things that last and build the nation-building infrastructure of the 21st century, that is, homes at the micro level, and at the national level, the energy infrastructure, the mines and the development opportunities in both traditional energy and new green energy.

The problem with the Liberal government, in terms of its rhetoric on green, is that it misses how its antidevelopment, red-tape-driven agenda is actually holding up green projects as well.

If we have an economy where people want to invest, where we can unleash opportunity and where we are attracting investment with the right tax policies, as well as pulling aside red tape, this would have an impact on both traditional and green energy.

The Liberal approach is to pile red tape on and then hope that an additional subsidy is somehow going to help move certain preferred projects in preferred sectors along. They do not understand that the government's role should not be to pick winners and losers; rather, it should be to create an environment where all businesses want to invest and pursue opportunity.

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That is what our country was before 2015 and will be again under responsible, Conservative, pro-development leadership. Despite the challenges our country faces, I know that there is great excitement about what is to come. I hear it from constituents across the country. There is great hope for the restoration of this country to one where we see the good in each other, where we see the opportunity in our natural resources and where regions wish for each other's success.

● (2240)

Under the current government, there has been a pitting of regions against each other. There has been a desire to create division between, for instance, Atlantic Canada and the west, with a carbon tax policy that seeks to create a temporary fake break to the carbon tax in eastern Canada while not having the same kind of changes happen in western Canada. Nonetheless, the carbon tax is expected to go way back up again in eastern Canada. Liberal ministers have made incredibly divisive comments on this. This is the Liberal approach. It is to see economic development as a zero-sum game. They have to tear down the west in order to build up the east.

What we say in the Conservative Party is this: Let us encourage and be excited about the opportunities for growth and development in every part of this country. As an Alberta MP, I want to see Atlantic Canada succeed. I want to see Atlantic Canada become incredibly prosperous and create jobs and opportunities for people in Atlantic Canada. I want the same thing in Quebec, Ontario, the north and every region of the country. Conservatives want to see every family, community, region, province and territory prospering and building itself up. We want to end the division. There is hope for this new vision of a strong Canada made up of strong individuals. The Liberals are bent on a government that is constantly gorging itself and growing at the expense of citizens. Conservatives want a smaller government and bigger citizens. That is our vision, and that is how energy development connects to that vision of what a brighter future will be when the current Leader of the Opposition becomes prime minister.

Why is it important to support energy development? It is important on four grounds, which I would like to go through: on economic grounds, on reconciliation grounds, on environmental grounds and on global security grounds.

I have spoken about the economic grounds already, but we can build a strong national economy driven by the private sector if we focus on removing the barriers that prevent investment and development from moving forward. I believe in the inherent creative potential of every human being, wherever they live, whatever their background. We do not create economic opportunity through central state planning, but rather by unleashing the creative genius of every individual. We need to build systems that emphasize subsidiarity, which is decentralized decision-making that unleashes the creativity of more and more individuals as part of economic development. That is why our focus should be on removing gatekeepers, removing red tape, identifying those things that prevent development and investments from taking place, and removing those barriers. It is only through the creative genius of individuals with new ideas and taking risks through investment that we will truly see economic growth and opportunity.

This government seems to believe that it is about the government making bets on specific sectors, without taking any kind of risk itself. The Liberals are not spending their own money, after all, and they are only applying the creativity of the central state system. This is not how we build a powerful modern economy, and all the evidence shows that. We have the current government, frankly, trending towards the most left-wing economic philosophy in a government that we have seen in decades. This is not the John Chrétien-Paul Martin Liberal Party. This is a government that loves centralized state planning as its approach to the economy, and it clearly just does not work.

Energy development has incredible potential for facilitating reconciliation. Canadians want to see each other succeed. We all want to see success in economic development that will provide jobs and opportunity for indigenous peoples. A big part of that is going to be economic development in the area of energy, and many indigenous nations are eagerly engaging with and investing in this opportunity.

We have a number of prominent indigenous leaders who are joining the Conservative Party and running in the next election. In the Edmonton area, we have Chief Billy Morin, who is a great champion of energy development. He will, of course, be joining our caucus after the next election. Indigenous leaders such as Ellis Ross, Billy Morin and so many others understand the potential for economic development, for prosperity and for ending poverty in indigenous communities through energy development.

● (2245)

Many indigenous communities are asking for this, yet the Liberal approach is, on the one hand, if someone is proposing a development project, to pile on consultation processes, but then when they want to stop development from happening, they do not consult at all. We have had many instances in which the government has proposed antidevelopment policies and has shut down development opportunities that indigenous nations wanted, and the Liberals did not feel like they had to consult at all. How do they explain that? The government, on the one hand, wants to constantly pile on more red tape if a project is going to move forward, but it does not feel any need to consult with indigenous nations when it is imposing antidevelopment projects on communities who want the opportunity and want the prosperity to come from that.

Conservatives believe in the benefits of development, and we believe that consultation should be meaningful consultation. It should be required and a part of the process, within reasonable parameters and a reasonable time frame, and it should be part of the process if they are moving forward with a pro- or an antidevelopment policy. Either way, the people should be listened to and consulted.

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In terms of the environment, Canada's energy sector is continually improving its environmental performance. This is part of who we are. This has always been part of who we are. We live here. We live on this land. We breathe the air. We are all working together on environmental improvements. However, that environmental improvement surely cannot mean shutting down highly productive sectors of the economy and moving those jobs to other jurisdictions that do not have the same environmental standards. Given the global need for energy, either Canada can fill and respond to that global need, or we can leave it to other countries that do not have the same standards that we do. I submit that it is better for the environment if Canada continues to develop and improve its environmental performance while sharing the technology that it develops with the rest of the world. This is good for our economy. It contributes to reconciliation. It is also good for the environment.

Finally, I want to speak about global security. This is the biggest issue being talked about around the world. We are in a new cold war. The world is an increasingly unstable place, and access to energy will be a critical part of that global struggle as it unfolds. Canada could play a critical role. Most of the world's free democracies happen to be geographically small, more densely populated nations that rely on the import of natural resources. This is the reality for our democratic partners in Europe as well as in the Asia-Pacific. In the vast majority of cases, they are geographically small, densely populated nations that struggle with energy security and have to constantly be thinking about how they could position themselves to have a secure supply of energy imports.

Canada, relatively uniquely in the democratic world, is a geographically vast, sparsely populated nation blessed with an abundance of natural resources. We are that cold frontier nation within the community of democratic countries. We have an opportunity and a responsibility to develop those resources for the benefit not only of our own domestic economy, but also for the benefit of our partners and contributing to global security.

When European countries have to rely or have chosen to rely on imports of energy from Russia, they fuel the aggressive, violent, genocidal designs of the Putin regime. Canada can be strategic and displace and replace that Russian gas. Particularly when we are talking about energy development in Atlantic Canada, of course, which has greater proximity to Europe compared to western Canadian resources, there is a great opportunity for us to be excitedly engaging with the opportunity in Atlantic Canadian energy development and using that opportunity to not only support Canadian prosperity, but also contribute to global energy security. This is good for us, but it is more fundamentally the right thing to do in this new cold war struggle to ensure that our democratic allies around the world do not have to rely on strategic foes for energy, that they do not have to calibrate their foreign policy positions for fear of losing access to the fuel that their people need.

This is Canada's vocation. This is Canada's opportunity in this new struggle. Let us step up to seize it. Let us do what is right for our country and for our people. Let us also play our essential role in the world by rejecting Liberal antidevelopment bills and standing up for Canada and for freedom everywhere by developing our natural resources and creating jobs, opportunity and prosperity for the Canadian people.

• (2250)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been trying to understand where exactly the centre of gravity for Conservatives is on this particular bill because we heard earlier some of the member's colleagues saying they support the bill in principle, but that they are disappointed that there are some amendments that did not get made at committee. They want it to go back.

Earlier in his speech, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan stated that this bill “is about furthering the government's anti-energy, antidevelopment agenda.” I am looking for clarity on whether Conservatives support the basic principle of the bill. The vote at second reading was on basic support in principle of the bill, and they voted I believe against it, which would suggest, consistent with the member's statement, that they do not support it in any way, shape or form.

Is that indeed the case? If so, how then are we to understand the comments of his colleagues who say they support it? I am trying to understand where you are coming from.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not coming from anywhere, but I am sure the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan might be.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, maybe I should just go from the top if it was not clear where I stand on the bill. I will emphasize again that this bill piles red tape on development. It gives ministers arbitrary power to disrupt energy projects without consultation. It is aligned with the broader thrust of the government's approach to energy development, which is to not seek jobs and opportunities that align with economic reconciliation, global environmental improvements and global security, and we reject its anti-energy, antidevelopment agenda, full stop.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every bill has pros and cons. We agreed in principle, but not one amendment was adopted. If there is no possibility of improving the bill, we do not see the point in passing it.

The thing that I am worried about, and I want my colleague's opinion on this, is the clauses in the bill that would allow the Governor in Council to make changes to the lines marking offshore and provincial boundaries and to certain definitions.

What does that mean for transparency and democracy?

• (2255)

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do have concerns that this bill, among other problems, gives too much arbitrary power to the government with respect to the designation of areas without proper consultation. I share what I think are the concerns raised by the Bloc in that regard.

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Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague is also a student of parliamentary procedure. My other colleague, the member for Calgary Nose Hill, outlined a very good argument on why she believes this bill may end up back in litigation at the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality.

I wonder if the member would like to opine on that member's speech or, as has been the case for much of tonight, the fact that there are not enough members in this place to hold quorum. That may impact the constitutionality of the bill. When litigants are searching the Hansard, they may find that there was not enough people in the House for quorum.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it does seem that a substantially greater number of Liberals came in for my speech, like the member for Kingston and the Islands in particular, and the prospective leadership candidate, the Minister of Housing. The Liberals are busy planning leadership campaigns.

To the member's point, a very important point, I will firmly agree with everything said by my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill. The government members love to talk about the Constitution, except when they violate it. It is all about the charter, except when it is inconvenient.

Then, on Bill C-69, the court finds the government was ignoring the Constitution. It shows flagrant disregard for the constitutional order, and it gets its plans shut down.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Garnett Genuis: The member is asking if that leads to the use of the notwithstanding clause.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals actually just ignore the Constitution. They bring in a bill like this that does not at all address or respond to what the court has already found with respect to Bill C-69. The member for Kingston and the Islands wants to use constitutional issues as a pointed, partisan political attack, while he and his colleagues show shameful disregard for the Constitution in terms of their own legislative action.

I have read, in the good book, that someone should not try to remove a sliver from their brother's eye when they have a log in their own. When it comes to respecting the Constitution, I think the government has a log in its own eye that it needs to address before it tries to hurl political attacks at others.

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for York—Simcoe.

Mr. Scot Davidson: I would like to check the requirement for quorum, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: There are no quorum calls because of the autopilot order that we are under.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives is when the court makes a decision, we respect that decision. Even if we do not like it or even if we do not agree with it, we respect it.

We do not then turn around and say maybe we will use the notwithstanding clause in order to supersede the decision, which is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition does.

The member talked earlier in his speech about the inflationary budget and all this spending was going to lead to inflation. Conservatives have been scaring the public about that since the fall. However, here we are, for the fourth month in a row, and inflation is within the Bank of Canada's targets. As a matter of fact, inflation right now is the lowest it has been in three years.

Can the member explain to the House how the inflationary budgets the Conservatives mentioned never actually ended up materializing to produce inflation?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands undoes himself with his own arguments. He says inflation is not as bad as it was three years ago. He says the Liberals are getting a little better than they were. The Liberals want to tell us they might be bad, but they are getting a little better, and they are not doing as badly as they used to.

To the member's comments on the Constitution, the Liberals just show complete disregard for the Constitution. They just ignore it. They violate the law routinely. We see that with Bill C-69. The anti-energy, anti-development Bill C-69 has been found, in part, to be unconstitutional, and rather than responding to it, they are resuscitating provisions in Bill C-49.

While I am on my feet, I just want to say the lack of extending the rural top-up to the people of Pefferlaw is a grave injustice. I stand with the member for York—Simcoe in calling for the immediate redress of that injustice.

● (2300)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is from the area of the heartland in Alberta. He knows it well and knows how development can happen there.

What has the member seen when development works? What could happen elsewhere in this country? What optimism does he have for what our country could be if it was developed like the heartland in his constituency?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands has to be loud to make up for the absence of other colleagues who are able to say anything in the House. I want to credit the member. He speaks when nobody else is here, and he is carrying more water than some.

In response to my colleague, absolutely the industrial heartland is a critical example of the benefits of energy-related manufacturing, and my riding is a real hub of that. Of course, it covers some parts of other ridings. I am very proud of the industrial heartland, what it has been, and I can only see the growth in potential when we finally have a federal government that is actually supportive of our energy sector.

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Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be here this time of the night, and I do want to congratulate Lin Paddock, who won the Baie Verte—Green Bay by-election in Newfoundland. Kudos to him, a progressive Conservative, as he won with an almost 80% victory. Actually, two years ago, in a by-election, he had 48%. The Liberals went from 52% to 24%. So that is Newfoundland, the Maritimes, but there has been a plethora of polls the past year that have the Liberals trailing. I know that we do not count our chickens before they hatch, but this one did hatch this evening. I think that the Liberals and the NDP should get this message that they are out of touch with Newfoundlanders, Maritimers, British Columbians and everyone in between. What is the problem? Is it just because people like the change of colour? No, the issue is that the Liberals' policies are hurting Newfoundlanders, Maritimers and all Canadians. They are putting a squeeze on Canadians.

Now, the member for Kingston and the Islands just finished talking about bringing down inflation. Well, he fails to recognize that all those past number of years when inflation was extremely high have not gone away, and Canadians are struggling to pay for the increases that have been happening because of the out-of-control spending.

I have been in Newfoundland. I was in Labrador once in Goose Bay in 2016. I was very impressed. I went to St. John's, rented a car, went down the Avalon Peninsula, and I was surprised at the wealth. I saw a lot of construction, a lot of nice houses and it is a beautiful part of the country. It has been transformed from a haven to a have province. However, that was in 2016, and already there were starting to be some problems. With the anti-energy policies of the Liberals, the Newfoundlanders and the Maritimers had a lot of flights going directly to Fort McMurray, but their policies squeezed that and those direct flights and that income were cut off, which has hurt. So, a tip for the government is that it should listen to the Conservatives, which might help it a little bit, because we are listening to the people of Canada.

However, the problem that we have with Bill C-49 is that it is essentially just going to be adding more regulations and more red tape to an already cumbersome, if not impossible, process. Yes, it is pretty much impossible to get projects approved in Canada, and that is very unfortunate.

I think the comments from the member from Nova Scotia a little earlier bear repeating, about the tidal project in the Bay of Fundy that was ready to roll. It was tested, they were bringing electricity into Nova Scotia, and then it got cut off. It got cancelled by the Liberal Department of Fisheries.

• (2305)

This is a prime, and incredible, example of a potential project that could have been a reality with green energy, yet the Liberals cancelled it. It is just contrary. Looking at this bill, the Liberals are saying that it is pro-renewable energy. They had something right in their hands that could have gone forward and would have supplied hundreds of megawatts, and it was just cancelled. This is what the Liberals will also be doing with these other projects.

I am from British Columbia. We saw similar things happen for energy that is clean, for example, the LNG. The presidents of Ger-

many and Japan wanted LNG and wanted production because of the invasion of Ukraine and their source of energy from Russia being cut off. They said that they needed it.

The Prime Minister's response was to see if there was a business case. That was basically flipping the bird. Then they went to Qatar, which is a sponsor of many terrorist organizations. This is something that we could have gotten. These are jobs. The biggest private project in history is happening right now in Prince Rupert, the LNG. That was approved under the Harper Conservative government. It reduces global emissions worldwide.

However, the Liberals have blocked everything else from happening. They talk about consultation with indigenous people. The northern gateway project was supported by all the different first nations along the route. The Liberals thought about it and asked what they were going to do there. The first nations wanted it, but what were they going to do? They decided to find a few elders who were not even part of the leadership and put everything upon them.

Then the Liberals cancelled the project because those elders were against it, even though the first nations, the Wet'suwet'en First Nations and everyone else, wanted it. The Liberals blocked it. This is just a sham, as far as what the Liberals say toward the first nations, that they really want to consult and work with them. This is just a way to block and not allow first nations and Métis people to really benefit.

As far as the energy projects, it seems what the Liberals are really just building more regulations, more red tape and more bureaucracy. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development worked with the Auditor General to do a study on the net-zero accelerator initiative, a \$7.4-billion project. Their conclusion was that there was no due diligence happening. They could not even determine if emissions would go down. The contracts were not clear. It is just a mess.

It is the same thing with the \$1-billion green slush fund. The Liberals appointed Liberals to a board, and those Liberals directed hundreds of millions of dollars to their own personal companies. This is the type of mess that we are facing here in Canada. It is all about what is in it for me, or what is in it for the Liberals. We saw that with the WE Charity, where the Prime Minister's family got significant money for contracts. We saw that with former Liberal MP Frank Baylis with the COVID contracts. We see it all the way through.

We just have to question if that is the Liberal objective, to build bureaucracy and build more opportunities to give money to their friends and family.

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• (2310)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have asked the member this question a number of times, and he neglects to ever really answer it. It is about the fact that he was an MLA in British Columbia when the carbon tax was introduced, and he voted in favour of it. He is on the record having voted for it.

Now, he will not answer the question. I have asked it of him many times before. What I really want to know is, is it awkward? Is it awkward to have voted in favour of it, and then to come here and pretend to be against it? Does the member sleep well at night knowing that he is such a giant hypocrite?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member will have to withdraw that hypocrite statement. Would the hon. member mind retracting that one?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I will retract “hypocrite” and replace it with “the hypocrisy of it”.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Why does this happen every time? The hon. member starts and creates his problem in the late night on this one.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, if you deem the name “hypocrite” to be offensive, I appreciate that, and I withdraw it, but I just want to know this: Does the hypocrisy really bother him?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I said to retract it, and that was all I needed, but the hon. member wanted to replace it.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the chair occupant has made a precedent on this, and it is incumbent on you to restore order in this place and to name the member.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the member has still not been brought to order. Bring him to order. Name him. If he will not—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I am standing right now, and I hope that I am the only one standing right now.

Will the hon. member come to order? Are we calmed down? Will everybody be calmed down for a second? I am not going to do this again because it is getting too late in the night.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I have actually addressed this to the member a number of times. Members can see the light and have

a change when they understand that this has been going on for a number of years, this carbon tax, and it does not work. Even former premier Christy Clark has come out against it. I am an example of something that can happen on that side if they would come to the truth and would just accept it. There could be change there, but I do not have high hopes.

• (2315)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague seems like he may be confused about a few of the facts. I am just wondering if he might want to correct the record. First of all, he stated somewhat erroneously that all first nations along the corridor wanted the northern gateway pipeline. As someone who lives along the corridor of what was proposed to be the northern gateway pipeline, I can assure him that this is not true. It is a fact that is more usually ascribed to the Coastal GasLink pipeline, which is a totally different project. Most of the bands located along the pipeline route did sign agreements with the company, but not all of them. In fact, the Hagwilget band did not sign an agreement with that company, but that is fair enough.

He also referred to the largest private sector project in Canadian history as being the LNG Canada project, which is indeed true. It is a project I had a chance to tour a couple of weeks ago. However, he mentioned that it is in Prince Rupert, when actually it is in Kitimat. I just wonder if he would like to rise as a British Columbian and correct the record.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his correction as far as Kitimat, but Prince Rupert will benefit also. That entire riding will benefit, and it will also benefit from a new government, hopefully sooner rather than later.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise here in the House and have many of my colleagues join to listen as I contribute some points to the debate we are having here tonight, particularly on our Conservative amendment. Many would argue it would be common sense. I look forward to getting into that tonight a little bit more.

However, Mr. Speaker, you are from Nova Scotia. The legislation here impacts that province. It also impacts the great people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I had the honour to visit, a couple of weeks ago, the province. I had some great visits, travelling many miles, all the way from St. John's and Mount Pearl in the Avalon region, all the way across to Clarendville, Grand Falls, Windsor, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Stephenville, Kippens, and all points in between. I think the debate here is timely tonight, as we talk about what the priorities are for the good people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, I want to give some breaking news here in the House tonight, if I could; breaking news that is fresh, hot off the press of some by-elections, a by-election that just took place in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Liberals love intruding into provincial jurisdiction on issues, although they should not. They get struck down by courts and we have these prolonged problems. I am going to bring in provincial jurisdiction here because in Newfoundland and Labrador, in that by-election tonight, in the riding of Baie Verte—Green Bay, the votes are in. It was a carbon tax by-election.

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After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, here is an interesting thing. Both of the PC and the Liberal candidates endorsed the Leader of the Opposition in Ottawa. The Prime Minister has become so toxic, even Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador want nothing to do with him. The results are in tonight and it was very conclusive. The voter turnout in the by-election tonight in central Newfoundland was 57%. It was 15 points higher than it was in the last general election in that riding. It was a close riding in 2021. The Liberals got about 52%, the PCs got 47%. Tonight, the Conservative candidate who opposes the carbon tax got 80% of the vote.

Congratulations to Lin Paddock from Ottawa. I am thankful to him for fighting the carbon tax, fighting and standing up against the punitive measures that the Prime Minister and the NDP are imposing on his province.

That by-election followed, in Newfoundland and Labrador, a by-election that just took place about a month ago. Again, it was the same thing around central Newfoundland. There was a historically high voter turnout in that riding. It took a long-time Liberal riding and flipped it to the PCs; again, a carbon tax by-election. They are just building the momentum. If we go to Nova Scotia, in Pictou West, the minister of housing's own riding, right in that region, the PCs not only held that riding, but they drastically increased their vote share and the turnout there was very solid for a by-election.

There was another example, absolutely, in Preston only a short while ago. For the first time, in a long-time Liberal or NDP back-and-forth riding for the most part, there was a Conservative victory there as well, another carbon tax by-election.

I raise this point tonight because there is a theme developing in Atlantic Canada. It is going from Liberal to common-sense Conservative. Here is the thing that is interesting. It is building the momentum. The Prime Minister and the NDP and Liberals know they are extremely unpopular. They know that their plan for this country is more and more unpopular, the more Canadians learn about it. The priorities that they try to address are out of touch with the realities on the ground.

After giving colleagues these updates of these carbon tax by-elections in those respective provinces, I cannot wait for our carbon tax election here to take place all across Canada. Canadians are going to have their say. I think the turnout and the blue wave are going to be equal in every part of this country.

I want to talk about Bill C-49 here tonight. I do listen to what the member for Kingston and the Islands says, believe it or not. I have to because both he and the member for Winnipeg North speak quite a bit here in the chamber.

Just a few minutes ago, the member for Kingston and the Islands was trying to make this argument about the Constitution and how the Liberals listen to the Constitution, respect it and talking about their actions when it comes to their legislation and bills. This bill here, or more specifically, our Conservative amendment, actually just call it out for what it is, hypocrisy. It is saying one thing and doing the absolute opposite.

• (2320)

He goes on about how they do all this. Well, Bill C-49 has a lot of very similar provisions to Bill C-69, which has garnered a lot of attention when it comes to developing our natural resources and realizing our economic potential. It has done a lot of damage in every part of the country. It has turned away, turned down and cancelled investments by the hundreds of millions of dollars in this country. The thing about Bill C-69 was that, for months and for years, Liberal ministers would go out and say, "There is nothing wrong. The bill is constitutional. It is going to be upheld." Well, the Supreme Court had its say, and guess what. It did not uphold it. The bill was struck down.

Now, moving forward, we have Bill C-49. Our Conservative amendment tonight is saying that we need to take this back to committee. There are serious flaws with what the government is trying to do because many of the same provisions that were struck down in Bill C-69 are embedded and repeated here in Bill C-49.

Mark my words. I am going to put it right here, in Hansard, in the blues and on video here tonight: This piece of legislation is going to be dithered and delayed for years. It is going to be challenged. Look at what happened with respect to Bill C-69. Liberals and then the New Democrats said, "Oh, it is all fine. Do not worry about it. The Conservatives are just talking negative about it." The government ignored it, and guess what happened. It is the chaos coming around Bill C-69. The uncertainty, the lack of answers from that side and the lack of fixing the problem the Liberals were warned about in the first place are challenging the economic environment in our country. It is turning away investment. It is turning away projects that could be completed here at home, creating great Canadian paycheques. The Liberals are doing the exact same thing. Members could look and see that there are now the same inefficiencies that are here in the Impact Assessment Act, in sections 61, 62, 169 and 170. The list goes on about how they are constantly dithering and delaying.

If members do not want to take my word for it here with what I have said so far, let us just look at the number of projects already stalled under the Liberal-NDP government. The Liberals are blocking projects with red tape left, right and centre. Bill C-49 would only make it worse. There is Beaver Dam gold mine in Nova Scotia. It has been nine years, and it is still not done. Fifteen Mile Stream gold project is going to be a massive \$123 million investment. After six years, that project, 95 kilometres northeast of Halifax, is still being delayed, and with three years extension, it is still not done. Then we have the Joyce Lake direct shipping iron ore project, which would be a \$270-million investment in Newfoundland and Labrador. After 11 years, it is still waiting and not approved. There is Cape Ray gold and silver mine in Newfoundland and Labrador. It has been eight years, and it is still waiting and not going through. The list goes on and on. It is the definition of insanity.

Government Orders

I have said it before about the budget, and I will say the same thing about the Liberals' efforts to remove red tape and unleash the economic potential of this country. We have so many natural resources. We have so many jobs that could be created in this country, and what the Liberals have done time and time again, and what they are doing with Bill C-49, is causing legal nightmares. They are going to cause red tape nightmares for years to come, and it is Canadian workers in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Nova Scotia who are going to be hurt.

We are putting this amendment forward. We are opposing the constant red tape of the Liberals. After nine years, Canadians have had enough, and I do not blame them.

• (2325)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, red tape is indeed a rather serious problem. It is a problem not just with the Liberal government, but also with the Conservatives before this and the Liberals before them and so on, back almost to the beginning of time.

Beyond the issue of red tape, what happens sometimes is that the government rushes to introduce botched legislation in an apparent attempt to clear its conscience.

Does my colleague agree with me on that? I would like his answer to also take into account committee work.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member from the Bloc a little, and I am going to disagree with her a little as well.

I agree that this is a shoddy bill. The government has been warned. The Liberals and the NDP want to ram this through, and they have been reminded over and over again, including in some great speeches here tonight, of how this is going to end up in the courts, like Bill C-69. I agree with her on that. They are putting it through and they do not care. It is going to get stalled for years and they are going to blame everybody but themselves.

I find that I disagree with the Bloc, though, too. I agree a little more, if I could, about simplifying the environmental assessment process: one environmental assessment, federal or provincial. We do not need the double red tape taking years. The list goes on of the number of companies and projects that have been caught up in this.

The thing with the Bloc Québécois is that it wants to cancel, as an example, all offshore petroleum or the wonderful oil and gas sector, with a number of jobs in this country. The irony is that when we cancel a project here in Canada, what happens is that countries like Russia, Venezuela and other countries that do not give two hoots about emissions reductions are going to take up that limit. Trust me: They are not having the same conversations about conservation and good measures that we are having here in Canada.

The Bloc Québécois is saying these projects and paycheques belong in Canada, but it wants to export them around the world.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague can speak to many of the countries around the world that have asked for Canadian energy

and have been turned down by the Prime Minister. Most recently, there have been Germany, Poland, Japan, Greece and others as well. These really are lost opportunities. We know that five or six years ago the United States was barely exporting LNG, and now it is one of the largest exporters of LNG in the world. Really, this is a lost opportunity for Canadians, Canadian businesses and Canadian workers.

I am wondering if the member can speak to that.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from British Columbia is correct. A number of times leaders of other countries have come to Canada asking it to tap into its natural resources, LNG and all of the vast natural resources we have to offer, and the government's line is that there is no business case for it. It is nonsense. The irony is that the government literally says those replies on the days or weeks when leaders from around the world are coming to Canada asking us to help them do all of that.

Here is the thing that is interesting with the Liberals. It is the equivalent of saying the budget will balance itself. People just laugh now. After nine years of lectures they give on that side of the aisle, we can throw their record back at them. A number of projects are being cancelled in this country with the delays, dithering and red tape that goes on. The Liberals act as if they have just been here for nine days, when they have been here for nine years. It is worse, not better, than when they started. How many more months or years do they think they need before they make things better?

Better yet, let us just call the election and let Canadians decide the direction of this country. I have a feeling they are going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

• (2330)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have heard tonight is that the Liberals are ramming the bill through. Is it just a shot or is there some darker motive? They know they will be in trouble and some things will never get done.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I agree. At one point, I would have said that I do not understand what the government is doing, but after a while, one knows full well what they are doing. The Liberals and the NDP are antidevelopment. They are anti-Canadian jobs. They are doing everything they can to suppress investment in this country.

Look at what Bill C-49 would do. It is going to be caught up in the courts. There is going to be chaos and confusion. Look at Bill C-69 and what it has done to our natural resources sector. It has been devastating. It has been struck down in court. It will be the same thing here. The Liberal record after nine years is turning away investment in this country. We go through the laundry list and they keep saying they are proposing new ideas. It is the same failed approach that got us in this mess in the first place. It is time for a fresh start. Bill C-49 and their other efforts are not worth it.

Government Orders

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to join debate in the House of Commons, even quite late on a Monday evening. We are discussing Bill C-49, a bill the government tabled to solve regulatory issues and bring them in line with other bills it had passed, in particular, the Impact Assessment Act, Bill C-69 of the 42nd Parliament.

The problem with Bill C-49, as well as the sudden urge to ensure its passage by invoking closure and using procedural tools to force a vote on it, is this: Since the time the government tabled the bill at first reading to bring existing environmental regulations into line with the other red tape it brought in with Bill C-69, significant portions of Bill C-69 were struck down in court.

The prudent action any government would take in this situation would be to remedy the portions of its existing red-tape regime that have been found to be unconstitutional. The government has been found to have trammelled the constitutional prerogatives of provinces. This is what the Supreme Court found in its review of Bill C-69. However, the government is persisting, through Bill C-49, in taking the same unconstitutional framework and applying it to offshore projects, both oil and gas drilling projects and future renewable energy projects, such as offshore wind production or perhaps tidal electrical generation.

On this side of the House, we are the party of energy. Canadians need reliable, affordable and abundant energy. That energy could come from any of a variety of sources. We support all forms of energy that can deliver on those basic points of affordability, availability and reliability. Different parts of the country are able to produce energy in different ways. The potential for offshore in its oil and gas potential has brought, in fairly recent memory, tremendous economic benefit to Newfoundland and Labrador. For the first half or more of my life, this was by far the poorest region in Canada, with the lowest per capita GDP. It is a part of the country that really suffered economically and had the lowest standards of living in Canada.

We have seen in a generation what energy production can do for that part of the world and how so many people from Newfoundland and Labrador have also helped build Alberta and its energy projects. In addition to that, there is tremendous potential for offshore renewable energy. However, taking this unconstitutional model from the government's earlier bill and applying it to projects offshore, renewable or non-renewable, is not going to give affordable, reliable and available energy for Canadians or create the export opportunities that an abundance of energy may give. This is a flawed approach.

• (2335)

One would think that the Liberals would not need the opposition to move an amendment that would seek to refer the bill back to committee where it could be studied further and amended to deal with the reality of the Supreme Court's decision on renewable energy. However, they have even made it muddier still by tabling, in the House, a budget implementation act that further confuses regulatory issues and compliance and congruity between these different acts, by tabling a bill that overlaps and attempts to do some of these things the bill before us would do.

One would think that the Liberals would hold back on the bill before us and call the BIA tonight, and it is confusing because it is numbered Bill C-69, but have that debate instead and move that bill along. I mean, I will vote against it and I hope that other members will too and so that we can bring the government down and get on with the carbon tax election. However, either way, whether the bill passes or not, surely that is a more prudent present step than forcing through Bill C-49, which has obvious constitutional and regulatory problems to it. So, if they will not do it for that reason, if they will not do it for compliance or get the order right with the BIA versus Bill C-49, at least recognize that the Supreme Court has already weighed in on the substance of the bill and found it unconstitutional. The bill belongs back at committee, or perhaps just not called at all.

The Liberals have tabled a lot of bills, and a lot of them do not go anywhere. In fact, over these last few weeks, they have tabled a number of bills that they have not called, and so I do not understand, in terms of the management of its legislative calendar, why suddenly the drive to call the bill before us.

We have seen the kind of red tape that this government has given Canadians. The Liberals have already hindered traditional and alternative energy development in Canada. Under Bill C-69, no projects get approved. It is the no-more-pipelines bill, and it is going to become the no-offshore-wind-development bill and the no-offshore-drilling bill. To top it all off, I understand from speaking to a number of Atlantic members of Parliament that they have also managed to upset the stability and the investment climate for the fishing industry, because they have not consulted those in the fishing industry who stand to be affected by the bill. This government is so consistent in its muddy, muddled approach to regulation and the creation of red tape. It is time for this government to maybe fire some gatekeepers instead of finding new ways to tie up Canadian businesses and scare away investment.

Government Orders

However, scaring away investment is exactly what these bills have done. Bill C-69 led to capital flight from this country. We have seen how Bill C-49, even its tabling, has also triggered capital flight from Atlantic Canada in terms of projects abandoned and the dearth of new applications for drilling or offshore projects in the wake of the bill. As my colleague for Calgary Nose Hill said earlier, Canada has become a country where political risk is driving away investment, because decision-makers, those who allocate capital, do not know from one year to the next just what this government is going to do. It piles on laws that do not stand up in court and then it is charging along here tonight by calling the bill before us and having a debate on it as if the Supreme Court decision did not happen. It happened, and it cannot be ignored. The bill was tabled before that decision, and it does not take that decision into account. It should be taken back to committee where maybe it can get sorted out, or it can just be held back and not called again.

The Liberals have so many other bills that they seem to want to get approved but have not called and have chosen instead to call Bill C-49. I would call on the government to get a hold of its legislative calendar, get a hold of its constitutional issues, and go back and fix the bill if it is going to call it again.

● (2340)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for a moment, let us imagine that the member who just spoke has a magic wand. I wonder, which provision would the member change, why he would change it and how he would change it?

[English]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I would strip out the sections that have already been struck down in court. That might be an easy place to start. There are four of them, but I do reject the entire approach of the government to business regulation and the regulation of energy development, both renewable and non-renewable.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge understands what the oil industry did in the city of Calgary, what it could do and how it was devastated by these Liberal policies. Can he imagine what this kind of policy would stop from happening in the Atlantic region? It has possibilities, but what does he really think would happen, as he may have seen what the Liberal government did to the industry in Alberta, particularly Calgary?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the impact was instantaneous when the government came to power. Some 200,000 energy workers across Canada, not all in Calgary, but many thousands in Calgary, including in my own riding, lost their jobs in the early months of the government. While things are much better now, the environment is still not there for investment. Money is leaving Calgary, not coming into it, from what some of the finance community has told me. I can only imagine what the bill might do to Newfoundland and Labrador and to Nova Scotia.

It is the uncertainty that is such a killer. If we do not know what the bill is going to do, nobody is going to invest in any project. Even the existing fishing industry does not know how it may or may not be affected. That leads to decisions that have to be made on capital allocation, and it will not be for Canada.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the important points he made about the energy sector, about the value it produces for our economy and about the failures of the government. I wonder if he can expand specifically on just what the bill would do, the additional challenges it would create and what kind of an approach we should be taking instead.

● (2345)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, it is really all about certainty for investors. If it is going to take potentially years to get a decision, and if a full offshore development and production designated project review can take 1,600 days, people are not going to apply. The uncertainty has been there from the moment the Liberals tabled the bill. They should make a clear declaration that they are not going to proceed down this road of potential unconstitutional jurisdictional intrusion by adding more red tape. They should go with an entirely different approach and start again.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight we are talking about Bill C-49, an act to amend the Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord. I am a member of Parliament from the other end of the country, the Pacific Coast, and it is a real honour for me to be joining in the debate about something that is so important to Canada. It goes to show that Canada really is a nation from sea to sea. I am from the other ocean, but it is wonderful to be here with my colleagues who are very knowledgeable about what happens on the Atlantic Coast. Listening to the speeches tonight, I have learned a lot about that part of my country.

Bill C-49 would impose, unfortunately, many of the Liberals' failed environmental assessment initiatives that have been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada for infringing on provincial jurisdiction. It was a real surprise for me, as I delved into this bill, to see that the Liberals would take the risk of incorporating a lot of the failed clauses of Bill C-69, which we call the "no more pipelines" bill, into this very important legislation about improving the economy of the Atlantic Coast, and I wonder why they would do that. The last thing that investment dollars and investment entrepreneurs want is risk. It has been pointed out before that this bill poses a political risk that is going to drive away investment. Here is a proof point that I think is really clear.

In 2022, there were five offshore land bids in Newfoundland and Labrador at a value of \$238 million. If we move forward five months to May 30, 2023, about a year ago, when Bill C-49 was first introduced, which is not law yet. Business people read it and said that they did not want to take that risk, and in 2023, there were zero bids. That is just a really clear example of what happens when the government introduces legislation that does nothing more than introduce a lot of uncertainty into the mix.

Government Orders

If we take a look at what happened with the TMX pipeline, Kinder Morgan, which is a risk-taking company with very deep pockets. It was willing to take on the challenge of twinning the pipeline that had been in existence for 70 years with very little environmental risks involved. It started the project to twin that pipeline, which seemed like a very common-sense project to undertake, and it was, until the federal government started imposing environmental regulatory red tape that really did not do anything but slow down the project. Finally, Kinder Morgan said that it was out of there because it did not want that risk anymore. It is a business that wants to make money, and it could see that there was way too much risk there, so it pulled out. It was willing to walk away from its multibillion dollar investment at that point.

However, the Liberal federal government said that it needed that pipeline and that it could not let it go unfinished. It picked up the project for \$5 billion, which was going to cost \$7 billion altogether to complete it. In fact, the project is now finished, finally, but at a cost of \$35 billion. The federal government is now saying it is for sale, but who is going to buy it? Certainly, not for \$35 billion. That is what happens when government gets into business. It should just stay out of business and should let private enterprise do what it does best, which is to undertake projects that have a very good opportunity for earning a profit. I know “profit” is a bad word with the NDP-Liberal government, but let me assure members that private enterprise runs on profit. Profit drives innovation, competition, investment and creates wealth.

• (2350)

This is very important to Canada because our productivity numbers are lagging compared to our trading nations, and this has been pointed out on many occasions. It was recognized by the former Liberal minister of finance, Mr. Bill Morneau, in the book he wrote after he left government, after he was released from the Liberal Party's talking points. He said he had pointed out to the current Prime Minister that one of Canada's biggest economic challenges was its lagging productivity numbers.

Here is a nice, neat example of what exactly that means when compared to the United States. For every American worker who pumps in \$100 into their economy, their Canadian counterpart, doing exactly the same kind of work, pumps \$70 into Canada's GDP. We are 70% as productive as the United States. Does that mean that we do not work as hard? No, of course not. We are very hard-working and industrious people.

However, we do not have the tools, investment, creativity and tax fairness here in Canada. That is what is causing our productivity numbers to lag. That goes to the wealth of the nation. It goes to the wealth of individual people. This is what Mr. Morneau had pointed out to Mr. Trudeau on what he said were numerous occasions. He said—

The Deputy Speaker: Could the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove just back up and not use the name of the Prime Minister?

The hon. member.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, thank you for pointing that out.

Mr. Morneau said he had pointed out, on several occasions, to the Prime Minister that he had a focus on improving Canada's productivity. Mr. Morneau said, unfortunately, the Prime Minister was not interested in that. He was more interested in distributing wealth, rather than creating wealth.

I think that is one of the fundamental economic problems in Canada today. The person at the head, the Prime Minister, is not interested in these sorts of things. That is very evident with what we see in Bill C-49. There is no interest in talking about the things that drive our economy and that are going to improve our wealth and wealth for Atlantic Canadians.

What are the sorts of things that we can do to improve our productivity, our per capita GDP? We talked about investment already. Bill C-49, the old Bill C-69, scared investment away, and that needs to be reversed. The Conservative members are saying that we need to bring this bill back to committee. These are the sorts of things that we have to look for.

We also need to reduce red tape. That is another common-sense solution to Canada's lagging productivity. We need more innovation. We need to develop our natural resources.

I want to talk about something that is very important to my end of the country, the Pacific region, and that is liquid natural gas.

It was pointed out in earlier debates that Canada has an abundance of natural gas. That is how most western Canadians heat their homes and buildings, and it is used for a lot of our vehicles. Natural gas is much cleaner burning than coal or even oil.

The world wants it. How do we ship natural gas? We liquefy it, we put it into special containers and we ship it around the world. This is a proven technology, and Canada is ready and willing, but not able to do it because the Prime Minister has told other countries there is no business case for this. Unbelievable. He said there is no business case for liquid natural gas.

Other countries in the world, like the United States, for example, see that there is a business case. Where we dropped the ball, the Americans picked it up and they are supplying Europe with liquid natural gas, which is exactly what Canada should be doing. Our allies are asking for this kind of help. It is a perfect solution to their problems, to wean themselves off Russian natural gas, and it is a perfect opportunity for us to grow our economy and improve our productivity.

• (2355)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my remarks, I actually did not have time to talk about the important role that Canada could play in exporting our natural resources for energy.

The member touched on it a little. However, with some extra time, could he explain further about just why it is so important that Canada be a global supplier of reliable, clean and affordable energy for people throughout the world?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, Canada is rich in natural resources. Any country in the world that is rich in natural resources develops them for the benefit of their citizens.

Adjournment Proceedings

We are a trading nation, and we have a lot of allies that want to purchase our resources. Again, I am thinking of liquid natural gas as one example of that. These are the sorts of things that we should be doing for our own benefit, as well as for the benefit of our friends and trading partners.

I could talk about other natural resources as well, but I will leave room for some other questions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his excellent speech. We have heard many excellent speeches from Conservative colleagues tonight about the importance of the energy sector, jobs and opportunity.

After nine years of the Liberal government, it is clear that its policies are not working, and it is not worth the cost, the crime or the corruption. We will get to that, but in the context of the bill, certainly, it is not worth the cost.

However, the good news is that, after nine years, there is hope on the horizon. Canadians know that it was not this way before the extreme NDP-Liberal coalition took power, and it will not be that way once we have a restoration of common-sense leadership in this country.

Could the member share a little more about the promise associated with a restoration of common-sense leadership in this country and how his constituents are reacting to that?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, that was a great question. I am sure the member is hearing from his constituents; likewise, I am hearing from my constituents that they are eager to have a federal carbon tax election.

We have seen in some of the recent by-elections that this is resonating with Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is certainly true in my region.

I talked about productivity and efficiency. One factor, any economist would tell us, is to have a competitive tax regime. Canada has a carbon tax, which has proven not to be effective at all in reducing carbon emissions and is just making our economy less efficient.

I say bring it on. We are ready for a carbon tax election. I would ask that the other opposition parties please vote with us. They should do what they are supposed to do and oppose the budget. Let us force a carbon tax election.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (2400)

[*English*]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am up with a follow-up to a question that I had put to the Liberal minister. On May 3 in question period, I asked a question about the failed drug legalization pilot project in British Columbia.

That project was a joint initiative of the federal Liberal government and the provincial NDP government to basically decriminalize the possession of small amounts of hard drugs for personal use. The thinking was that, if we treat drug addiction as a health issue rather than a criminal issue, then we will destigmatize drug use and, in that way, encourage addicts to seek medical treatment. That sounded good in theory, but one year into this three-year pilot project, it was clear that it was going to fail. It was a failed experiment.

There were 2,500 toxic deaths in the first year of the pilot project, up 7% from the previous year, and there was crime and chaos on the streets. We all heard examples from MPs right across the province, and I heard of it too in Langley. Citizens were worried that they were seeing people injecting drugs in front of an elementary school, people discarding used needles in playgrounds and people smoking crack at bus stops and on transit. Other communities across British Columbia had similar experiences. None were as stark as those in the Downtown Eastside, where chaos had become widespread. British Columbians were unhappy.

The provincial NDP government realized it needed to do something, and it did try. It introduced a provincial bill called the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, which put restrictions on consumption of drugs in open places, such as playgrounds, schools, etc. That made sense to common-sense citizens, but there was an organization, the Harm Reduction Nurses Association, that took issue with it. The organization took this to court and surprisingly, at least surprisingly to me, was able to convince the judge to issue a temporary injunction preventing the provincial government from bringing this law into effect.

The argument that convinced the judge was that it is more dangerous for a drug user to be using alone in a private place, at home presumably, than it is in the public eye. I do not argue with that, and I do not know if there is evidence to back that up, but this is what convinced the judge. He was convinced that this was a violation of drug users' section 7 charter rights to life, liberty and security of the person. I was surprised by that.

The provincial government realized that it had lost this battle and so instead, went to the federal government and asked for an amendment to the exemption order to effectively do the same as its provincial legislation was going to do.

I asked my question in that context, and it was whether the government was going to put an end to the disastrous failed drug-use experiment. What I got, unfortunately, was a nonsensical answer from the minister, who said that the Conservatives were not interested in protecting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I do not know where that came from. I thought it was very surprising, coming from a minister whose government's failed plan for drug use basically undermined the Constitution itself. I was disappointed in that. I am hoping I get a better answer today.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a tragic public health crisis, and it is impacting people deeply across this country. My heart goes out to those people who have been impacted by this public health crisis.

Our government remains fully committed to addressing this public health crisis, using every tool at our disposal to save lives and keep communities safe. We have taken unprecedented action since 2017, action that has been informed by evidence and the experiences of those who have been most affected.

It is clear there is no one-size-fits-all approach. We are committed to a comprehensive, collaborative and evidence-based substance policy approach that includes prevention, enforcement, treatment and harm reduction.

Too often, ideological approaches have gotten in the way of real progress, which inhibits the science. The toxic drug and overdose crisis is a public health issue. It is not a criminal justice issue. We do recognize that public safety must be maintained while we use a public health approach to address this crisis.

Let us be clear that B.C. asked for this pilot project, and we granted its amendment request to make sure law enforcement has additional tools to address the public safety issues while we continue to take a public health approach to addressing the toxic drug and overdose crisis. We all want the same thing, which is for people and communities to be safe and secure and for health care to be available to those who need it. We will continue to work with B.C. and to listen to concerns raised by all partners to make sure this exemption works seamlessly within the province's broader public health approach.

Law enforcement leaders in Canada support a public health approach. They know we cannot arrest our way out of this health crisis. British Columbia's exemption continues to be supported by rigorous monitoring and third party evaluation to gather evidence and data on its impacts and outcomes and to identify effective mitigation measures for any unintended consequences.

I will repeat that we are committed to a comprehensive approach that protects public health and maintains public safety. We will keep working with provinces and territories, municipalities, organizations, other partners and everyone involved to make sure we bring this public health crisis to an end.

● (2405)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, we often hear the Liberals say they are taking a science-based approach. The science is in, and it is not working. There were over 2,500 toxic deaths last year during the pilot project. It was worse than the year before. This is going in the wrong direction.

We have known about this for quite a long time. The provincial government introduced this legislation a while ago, and unfortunately it failed at the B.C. Supreme Court level. However, we also have evidence coming out of Oregon, for example, which has also rolled back its harm reduction and its safe supply strategies, because they are not working. We are really looking for creative solutions that will protect people's rights, and their charter rights as well, I might add.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: As I said, Mr. Speaker, no one measure will work. We must do everything we can to prevent overdoses, save lives and help people find their way to appropriate treatment and pathways to recovery, while at the same time keeping our communities safe and addressing drug trafficking and organized crime.

Our government is focused on supporting a full range of services and supports to address the diverse needs of people who use drugs, as well as enforcement efforts to protect our communities. We are in the midst of a crisis. This is not a time to be pitting harm reduction against treatment. The truth is we need them both, and we need more than that. The evidence clearly demonstrates this. Going forward, we will continue to work hand in hand with all of our partners, including provinces, law enforcement, indigenous communities, people with lived and living experience and municipalities across this country every step of the way. We will adapt and adjust our approach to reflect the evidence and what is actually working on the ground.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is now clear that the costly, crooked, cover-up coalition engaged in corrupt practices in the arrive scam scandal. The Auditor General's report revealed that the government rigged the process, which was that senior officials sat down with the well-connected insider firm, GC Strategies, and discussed and arranged the terms of a deal, which GC Strategies would then bid on. It was able to rig the process, discuss the terms of the deal, which it then bid on and, surprise, got the contract. However, we still do not know why the NDP-Liberal coalition went to such lengths to favour GC Strategies.

Let us paint the picture. GC Strategies is two guys who work out of a basement. They do not do any actual work on projects; they simply receive the contracts and then subcontract them and take massive commissions along the way. It would be as if the member for York—Simcoe and I went out and started Lake Simcoe Enterprises, did no work but just got contracts and passed them along. That would be a good deal for us, but it would be a bad deal for taxpayers.

Adjournment Proceedings

Why is it that the government did not simply hire the IT professionals to do the work rather than going through a couple of middlemen sitting in their basement who know nothing about IT and whose only business is to go on LinkedIn, find people who can do the work, then get the contracts, find the people to actually do the work, and collect millions of dollars in commissions in the process?

However, the government chose the two people from GC Strategies. The government chose this company to be the favoured son of Liberal corrupt procurement. Why were they chosen? We still do not have an answer to that. Maybe the parliamentary secretary will be able to explain it to the House.

Frankly, we have seen that the government, the Prime Minister and the people working under him, have persistently rigged the process to reward insiders and punish taxpayers, and the process is broken. We will hear Liberals say, "Well, those Conservatives will make cuts. What will they spend less on when they are in government?" I will tell members; it is not rocket science. If there is a two-person firm that receives the contracts then passes them along and does no work in the process, it seems pretty uncomplicated. I mean, it would be ideal to cut out the contracting in general and have the work done inside government, but at least cut out the middleman.

GC Strategies has rightly gotten a lot of attention. It has done very well under the current government. It was founded in 2015 and has done extremely well under the NDP-Liberals. However, there are over 600 different companies doing IT middleman contracting and subcontracting, doing so-called staff augmentation for the public service. This is out of control, and it involves massive amounts of money. There has been a dramatic growth in public service spending but also a dramatic growth in contracting out at the same time, and a substantial amount of the contracting out is going to do-nothing middleman companies and is going to advice from professional services.

Why is the government spending so much and getting so little for Canadians?

• (2410)

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, taxpayer money needs to be treated with the utmost respect. Departments and agencies must follow contracting rules and handle all procurement processes in a fair, open and transparent manner, in accordance with all policies, guidelines, regulations and trade agreements. The gaps in management processes, roles and controls that the Auditor General of Canada and the procurement ombud have identified in their reports are unacceptable. We welcome the recommendations made in the reports.

The CBSA has already taken steps to strengthen its procurement activities and ensure proper oversight of them. The agency has established an executive procurement review committee tasked with approving contracts and task authorizations. This is already providing additional oversight on all contracting activities, with a focus on delivering value for money. Employees will be required to disclose interaction with potential vendors. Furthermore, Public Services and Procurement Canada will continue to strengthen all aspects of the federal procurement system; it will use findings from

the Auditor General's report to improve the way the Government of Canada does business with its suppliers.

The hon. member will certainly remember the unprecedented context in which the ArriveCAN application was created. After the pandemic was declared in March 2020, the app was developed and launched as quickly as possible by Canada Border Services Agency, at the request of the Public Health Agency of Canada. The data provided by ArriveCAN was essential for the government to monitor, detect and identify new COVID-19 variants of concern and to respond as these variants evolved. The CBSA was working as quickly as possible to replace a paper process that was not meeting public health needs. At the time, there were significant wait times at the border, which disrupted the essential flow of people and goods.

I wish to point this out to the hon. member: In her report, the Auditor General recognized that the government improved the speed and quality of information collected at the border by using the ArriveCAN app rather than the paper form. We should not forget that this app helped ensure the continued flow of essential goods, including food and medical supplies, for all Canadians.

The CBSA played a key role in facilitating the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines in this country. The public health measures that were taken have supported Canadian businesses that depend on secure and timely cross-border shipments. They kept food and goods on store shelves and ensured our frontline workers were equipped with essential supplies such as personal protective equipment.

I would like to emphasize the efforts of frontline border officers and all CBSA personnel, who diligently served and protected Canadian citizens during the pandemic. They continue to do so every single day in Canada and around the world.

• (2415)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable to me that the NDP-Liberals are still defending the arrive scam policy. The fact is that this app was a disaster. Sixty million dollars was spent. A big chunk of it went to this do-nothing middleman company. Most versions of the app, according to the Auditor General, were not tested. As a result, over 10,000 people who followed all the rules were accidentally sent into quarantine because of a glitch in the app.

We can imagine that someone does everything they are supposed to. They are coming back home; they are supposed to be able to see their family and get back to work. They are sent into quarantine, not because they are supposed to go, but because the government could not be bothered to test the app. Rather, it hired two guys working out of a basement with no IT experience, who went on LinkedIn to find other people to do the work.

The Auditor General very clearly said that there is no excuse. The government continues to make excuses in spite of it. Does the government have no shame? Will it finally admit what a disaster the arrive scam policy was?

Ms. Lisa Hefner: Mr. Speaker, despite the hyperbole and fake outrage, I will reiterate that transparency and accountability are priorities for the government. We expect that procurement processes will be properly followed and that anyone accused of wrongdoing will face the appropriate consequences. This has been and always will be the case.

The gaps found by the Auditor General of Canada and the procurement ombud in their reports are unacceptable, and we welcome the recommendations. The government is taking steps to ensure that all departments are better positioned to undertake projects of this nature in the future. Some of the recommendations outlined in the report have already been addressed. The president of the CBSA has implemented measures to strengthen and improve procurement processes and internal controls, and the government has full confidence that any investigation into wrongdoing allegations will be pursued with integrity and efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, the hon. member and all Canadians that the government remains unwavering in its commitment to prioritizing efficiency, accountability and transparency in the stewardship of public resources.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, good morning. It is 12:20 a.m., and I rise to get answers and accountability from the NDP-Liberal government on behalf of the hard-working people of York—Simcoe. The Liberal carbon tax has made life more expensive for every Canadian across the country, raising the price of food, fuel and everything else. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed: “When both fiscal and economic impacts of the federal fuel charge are considered...most households will see a net loss.”

Rural Canadians are especially affected, as they have to travel farther for longer to go anywhere and face higher costs across the board compared to urban regions. While the government has introduced a 20% top-up to the carbon tax rebate for small town and rural Canadians, many residents are not eligible to receive it. Under the current rules, in order to qualify for the rural rebate, one must live outside a CMA, a census metropolitan area, as defined by Statistics Canada.

Under these ridiculous rules put in place by the Liberals, my community of York—Simcoe is considered to be part of the Toronto CMA, despite being made up entirely of rural areas, agricultural lands and small towns. This includes the Chippewas of Georgina Island on Lake Simcoe, who are classified as rural and remote in any dealings they have with the federal government.

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If people google it, they will see that it would take 16 hours to walk to the closest subway station. We are the ice-fishing capital of Canada, the soup and salad bowl of Canada. That is York—Simcoe, and yet the upside-down Liberal government thinks that the CN Tower is right in our backyard. Houston, we have a problem. We know that the government is aware of this problem.

After all, Liberals recently rolled the census data back to 2016 for those living in Liberal ridings that were to be classified as part of a CMA in the most recent census. This ensured that they would still receive the rural top-up, but the Liberals have done nothing for those who are already unfairly excluded from the rebate, which is affecting those in York—Simcoe, outside Thunder Bay and elsewhere, coast to coast to coast.

Budget 2024 indicated, “The government is also working to expand rural top-up eligibility to more Canadians who need this support and will announce a proposal on better defining rural areas later this year.” As per Liberals, they say as much as they can without saying anything. The carbon tax has been in place for years, and now the Liberals are promising a proposal this year, but we all know what a Liberal promise is worth. That promise will be no relief to the residents of these excluded communities who are struggling to pay for groceries on their table and fuel in their cars right now.

Conservatives will axe the tax, but until then, my job is to stand up for my constituents and get every nickel that is owed to them.

Will the Liberal government commit today to stop screwing over rural Canadians and give York—Simcoe the rural top-up?

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• (2420)

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our carbon pricing approach reduces emissions. Environment and climate change modelling shows that Canada's emissions in 2021, the second year that the national minimum price on carbon pollution was in effect in Canada, would have been about 18 million tonnes higher in the absence of Canada's carbon pricing plan. Canada recently released the national inventory report, which tracks and reports on the country's GHG emissions. The report showed that Canada remains on track to meet our emissions reduction goals for 2030, and it shows that our emissions have been significantly reduced, by 44 million tonnes, compared to our pre-pandemic levels. The data is very clear: Carbon pricing works.

More than 90% of fuel charge proceeds are returned directly to individuals and households through the Canada carbon rebate. People get them through cheque or direct bank deposit every three months, and eight out of 10 families in provinces where the federal system applies receive more money back than they pay. Low and medium-income households actually benefit the most because they tend to spend less on energy-intensive goods, and they still collect the full amount of the Canada carbon rebate.

Of particular interest to the member opposite is the fact that households in rural areas and smaller communities receive a 20% top-up to their Canada carbon rebate, reflecting that they may face higher costs and have fewer short-term options to reduce their emissions. Canada's approach to carbon pricing is designed to protect affordability and to return all the proceeds back to Canadians. Those who need it the most receive more back than they pay.

Carbon pricing simply is not the cause of the increased cost of living. The data proves it year over year, and I am concerned with the opposite member's questions, because Canadians have been through a lot in the last five years, and they are struggling with the cost of living. We have heard numerous calls to scale back the carbon pricing system in response, but carbon pricing is not the problem; it is designed to help families, through the Canada carbon rebates. That is why a pause on pricing would not help families keep life affordable.

It can be tempting to put off action for the future in favour of other short-term goals and needs, but in the case of carbon pricing,

we actually do not have to choose. We can take action to protect ourselves and our children against climate change without hurting Canadians' pocketbooks.

• (2425)

Mr. Scot Davidson: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague missed my four-minute speech. York—Simcoe does not qualify for the 20% rural top-up. I need her to understand that in York-Simcoe, we are on the outside looking in. I would also point out that the fastest growing area in Canada is East Gwillimbury, in my riding, and none of the six northern communities got any housing accelerator funds.

I would sum it up to my colleague like this. York—Simcoe is too Toronto for the rural top-up, but not Toronto enough for any housing accelerator funds. It does not make sense. It is completely upside down. I think of the Chippewas of Georgina Island, out in the middle of Lake Simcoe, which one has to take a ferry to. Could the member square the circle for us? What would she like me to tell the chief on the Chippewas of Georgina Island? They are not subject to getting the rural top-up. We do not qualify. We are part of the people who are not qualifying for the rural top-up.

Axe the tax.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member has particular issues in his constituency, but we cannot deny the devastating impacts of climate change, and doing nothing is not an option. Climate-related impacts are costing average Canadian households \$720 a year. That is going to rise up to \$2,000 a year by 2050. Climate change is costing people's lives. It is affecting physical and mental health. Doing nothing would lead us to lose out in the worldwide race to net-zero solutions. We need to listen to our youth. We need to listen to our communities and our businesses, and we need to take action now.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day, at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:27 a.m.)

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