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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 16, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I would like to welcome all members back. I hope we will have some good discussions this fall.

[*English*]

VACANCY

HALIFAX

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely Mr. Fillmore, member for the electoral district of Halifax, by resignation effective Sunday, August 31, 2024.

Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TECHNOLOGY CANADA

The Speaker: Pursuant to the order made on Monday, June 10, it is my duty to table, in both official languages, a letter I have received from the law clerk and parliamentary counsel regarding the order for the production of documents from the government, Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the Auditor General of Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act, Ms. Gould, member for Burlington, has been appointed member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. MacKinnon, member for Gatineau and member of the King's Privy Council.

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-17, an act to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies, out-dated terminology and errors and to deal with other matters of a non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the Statutes and Regulations of Canada and to repeal certain provisions that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

COMBATING MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT ACT

The House resumed from May 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-379, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (motor vehicle theft), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, welcome back. I find that our summers go by awfully quickly, that is for sure.

It is nice to come back and talk about some important issues that Canadians are facing day in and day out. As we see the days proceed ahead of us, we are going to have a lot of good and hopefully healthy debate on the issues that we know Canadians are very much concerned about. As much as possible, we will try to put them into a perspective that gets us a better understanding of where the Conservatives are on a number of policy fronts, because they do send confusing messages.

Let us take a look at Bill C-379 as an example. What we see is a bill that likely Stephen Harper would not have introduced. Why? If we look at his former legal adviser, Ben Perrin, he did not speak very positively about Conservative members of Parliament in regard to the legislation they are proposing today.

When we think of auto theft, we have to realize that not just one jurisdiction is ultimately responsible. Let me give a tangible example. In the province of Manitoba, we had very serious auto theft taking place in and around 2004 to 2008. We had thousands of vehicles being stolen every year, and no province in the country, on a per capita basis, was doing any worse than Manitoba.

Private Members' Business

What we found was that a provincial initiative made the difference. It was about working with MPI, Manitoba Public Insurance. It was about looking at how Ottawa might be able to complement some of the actions that would help us bring the rate down. However, let there be no doubt that it was not about any single level of government, and the lead government in this situation was in fact that of Manitoba.

I understand and hear about the issue of stolen vehicles in Ontario in particular. I can say that my Liberal colleagues talk about it at great length because they understand how important it is. That is why we had the national summit.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives from their seats are shouting as if they are impressed. As well they should be, because it was not until after the national summit that the leader of the official opposition started to raise the issue here in the House. It took a national summit for the Conservative Party, at least its leadership, to wake up and recognize the issue.

That national summit, where we brought different stakeholders together, has made a difference. Not only have we seen tens of millions of dollars being invested by the federal government, but as a direct result, the number of vehicles being stolen has been reduced. The Conservatives might wish the opposite, as they well do. They want to see more crime on our streets. They can wish for it all they want, but at the end of the day, we will continue to be focused on Canadians and on bringing forward budgetary and legislative measures that are going to make a real, positive difference.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by greeting everyone and wishing everyone a happy and pleasant return. I encourage my colleagues to work for the common good and in the collective interest rather than their personal interest. It is a subtle message. Some will hear it; others, not so much. That is where I wanted to start.

We are talking about Bill C-379, which seeks to amend the Criminal Code to curb motor vehicle theft. The bill seeks to establish a minimum prison sentence of three years for a repeat offence when a person commits that offence three times.

The Bloc Québécois agrees with the principle. We will vote in favour of the bill so that it can be studied in committee. Our colleagues know how we work. We will determine whether it is good for Quebec and Quebecers. If that is the case, we will vote in favour of the bill.

We think this could improve things. However, a lot of questions remain about the bill's current wording, such as the aggravating circumstances. The bill would add another aggravating circumstance: the fact that the offence was committed for the benefit of organized crime. We agree with that, but this part already exists. The Criminal Code already contains a provision on that. Adding it serves no purpose. It is probably more of a political statement, a way to claim credit for doing it, than a material change to the legislation. We will study the matter and, if necessary, we will keep this aspect. Howev-

er, our research shows that this provision exists in the legislation already.

There is also a provision preventing the use of conditional sentences. We do not necessarily disagree with this, but we would like to sound a note of caution and raise questions in committee. We must always ensure that judges have the discretion to use their own judgment. As their title suggests, these people are supposed to have good judgment. We need to trust them to use it. Throwing a young person in jail for a first offence and having them spend three years behind bars alongside career criminals may not always be the best option to foster rehabilitation and reintegration. What we want is to reintegrate these people into society and the job market in a way that is constructive. We will study this. I am not saying we will oppose this clause when push comes to shove, but we have questions about it.

We are also backing the bill because we want to support the people on the ground. Bloc Québécois members are constantly on the ground. We have just come back from spending the summer in our ridings. We were on the ground, myself included. I try to visit a different region of Quebec each summer so I can talk to residents about their realities in connection with my portfolio, which is agriculture and agri-food.

This summer, I visited the north shore. My time there was brief, because I had to go home to deal with events in my riding. My riding was hit hard by torrential rains, so I had to cut my trip short. Nevertheless, I was able to spend a few days on the north shore and gauge the mood in the region. That is important.

In passing, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the people of Berthier—Maskinongé for their resilience. They showed tremendous resilience this summer in the face of these very unfortunate circumstances. I would also like to tip my hat to all the local elected officials, who are on the front lines when such things happen. When a city experiences flooding, they are the ones in the trenches calling for aid. People know me and know that I try to be very present and offer plenty of support. I kept in direct touch with all these people, and I tried to support them as best I could. Anyway, I digress.

I was talking about what is happening on the ground. The Montreal police department is asking for harsher sentences for auto theft under the Criminal Code. It has reported some troubling findings. One is that stealing cars is far more profitable and less risky than selling drugs. Of course, we do not want to encourage criminals to sell drugs either, but when we compare the two, it does not seem like auto theft is being tackled very aggressively, which may explain why this crime is so popular and growing exponentially.

• (1115)

In short, as I said at the start of my speech, as legislators, let us work for the common good. When cars are stolen, manufacturers are not particularly affected because the insurance company pays out the claim and the owner buys another car. That means auto theft may even increase manufacturers' sales numbers. The important thing is that we work for Canadians.

Who is going to pay for all this in the end? It is ordinary folks, who will have to pay more for car insurance. We have all seen insurance premiums shoot up in recent years. If they continue to go up, it is our fault, since we are doing nothing about it. We need to fix the problem.

I heard the parliamentary secretary say that not just one jurisdiction is responsible. That is just a way of shirking responsibility. He also said that the government held a summit on car theft. It was all just smoke and mirrors. When the media started putting the pressure on, it became clear that the Liberals had been doing nothing about this issue for far too long. That is the hallmark of this tired Liberal government. It is a wait-and-see government. It sticks its head in the sand whenever there is a problem, hoping that it will take care of itself. This government only acts when it has its back to the wall. Our job as the opposition is to put it in that position and tell it to do something.

Auto theft is surging, particularly because of technology. Take smart keys, for example. They seem like a magic solution to make life easier, but they have actually made it easier to steal cars. All the thief has to do is use an amplifier or a computer that they plug into the on-board diagnostics socket to clone the key's signal. Then they can easily drive off with the car. They park it somewhere for a few days and wait to see if it is noticed. Once they are sure it has not been noticed, they load it in a container, drive it to the port and ship it out. That is the big problem.

The bill before us is interesting in certain respects, but it fails to address some sizable gaps, such as the inspection of containers prior to export. What is the justification for requiring a warrant to open containers at the port, even when they are suspicious? A judge needs to issue a warrant, so that complicates matters. Meanwhile, law enforcement officials say that the port already has a security service, so they are not patrolling those areas.

For the 871,000 containers that left the Port of Montreal in 2022, how many inspectors were there? I hope members are sitting down before I give the answer. According to the Canada Border Services Agency, there were five. There were five inspectors for 871,000 containers. Then they are surprised that auto theft has become so popular and is happening so much. Sooner or later, something needs to be done.

This is the same Canada Border Services Agency that was responsible for the ArriveCAN scandal. This resulted in a shameful waste of public funds because of cronies who lined their own pockets, their buddies' pockets and the pockets of four or five other middlemen. This is off topic, but I need to point out that the same thing will happen with pharmacare and dental plans that go through private companies. The government needs to transfer the money to Quebec and let us manage these areas ourselves.

Private Members' Business

Getting back to the topic of auto theft, there is a problem with the Canada Border Services Agency. There is negligence. The media even reported that some suspicious containers were not inspected because someone's shift was over or someone was not working evenings or weekends or had something else to do. I am not saying that all this is true. I know the importance of avoiding populism, unlike some other individuals here in the House, but this does raise some serious questions.

As for the Canada Border Services Agency, the Bloc Québécois is on record as saying, and I would like to reiterate it now, that in light of the ArriveCAN scandal, the CBSA should be placed under third-party management. If the government wants to be serious, it must intervene.

Just look at the way the port of Montreal is managed and inspected. There are five inspectors for 871,000 outbound containers; there was a refusal to provide an inspector for a special squad that would have worked on vehicle exports; and there were requests from Montreal's police chief. The penalties for those who export the cars need to be increased. This is something we could have control over.

There is a lot of work to be done on this file. The Bloc Québécois will go to committee with an open mind but also with a lot of questions and a lot of suggestions for improvements, as we always do in the best interest of Quebecers.

• (1120)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish a good morning to you and to all of my colleagues in the House. I trust that everyone had an enjoyable summer back in their ridings. Here we are on the first day back.

I am pleased to rise today during Private Members' Business as the NDP's public safety critic to share some of my thoughts on Bill C-379. I know that the member for Prince Albert, who introduced the bill, is coming at this issue with sincerity. I think every member in the House, no matter what political party we belong to, understands that the issue of car thefts in Canada is serious. It is not a victimless crime. We all represent communities that have suffered from it. It is certainly something for which we need an all-encompassing policy response to effectively deal with it.

The bill before us today, Bill C-379, is a relatively short bill, as most private members' bills are. Essentially, the main part of the bill is seeking to increase the minimum term of imprisonment for repeat offenders from six months to three years.

Private Members' Business

Before I get into a discussion of the bill itself, I want to acknowledge the severity of car thefts in Canada. I am a member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. That committee has been conducting a study into this very issue, and we are getting close to when we will be able to hopefully table a report in the House of Commons with recommendations for the government. That report, of course, will be based on the full spectrum of witness testimony we heard at committee.

To put this in context, there has been a significant increase in vehicle thefts across the country. According to Statistics Canada, there were 83,416 vehicle thefts recorded in 2021. Then a year later, in 2022, that number jumped to 105,673, which is a significant increase in just one year's time.

Between February 26 and May 23 of this year, the public safety committee held six meetings, with a total of 42 witnesses, and 11 briefs were submitted. Committee members were also invited to take a trip to the port of Montreal, so they could see in person what CBSA operations are like there and some of the challenges that CBSA members deal with in how they inspect containers, because that is the primary port through which stolen cars in Canada exit our country to find lucrative markets abroad. It is a very big problem.

There is an incredible amount of transnational criminal organization that goes into these operations, and the payoff can be quite significant. For one stolen car, people can fetch a price of anywhere from \$30,000 to \$60,000, or even higher. It is a significant return on the investments that criminal organizations make to do this. However, I would like to underline this point by encouraging members to wait for that report so that we can review the recommendations within it.

I do believe that, to effectively deal with this problem, we need an all-encompassing and holistic approach, which would rely on not only criminal law but also a variety of policy measures and programs, to tackle it. The main problem I have with the bill is its reliance on mandatory minimums as a cure-all for a very real and complex problem. The reason for that is that, if we look at the evidence, and there is a tremendous amount of evidence out there, it shows very clearly that mandatory minimum sentences produce substantial harm with no overall benefit to crime control. That is our guiding star in this debate. We want crime control. We want to see it come down.

The evidence, which is very clearly available, shows that mandatory minimums do not have a beneficial effect on that. They represent an intrusion of the legislative branch into an area that is under judicial jurisdiction. They constrain judicial discretion. There is evidence that they deepen racial disparities in the criminal legal system and cause far-reaching harm to individuals, families and communities.

• (1125)

I say this in the context that auto theft, the crime itself, is not victimless. We have to keep it in balance that, when a person experiences a car theft, it is a very real problem we must address, and it causes a significant amount of hurt in our communities. However, I firmly believe, and the evidence bears this out, that sentences must be based on individual contextual factors relating to each offence

and each offender, rather than on one-size-fits-all legislated minimum sentences, which often result in ineffective, expensive and unduly harsh periods of incarceration.

The John Howard Society has done a meta-analysis of 116 studies on this subject from both Canada and the United States. It is a massive analysis of the literature and evidence that is out there. One of the main findings is “custodial sanctions have no effect on reoffending or slightly increase it when compared with the effects of noncustodial sanctions such as probation.”

I do not want to beat a dead horse on this fact. Members here have a variety of tools at their disposal. They have the Library of Parliament and can read that same evidence, but this point needs to be hammered home: It is very clear that mandatory minimums do not deter crime. There is evidence that, if we put in lengthier periods of incarceration, we could actually see an increase in recidivism among offenders, and that is certainly not a result that we are aiming for.

I also want to talk a bit about the cost because, in addition to the fact that mandatory minimums affect indigenous, Black and racialized Canadians in a very disproportionate way, there is also the fact that the cost of housing an inmate in a federal institution has now reached \$428 a day. If we multiply that by 365, we see that the cost for an individual in a federal institution, per year, is \$156,220. That is an astonishing cost to taxpayers and far more expensive than crime prevention and social outreach programs, which often have much better results and a far better track record.

If we were to take that cost, which is a fact borne out by the statistics, under the member's proposed Bill C-379 and its mandatory minimum of three years, we are looking at an expenditure of nearly half a million dollars per person convicted under this change to the law alone. Anyone who is sentenced for over two years is automatically placed in a federal institution, whereas those sentenced to two years less a day are under provincial jurisdiction, but those provincial incarceration costs are relatively similar. I am not saying that jail time is not justified in certain cases, but I maintain that this is up to the trial judge to determine, given the facts of the case and the nature of the accused who is before the judge.

We should be putting far more resources into a variety of programs, such as the training resources for youth program or the help eliminate auto theft program, which has had very good success in the province of Manitoba since 2014 and 2015. Those results showed a 30% reduction in gang involvement. The results also indicated that 95% of the people did not receive new charges while in the program, 93% of the property offenders in the program did not receive new charges, there were zero new auto theft charges during the program period and 95% of the participants did not receive new offences against person-related charges. If we look at those results and the cost of these programs, compared to the \$156,000 per year to put someone in a federal institution, we see that the cost of these programs ranged anywhere from \$7,000 to \$10,000 per participant, and they had amazing success rates.

Private Members' Business

I do not want it to escape the Conservatives that, during their time under the Harper government, there were significant cuts to the RCMP budget and the CBSA budget, which put us in the position we are in now. Just last year, in December 2023, the Conservatives voted against the estimates that provided important funding to the RCMP, the CBSA and Public Safety Canada.

In conclusion, New Democrats want to see action against the auto theft crisis, but we want to see investment in those prevention programs that obviously have a track record and are more cost effective to the taxpayer. On that, I will stick by my principles. Despite all the rhetoric from the Conservatives, they know that the evidence does not support their argument. What is borne out by the evidence is that crime prevention programs are where we need to be putting those smart taxpayer dollars for effective results.

• (1130)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, common sense Conservatives will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. This bill, which we are talking about today, Bill C-379, will be one step in the stop-the-crime initiatives that we have undertaken.

I do not know if one remembers when one received one's driver's licence, but I do remember when I received my driver's licence. Buying my first car, buying my first vehicle, was a huge milestone in my life. Where I come from, in the country, a vehicle is freedom. The ability to drive is freedom. That is why, from my perspective, auto theft is such a heinous crime. It takes away a person's freedom. Auto theft has been a long-standing problem in northern Alberta. It has more recently reached Toronto, and suddenly, this country is seized with it because of that. Auto theft has been a major challenge, going back a very long time.

Since I have been, probably, three years old, I wanted to be an auto mechanic, and I achieved that goal by the time I was 21. I was able to see first-hand and was able to interact with the auto theft deterrent systems on vehicles quite extensively. I programmed thousands of keys for people who either lost their keys or wanted an extra key, or something like that. I would program them when I worked for Chrysler dealerships. It was called the SKIM program, or "sentry key immobilizer module".

That system was introduced in 1998. By 2006, every Chrysler product had it. When I quit in 2015, there had never been a case of somebody being able to undermine that system. It had been an incredible system, and it had worked very well. Around 2015, people had figured out a way to beat that system. Here we are, today, with no real way for auto manufacturers to build a system to deter or to make a secure key, without maybe even going back to a hard key again. I do not know about the vehicles that members drive, but most people do not have to put their keys in the doors to make them open anymore. It is not a hard key; it is a digital key. Maybe we have to go back to hard keys. I am not sure about that. Those were relatively easy to get around as well. I have had extensive experience with that, and I have watched the progression of these systems grow. I have enjoyed being part of that sort of thing.

I also had the luxury of being an owner. My very first car, in fact, was a Chrysler Neon. In 1999, that was the most stolen car in Ed-

monton. I also owned a Jeep TJ, which, in another year, was the most stolen vehicle in Edmonton as well.

For both of those vehicles, the police put out sting vehicles. It did not take very long, and they just had to arrest a few people stealing those sting vehicles, and they went from being the most stolen to the least stolen over just a couple of weekends of doing sting operations and charging people with auto theft. That was bringing people to justice.

We hear a lot from the NDP around mandatory minimums, how they do not work, and things like that. The deterrence effect of the law is a real thing. Bringing people to justice is a real thing. A real thing is ensuring that Canadians understand that if one steals a vehicle, one will go to jail.

For the police to have the backup, to feel that they can pursue this and to ensure that the police have the resources to do this, those are all other things, but private members' bills cannot spend money. This bill is taking one part of the law that we can affect with a private member's bill. I want to thank the member for bringing this bill forward and for ensuring that we can put into effect that deterrence mechanism to ensure that justice can be brought when our vehicles get stolen.

For many people, their vehicle is their lifeline to the world. Their vehicle is often a personal statement. They have a lot invested in their vehicle. To wake up in the morning and to discover one's vehicle missing is a huge insecurity that builds in one's life. In many cases, people work out of their vehicles. Their vehicles are their places of work. To wake up in the morning and to discover that their entire business is missing, that all of their tools and that all of their livelihood is missing because somebody stole their vehicle, is often the case.

• (1135)

Over the last couple of years, we have seen that the Liberal government's soft-on-crime initiatives have led to increases in auto theft. Why is that? It is because there are no deterrents anymore. I have had constituents come in and talk to me about the fact that the people stealing these vehicles are brazen. They know that they are going to get away with it. They know what to say when they are stopped with a stolen vehicle to get out of it. The justice system has been a failure at bringing these people to justice, and because of that, there is no deterrence to auto theft.

Private Members' Business

The police are more than frustrated with this. They will build a case and make an arrest, only to have the courts slap the person on the wrist and build a revolving door to put the person out on bail. We have addressed this as well in other areas, saying that it should be jail, not bail, for repeat offenders because we see folks who have been charged with auto theft, out on bail and stealing more cars. This has become a major thing. I do not know if members have seen in the news that one of the suggestions as a solution for this is to leave one's keys near the door to ensure that one's family is not violently offended by an auto theft attempt. That does not seem like a solution.

We have seen the cost of living rise across the country, and auto theft is contributing to that. The increases to the insurance rates because of auto theft is making one more thing in our lives more expensive. We are seeing it all around in the distress that people are feeling because they cannot make ends meet. The fuel they put in their cars is one of those things, but their insurance is another thing that keeps on being driven up by the 105,000 cars stolen each year in Canada. All of these things together mean that we need to address auto theft, and I think this bill is a good step along the way.

We hear criticism from the NDP that we need a holistic bill. This is a private member's bill, and private member's bills are not allowed to spend money. We are not allowed to build big national programs that cost a whole bunch of money to set forward a strategy that will need money. Therefore, if we can push the government to do those things, that is great. I think we need that to put forward these sting operations that I experienced back in the early 2000s, when auto theft was also a challenge. There was a focused, concerted effort to bring auto theft down. A lot of levers were pulled to make that happen. That is when we saw the rise of immobilizer systems installed on vehicles as well. The manufacturers, insurance companies, government and community associations got involved, and we were able to bring auto theft down. However, now we see that this lack of deterrence from the soft-on-crime Liberals has driven up auto theft. We have also seen technological advances by the thieves.

I am hopeful that this bill will pass and that we will bring in that deterrence piece of the puzzle to ensure that we have a strong deterrence, that the police have the tools, that prosecutors are able to bring these people to justice and that vehicle thefts go down. However, this bill is just the first small piece on the start. We hope it will inspire the government to take bold action to bring auto theft down across the country. If it is unable to do that, common sense Conservatives stand ready to stop the crime, axe the tax, build the homes and fix the budget.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we should give careful consideration to this bill and study it in committee. That said, neither the Bloc Québécois nor I are prepared to vote for it in its current form. Make no mistake: We need to tackle the problem of auto theft.

In 2022, according to the reams of figures I have looked over, 10,595 car thefts were reported in Quebec. Over the same period, 70,000 were reported in Canada. That is huge. It means that more

than 29 vehicles were stolen per day in Quebec, a 138% increase from 2016. Obviously, this has unfortunate consequences for car owners who have their vehicle stolen, but it also affects all vehicle owners and drivers. Car insurance premiums increased by 50% between 2012 and 2022, mainly due to the increase in car thefts. This is a major problem that needs to be addressed.

We in the House of Commons must deal with many types of crimes. Crimes against the person are something the Bloc Québécois cares deeply about. However, just because auto theft is less serious does not mean we should neglect it, because it is still a major problem.

That being said, the Bloc Québécois is inherently against mandatory minimum sentences. We all know that mandatory minimum sentences have next to no effect on people who commit crimes. The same goes for the ban on conditional sentences. The bill proposes banning conditional sentences and also increasing the minimum sentence from two years to three years. I must say that I do not really believe in all that. This bill was introduced in good faith, I am sure. I think that the people introducing it believe this would have a positive impact. We in the Bloc Québécois do not believe that.

However, we think we need to tackle the problem. In particular, when it comes to increasing sentences, we think that the fact that the theft was committed on behalf of a criminal organization should be an aggravating factor. Everyone in the House knows that we have been pushing for more aggressive and serious action against criminal organizations since 2015. At the time—I think it was in 2016—I tabled a bill to create a registry of criminal organizations to make it easier to identify them, streamline the prosecution of crimes committed for their benefit and possibly consider membership in such an organization or the use of emblems to identify as a member or supporter of a criminal organization a crime. The bill was rejected at the time, but here we are again. We have not given up, we will continue to fight.

When we look more closely at car theft, we can see that the real problem does not lie with the young men or women who go out drinking on a Saturday night and decide to steal a car. This is of course a problem, but the real scourge is the organization behind the thefts, the criminal organizations that pay and encourage often disadvantaged youth to commit these crimes on their behalf. I agree that it is important to punish the individual who actually stole the vehicle. However, as I said earlier, I think that punishing them with mandatory minimum sentences and banning conditional sentences is a bit much, because we are not allowing the judge hearing the case to adapt the sentence based on the particular situation. Personally, I believe in our judicial system. I think that we need to trust the judges who hear the arguments to determine the right thing to do.

• (1145)

We believe that minimum sentences are useful in cases of crimes against the person, since it allows us to send a clear message. Minimum sentences may well make certain individuals think twice, namely those who would otherwise commit crimes against the person on impulse or for all sorts of reasons; we should be tough on them. We need to stop the epidemic of vehicle theft. I would not say that they apply in every case, but in many cases we support mandatory minimum sentences. However, when it comes to car theft, I think it is almost counterproductive to deprive ourselves, as a society, of the assessment a judge can make of a particular situation after hearing all the evidence.

Mandatory minimum sentences are therefore a bit of a problem. Systematically refusing conditional sentences is another problem. We need to trust our judges. However, when there are aggravating circumstances and when the crime is committed for the benefit of a criminal organization, I agree. It think that is essential. We still have a lot to discuss. We are sitting in the House of Commons and adopting provisions to amend the Criminal Code. That is a federal jurisdiction. Too often, the federal government tries to interfere in the provinces' jurisdictions, and we call it out every time, but this is clearly a federal jurisdiction. In fact, I would say that I still have a hard time understanding why there have been no results after all these years. I am a younger member of the House. I have been here since 2015. For nine years we have been working on this, and nothing has come of it. There have been others before me, but we never managed to tackle criminal organizations severely enough. I think we should be ruthless. Criminal organizations need to be effectively and harshly sanctioned.

That being said, there is another option when it comes to mandatory minimum sentences. We have always looked at crimes to determine whether they merit mandatory minimum sentences. I have shared my thoughts, but could we also consider another way of eliminating crime or perhaps rehabilitating a person who has committed a crime? I think we could. I think that we should look at that more closely. I am thinking among other things about the electronic bracelets used when criminals are released. I wonder whether, instead of sentencing a person who stole a car, for example, to two or three years in prison, regardless of the number of years, we could put them in prison for six months or a year and then have them serve the rest of their sentence out in the community, but wearing an electronic bracelet.

Private Members' Business

It would be more difficult for criminal organizations to recruit individuals wearing an electronic bracelet. I do not think that many criminal organizations would want to hire people to commit crimes if they are being monitored through an electronic bracelet that can provide information about who and where they are at any given time. That would be risky. This might also help rehabilitate those people, who, rather than going back to their former life of crime might choose—not all but some of them—to try to abide by the rules of our society, the society we ultimately want to have.

This is not a cure-all. I am not saying that it is the only solution, but it is a solution that we could look into. Perhaps I might also change my mind at some point for all sorts of reasons that I am not aware of today, but I do not think that we should cut corners when looking into this issue. Minimum sentencing is counterproductive, but I support alternative ways of rehabilitating individuals. I think that is a good idea.

In closing, we need to be tough on crime committed by criminal organizations, and the Bloc Québécois can be counted on to support these kinds of sanctions. In the meantime, let us study this bill in committee and see how it can be improved in the interest of all Quebecers and Canadians.

• (1150)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Now the hon. member for Prince Albert has the right of reply.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone here for giving the bill its due consideration, going through it and providing some good insight into what we should or should not be doing.

I also want to thank the House for the ability to raise this issue on behalf of Canadians; it is a very serious issue. Canadians are saying they want to see action on auto theft. They want to make sure that things are being done to stop this. It is costing them a lot of money, causing harm, affecting personal safety and creating a lot of stress. This is an issue that actually needs to be addressed by the House of Commons, and the bill provides that option.

I have heard members from different parties give their opinions and views. Some had really good ideas. I know the member from the Bloc talked about how he is willing to get it to committee. That is all I was asking for. That is all Canadians were asking for: a chance to get it to committee and then look at it in a very serious manner, bring in the appropriate witnesses, the police chiefs, the police unions, the judges and the appropriate people, including members from the so-called summit that they had. They could bring in the experts from there, if they have data to do that. The NDP talked about some of the programs in British Columbia and Manitoba. They could bring that data to committee and then look at that and see how we can craft it into something that we can make work here in Canada.

Privilege

Doing nothing is not an option. Doing nothing means we have not listened to one word our constituents have told us this past summer. Constituents have talked about crime. If members were going door to door, crime would have been one of the top two issues constituents would have talked about.

This could go to committee. It could be massaged and changed. I am open-minded on that. I am the type of person who is not overly partisan. I just like to move the yardsticks and make sure that, at the end of the day, Canadians have benefited. That is the goal of this piece of legislation, to get it there so we can talk about it and look for the best practices.

When I look at the response from the member for Winnipeg North, he talked about the programs they had in Manitoba and how good they were. I will remind him that auto theft is up 62.5% in Winnipeg alone. That is not the rest of Manitoba. From 2015 to 2022, it was up 62%.

We can go right across the board, right across Canada, and these numbers are astounding. This is a real issue that Canadians want to be talking about and want us to work on. This is an example of how parties can actually work together to accomplish something that would benefit all Canadians.

However, we have seen a partisan attack by the Liberals. Basically, they are saying that there is no problem, even though they had a summit on it. Even though they have put it into their budget and started to allocate money next year on this, \$14 million a year, they are saying it is not a problem. They are just closing their eyes and putting their head in the sand. It matches the reasons the party is so out of touch.

The Liberal Party has lost touch with Canadians. It does not understand what Canadians are asking them to do. The Liberals do not understand the role they have as a government to represent Canadians and to actually bring in laws to protect Canadians. Do I need to repeat that?

Here is a prime example: We could go to the committee and bring forward different ideas from different provinces, groups and associations. I have no issue with any of that. At the end of the day, we need to have a piece of legislation coming out of the House of Commons that actually attacks the issue and reduces the crime.

What is the best way to do that? If we do not go to committee, if we do not get it there, then we are saying to our constituents that it is not a big enough issue or that we do not care. That is how it is going to be received. That is what they are going to think. When members go door knocking, constituents will ask about crime. Will members say that we had a private member's bill but voted against it? Constituents will ask why. Why would we not get it to committee and talk about it? Why would we not keep an open mind, as I am willing to do, and actually put a piece of legislation forward that may lower auto crime, actual insurance rates and people's feeling that they are unsafe in their homes?

There are lots of options here, but one that should not be considered is the option of not taking it to committee and talking about it. If the government wants to go down that path, it explains why the Liberals are where they are in the polls. They have lost touch with Canada and Canadians. They do not represent what constituents are

asking them to do. They have their own opinions, but instead of listening, the Liberals are going back to preaching to them. That does not work, and the next election will prove that.

• (1155)

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[*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. Randy Hoback: I request a recorded vote, please.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 18, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would suggest that we suspend for a few minutes until noon, so we can get things under way under Government Orders.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: The House is suspended until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:56 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

* * *

• (1200)

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege following my notice under Standing Order 48 concerning the failure of the government to comply with the order that the House adopted on Monday, June 10.

Privilege

A majority of the House voted that day to compel the government to produce a series of unredacted records concerning Sustainable Development Technology Canada, a body engulfed in Liberal scandal in recent years, leading to its being dubbed the “green slush fund”. For the purpose of making those documents available to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the government has failed to comply and failed to obey this House order, as we learned this summer when the law clerk and parliamentary counsel reported to the House through you on July 17.

Mr. Speaker, you are being put into a situation like your predecessors were so conspicuously placed in, to address a serious impasse over document production. As your well-regarded predecessor, Speaker Milliken, said on April 27, 2010, at page 2042 of the Debates, in a widely acclaimed ruling, “Before us are issues that question the very foundations upon which our parliamentary system is built. In a system of responsible government, the fundamental right of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its actions is an indisputable privilege and in fact an obligation.”

The current obligation originates from the Conservative opposition motion adopted on the heels of an utterly scandalous Auditor General's report. Over the summer, yet another officer of Parliament, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, also weighed in, finding the former Liberal hand-picked chair of SDTC guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act twice.

There is little doubt the Liberal government must be held to account over this debacle, which is why the House decided to exercise one of its ancient powers to compel the production of papers. Indeed, as a mark of how old the power is, Erskine May treated it as a settled matter in the first edition of his self-titled treatise on parliamentary procedure, published in 1844, at page 309: “Parliament, in the exercise of its various functions, is invested with the power of ordering all documents to be laid before it which are necessary for its information.”

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, elaborates, at pages 984 and 985, upon the scope of that power:

The Standing Orders do not delimit the power to order the production of papers and records. The result is a broad, absolute power that on the surface appears to be without restriction. There is no limit on the types of papers likely to be requested; the only prerequisite is that the papers exist in hard copy or electronic format, and that they are located in Canada. They can be papers originating from or in the possession of governments, or papers the authors or owners of which are from the private sector or civil society (individuals, associations, organizations, et cetera)....

No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers and records.

This is a critical point and one to which I will return.

In a May 2019 report on the power to send for papers, the United Kingdom House of Commons procedure committee concluded, at paragraph 16, that “The power of the House of Commons to require the production of papers is in theory absolute. It is binding on Ministers, and its exercise has consistently been complied with by the Government.”

In recent years, our own House has, however, encountered several incidents of government refusals to provide records which it or its committees have ordered to be produced. Most famously, there

was the very high-profile, high-stakes decision of your longest-serving predecessor, Speaker Milliken, concerning documents regarding the Afghanistan conflict following a Liberal opposition motion, which the House adopted in December 2009, requiring the public tabling of 40,000 unredacted pages of sensitively classified records about operations in an active war zone, with zero provision for their safekeeping. Bosc and Gagnon explain, at page 139, the subsequent events:

● (1205)

the Government refused, citing national security concerns. Questions of privilege were raised based on the House's absolute right to order documents. The Minister of Justice insisted that as the government had a duty to protect information that could jeopardize national security, that right was not without limits. On April 27, 2010, Speaker Milliken ruled that it was within the powers of the House to ask for the documents specified in the House Order, and that it did not transgress the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of Government. Thus, the Speaker concluded that the government's failure to comply with the House Order constituted a prima facie breach of privilege. However, he gave the parties two weeks to develop a mechanism that would accommodate the Government's concerns over national security and the House's right to receive the documents.

As a result, three of the four recognized parties negotiated an agreement in principle to have an ad hoc committee of parliamentarians convened to review the 40,000 pages in question and to vet them for future tabling.

Meanwhile, in 2011, another prima facie case of privilege was found in respect of efforts by the Standing Committee on Finance to obtain documents with financial information. Allow me to summarize for the House the pertinent developments there. In autumn of 2010, the finance committee requested certain financial information from the government and ordered the production of various documents concerning economic projections and costing estimates. The government responded that certain of the documents sought constituted cabinet confidences.

In February 2011, the finance committee agreed to report the foregoing events to the House. That report, the finance committee's tenth report, was presented, and a question of privilege was raised. While awaiting a ruling, the government tabled in the House some documents responsive to the finance committee's requests, and in any event, the House adopted an opposition motion ordering the production of the same documents.

Subsequently, on March 9, 2011, Speaker Milliken ruled on the question of privilege, finding a prima facie case of privilege, whereupon a motion to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was adopted. That committee then presented its 27th report on March 21, 2011. While most of the report dealt with the government's invocation of cabinet confidence, something which is an issue in the present case but not a central one, there are still two notable items in the report's summary of the evidence which are relevant to quote.

Privilege

First, at page 4, Mr. Robert Walsh, House of Commons Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, “indicated that the Speaker had concluded in his ruling that Parliament has the right to receive all the information that it requires, but the government may decide to refuse to provide this information. In that event, the government must convince Parliament that its decision is well-founded.”

Later, at page 9, Mr. Ned Franks, professor emeritus in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University, “affirmed that he sided with Speaker Milliken and declared that, in his view, the government was not entitled to limit Parliament's power to receive information.”

On March 25, 2011, the House considered and adopted an opposition motion proposed by Michael Ignatieff, which stated, among other things, “That the House agree with the finding of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs that the government is in contempt of Parliament”.

Where the House subsequently agreed with the 27th report's conclusions, it stands to reason that the House likewise endorsed the analysis leading to it. Most recently, there was the famous 2021 case concerning the Winnipeg lab documents. As most of us will recall, in spring 2021, the then special committee on Canada-China relations adopted two orders for unredacted copies of documents concerning very troubling reports out of Winnipeg's National Microbiology Laboratory.

When those orders were not honoured on June 2, 2021 to compel the production of the same documents, the government persisted in its refusal to comply. That led to a question of privilege on which your immediate predecessor ruled, on June 16, 2021, at page 8548 of the Debates, when he reaffirmed that “at the heart of the parliamentary system, and firmly anchored in our Constitution, there are rights and privileges that are indispensable to the performance of members' duties.”

The House, in turn, on June 17, 2021, adopted a motion to find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey an order of the House, and accordingly ordered its president to attend at the bar of the House to be admonished and to hand over the documents. That led to the historic moment on June 21, 2021, when Iain Stewart, the agency's president, stood at the bar to be admonished by the Speaker in the following words:

● (1210)

The privileges held by the House of Commons are an integral part of the Constitution Act, 1867, and the Parliament of Canada Act. These rights include the right to require the production of documents....

The privileges in question, like all those enjoyed by the House collectively and by members individually, are essential to the performance of their duties. The House has the power, and indeed the duty, to reaffirm them when obstruction or interference impedes its deliberations. As guardian of these rights and privileges, that is precisely what the House has asked me to do today by ordering the Speaker to reprimand you for the Public Health Agency of Canada's contempt in refusing to submit the required documents.

In parallel, the Liberal government, quite shockingly, initiated proceedings in the federal court against the House and its Speaker, seeking to block any further attempts to obtain the documents. Our then Speaker quite fearlessly fought back in court against a government of his own party background, seeking to have the government's court application thrown out. The Prime Minister's selfish

and self-interested early election call brought an abrupt end to the federal court proceedings.

In the new Parliament, an ad hoc committee of parliamentarians, similar to that in the 2010 example, was eventually established to look at the Winnipeg lab documents. In February of this year, its work on 600 pages of documents was finally tabled, some 35 months after the standoff in the special committee began. In the end, we discovered that most redactions were not about national security but about protecting the government from embarrassment.

There have also been developments in the United Kingdom Parliament in recent years that some of our colleagues may not be fully familiar with. In the 2017 general election, the incumbent Conservative government did not secure a majority in the House of Commons. The Labour Party subsequently devoted some 10 of its opposition days in the first session of Parliament following that election to ordering the production of documents. Half of the motions were defeated by the House, and of the remaining five, four were responded to in a satisfactory manner by the government.

It is the fifth motion that warrants our attention and was a case that prompted the U.K. House of Commons procedure committee to study the matter and issue its ninth report, entitled “The House's power to call for papers: procedure and practice”, in May 2019, which I quoted earlier.

On November 13, 2018, the U.K. House of Commons adopted the following motion, proposed by Sir Keir Starmer, who is now the country's Prime Minister:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, That she will be graciously pleased to give directions that the following papers be laid before Parliament: any legal advice in full, including that provided by the Attorney General, on the proposed withdrawal agreement on the terms of the UK's departure from the European Union including the Northern Ireland backstop and framework for a future relationship between the UK and the European Union.

Subsequent events can be summarized by the following extracts from paragraphs 41 to 43 of the U.K. Parliament's procedure committee's 2019 report:

Ministers advanced arguments against the motion from the Despatch Box, but did not seek to divide the House. The motion therefore passed unopposed. In points of order raised immediately after the House's decision, Members sought to clarify the obligations on the Government arising from it: no Ministerial statement was made in response.

An agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU on the UK's withdrawal from the EU was endorsed by heads of state and government at the European Council meeting of 25 November 2018.... On 3 December the Attorney General presented to Parliament a Command Paper which purported to describe the “overall legal effect” of the agreement of 25 November 2018. On the same day he made a statement to the House...neither the Command Paper nor the statement made reference to the resolution of 13 November, and the Command Paper did not purport to be a return to the resolution of the House.

Privilege

Following the presentation of the government's command paper to the House, Keir Starmer, together with representatives of four other political parties, wrote to the Speaker alleging that the government had not complied with the terms of the resolution of 13 November. The Attorney General also wrote to the Speaker with his observations on the matter. He argued that the government was in considerable difficulty in knowing how to comply with the resolution.

Speaker Bercow ruled, on December 3, 2018, at column 625 of the official report:

The letter that I received from the members mentioned at the start of this statement asks me to give precedence to a motion relating to privilege in relation to the failure of Ministers to comply with the terms of the resolution of the House of 13 November. I have considered the matter carefully, and I am satisfied that there is an arguable case that a contempt has been committed. I am therefore giving precedence to a motion to be tabled tonight before the House rises and to be taken as first business tomorrow, Tuesday. It will then be entirely for the House to decide on that motion.

- (1215)

The following day, after defeating a government amendment, the House voted to adopt the following motion:

That this House finds Ministers in contempt for their failure to comply with the requirements of the motion for return passed on 13 November 2018, to publish the final and full legal advice provided by the Attorney General to the Cabinet concerning the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the framework for the future relationship, and orders its immediate publication.

In response, the government produced a complete, unredacted copy of the Attorney General's legal advice the next day. According to the procedure committee's report, at paragraph 68, "The Attorney General later said that he had complied with the order of the House of 4 December 'out of respect of the House's constitutional position.'" A government that respects the constitutional position of the House of Commons; let us all just imagine that for a moment.

As I mentioned earlier, the Liberal government is, on the other hand, in my submission, in contempt of Parliament yet again. Bosc and Gagnon comment, at page 81:

Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege: tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions;...or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands....

On the next page, they articulate the well-established categories of contempt, including:

deliberately altering, suppressing, concealing or destroying a paper required to be produced for the House or a committee;...

without reasonable excuse, refusing to answer a question or provide information or produce papers formally required by the House or a committee; [and]

without reasonable excuse, disobeying a lawful order of the House or a committee....

In the present case, the government has disobeyed a lawful order of this House. It has failed to provide all of the papers that were formally required by this House, and in so responding, many papers were altered or outright suppressed through the redaction process.

On June 10, the House ordered the government to deposit a series of documents concerning SDTC, the Liberal green slush fund, with the law clerk within 30 days. No redactions or other alterations were contemplated by that order, nor was any information permit-

ted to be otherwise withheld, though I would not be surprised if there is a fresh update for us today.

We do know, based on the law clerk's July 17 and August 21 reports to you, Mr. Speaker, which you tabled the same days, that the Department of Finance, Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat each provided only partial responses.

Several government institutions redacted the records they deposited with the law clerk, including the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; the Business Development Bank of Canada; the Canada Revenue Agency; the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency; the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; the Department of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities; the Department of National Defence; the Department of Natural Resources; Public Services and Procurement Canada; Western Economic Diversification Canada; Export Development Canada; the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario; Pacific Economic Development Canada; the Privy Council Office; the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; and the Standards Council of Canada.

I would add that the Department of Natural Resources also decided only to provide the House with records from the director general level and higher. For those not familiar with government hierarchy, a director general is a pretty elite bigwig within the government. They are typically at least four layers above a typical front-line worker. Who knows what pertinent information from the front lines, so to speak, was concealed by this manoeuvre? The House order certainly did not contemplate this approach.

Three other organizations fall into both of these categories, by providing incomplete responses and redacting what they did provide: Innovation, Science and Economic Development; the Department of Justice; and the National Research Council Canada. For its part, the justice department brazenly put the House on notice that some 10,772 pages of relevant documents were "completely withheld". The Communications Security Establishment, meanwhile, simply wrote that it was refusing to turn over any documents, even redacted ones. Then we have the case of the Public Sector Pension Investment Board, the body that manages a quarter of a trillion dollars of public sector pension assets, which claimed it is not part of the government. I guess it is not just campaign managers who are distancing themselves from the Liberal Prime Minister.

The Auditor General, for her part, also refused to provide documents, referring to her obligations under the Auditor General Act to honour whatever security restrictions the government imposes on its information. Not only has the government refused to comply with the House's order; it has also shackled the Auditor General, an officer of Parliament, from being able to comply as well.

Privilege

• (1220)

I want to pause here to recognize the Privacy Commissioner's, our former law clerk's, gold standard approach. He provided a set of records with what he called proposed redactions along with a clean copy of the records, because, as he wrote, "these provisions [of the Access to Information Act] do not limit the House of Commons' constitutional authority to seek and obtain information and documents." At least he gets it.

Regardless, there is clear and convincing evidence before the House today that a contempt was committed by the government's flagrant and systematic disobedience to the House's June 10 order. While I think it is clear-cut, it is, of course, ultimately a decision for the House to take.

In his March 9, 2011, ruling, Mr. Speaker Milliken cited page 281 of Sir John Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada*, fourth edition:

But it must be remembered that under all circumstances it is for the house to consider whether the reasons given for refusing the information are sufficient. The right of Parliament to obtain every possible information on public questions is undoubted, and the circumstances must be exceptional, and the reasons very cogent, when it cannot be at once laid before the houses.

From there, the Chair added, at page 8841 of the Debates:

It may be that valid reasons exist. That is not for the Chair to judge. A committee empowered to investigate the matter might, but the Chair is ill-equipped to do so. However, there is no doubt that an order to produce documents is not being fully complied with, and this is a serious matter that goes to the heart of the House's undoubted role in holding the government to account.

The U.K. procedure committee, in its May 2019 report, concluded, at paragraph 16, "The way in which the power [to require the production of papers] is exercised is a matter for the House and not subject to the discretion of the Chair." That committee commented, at paragraph 35, similarly to the views of Mr. Speaker Milliken, on the means of assessing compliance:

There is no recognised procedure to assess the papers provided to the House as a whole in response to a resolution or order, and no means of appeal against non-compliance, short of raising the issue as a matter of privilege.

Where papers have been provided to a body of the House, compliance has been easier to assess. Select committees in receipt of papers have been able to review the information they have received and to determine whether the House's instructions have been complied with.

The U.K. procedure committee concluded, at paragraph 86:

The House alone determines the scope of its power to call for papers. In its consideration of each motion it is able to discern whether an inappropriate or irresponsible use of the power is sought, and whether it is being asked to require the production of information from Ministers on a scale disproportionate to the matter under debate. We expect that in each such case the House will continue to exercise its judgment in favour of a responsible use of the power.

A similar point was also made in the first report of our House's former Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, tabled on May 29, 1991, and of which the House took note on June 18, 1991:

It is well established that Parliament has the right to order any and all documents to be laid before it which it believes are necessary for its information. ... The power to call for persons, papers and records is absolute, but it is seldom exercised without consideration of the public interest.

In our present case, the House has before it, I would submit, a thorough record upon which to take a decision. The law clerk's reports, with the annexed correspondence from assorted deputy heads, lay before the House both sides of the argument. Personally,

I side with the law clerk and his defence of the rights of Parliament. For those who would advocate that we must temper the House's authority with a willingness to accept the government's decisions to withhold information, supposedly in the name of the public interest, I would recall that these balancing acts are represented within the House's own self-restraint and not by any veto exercised by an outside authority.

Mr. Speaker Milliken articulated the concept on April 27, 2010, at page 2043 of the Debates:

It is the view of the Chair that accepting an unconditional authority of the executive to censor the information provided to Parliament would in fact jeopardize the very separation of powers that is purported to lie at the heart of our parliamentary system and the independence of its constituent parts. Furthermore, it risks diminishing the inherent privileges of the House and its members, which have been earned and must be safeguarded.

As has been noted earlier, procedural authorities are categorical in repeatedly asserting the powers of the House in ordering the production of documents. No exceptions are made for any category of government documents, even those related to national security.

Therefore, the Chair must conclude that it is perfectly within the existing privileges of the House to order production of the documents in question.

Having established that it is for the House to decide how to exercise its authority in ordering the production of papers, how can we go about such mechanisms to strike the right balance?

• (1225)

As you recall, in the 2010 case of Afghanistan documents, the House ordered some 40,000 pages of records to be produced in the original and uncensored form forthwith, even though the complete disclosure of them could have prejudiced Canada and her NATO allies' interest in a conflict zone. That prompted Mr. Speaker Milliken to suspend the effect of his ruling to allow a critical gap to be filled.

In 2021, we were dealing with about 600 pages involving professional and counter-espionage investigations while the motion had embedded a series of safeguards, like having the records vetted by the top-secret-cleared law clerk. That gave your predecessor, Mr. Speaker, the comfort to allow a motion to proceed immediately from his ruling. In the present case, the House adopted the motion for the purpose of making these documents available to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada's national law enforcement agency.

To ensure adequate confidentiality for information that might be sensitive in any potential criminal investigation, the June 10 order established a procedure whereby institutions would directly deposit the records with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, who, in turn, would transmit them to the RCMP. The documents were not tabled nor were they meant to be tabled. Instead, the law clerk was directed to prepare a report to the House to be tabled by you. In other words, the documents in question are not open to public inspection. Privacy interests are protected. The documents are, literally, simply being transferred within the federal government from one institution to another institution, the RCMP, through the good offices of our own law clerk.

It is incumbent upon us to act, and act now, in the face of this disregard for the House's authority. To quote page 239 of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition:

Disobedience to rules or orders represents an affront to the dignity of the House, and accordingly the House could take action, not simply for satisfaction but to ensure that the House of Commons is held in the respect necessary for its authority to be vindicated. Without proper respect, the House of Commons could not function.

I recognize that the government will undoubtedly try to lay the blame at the feet of the public servants who prepared the documents and applied the redactions. However, it is not the public service but the cabinet that is accountable here on the floor of the House of Commons. On September 15, 2021, in preparation for this Parliament, the Privy Council Office provided a briefing note to Paul MacKinnon, then the deputy secretary to the cabinet and a former Chrétien PMO staffer, a former senior staffer for the current Minister of Agriculture and, if I am not mistaken, a brother of the Minister of Labour, to advise that “in the event that parliamentarians press for the release of confidential information, the appropriate minister or ministers should take responsibility for the decision to provide or withhold the information.”

Mr. MacKinnon, in turn, on November 24, 2021, immediately following a question of privilege being raised concerning the Winnipeg lab documents, sent a briefing note to the then government House leader, stating, “Consistent with the principles of responsible government, the ultimate accountability for deciding what information to withhold from or release to parliamentarians resides with the responsible minister. Public servants do not share in ministers' constitutional accountability to the Houses of Parliament but support ministers in this accountability, including by collecting and transmitting documents to Parliament.”

Those are the words of the Prime Minister's own department. We think that it is only fair that the Prime Minister should heed the words of his own officials. The Prime Minister needs to take responsibility for a whole-of-government failure to respect the will of the House of Commons.

That is why the motion I intend to put forward, should you agree that this is a *prime facie* contempt, would reiterate the House's June 10 order and direct all government institutions that failed to comply with the original order to get their act together and deposit with the law clerk all of the documents we originally ordered, without any redactions this time, and to do so within one week. For good measure, the motion would also express the House's view to urge the Prime Minister, consistent with the spirit of the principles of responsible government, to make his view clear and known to those

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delinquent government departments that he expects the House's order to be complied with this time.

In the interim, you have an important decision. The House of Commons, Canadians and hundreds of years of constitutional parliamentary government are looking to you to allow us to stand up for the ancient rights of the people's elected representatives.

I know it is customary to reflect and ponder on arguments made on these types of questions of privilege, but this is a very easy decision. We just have to ask ourselves the following questions. Did the House adopt a production order? Yes, it did. That is not a matter of opinion. That is in the Journals and you know that, Mr. Speaker.

Was the order complied with? No. Some provided partial responses. A few withheld documents. Most of them redacted them.

• (1230)

Again, it is not my opinion. It is not a subjective analysis. That is in a report tabled by you, Mr. Speaker, and written by the law clerk on how the government complied with the order.

The law clerk's reports lay out all of these facts and are there on the table. Mr. Speaker, you could quickly consult with him and make your ruling right now. Thank you.

The Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for his substantive and comprehensive question of privilege that he has put before the House. It is my understanding and it is a normal tradition that we would hear from the different party House leaders as to their comments on this and I hope that they will do so forthwith.

I see that the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Welcome back to the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker.

I listened with interest from the lobby to what my colleague was saying. The NDP would like to reserve the right to revisit this issue in the near future.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his comments, and I hope that he will do that in the near future, as he said.

[*English*]

I will turn now to the Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to extend the same courtesy, we would like to be able to review what the opposition House leader has said and then return back to the House once we have had the opportunity to do so.

The Speaker: Again, as I indicated to the other hon. member, I appreciate the intervention and I hope that the parliamentary secretary will do so forthwith so that the Speaker would be able to make a determination to the House.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

I do not see any members of the Bloc Québécois rising. I would imagine that the Bloc members listened to the speeches in the House.

I hope to share my ruling with the House soon.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***CITIZENSHIP ACT**

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.) moved that Bill C-71, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2024), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we return to the House, I want to begin by acknowledging that we are gathering today on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe peoples.

I am honoured to rise in this House today to discuss the proposed amendments to the Citizenship Act. The legislation would provide a clear framework for citizenship by descent with the immediate goal of restoring and granting citizenship to lost Canadians.

Some of us, like me, were fortunate to be citizens by birth. Others come from far and wide, choose Canada to be their home and earn their citizenship through our naturalization process. There are those who are Canadians by descent, who are born outside the country to a parent who is a Canadian citizen.

• (1235)

[Translation]

Regardless of how someone acquires their citizenship, I think we all agree that we appreciate each Canadian just the same in this great nation of ours. Whether one was born Canadian or chose Canada as their new land, we are united by a common set of principles and mutual respect for our communities and our country. We are all proud to be Canadian.

Since the founding of what we now call Canada, people from around the world have made this country their home. Canadians are a welcoming people who help others and one another. We demonstrate our commitment to others within the community and the world over when we support charities, volunteer our time and extend a helping hand to those in need.

[English]

Canadians are a diverse group, but we share a set of common values and take pride in who we are and what the country stands for. We are welcoming, inclusive, generous; a country that supports human rights, equality and respect for all people. There is no doubt that Canadian citizenship is highly valued and recognized around the world. We want our citizenship system to be fair and accessible and with clear and transparent rules. That is why, when issues arise around our citizenship laws, it is important that Parliament address them.

Given recent challenges to the first-generation limit that Harper Conservatives unfairly introduced, it was clear that changes were needed to the Citizenship Act to address cohorts excluded from citizenship. This is especially relevant for those born outside Canada to a Canadian parent.

[Translation]

It is important that members understand the history of the Citizenship Act in order to better understand how this problem arose. Canada's first citizenship law was passed in 1947. It contained provisions that could revoke some people's citizenship or prevent others from becoming citizens in the first place. Today we view those provisions as outdated, and they were either removed or amended. Those affected by these provisions who lost their citizenship or never became citizens are referred to as "lost Canadians".

In the past, Canadians could hand down their citizenship to their descendants born abroad not only in the next generation but also beyond the first generation, so long as they met certain conditions and applied by a certain age.

When a new citizenship statute took effect in 1977, children born abroad to a Canadian parent also born abroad were citizens, but they had to act to preserve their citizenship by age 28, or else they would lose it. This requirement was not well understood, so some people lost their citizenship and became so-called lost Canadians.

To wit, my department generally receives 35 to 40 applications for resumption of citizenship per year because of this problem.

[English]

In 2009, several amendments to the Citizenship Act remedied the majority of these older lost Canadian cases by providing or restoring citizenship by their 28th birthday. Since 2009, approximately 20,000 individuals have come forward and have been issued proof of their Canadian citizenship because of these changes.

However, the Harper Conservatives introduced the first-generation limit, which the Ontario Superior Court has deemed unconstitutional on equality and mobility rights. The Leader of the Opposition has suggested he would use the notwithstanding clause if given the chance, and that they are considering taking away people's rights when it suits the Conservatives. What the Conservative Party did here is a concrete example of taking away the rights of Canadians. When Conservatives say that we have nothing to fear, Canadians need to take note of what they have done in the past.

This is a record where Conservatives, with the Leader of the Opposition as one of their members, took people's rights away. This should speak for itself.

Government Orders

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

The legislative amendments of 2009 also allowed anyone born after the 1977 act who was not yet 28 years old when the changes took effect to retain their status and remain a Canadian citizen.

However, there is still a cohort of people who self-identify as lost Canadians. These are people born abroad to a Canadian parent after 1977 in the second generation or beyond who lost their citizenship before 2009 because of rules since revoked that obliged them to take action to retain their Canadian citizenship before their 28th birthday.

Some of these people born abroad were raised in Canada and were unaware that they needed to take steps to retain their Canadian citizenship. We know that the number of people in this cohort is rather small. We know this because the only people affected are those who were born abroad in the second generation or beyond between 1977 and 1981; in other words, only Canadians who had already reached the age of 28 and lost their citizenship before the passage of the 2009 act, which revoked the requirement. As we can see, this is a complicated issue.

Senator Martin of British Columbia introduced public bill S-245 in an effort to address the issue. The goal of the bill and the amendments adopted by the members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration is to restore the citizenship of this cohort, of these lost Canadians affected by the age 28 rule.

[*English*]

When Bill S-245 was studied by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, the bill was amended to include not only a mechanism to restore the citizenship of this cohort but also a mechanism to allow some people born in the second or subsequent generation to be born a Canadian citizen by descent if their Canadian parent could demonstrate that they held a substantial connection to Canada. That is, if a child's Canadian parent had been in Canada for three years before the child was born, they could pass on their citizenship to that child. Bill S-245 also proposes that children born abroad and adopted by a Canadian could also access citizenship. The process for adopted children is a grant of citizenship.

What has changed since we began the review of Bill S-245 is a key decision by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice that determined that the first-generation limit on citizenship by descent was unconstitutional. It is clear that the House must now take immediate action to address the issues the court noted.

Since Bill S-245 went through a number of changes and improvements based on feedback from experts and those impacted, the Conservative Party continues to delay the progress of this bill. Not only that, but Conservatives filibustered Bill S-245 for nearly 30 hours during the actual study. It is obvious, again, that there is little care for Canadians' rights.

During that time, the member of Parliament for Calgary Forest Lawn, who sponsored Senate Bill S-245, as well as the former Conservative immigration critic, recommended the introduction of a private member's bill or a government bill to address the remaining cohort of lost Canadians.

We have a government bill in front of us to do just that. Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, 2024, establishes a revised framework governing citizenship by descent and restores citizenship to lost Canadians and their descendants. This revised regime would also address issues raised by the recent Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling by providing a pathway to citizenship for those born or adopted abroad. Similar to what is proposed by Bill S-245, this bill expands access to citizenship by descent, but in a more comprehensive and inclusive way.

Like Bill S-245, it would restore citizenship to the last cohort of lost Canadians, but it also proposes that all individuals born outside Canada to a Canadian parent before coming into force in this legislation would also be citizens by descent, including those previously excluded by the first-generation limit.

For those born outside our borders, beyond the first generation, or after the legislation comes into force, they would be citizens from birth if their Canadian parent can demonstrate their own substantial connection to Canada. That means that the parent was in Canada for three years, cumulative, and it does not need to be consecutive, before the child was born.

Any child born abroad and adopted by a Canadian parent before this bill's coming-into-force date would have access to the direct grant of citizenship for adoptees, and that includes those previously excluded by the first-generation limit. Today, we are dealing with fundamental issues of fairness for people who should be Canadian citizens.

When the legislation comes into force, the same substantial connection to Canada test will apply for Canadian adoptive parents who are also born outside the country to access a grant of citizenship. If the adoptive parent was physically in Canada for 1,095 days or three years prior to the adoption, their child could access the adoption grant of citizenship.

Finally, as with previous changes to the Citizenship Act that helped other lost Canadians, this bill would confer automatic citizenship on some people born outside Canada who may not wish to be citizens.

● (1245)

[*Translation*]

In many countries, dual citizenship is not permitted in certain jobs, including in government, military and national security positions. In some countries, having citizenship in another country can present legal, professional or other barriers, including restricting access to benefits. That is why this bill will provide access to the same simplified renunciation process as the one established in 2009.

Government Orders

Most people who would automatically become citizens when the bill comes into force but may not wish to hold citizenship will be able to use the simplified renunciation process. This mechanism has a few requirements. These individuals must not reside in Canada; they also must not become stateless by renouncing their Canadian citizenship. That is an important point. In addition, people must apply to renounce the citizenship granted to them through the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): One moment, please. The hon. minister can start his last sentence over. I believe the hon. minister's phone is on his desk, and that is causing problems for the interpreters. I would ask him to move his phone, if that is indeed the issue.

The hon. minister can repeat the sentence he was saying before I interrupted him.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, please let me know if the problem persists because my phones were rather far away.

I will go back to what I was saying about the statutory mechanism allowing those who do not want to become Canadian to renounce their citizenship. A few requirements need to be met. The person must not be a resident of Canada; they must not become stateless as a result of renouncing their Canadian citizenship; and they must request the renunciation of the citizenship that was conferred on them through the ministerial process.

[*English*]

When the legislation comes into force, the same substantial connection to Canada test will apply for Canadian adoptive parents who were also born outside the country to access a grant of citizenship. If the adoptive parent was physically in Canada for that 1,095-day period or three years prior to the adoption, the child can access the adoption grant to citizenship.

Finally, as with previous changes to the Citizenship Act to help other lost Canadians, this bill would confer automatic citizenship on some people born outside of Canada who may not wish to be citizens, and we will remediate that as the case may be.

[*Translation*]

This bill introduces changes to make the necessary improvements, to restore citizenship to those who lost it and to expand eligibility beyond the first generation to people who have proven that they have a substantial connection to Canada. These legislative changes address the concerns raised in the recent decision by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, which calls on the federal government to act.

[*English*]

Don Chapman, a long-time advocate for lost Canadians, who has met many members of Parliament in fighting for this noble cause, has said, "This bill will be the first time in Canadian history that women achieve the same rights as men in the Citizenship Act." It will be the first time that the Citizenship Act is actually charter compliant.

There is urgency in this matter. It is crucial that we establish an updated framework as soon as possible. I would hope, given the cross-party support from the New Democratic Party, the Bloc

Québécois and the Green Party to restore citizenship, that we are positioned to move the legislation forward quickly.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

I look forward to working with members and senators to move this bill forward without delay with the appropriate considerations and reviews.

[*English*]

Canadian citizenship is integral to who we are, uniting us through shared values of democracy, equality and inclusion. Through this legislation, we are working to provide a more inclusive Citizenship Act and ensure that those who are rightfully Canadian are seen as such under the law.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, coming back from the summer recess, I was hoping the minister would not start by being so partisan on the bill before us.

I want to remind the minister, because he mentioned it several times, about the Harper government. In the session of Parliament on February 7, 2008, the Liberal Party voted for the first generation limit and then proceeded to vote again for it at third reading. This original ruling, this decision in legislation to introduce a first generation limit, was supported by the Liberal Party at the time.

However, I missed the part today where the minister said how many people would be impacted by the legislation in its multiple parts, which is the key criteria here. It is reckless to continue to forward legislation when government officials have told us at committee repeatedly that they do not know how many people would then be eligible for citizenship by descent.

How many people would be eligible for citizenship by descent through Bill C-71?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, what the member opposite fails to note is that this is a question the rights of Canadians, people to have the right to be Canadian, the right that was denied to them by the Harper government. He wants to talk about numbers, and perhaps that is important from a logistical planning perspective, I do not deny that, but please do not continue to deny the rights of Canadians who duly should be Canadian today.

On the 2009 amendments, as an indicative matter and as I mentioned in my speech, about 20,000 people were affected and became Canadians. We routinely, as a matter of people who apply to our department, have about 40 to 45 people per year who ask us for the restoration of their rights.

Government Orders

There will be more to this, and we will need an organized way to do this. This is why we are responding in an organized fashion to a ruling of the Ontario Superior Court. If the member opposite is concerned with numbers, he will take heart in the fact that we will have a three-year naturalization limit for people to prove that substantive connection to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to wish everyone a warm welcome back to Parliament.

The Bloc Québécois will support the bill in principle so that it can be studied in committee. We understand that the bill's ultimate aim is to right a wrong. Of course, that is no easy matter. I have the same question as my Conservative colleague. How many people does the government estimate are involved? I understand that the aim is not to put quantity ahead of quality. Still, the numbers matter.

When you decided not to appeal the decision, you also said that the people likely to be affected would have a lot of questions about what it means for them personally and their families, and that you would take the time to explain the process.

Would the minister tell us how he intends to explain this situation?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member used the word “you” several times while addressing the government directly. I would remind her to kindly address her comments to the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the Bloc Québécois members for their support. They are not necessarily the biggest advocates of Canadian citizenship, but they are supporting us in correcting an injustice related to Canadian citizenship. This is a fundamental matter of justice and rights, as they so clearly said, and I thank them for their support.

The first step will be to pass the bill and get royal assent. Then, we will have to implement an internal process, which, obviously, we have started doing, because we have to respond to several questions from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice regarding the process and the mechanism for ensuring that these individuals can obtain Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time frame. Obviously, several tests will be required, as set out in the bill. I would be happy to talk more about this in committee or in person.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for bringing Bill C-71 to the floor. The New Democrats have fought for this ever since John McCallum. It has been more than a decade, at least for me, in this fight.

With Bill C-71, the minister touched on the issue around royal assent. In the bill, there is the commencement provision which confers discretion on the Governor in Council, meaning the cabinet, to determine when to proclaim the act into force, but does not set a specific date.

Could the minister advise the House, and families that are waiting to have their rights restored, how long it will take for the bill to become law. Would it be a proclamation and royal assent?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, I would expect that to be the case.

Again, I want to thank the New Democrats for their support. This was a modification that we made relatively recently, simply to ensure that the court did not feel like it was constrained to a certain number of days by our legislative process. We have told the court time and again that we plan to put this into force as quickly as possible. Otherwise, it is a bit more of an open application process where I would have the discretion to grant citizenship.

I would implore Parliament to move quickly if members do not feel that my discretion should not be fettered by Parliament. It absolutely should in this case and there should be a number of reasons and concrete bases for people to get their citizenship. The naturalization test is a perfect point.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking members in other parties, and in particular the Minister of Immigration for bringing Bill C-71 forward.

The hon. member for Vancouver East has been tireless, as have many citizen champions, including, as mentioned by the minister, Don Chapman. The work to restore the rights to lost Canadians is urgent.

With all due respect to the minister, I would like to repeat the question from the member for Vancouver East. When might we see this pass into law? It is obviously urgent that it be done as expeditiously as possible, through the House and the Senate.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, that is probably a question best—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. minister has the floor. I would ask members to please hold their thoughts.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, as soon as possible, obviously.

This question is best answered by the Conservative Party. A lot of us in the House would like to see it approved at all stages and get it enforced, so we can get these rights recognized by Canadians who are waiting, and have waited for a hell of a long time, to become citizens.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I did shout out to the minister, because there seems to be a will to see this legislation advanced. I was yelling out to say that we should call the question.

Government Orders

What is clear from the official opposition is that for the Conservative Party of Canada, whether under the current leader or under Prime Minister Harper, there has always been two classes of Canadians and a change that they made left certain Canadians behind. One of the reasons I ran for office was that the Conservatives never wanted people like myself to have their voices heard.

I would ask the minister the following. What is it about the legislation and the constitutionality? We know that there have been a couple of rulings. On the comments of Don Chapman, I worked for the Hon. Andrew Telegdi when Don Chapman was leading this charge to ensure that their rights and their abilities were also advanced. It was important that it happen then but it did not, and here we are today. What is the importance of this legislation and is there a willingness to have the question called so we can see the legislation advance as quickly as possible?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, this is fundamentally about rights. The court case that generated this is a pretty short one. I would invite members to take a quick read of it.

One of the telling statements by the judge in the case was to highlight the fact that women, in particular, were unduly burdened as to where they would have to decide to have their child, failure of which to have them in Canada would result in the the individuals in question losing their citizenship. These are not faraway examples. My children were not born in Canada. Their next generation could possibly have been in jeopardy. Therefore, it hits home in a lot of ways.

It is not about people who have never been to Canada. Obviously, this is about Canadian citizenship; it is not for all. There are tests to become a Canadian citizen. We know, or at least I and my department know, how important it is to ensure there are rigorous rules to decide who becomes a Canadian citizen or not.

This is a question of rights, and the court case in question is about women's rights. As Don Chapman said, and as the court said, this will perhaps be the first time where the Citizenship Act is charter compliant when it comes to women.

• (1300)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad to be the first member of the official opposition to rise for Bill C-71. After hearing the minister speak, it tells me that he came here unprepared to deal with the substance of the legislation that he himself tabled in this House.

First of all, I will debunk a bunch of things that were said that are incorrect. They are not true. If we look at the record, as I said in my question, on February 15 and February 7, 2008, in the original debate on Bill C-37 on the first-generation limit that introduced the rules that existed between 2009 and the end of 2023, when the Ontario Superior Court ruled that there were two charter violations, the Liberals voted for it, supporting a motion to move forward with the legislation at the next stage. They did not do that once such that we could perhaps say they were not paying attention, but they did it twice. They accepted the logic of it.

Not only did they accept the logic of it, but there is a report from the 2005 immigration committee that recommended putting something like a first-generation limit rule in legislation. In 2005, former

prime minister Paul Martin was in charge, which means there was a minority government and a majority on the committee decided to push forward that recommendation. It was then adopted in 2007 by Diane Finley, the immigration minister at the time.

The ridiculous claim that we on this side are taking away rights or that rights are being taken away is absolutely false. All Liberals supported it. In fact, even the NDP supported the motion at the time. There are some members sitting here today who were in their seats at the time they supported the Bill C-37 motion, not once but twice. Let us start with that.

Nobody would lose their citizenship through this legislation. That is not what we are talking about. The Conservatives believe that everybody has a right, if they meet the rules, to apply for citizenship, but new rules would be created for citizenship by descent with a substantive connection clause that a judge said was necessary. We disagree with how the substantive connection test is created and what the rules for it are. That is a substantive reason to oppose this legislation at second reading, something that all other parties knew about because, as the minister mentioned, we were going through this during the Bill S-245 debate.

I think I have shown that this is not anything new. Other parties supported the first-generation limit at the time. They were all on-side to push through Bill C-37. Our belief is that naturalized Canadians like me are treated exactly the same in the Citizenship Act and the law as Canadians who were born here. My children were born here and I am a naturalized Canadian. We are considered generation zero for the purposes of current legislation.

I am not the only one saying that. It is a judge saying that. In paragraph 9, he said, "gen zero: the applicants belonging to gen zero are Canadian-born citizens who had children abroad, or naturalized Canadian citizens who had children abroad after their naturalization, and whose children acquired Canadian citizenship automatically by descent." We are really talking about grandkids.

The critical question that government officials have been incapable of answering is about sound logistical planning, the words the minister used just now. As sound logistical planning indicates, when we are passing legislation and proposing it to the House, members in the House should know how many people would be affected by it and how many people would be included, because this is about grandkids who are born abroad to parents who were abroad when they get citizenship by descent. That is the critical question here, and the Liberals have not been able to answer it. They have not been able to answer how many people this would apply to.

Government Orders

With all the benefits we give out to Canadian citizens, which Parliament has voted on, such as transfer payments, the ability to travel on a Canadian passport, one of the strongest passports in the world, and the ability to be evacuated from certain countries when there are issues and problems overseas, as we saw during the pandemic, we would think the government would take the summer to do its homework. However, the minister did not do his homework. Instead, he came here to accuse the Conservatives and anybody who disagreed with him and, frankly, did not even read the record from 2008 to know how his own party voted. The Liberals were in support of the same rule that the Superior Court in Ontario found for two reasons is not charter-compliant. That should have resulted in an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. On a matter as important as the Citizenship Act, I would have liked to see the government appeal it. The minister refused to explain to the House why he did not seek that appeal, why he chose not to go forward with it.

• (1305)

As found later in the ruling, which I am going to read from partially because I think it is important, one of the reasons that the legislation was found not to be charter-compliant is the bureaucratic incompetence at the immigration department. That is entirely on the back of the minister. He is responsible for the logistical planning, which are his words, to make sure there is no backlog, that applications have the correct information in them and that officials are held accountable.

I am going to read from sections 263 to 265 of the ruling, which are different parts. The judge noted:

On cross-examination he testified that his source for this information were various unnamed IRCC case managers. However, the information Mr. Milord obtained from these case managers was replete with inaccuracies. With respect to Ms. Maruyama, these include misidentifying the year Ms. Maruyama's father was naturalized as a Canadian citizen, Ms. Maruyama's mother's citizenship, the reason for rejection of Ms. Maruyama's children's application for permanent residency.... There were also errors in Mr. Milord's evidence about how Mr. Chandler's child acquired Irish citizenship.

Paragraph 264 states:

I note that in addition to these errors, at the outset of the hearing, I was advised that Mr. Burgess had been told that his child, QR—

This is to hide the identity of minors.

—had been granted permanent residency or citizenship status. However, counsel for Mr. Burgess was unable to confirm exactly what was going on, because in the mail, the Burgess family had received citizenship documents pertaining to someone else entirely, unrelated to the family or this application.

In paragraph 265, the judge found in a very small sampling that there was an error rate of 50% in these particular case files. I think for many of us in our constituency offices in our ridings, about 80% to 90% of the work is immigration case files. I hope members will agree with me that we find them replete with errors time and time again. It was because of errors on the bureaucratic side by the minister and the department he runs and is responsible and accountable for that the judge found there were charter violations. That is not a problem with the original idea that the Liberal Party of Canada supported. I am going to repeat that to them: They supported it not once by accident but twice. They knew exactly what they were doing at the time.

The minister talked about the substantive connection test without referring to it directly, saying that there would be a three-year natu-

ralization limit. That is an incomplete statement. It is an incomplete answer. The suggestion to use the same rule that we have for permanent residency is found in three out of five applications for permanent residency to Canada. I do not think that is enough, and I made that case at the immigration committee during the Bill S-245 debate. The reason I do not believe it is enough is the way it is going to be calculated.

The rule would be applied if the parent of a child can demonstrate 1,095 non-consecutive days in Canada at any time before the birth of the child. If someone is having children later in life, they would have more time to prove the 1,095 days to pass on their citizenship by descent. If they ever travelled back to Canada, they could obviously give birth to their children in Canada. As a Canadian by descent, they could do that here, and they would have birthright citizenship, just as my children did when they were born in Calgary. All four of them were born in Calgary.

For the 1,095 days, we proposed to make them consecutive so that someone could prove a substantial connection to Canada. The Conservatives agreed at committee that three years seemed like a reasonable amount. If someone went through a K-to-12 system or went to school for a few years and then their parents left Canada for whatever reason, such as for work opportunities or take a year off, three years consecutively would be a good demonstration of a substantial connection to Canada.

That was voted down by the Liberals. In fact, they voted down nearly all of our amendments. We proposed over 40 of them, and let it not be said that we are unreasonable. We actually voted with the Liberals on 10 of their amendments. We said that we could see the wisdom of them. There are sections in Bill C-71 that we agree with, like treating adopted children of Canadians equally to those who are naturalized or born Canadians. That seems like a reasonable thing to do. For the faster revocation rules for citizenship, if someone does not want their citizenship and wants to give it up, we agree that there should be a simpler process.

• (1310)

The example the minister gave is incomplete. The best example to give would be members serving in the Australian Parliament, who cannot be dual citizens. That is directly in their constitution. Certain members here might have Canadian citizenship eligibility by descent, and we do not want to make them ineligible. In my case, I am a dual citizen. I am a citizen of Canada by naturalization and a citizen of the Republic of Poland by birth. They would charge me about \$565 to give up my citizenship, and I am not giving up one red cent for that. There are still some red cents in circulation, and I will not pay one red cent to the republic to give up my citizenship. The application is entirely in Polish as well. Our rules for individuals to renounce their citizenship if they do not want it would be much simpler. I find it interesting that the minister did not even know that about his own legislation.

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We also support another important part, which was in the original Senate bill, Bill S-245. It came from our colleague on the Conservative side, Senator Yonah Martin, who wanted to address 50 months of lost Canadians between 1977 and 1981. We agreed. That is why the legislation came here. At the time, we asked if we could pass it quickly enough to look after the section 8 lost Canadians. We agreed that they should have their citizenship restored because they missed the cut-off date. In fact, one of our members from Saskatchewan almost became one of those lost Canadians. He only found out within a few months that he needed to apply to maintain his citizenship. We agree with the principle that this group of Canadians should have their citizenship restored and protected.

The other changes the government is proposing are not what I would call proper logistical planning, to use the minister's term. Why should we believe that the minister is capable of managing the new applications that would result from people seeking their proof of citizenship documents? That is why I asked how many people there would be and how many resources would be needed to process them. Are they in the thousands, tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands? Are there more than that? That would be a huge burden on the department.

Back in September 2022, the former minister announced that we would have all digital applications. The claim was made at committee, in both public and private, that it would help to reduce the backlog of immigration applications. It has not done that. We are still at over two million backlogged applications in the system, and some of the wait times are just as long if not longer than they used to be for some of the major PR programs.

I will read a few of the headlines about this from different commentators and immigration consultants. The first one, by Sergio R. Karas, is from Law360 Canada: "Bill C-71 depreciates Canadian citizenship". Here is another: "First reading: How the Liberals keep dropping the barriers on who can become a Canadian". This is by Jamie Sarkonak: "Liberals water down citizenship for grandkids of convenience Canadians". "Government bill will allow Canadians to pass citizenship rights to kids born abroad" is a Canadian Press article. Here is another one, from Brian Lilley: "Trudeau Liberals making moves to cheapen Canadian citizenship". Another says, "Canada Introduces New Bill to Restore Citizenship by Descent".

We should go into the provisions on the substantial connection test, about which I have, again, a lot of concerns. At committee, we proposed a change to make it 1,095 consecutive days.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry to interrupt the member. The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville is rising on a point of order.

• (1315)

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, we cannot hear the French interpretation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We were having problems with the interpretation, but I am told that everything is working properly now.

[English]

The hon. member was reading titles and mentioned the Prime Minister's name. I would ask him to say "Prime Minister" as opposed to his name.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, forgive me for the error of reading the Prime Minister's name into the record. Thank you for reproaching me for doing so.

[Translation]

I see that I have about six minutes left to address the backlog of applications at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. We always forget that it is the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. These are two matters we are dealing with at the same time.

If we look at the backlog in the department, we see that it is over two million applications. At the same time, the minister insists that he knows what he is doing. He spends far too much time on Twitter, or X, fighting with anonymous users and others and taking cheap shots at other politicians who disagree with him. That is what he is doing instead of managing his department.

On the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, we often see a number of issues. There is a one-, two- or three-year backlog. Sometimes it could even take five, six or seven years. These applications should be easy to process in the allotted time.

Let us talk about the commission that is responsible for asylum claims. This is an excellent example of what happened in this country under this government and this minister in particular. Today, the department has a backlog of more than 220,000 asylum claims. More than 300,000 applications are on hold, and the waiting period is three and a half years before a file is reviewed and an answer is given. There is a backlog of 220,000 applications.

In 2016, an estimate published online indicated that there was a backlog of 17,000 applications. Under the Liberals, the backlog in the asylum management system went from 17,000 to 220,000, with more than 100,000 applications currently being processed. Some 220,000 people are waiting. These people came to Canada through another immigration program or crossed at Roxham Road. They applied for asylum, for refugee status. One would have thought that the government would have allocated enough resources to manage the number of people in the system in order to protect their rights. That is what the minister says.

Government Orders

Every year, the numbers grow. I have them here. In 2022, when the minister took office, there was a backlog of 70,223 applications. In 2023, the backlog was up to 156,023 applications. In July 2024, it was 218,593 applications. Today I received an answer to an access to information request, which I read very closely. It states that almost 18% of people who request an answer to their asylum claim are international students. Their applications are now part of the department's backlog.

[*English*]

When the minister is talking about not knowing the numbers so that he could not respond to the question, this is critical to how immigration and citizenship and refugee systems are managed in Canada. The minister does not know the impact of his own legislation. It greatly worries me that he is not aware of the details.

We Conservatives had a private member's bill, which was proposed from the Senate side, that offered to fix section 8 regarding lost Canadians. For those 50 months, we were on side. We proposed substantive amendments, once the scope of amendments was expanded, to the substantive connection test, and we proposed to introduce what I think was the most critical requirement, which was to have a police record check, to actually do a security record check. That was one amendment, I will say, that the Liberals voted against, with their allies in the NDP, at committee.

We have now seen, over the last six to 12 months, many security issues with different types of visa applicants who have been approved and who have come to Canada. I think the security of Canadians is incredibly important. The integrity of our citizenship system is critical. I do not trust the minister. I do not trust the Liberal Party. I do not trust its ally in the NDP, either, that it would be able to manage the new flow of applications because it just does not know how many people would be eligible, through Bill C-71, for citizenship by descent.

• (1320)

As the judge found in his own ruling, the reasons for charter non-compliance were not that there was an overall violation of it but that there was incompetence of the minister and the bureaucracy, which failed to provide accurate information. There were 50% errors in applications being processed: dates were wrong; names were wrong; and some even received a citizenship document for someone who was not even related to the same family. Those are serious errors in administration that the minister should have had fixed.

Therefore, we will be opposing this piece of legislation. We will then propose amendments. We are going to put forward amendments at committee to try to fix the legislation, and if we can fix it, then we will revise our position. I think that if we can fix it by providing the substantive connection test, the 1,095 or more consecutive days, we can come to some type of agreement on what Canadians expect. Also, a security record check is an absolute requirement.

We already have chaos in the immigration system. The immigration minister and the government he is part of have destroyed the consensus in Canada that immigration is a great thing. I think it is a great thing, but I was sad to see so many Canadians come up to me during door knocking and at town halls to say that they do not

agree with it anymore. Therefore, because we cannot trust the Liberals with something as important as our citizenship, we are going to vote against them.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I found it really fascinating listening to that member's comments. It is interesting that, in Canada, we have an elected House, so Canadians get to choose who they vote for. However, we also have an independent judicial process, and that independent court ruled the Harper legislation unconstitutional on multiple grounds. The member, rather than actually respecting our independent court processes, is suggesting that the government should have appealed that decision rather than give Canadians their rights. Members of the Conservative Party today, no different from those under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, believe that they can pick and choose Canadians' rights. It was wrong then, and it is wrong now.

I would like to understand from the member, when he challenges the substantive clause, why he believes a second-generation born abroad should need to do the substantive clause, yet people born prior to that should not. Why does he believe he has the ability to determine who should be a Canadian and who does not have the right to be a Canadian?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, to the point I think the member was making, nobody would lose their citizenship through Bill C-71. There is no new person who would lose their citizenship.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member is heckling me now. If she would allow me, I will give a thoughtful answer, as best I can.

Her own party voted for this legislation twice, back when it was Bill C-37, the first-generation limit—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has had her opportunity to ask a question.

I want to remind members that if they want to have other conversations, they should take it outside so as not to disturb the member who has the floor.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Waterloo.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I know that I do sometimes speak in the House when it is not my turn, but when I do not speak and I am given that credit, I do not appreciate it. In the case the member referred to, it was actually not me speaking.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but the hon. member was having a conversation with someone across the way. I would just ask her to step out and have that conversation, if she wishes to speak, because it does disrupt, as there is an echo in the House; therefore, we can hear what is going on at the other end.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Government Orders

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, to continue what I was saying, when we had Bill C-37, the first-generation limit was introduced, and the Liberal Party of Canada voted in favour of those changes, twice. The Liberals cannot now claim that it is a charter violation and that they have changed their minds. They supported it then for the reasons they had, and I do not know exactly what those were, but they did, twice, so it was not a mistake.

I believe that with this legislation, the key is what the impact would be on our citizenship system and our immigration system, and how many people it would impact. The minister is incapable of answering, and I think it is a critical question that Canadians need to know the answer to.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Calgary Shepard. We get along very well, he and I. We are able to work together. I think we are both able to set aside partisanship and work on improving bills sent to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, on which we sit.

I agree with some of the points my colleague made in his remarks, particularly when he said that the situation at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is chaotic. This department is probably the most dysfunctional of all the federal government apparatus. On that point, I think we see eye to eye. When he talks about politicians who should stop being aggressive and insulting people on X, I agree with him. I think this is the right way to view things. Here again, I agree with my colleague.

As for the bill itself, the only thing I have trouble understanding about the Conservative position, which I respect, by the way, is that my colleague plans to table amendments to improve the bill if and when it is sent to committee. My understanding is that we must solve this problem. We agree on the principle of the bill. Now, it is possible to improve the bill, so why would my colleague not vote in favour of sending it to committee? We will work on these amendments, and then we will vote yea or nay on the bill based on the amendments that will have been adopted.

• (1325)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my Bloc Québécois colleague. We work together on the committee as much as we can. Sometimes we are on opposite sides, but I do not make it personal when we have differences of opinion or political differences. It happens. We are in different parties. People in our ridings voted for us because we belong to different parties.

The problem is that the last time we studied this issue in committee, we put forward nearly 40 amendments to change various parts of the Citizenship Act, including requiring that the 1,095 days be consecutive. There was also the need to run security checks to be able to say, yes or no, whether any of the applications received by the department raised any national security concerns.

The governing party, namely the Liberals, joined the NDP in voting against. For us, that was very important. We see the same thing happening in committee. We will vote against the bill at second reading.

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the truth of the matter is that the Conservatives actually filibustered Bill S-245 for 30 hours at committee. Even after it had gone through the committee and had been referred back to the House at third reading, they traded down that bill in the order of precedence eight times so that we would not get to debate it at third reading in the House and vote on it.

The leader of the official opposition's office wrote to family members who were concerned about their rights being taken away and about their constitutional rights being violated stating, "Conservatives will...preserve what it means to be a citizen of this country and fundamentally what it means to be a Canadian. Please be assured we will continue to support and advocate for this legislation to reach its third reading in the House of Commons." That is in reference to Bill S-245. This is blatantly false. If that is the case, why did the member for Calgary Forest Lawn trade the bill on the order of precedence eight times so that it cannot come to the House for a third reading debate?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the NDP complain about committee work because they always want to send things to committee. I want to do the work at committee, and when it is presented to me, I do it. We proposed well over 49 amendments. I am looking at them because I have them with me. Ten times, we voted with the Liberals in support of their amendments that we agreed with, so we were willing to do—

An hon. member: It was 30 hours.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I am being heckled again.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind members who have had an opportunity to ask a question, if they wish to ask more questions, that they please wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that this is the first day back, and I think I have been heckled more as a member today than I have, probably, in the entire last session. I am not a member who does the heckling. I hope you will agree. I try to restrain myself. I am not always perfect. I have a member next to me who sometimes does the same.

With respect to the committee work and the amendments, we proposed substantive amendments that would improve the bill. I told the members of the committee that if we could seek consensus on our amendments, we would vote in favour of the legislation, but we could not find it.

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Police record checks are important. Making sure a person has a substantive connection to Canada is important. At the very minimum, it should be consecutive, not just spending a few days in a year. There is also the question of how would one prove 1,095 days in the previous 40 years of their life if they started having kids when they were 40? These are important administrative questions. The minister recognized that, but he could not answer how many people would be impacted.

I will just remind the NDP that they voted for Bill C-37, with a first-generation limit, back in 2008.

• (1330)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think there is a very simple question that many Canadians are concerned about. The leader of the Conservative Party has no issue raising the notwithstanding clause. We have a former Conservative government that tried to establish the first-generation limits, and we have a superior court in Ontario that says it is unconstitutional.

Will the critic for immigration give clear indication to the House that the Conservative Party, the official opposition, would never use the notwithstanding clause in order to invoke its will with respect to Canadian citizenship? Will he give us that assurance?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member well knows, as the parliamentary secretary on the government side, who speaks often in the House, that we will only use it with respect to justice bills. This is not a justice bill; this is the Citizenship Act.

I want to remind the member, because again he implied or basically said that there is a taking away of rights here, that the Liberal Party of Canada, on February 7, 2008, voted in favour of Bill C-37 at second reading and referred it to a committee. On February 15, it was again the same thing, seeking unanimous consent. It was not for unanimous consent and a vote on division, but for unanimous consent to simply proceed with the motion at third reading, to pass it at report stage and to have it concurred in. The Liberal Party supported the 2009 first-generation limit at the time, so it cannot now back away from it.

We just want legislation that is reasonable, not reckless, where the numbers are provided to parliamentarians so that we know what we are voting on and we know what the impact would be on Canadian citizenship and on Canadians in general.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, some might find it strange for a Bloc Québécois member to speak on a Canadian citizenship bill, but it will be easier for these “lost Canadians” interested in reclaiming their Canadian citizenship to acquire their Quebec citizenship once Quebec becomes a country. I am therefore pleased to speak on this question.

A few months ago, I stood in the House to speak to Bill S-245, which sought to right a historic wrong by granting citizenship to Canadians whose cases had slipped through the cracks. I spoke about children of Canadian parents who had been born abroad and had lost their citizenship because of changes in the federal rules or for reasons that struck me as hard to justify at the time. In fact,

what Bill S-245 basically said was all these people who had lost their status due to overly complex and often unjust provisions of previous Canadian laws should have their citizenship restored.

This is the idea behind Bill C-71, which we are dealing with today. In fact, the bill replicates all of the proposed amendments in Bill S-245, which sought to rectify the Citizenship Act's well-known injustices and mistakes.

Bill C-71 responds to the decision handed down by the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario, which ruled that the first-generation limit to citizenship by descent for children born abroad to Canadian citizens was unconstitutional. As we are seeing yet again, the Bloc Québécois is defending the rule of law and a Canadian Constitution that Quebec did not sign. That should come as no surprise, since we will one day have our own.

At that time, the government had six months to amend the act. Bill C-71 was tabled as a fallback, because Bill S-245, unfortunately, could not get across the finish line. Why is that? Part of the reason is the partisanship at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Speaking of which, I would like to bring up a point. As everyone knows, and as my colleague pointed out earlier, despite my differences of opinion with members from other parties in the House, I do not indulge in partisanship. What is more, I believe that being cross-partisan often helps me better do my job as a parliamentarian and better represent the people of Lac-Saint-Jean, who trusted me enough to elect me to work in the House of Commons. Whoever I am dealing with, from whatever party, if I can move a matter forward, I will, with no regard to political stripe. I do that for my people and on principle, because that is how I was raised. I often find the partisan-driven comments I hear in the House disheartening.

Today I will speak not only for Quebecers, but also for a good number of Canadians whose files at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada have fallen through the cracks for far too long. Today, as the Bloc Québécois critic for immigration, citizenship and refugees, I want to talk about Canadian citizenship, because this affects everyone here. I am also the critic for international human rights, so obviously, matters of justice are also of concern to me.

Government Orders

Today, more specifically, we are talking about Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act. I want to focus primarily on those individuals who are commonly known as “lost Canadians” because of a little-known but truly ridiculous provision. According to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's estimates, there are still between 100 and 200 people who have still not regained their citizenship. They are the last group of “lost Canadians”. This bill corrects an oversight in the 2009 act, which missed a golden opportunity to do away with the requirement for these people to apply to retain their citizenship when they turned 28.

At the risk of ruining the surprise and mostly for the sake of consistency, something that is often sorely lacking in the House, I will say that I was in favour of Bill S-245. Obviously, I am also in favour of Bill C-71, as are all the Bloc members here. We will vote in favour of the principle of Bill C-71 when the time comes to do so.

If we think about it, this bill is perfectly in line with what our contemporary vision of citizenship should be. Once citizenship has been duly granted, it should never be taken away from an individual, unless it is for reasons of national security. Only a citizen can freely renounce his or her citizenship.

• (1335)

Like all parties in the House, the Bloc Québécois supports and defends the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states that all are equal before the law. In fact, citizenship is an egalitarian legal status granted to all members of the same community. It confers privileges as well as duties.

In this case, the Canadian government has failed in meeting its obligations to its citizens. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. As I was saying, under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, citizenship must apply equally to all. This is simply a matter of principle. I do not believe I am alone in thinking that it is profoundly unfair that, in 2024, people can lose their citizenship for reasons that they probably do not even know exist. These provisions are from another time, a time long ago when there were questionable ideas about what it meant to be a citizen of Canada. Since time has not remedied the situation and since the reforms of the past have not been prescriptive enough, then politics must weigh in. That is what we are doing.

As we know, the process to regain citizenship is quite complicated. As I said earlier in a question to my colleague, the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is probably the most dysfunctional federal government department. Even my colleagues on the other side of the House, who currently form the government, must agree. They too have constituency offices, and most of the telephone calls they receive are about complex immigration cases. Even the Speaker probably agrees with me. Despite the fact that she has to remain neutral, I am sure that her constituency office probably gets a lot of calls about cases that are too difficult to resolve.

Everyone knows that that department is broken. There is sand in the gears and water in the gas. There is clearly a structural problem within the department itself. It is already complicated enough to deal with that department, so there is no need to be so secretive. The problem must be resolved as quickly as possible. We must at

least identify the problem and find a solution. I think we have a pretty clear consensus to send Bill C-71 to committee.

A look at what has previously occurred shows just how thorny this matter is. The act was reformed in 2005. It was reformed in 2009. It was reformed once again in 2015. How many reforms do we need? There are now a large number of Canadians who have been overlooked. Men and women, soldiers' wives and children, children born abroad, members of indigenous communities and Chinese-Canadians have been overlooked through every reform. People have been left behind because we have not properly fixed the act. With Bill C-71, we want to make sure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

I therefore urge my Conservative friends to propose their amendments. The Bloc Québécois members will study them, as they always do. If they are good, we will vote in favour. If they are bad, we will vote against. We are easy people to talk to. We do thorough work on our files, and we will carefully study the amendments that our Conservative friends send us.

The bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act to, among other things:

(a) ensure that citizenship by descent is conferred on all persons who were born outside Canada before the coming into force of this enactment to a parent who was a citizen;

(b) confer citizenship by descent on persons born outside Canada after the first generation...;

(c) allow citizenship to be granted...to all persons born outside Canada who were adopted before the coming into force of this enactment by a parent who was a citizen;

(e) restore citizenship to persons who lost their citizenship because they did not make an application to retain it under the former section 8 of that Act or because they made an application under that section that was not approved;

• (1340)

Normally, Bill S-245 would have gotten royal assent a long time ago, but we did not quite get there because of filibustering. That is what brings us here today. Constituents are having to wait because of petty politics. That is the way it has been over the past year in this Parliament on many files, in many committees. Both sides of the aisle are just the same. I have seen filibustering from the government side and from the official opposition. They are all just as bad. Unfortunately, there are people caught in the middle of all this. People are being held hostage by political or even electoral stunts. That is even worse.

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As I was saying earlier, the Bloc Québécois is here to work for our people. We are here working for Quebecers who care about Quebec's future, and not just when it is time to cater to our electoral ambitions. According to the polls, things are going very well for the Bloc Québécois. We are here to work for our people. If it is good for Quebec, then we will vote for it. If it is bad for Quebec, then we will vote against it. Bill C-71 will be able to give us far more Quebec citizens when Quebec becomes sovereign.

When I hear members of the federal parties arguing and then shouting nonsense at each other in the House or playing politics like they did with Bill S-245, I imagine what it must be like for those who have been waiting impatiently and for far too long for royal assent. There are specific examples in Quebec. Take Jean-François, a Quebecer born outside Canada when his father was completing his doctorate in the United States. Even though he returned to Quebec when he was three months old and spent his entire life in Quebec, his daughter was not automatically eligible for Canadian citizenship. This type of situation causes undue stress for families who should not have to deal with the federal government's lax approach.

Right now, the government is dealing with more and more delays every time we check. Every single immigration program is guaranteed to be backlogged. A new program has been created, and it is already behind schedule. There are already people on the waiting list. When we look into it, it is a mess. This is very hard for people. These are human beings. These are men, women and children who are caught up in the administrative maze of a department that seems to have forgotten that it should be the most compassionate of our departments; it is probably the least compassionate. It is frustrating. We are seeing horror stories every day. As the immigration critic, I see it all the time.

My point is that we will be there. We are there for people. We put people first. That is why we are going to vote in favour of Bill C-71 in principle. We will work hard. We will look at all the amendments brought to the table. I think that is why we are here. That is why we were elected, despite our differences and despite the fact that the Bloc Québécois wants Quebec to be independent. That should not come as a surprise to anyone. We will get there one day. The people who send us here to Ottawa know that we are separatists. They know that it will happen one day. They know that one day, with Bill C-71, we will have more Quebec citizens when Quebec becomes a country.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think we need to put it in perspective, as the member made reference to, in terms of the people it actually affects. There are many individuals in the different regions of the country whose ability to get their citizenship recognized is being challenged. Whether it is Senate legislation or, now, government legislation, it is imperative that we try to see the legislation at least get to the next step.

Conservatives say that they have amendments, and I would welcome seeing the types of amendments they have. Maybe we can

come up with some sort of unanimous support in getting the legislation through.

Could the member provide his thoughts in regard to advocating for getting the bill out of second reading and into committee, where we would at least be able to advance it?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, that rarely happens. I get the impression that my colleague took my speech and summed it up as a question. He is repeating the question back to me as if it was a short, one-page summary of my speech. That is exactly what I said.

The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of Bill C-71, just as it supported the principle of Bill S-245. We are working hand in hand with the NDP and the Liberals. If the Conservatives propose amendments that make sense, of course we will look at them. If the amendments make sense, of course we will vote for them. We are here to work. I do not think that Bill C-71 should stir up any partisan wars. It is not an issue that should get us yelling and calling each other names. When we take a good look at it, the bill is fairly simple. Its underlying principle is clear, namely, that an injustice must be fixed through a bill. That is pretty much a parliamentarian's most basic job.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, if this bill goes to committee, would the member be willing to support a Conservative amendment that would require a criminal record check for everyone who applies for citizenship by descent?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I will discuss it with my team, as they say.

I would be happy to study such an amendment, but in order to propose such an amendment, we must vote in favour of the principle of the bill and send it to committee. I therefore humbly suggest that my Conservative friends vote along with everyone else in favour of the principle of the bill so that it can be sent to committee.

Then we will study those amendments. I am sure we can find common ground.

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his collaboration and co-operation at committee on Bill S-245. I was delighted to work with him and to see that he supported the NDP amendments. That is the right thing to do, to restore the rights of Canadians, the rights that the Conservatives took away.

I want to ask the member a question. He may not have been elected at that time, and neither was I, but to my understanding and to the knowledge of Don Chapman, who is an extremely knowledgeable guy on the lost Canadian file, when the Harper government brought in Bill C-37, it actually put forward an edict for all the parties that, if they did not support it in its entirety, it would take away the bill. That meant that the Conservatives were able to put a poison pill in that bill with the first-generation cut-off rule.

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Would the member agree that is the wrong thing to do on an issue as important as people's basic fundamental rights?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I was not in fact elected at the time. However, Meili Faille, who was the Bloc Québécois member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges, worked on the file and knew Mr. Chapman very well. This is important.

We in the Bloc Québécois have a lot of expertise when it comes to Canadian citizenship. As I said, that will be useful when it comes time to work with Quebec citizenship.

Right now, I do not want to talk about what happened in the past. My colleague will understand why. Anyone watching the debate might be surprised to note that the Bloc Québécois is probably the only adult in the room right now. I am not badmouthing anyone. I do not want to cause friction with the other parties over a bill that I feel would be easy to work on if everyone did their part. I am not going to badmouth anyone.

I think that we could quite easily send it to committee, since we know that three parties so far will vote for it in principle. Then we will study the Conservatives' amendments.

I am willing to work with everyone here, because we in the Bloc Québécois are responsible people. When we study a bill, we set electioneering aside. We simply want what is best for the people who elected us to represent them.

• (1350)

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, his intelligent and constructive attitude and his open-mindedness.

Of course, he talked about the prospect of Quebec citizenship. We are currently talking about Bill C-71, which solves some of the problems. Does the member not think that the entire immigration and citizenship process needs a solid overhaul and that we could commit to contributing to it in a constructive and intelligent way?

As he mentioned, it would be good practice for us for Quebec citizenship.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, Bill C-71 is a good start for correcting a flagrant and absurd injustice. It is a good start and it can also give us a guideline we can follow should there ever be a complete reform of citizenship status, in terms of what it means, what it represents and what being a citizen of a country entails.

It is indeed a good idea that we should all be working on. Bill C-71 is a step in the right direction. It is something that many people want. Many people want this to be resolved at last. It has been dragging on for far too long.

The Bloc Québécois will collaborate on this.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed the member's speech.

I get the impression from today's debate that the Conservatives want to present amendments in committee. The Bloc Québécois has its position and also wants to debate the issue in committee. We

will listen to what the NDP wants to say, but from their questions, it seems as though they support this bill.

Does the member think it is important that we proceed with the vote so that we can debate this bill in committee, ask experts and witnesses questions and study the amendments that will be proposed by the Conservatives and perhaps by other parties as well? Is it time to vote so that we can move forward on the other bills that are before the House?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, yes, I tend to agree with what the member opposite just suggested.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to emphasize that achieving one's citizenship is very significant. I have had opportunities, as no doubt others have had, to witness the swearing-in for citizens. We should not be taking it for granted.

One of the things that is quite upsetting, and I made reference to it in the question I asked of the Conservatives, is the idea that the Conservative Party feels very easy and relaxed in using the notwithstanding clause. We have a superior decision from the Province of Ontario that says that the first-generation issue that the Harper government brought in is, in fact, unconstitutional. Can I get the Bloc's perspective on having the Citizenship Act in compliance with the Constitution?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, the notwithstanding clause is back on the table.

As I was saying, there is a strange atmosphere in Parliament at the moment. I just gave a speech, but I am not sure whether my colleague was listening. When he asked his first question, however, he seemed to have understood my remarks to the House.

Earlier on, I said that when it comes to a bill like Bill C-71, there should not be any mudslinging. That is basically what I said. As I said, we should work together, and most people are generally in agreement about Bill C-71. In asking a question about my speech, my colleague was really trying to get in a dig at the official opposition. He did not understand what I was trying to say at all.

Here is what we want. It is Monday morning. Parliament has just resumed. Could we behave like responsible people, like parliamentarians representing the people of our ridings, without slinging any mud or setting any partisan parliamentary traps?

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

• (1355)

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to enter this debate on Bill C-71. Because the House will be getting ready for statements and question period, I will be interrupted in my speech, so I am going to put a few things on the public record.

To the member from the Bloc's point that this is not about partisanship, I think it is important to put on the public record the history of what happened with respect to lost Canadians. Members will know that, 15 years ago, the Conservatives brought in Bill C-37 for an act that was supposed to fix a lot of the lost Canadian issues. It did fix some of those issues, but in that process, the Conservatives also put a poisoned pill in the bill, which was the first-generation cut-off rule deeming those of the second generation who were born abroad would not be able to receive their citizenship from their parents. That was incorporated into Bill C-37.

At the time, I was not here, but those who watched that debate saw what happened. The Harper government was clear to say that, unless Bill C-37 passed in its entirety, the bill would die. They would get rid of it and kill it. That is information from Don Chapman, who is the king of experts on lost Canadian issues because he has dedicated his life to addressing this injustice. That is the knowledge that he brings to this floor by sharing with me what happened. That is why the NDP and the Liberals had to vote for it.

They voted for it because they had no choice. If they had not, what would it have meant? It would have meant that thousands upon thousands of Canadian World War II vets, along with tens of thousands of Canadian war brides and their children, would have gone to their graves disenfranchised from their own country. A 20-year-old war bride in 1946 would be 98 years old today. Most of the Canadian brides and their World War II soldier husbands are now dead. If they had not accepted the first generation cut-off limit under Bill C-37, all these folks would have died without citizenship, all because Harper would have killed Bill C-37.

That is the reality. That is why people were jammed to do that. Despite that, the critic for the NDP at the time, Olivia Chow, put this on the public record: "We could get this bill done very quickly and accommodate this element by doing something very simple, by just amending subclause 2(2), or actually taking it out of the bill, because right now it limits citizenship to the first generation born to, or adopted by, Canadian parents."

The NDP tried to raise the issue, and Olivia said that we should get rid of the first-generation rule that the Conservatives brought in, but that was not allowed to take place because it was the poison pill that the Conservatives put in the bill. Otherwise, they would have taken away all of those rights for war veterans and the war brides. That is the reason, and that is the history.

Is this partisan politics? No, it is not, but it is an important part of the history to know what happened, where the lost Canadian issue stems from, why we are here and why the Superior Court has ruled that it is unconstitutional to take away those rights.

• (1400)

*[English]***LOCAL BROADCASTING**

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to reflect on the end of an era for local television and radio in Kingston. CKWS, now Global Kingston, and its local radio stations have been more than just news outlets. They have been trusted friends, reliable sources of information and a valued part of our daily lives. I want to thank the dedicated professionals who have worked tirelessly to bring us the news, weather and stories that matter the most. These people include Bill Hutchins, Bill Welychka, Julie Brown, Bill Hall, Doug Jeffries, and so many more.

These are the trusted voices that have made a lasting impact. I say to all the reporters, anchors, producers and behind-the-scenes staff that their commitment to excellence and their passion for journalism have enriched our lives in countless ways. As the local news scene evolves, we will continue to rally to bring back the spirit of connection and information sharing they fostered for decades.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Hard work should always be rewarded, but life has never been so hard for Canadians. Workers cannot afford to put gas in their tanks to get to work; moms and dads are struggling to put food on the table, and a generation of Canadians has lost hope in the dream of home ownership.

Fortunately, there is hope on the horizon. A common-sense Conservative government will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. We will turn the hurt the Prime Minister has caused into hope so that hard work is rewarded, food is affordable, neighbourhoods are safe and every Canadian has a fair shot at a good life. It is time for a carbon tax election.

*Statements by Members***BANGLADESH**

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned about violence targeting religious minorities, including Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, in Bangladesh. Every time there is instability in Bangladesh, religious minorities, particularly Hindus, face the brunt of it. The share of religious minorities in the population has significantly decreased since Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971. From 23.1%, including about 20% Hindus, it has now come down to just about 9.6%, including about 8.5% Hindus. Canadian Hindus who have family in Bangladesh are concerned about the security and safety of the people, their temples and their properties.

They will be holding a rally on Parliament Hill on Monday, September 23, to highlight the current situation there. They will be joined by Canadian Buddhists and Christians who have family in Bangladesh.

* * *

[Translation]

MARCEL TESSIER

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have lost a great patriot. My friend Marcel Tessier, who shaped the imagination of Quebecers for several decades, passed away on August 26.

Some heard him sing opera with gusto. Others watched him charm audiences on television or read some of his books. The really lucky ones had him as a teacher. Without exception, anyone who spent time with him would be left spellbound, hanging on his every word.

Marcel was exceptionally charismatic, but above all, he was a historian with a vast knowledge of history and the ability to teach it. One thing he used to say was that if Quebecers knew more about their history, Quebec would have been an independent, free and sovereign country a long time ago. Even among friends around a table, he was a fascinating storyteller and communicator.

Marcel will be missed, but not forgotten. May my friend rest in peace.

* * *

RETURN OF THE HOUSE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome members back to the House, and I also want to wish all students in Orléans every success in the classroom as they kick off a new school year. Many thanks to all the teachers and staff at our schools for guiding and supporting them in their achievements.

On August 29, I was extremely pleased to welcome over 600 residents of my community to my annual corn roast and barbecue on Petrie Island. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the Orléans Lions Club, who every year keep the grilling station running smoothly. It was also a privilege to welcome 21 young cadets from the 632 Phoenix Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, who came out to lend a helping hand during the event.

• (1405)

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years under the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up, but now the Prime Minister has doubled down on his carbon tax by appointing Mark Carney as his new de facto finance minister.

As a jet-setting member of the global elite, carbon tax Carney has spent his entire career promoting a costly carbon tax. He supports the Prime Minister's plan to quadruple the carbon tax and opposed removing the carbon tax from home heating. Carbon tax Carney has no issue lecturing working-class Canadians while being wined and dined by the global elite. He has so many conflicts of interest that the Prime Minister is shielding him from Canadian disclosure laws. Carney remains beholden to corporate boards, meaning that Canadians' interests are an afterthought for him.

Conservatives are demanding Mark Carney be sworn in as a public office holder so that he follows Canada's conflict of interest laws. No Liberal is above the law.

* * *

JOSEPH DAY

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour the memory of Senator Joseph Day; sadly, he passed away earlier this year.

Joe Day was a distinguished lawyer and a remarkable and much loved parliamentarian. Representing the Province of New Brunswick for almost two decades, he held an exceptional 18-year tenure with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, culminating in his election as the assembly's vice-president, a position he held from 2016 to 2018. Joe had a deep love for the NATO Parliamentary Association and its mission. He worked tirelessly to advance and promote the mandate of the Defence and Security Committee. As the committee's general rapporteur, Joe was a leading voice for NATO to strengthen its deterrence and defence position after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Today he is remembered not only for elevating Canada's position within the NATO alliance but also for his achievements, as well as his kindness and sunny character. We thank Joe for his leadership, his contributions to Canada and his commitment to peace and security in the world.

* * *

COMMUNITY OF MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be back in the House after a productive summer in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Over the summer, I attended more than 100 events and met with 180 organizations and businesses from my riding to discuss the issues most important to them. We welcomed thousands of residents to my seventh annual Mississauga—Erin Mills barbecue. Our Women's Council and Youth Council hosted a health symposium, as well as a mental health panel, to highlight important issues that have an impact on the well-being of youth and women in our community.

I met with hundreds of residents to talk about important issues, such as housing and grocery prices. I hosted a round table discussion with Canadian Palestinians to listen to them and better understand their lived experiences with anti-Palestinian racism.

We have considerable work ahead of us on many important issues. I am looking forward to working with all members in the House to deliver for Canadians.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years under the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Criminal gangs active in illegal lobster poaching have been terrorizing communities in Nova Scotia, and the incompetent Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is nowhere to be found. This is dereliction of duty by the same minister who ignored expert advice and reopened the northern cod fishery ahead of time.

We are a nation of laws founded on the principles of peace, order and good government. However, right now, Atlantic Canada's fishing communities do not have any of those blessings and feel completely abandoned by Ottawa. The president of the Unified Fisheries Conservation Alliance has described the situation as total lawlessness. The lobster fishers in Pugwash have reached out to me directly and told me just how concerned they are about the lack of enforcement.

Unchecked illegal poaching must be stopped, and help is on the way. Common-sense Conservatives will end lawlessness in the fishing industry and restore order and safety to Atlantic Canada.

* * *

● (1410)

MAHSA AMINI

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the second year since the tragic murder of Jina Mahsa Amini. We commemorate her life, her story and the names of countless others, amplifying the Iranian people's persistent call to end all forms of persecution and violence against women and any civilians. Canada stands with the Iranians protesting for a better future where human rights are respected. The concern must be addressed, and their right to protest must be protected.

The fight for human rights and freedom, as well as for justice and accountability, has not stopped. That is why Canada has led the international effort to respond to the Iranian regime's actions, including listing the IRGC as a terrorist entity and, recently, changing

Statements by Members

the designation day of the Iranian regime to June 23, 2003, ensuring its senior officials are inadmissible to Canada.

We will never forget the story of Jina Mahsa Amini and those who lost their lives fighting for women in Iran and around the world.

Zan, zendegi, azadi. Women, life, freedom.

* * *

[Translation]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nine years of this Liberal government equals nine years of inflationary spending, nine long years where the Liberals, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, have cost Quebeckers dearly.

We might even say that there is no Bloc Québécois in Parliament, just a “Liberal Bloc”. This “Liberal Bloc” voted for the largest-ever expansion of the federal government. The “Liberal Bloc” voted to bulk up the bureaucracy in Ottawa with an extra 100,000 public servants. The “Liberal Bloc” voted for \$500 billion in spending to expand the most centralist federal government in history.

That is why we do not have a Bloc Québécois in Parliament, but a “Liberal Bloc” that is using Quebeckers to waste and centralize their money here in Ottawa. The “Liberal Bloc” is out of touch with Quebeckers. What is the Bloc Québécois good for, or rather, who is it good for? It is good for the Liberal Prime Minister.

Fortunately, the common-sense Conservatives hear Quebeckers loud and clear. They are going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

* * *

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The carbon tax has increased the costs of food, fuel and home heating. As a result, we are seeing record numbers of working Canadian families relying on food banks. To make matters worse, the NDP-Liberal government plans to quadruple the carbon tax, and it continues to vote for soft-on-crime policies. Since 2015, violent crime in Winnipeg has gone up by 67%, car thefts have gone up by 63%, homicides have gone up by 100% and gun crime has gone up by a whopping 177%. This is the Liberal-NDP record: Canadians struggling to afford food and crime and chaos in our streets.

Statements by Members

Today in Elmwood—Transcona, Winnipeggers have a simple choice. A vote for the NDP is a vote for the Liberals and their soft-on-crime carbon tax agenda. Only a common-sense Conservative government will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

* * *

MARLENE CATTERALL

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour Marlene Catterall. A trail-blazing role model for Canadian women, she served on Ottawa city council and was a member of Parliament for 17 years.

An accomplished parliamentarian, Marlene preferred to be known as a community activist. She fought for justice, lobbying for the release of constituent Maher Arar from Syrian prison.

As Canada's first female chief government whip, she broke barriers in this chamber.

[Translation]

Marlene negotiated the unanimous vote that made it possible to erect the *Women are Persons!* monument on Parliament Hill. She received the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case, Canada's highest honour for women.

She also served on the board of directors for the Maison de la francophonie d'Ottawa as part of her commitment to the French language, and she was honoured as ACFO's francophile of the year in recognition of that commitment.

[English]

Marlene's passion, integrity and dedication will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats believe in taking care of one another. We believe that health care should be universally accessible and publicly delivered. We believe that every Canadian should be able to afford a decent home and a fridge full of groceries. However, many Canadians are losing hope right now. New Democrats want to restore that hope and make life more affordable for everyone.

Here is the truth: The Conservatives will steamroll the middle class if they are given the chance. When they were in power, they cut health care by more than \$30 billion. Wait times ballooned and Canadians suffered. The Conservatives cut pensions, forcing people to work longer and live on less in retirement.

Conservatives have said that they will cut health care, dental care, pharmacare, child care and employment insurance. Even the Canada pension plan is at risk. All this is to give a break to their corporate friends.

NDP members are in the House. We are here working for Canadians.

• (1415)

[Translation]

BENOÎT ROY

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to pay tribute to Benoît Roy, a defender of Quebec and the French language, who was named a knight of the Ordre de la Pléiade de la Francophonie on July 8.

Benoît has been advocating for Quebec sovereignty and defending Quebec culture through various organizations since 1974. In 2000, he founded the Rassemblement pour un Pays Souverain, a movement that seeks to achieve independence for Quebec and protect the French language. Today, he still chairs that organization, which, in just a few months, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. Over those 25 years, Benoît has had the opportunity to give out 117 awards.

What is more, in 2005, he launched an annual gala dinner to celebrate national patriots day, in tribute to those who work for Quebec's political freedom and independence.

His unwavering commitment makes him a key player in the promotion of Quebec's identity and the francophonie. I want to congratulate Benoît and thank him for all that he does for my riding and for Quebec.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, taxes are up. Costs are up. Crimes are up. Time is up. Over the summer I spoke to thousands of Canadians. I heard heart-breaking stories of how they are hurting after nine years of the NDP-Liberals.

It was two years ago that the sellout and cowardly leader of the NDP signed on to a costly coalition with the Liberal Prime Minister. A couple of weeks ago, he tried to convince people that he had a spine, and with much bravado, he tore up the agreement. However, following his media stunt, he refuses to state whether the NDP will vote to force a carbon tax election. The sellout NDP leader did not get the bump in the polls he was hoping for, I guess, and even went on to suggest that after voting for the carbon tax 24 times, he has somehow found the light and now will oppose it, but with a caveat and with details to come after he qualifies for his pension.

Canadians need a carbon tax election now to decide between a costly coalition of the NDP-Liberals or common-sense Conservatives who will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

CATHY MERRICK

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently Manitobans were shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' Grand Chief Cathy Merrick.

Grand Chief Merrick was more than a leader; she was a beacon of strength, wisdom and compassion. Her dedication to the AMC was not merely a role she undertook but also a calling she embraced with unwavering commitment. Her leadership was characterized by a deep understanding of the challenges faced by first nations people and a relentless pursuit of justice and equality.

Her impacts extend beyond her professional achievements. Grand Chief Cathy Merrick was a loving daughter, sister, wife, mother, aunt, cousin, grandmother, a supportive friend and a trusted mentor to many. Her legacy will live on through the lives she touched and the progress she championed.

As we reflect on her life, let us remember her resilience in the face of adversity, her tireless work on behalf of first nations people and her unwavering commitment to building a better future. Her contributions have paved the way for many, and her spirit will continue to inspire us as we move forward on the journey towards truth and reconciliation.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1420)

[English]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Stewart, member for the electoral district of Toronto—St. Paul's.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Don Stewart, member for the electoral district of Toronto—St. Paul's, introduced by the Hon. Pierre Poilievre.

The Speaker: Let the hon. member take his seat.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for nine years, the “Liberal Bloc” has taxed food, inflated the price of food, doubled the cost of housing and doubled the national debt, all with the full support of the Bloc Québécois, which voted to keep this party and this government in power more than 200 times. Now, the government wants to raise taxes again.

Is it not high time that Canadians had the opportunity to pick a new, common-sense government that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had spent any time at all talking to Canadians this summer, he would have heard that Canadians want solutions to the challenges that they and their families are facing. They want to know how we are going to fight climate change and how we are going to position Canada in the economy of the future.

The Leader of the Opposition only cares about his own interests, not the interests of Canadians. That is why, on this side of the House, we will continue to work with all parliamentarians who are willing, so we can deliver for Canadians and build a stronger economy for everyone.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are seeing the biggest expansion of the federal government in the history of the country. This is a costly, centralizing government that has the full support of the Bloc Québécois, which has voted nearly 200 times for \$500 billion in inflationary, centralizing, bureaucratic spending.

Quebeckers deserve a common-sense government that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime now.

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we announced a major investment in Telesat to create good jobs in Quebec, jobs that will have a positive impact on connectivity and national security across the country and around the world, the Conservatives' response was to call their friend Elon Musk to say that these jobs should not be sent to Canada and that the money should be given to American billionaires instead.

The Conservatives' view on investments that will create jobs is completely ridiculous. We will be there to invest in Quebecers for the future.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up. Costs are up. Crimes are up. Time is up. Now he wants a 300% carbon tax hike all the way up to 61¢ a litre.

Why not let Canadians choose a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had spent any time listening to Canadians over the summer, he would have heard that they need solutions. They need answers to the challenges they are facing. That is not what he is offering. Indeed, he does not care about Canadians; he just cares about himself and his own political interests.

Oral Questions

We are going to keep focused on doing the things that he refuses to do, whether it is him voting against dental care, whether it is him voting against child care, or whether it is him voting against a national school food program. We are going to still deliver the things that matter to Canadians, like food in kids' bellies, child care spaces, and supports for seniors to go to the dentist, many of them for the first time in years.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, children are hungrier than ever after nine years of the NDP-Liberals. In fact, 25% of them are not getting enough food, and we now know why. A carbon tax fraud has been perpetrated by the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, who kept secret Environment Canada documents that showed that the carbon tax was blowing a \$25-billion hole in our economy. Our economy, per capita, is smaller today than it was 10 years ago, during which time the American economy has grown by 19%.

Instead of a reckless plan to hike the tax to 61¢ a litre, why not allow Canadians to vote to axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is a news flash for the Conservative leader: Climate change costs money. What would cost the most money to Canadians at all is his do-nothing climate plan. Here is a news flash: When the Toronto subway gets flooded, it costs money. Here is another news flash: when forest fires hit communities across this country, it costs Canadians money to rebuild. When droughts hit farmers and agriculturists across this country, it costs money.

What does not cost money is putting money in eight out of 10 of Canadians' pockets with the Canada carbon rebate to support their families and fight climate change.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just proved my point. His tax does not stop floods, fires or droughts. All it does is create more poverty. This is also from a high-flying, high-taxing, high-carbon hypocrite, who flew 92,000 kilometres in a fuel-guzzling, tax-funded private jet, while he taxes single moms and seniors for heating their homes. Now carbon tax Carney wants him to put the tax back on home heating oil.

Will he reject carbon tax Carney and instead allow Canadians to choose to axe the tax?

The Speaker: I want to remind all members, and to do so early, to be very mindful of the language they use when referring to other members in the House.

The right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader does not believe in climate change and that is why he has a do-nothing plan to fight climate change. It would cost Canadians money and challenge the future we are building for our kids.

Our plan with the Canada carbon rebate puts more dollars in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians right across the country, and supports the middle class and people working hard to join it, while

delivering the kinds of investments that are going to grow our economy and reduce emissions at the same time. This is a responsible climate plan that fights climate change and supports Canadians. He wants to do nothing. He wants to hurt Canadians.

* * *

● (1430)

[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by welcoming back of all my colleagues.

Today is by-election day in LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, and I would like the Prime Minister to explain to retirees between the ages of 65 and 74 in that riding why their pension cheques are 10% lower than those of retirees aged 75 and up. This is blatant discrimination, and they have the right to understand why this is happening.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said before, seniors aged 75 and up have more expenses and often have less savings. That is why we are providing additional funding for them.

However, I am a bit confused about something. The Bloc Québécois claims to care about seniors aged 65 and up, but they voted against the dental care we are providing Canadians. A total of 650,000 Canadian seniors across the country have recently received dental care paid for by the federal government, but the Bloc voted against that. They do not give a damn about seniors.

The Speaker: Once again, I would ask members to raise their language to a level more befitting this Parliament.

The hon. member for Beloil—Chambly.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is easily confused. He just trampled on a jurisdiction exclusive to Quebec.

On Friday, he also said that Quebec anglophones were not entitled to the same health care services in English as francophones receive. That is not true. I am therefore specifically asking him, as the law requires, to acknowledge that he misled anglophones in Montreal, Quebec and LaSalle—Émard—Verdun when he said that they are not entitled to the same health care services in English as francophones.

Oral Questions

Right Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois claims to speak for the Government of Quebec but does not seem to acknowledge that the Government of Quebec admitted that it was going to issue an order to clarify and explain that it did not intend to attack anglophones. We are still awaiting that explanation. However, if the Government of Quebec could acknowledge it, maybe the Bloc Québécois could do likewise.

Seniors 65 and over who received dental care could not care less about their area of responsibility. They want the dental care that Quebec was not providing. The federal government is there to pay for seniors and help them get dental care. The Bloc Québécois voted against it.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis in LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, like everywhere else in Quebec, continues to worsen under the Liberals. Hundreds of people are currently homeless. This is a result of the rules the Liberals and Conservatives created so that wealthy investors can get richer while tenants pay more. Together, the Liberals and Conservatives have lost over one million affordable housing units. People deserve better.

When will the Prime Minister stop working for the real estate giants and start protecting tenants?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, I have had many good conversations with my NDP colleagues and the leader of the NDP. I know they are genuinely concerned about Canadians. They really want to help them, but what is becoming clear is that they have no idea how to do it. As soon as the Conservatives start attacking them a little bit, what do they do? They run away and hide behind politics.

Yes, it is hard to implement progressive measures in this country, but we are doing it as a government. Even without the NDP, we will continue to deliver for people across the country when it comes to housing, services—

The Speaker: The member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no excuses, no one in Canada should be homeless, period, full stop. No one in Canada should pay out of pocket to get the health care they need.

The Liberals are letting people be charged membership fees or bundled payments to gain access to primary care covered by universal health care. The Conservatives want people to pay for health care in Elmwood—Transcona and right across the country. The Liberals let us down on health care; we pay. The Conservatives cut health care; we pay.

When will Liberals stop making people pay for health care that should be free?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone in here knows, over the past couple of years, I have had a lot of great conversations with the NDP. I know the New Democrats actually do care about Canadians and about delivering for them. Unfortunately, they have no idea how to do it and as soon as hard things got hard, they turned tail and ran. They wanted to avoid the criticisms of the mean old Conservatives and tried to save themselves.

The reality is that we know that hard things are hard. We are going to continue to deliver progressive solutions for Canadians, because we are going to step up and fight for Canadians and not hide from the Conservatives.

* * *

FINANCE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister gave the finance minister a real vote of confidence last week as he outsourced the job that she was supposed to have been doing for four years and gave it to a man who is not even in the Liberal caucus.

First, the Prime Minister tried to fire her in the newspaper. Now she is being shoved aside for carbon tax Carney, a man focused on his own profits and his own corporate interests, who was brought in to serve as the de facto finance minister. She has lost her job responsibilities. She has lost her credibility.

How long will the phantom finance minister endure this humiliation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not going anywhere, but I can understand why the Conservatives prefer to focus on personal mudslinging and attacks rather than to actually talk about the economy. They do not want to talk about inflation, because it has been down in the target range for seven months in a row. They do not want to talk about interest rates, down three times in a row. All they can do is insult people.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, who is going to tell her? She just got a demotion and he hired a guy who is not even elected to do her job. Does anyone believe that carbon tax Carney is going to tell the Prime Minister how to help a family afford groceries as the loudest cheerleader for carbon taxes ever?

If the finance minister is not completely humiliated by now, could she explain why Canadians should trust a man who is the number-one supporter of higher taxes to do her job?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are seeing more clearly than ever that the only thing the Conservatives know how to do is to level personal attacks and personal denigration. They do not care about Canadians and now they are scared about the facts of our economy.

Let me tell members some facts. Inflation is in the target range for seven months in a row. Interest rates are down three times in a row. The IMF says that we will have the strongest economic growth in the G7.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer, after he argued that Atlantic Canadian home heating oil should be carbon taxed, carbon-tax-loving Mark Carney spent a lovely summer of whimsy having champers at the Royal Box at Wimbledon and rubbing shoulders at a swish cocktail party with a wealthy CEO, who yesterday, coincidentally, got millions of tax dollars. This is not someone who is in touch with the struggle of average Canadians, but neither is the Prime Minister.

Did he push aside his now-phantom female cabinet minister because carbon-tax-loving Mark Carney could get him into fancier parties than she can?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to begin by saying that it is great to be back in this place. I really did miss most people on this side. I cannot say I missed them that much, but I did miss them a little.

It is just typical from the Conservatives that when they have an eminent Canadian, someone who has given so much to the country, who does not agree with their economic vision or their vision at all in Canada, they attack him. We need to be better than this. We need to support Canadians and be grateful when they put forward for public service.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are not even letting her answer the question anymore.

At a time when so many people are struggling to make ends meet and pleading for someone to fix the budget, I am struggling to find a reason why the Prime Minister would put an out-of-touch elitist, active archpriest of carbon price profiteering, who has massive conflicts of interest, in charge of the federal budget while shunting aside his female cabinet minister. What a feminist.

Why does the now-phantom finance minister have to get approval for Canada's fall economic statement from carbon tax conflict of interest Mark Carney?

• (1440)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am actually really glad to welcome back to the QP roster the member for Calgary Nose Hill. We have not heard her raising her voice for a while.

I am not going anywhere, but I am not surprised to see the Conservatives continue cartoonish personal attacks. That is because

they are afraid to reveal to Canadians their plan for austerity and cuts, cuts, cuts, because they know that is not what Canadians want.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have two sources saying that the view of some senior officials within the PMO, including chief of staff Katie Telford, is that the phantom finance minister has been ineffective in selling the government's economic policies. It is curious, because we have a fake feminist Prime Minister who says he is all for women.

Taxes are up, costs are up, the economy is in the toilet and this carbon tax Mark Carney is now going to quadruple the carbon tax on all home heating across Canada.

Why is the phantom finance minister okay with being publicly humiliated by the fake feminist Prime Minister?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only people being humiliated today are Conservative MPs who have to listen to their colleagues wallow in the mud of personal character assassination. However, what we are focused on is representing and working for Canadians. That is why the real news today is 30-year mortgage amortizations for all first-time homebuyers. That is the real news.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not that Conservative saying that. It is the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Katie Telford, for the record.

I guess the question is before the phantom finance minister. She simply has two choices. Is she going to join the graveyard of Liberal female ministers under the fake feminist Prime Minister, like Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott, or will she continue to be publicly humiliated?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing today is the Conservatives running away from the reality about the Canadian economy. They are running away from the fact that inflation has been in the Bank of Canada's target range for seven months in a row. They are running away from interest rates that are down three times in a row for the first time in the G7 and wages outpacing inflation for 18 months. The only thing the Conservatives know how to do is traffic in cheap insults. Canadians are a lot better than that.

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these days there is a lot of talk about elections. Some people are doing with all sorts of calculations. For the Bloc Qu eb cois it is simple: We put our trust in Quebeckers, not the Liberals, not the Conservatives, but Quebeckers.

Quebeckers tell us that they are worried about the cost of living and living conditions for seniors. That is why our priority is to increase old age security for people aged 65 to 74. They are being unfairly discriminated against and it needs to stop. It is as simple as that.

Will the government listen to this simple request from Quebeckers?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the next time the Bloc Québécois supports seniors, that will be the first time in the history of this Parliament.

Let us look at the facts. When we restored the age of retirement to 65, how did the Bloc Québécois vote? It voted against. When we increased the guaranteed income supplement, helping hundreds of thousands of seniors in Quebec, the Bloc Québécois voted against. When we brought in dental care for millions of seniors, the Bloc Québécois voted against.

It is high time that they stood up for our seniors.

• (1445)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois's demand is simple: We want the House to pass our Bill C-319, which would increase the old age security pension for seniors aged 64 to 74 by 10%. It is so simple and it makes so much sense that all of the parties supported our bill in committee. All that is missing is the will of the government.

Since all the parties agree that we should increase the old age security pension by 10% for seniors aged 65 to 74, will the government do the right thing and give royal recommendation to Bill C-319?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome back the Bloc Québécois, which supports seniors, just as our government's actions do. Look at what we have done. We implemented the grocery rebate, increased the guaranteed income supplement and brought in many other measures, including dental care, which is being offered to people across Quebec this year, including those in my colleague's riding, even though she voted against it.

We are there for seniors.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I went all over Quebec again this summer to talk about Bill C-319. Everyone agrees that it is unfair that seniors aged 74 and under receive 10% less than other seniors. Everyone except the Liberals agrees that grocery bills do not discriminate based on age.

That is why this is a key issue for the Bloc Québécois. Quebeckers understand the problem. Quebeckers understand what we are doing.

Will the Liberals finally understand this as well and give royal recommendation to Bill C-319?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Bloc Québécois does not seem to understand is that actions do matter. Votes in the House matter. They voted against dental care, and Quebec seniors noticed. They voted against lowering the retirement age to 65. Quebeckers are paying attention.

Oral Questions

The Liberal Party of Canada is always there to support the federal pensions of Quebeckers. The Bloc Québécois has never demonstrated that it is there to protect Canadians' pensions in Quebec or elsewhere.

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FINANCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the “Liberal Bloc” voted for the largest expansion of the federal government in history. There is more spending than ever. There are more civil servants than ever. There are more financial scandals than ever. All this is being done with Quebeckers' money.

How did the Prime Minister manage to convince the Bloc Québécois to support the costliest and most centralizing government in Canadian history?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is proudly progressive. Our government is proud of our climate action. Our government is proud of our support for day care and early childhood centres. Our government is proud of our support for families.

We know that the people of Quebec share our progressive values. That is why we followed Quebec's lead on day care and the climate. We are proud to have done that.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the “Liberal Bloc” says it stands up for the interests of Quebeckers. Is it in the interest of Quebeckers to support the most costly government in the history of Canada? Is it in the interest of Quebeckers to increase their taxes to reinforce the federal state that keeps encroaching on Quebec's jurisdictions? It is clear that the “Liberal Bloc” does nothing but stand up for the interests of the Prime Minister.

What did the Prime Minister offer the leader of the “Liberal Bloc” to get him to agree to support all his centralist spending?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look at the Conservatives across the way and I see that they have no shame in claiming that they want to work toward prosperity, when all they manage to do is build a road to austerity. Canadians know that the only thing the Conservatives can do is chop, chop, chop. They cut investments in small craft harbours. They cut investments in science. They cut investments in families, in child care services and in dental care. That is the way to build a road to austerity. That is the Conservatives.

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one coalition seems to have ended, but another remains: the “Liberal Bloc” coalition, which is responsible for \$500 billion in inflationary and centralized spending. Under this coalition, the public service has grown, with more than 100,000 new public servants. It is the most costly government in history. Despite this, wait times and service standards have never been worse. The people and my staff in Beauce have to wait for hours to get answers.

What did the Prime Minister promise the leader of the Bloc Québécois to keep the most expensive and centralist government in the history of this country in power?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I had the opportunity and pleasure to invite my Quebec Liberal caucus colleagues to my riding, Brome—Missisquoi. I gave them a little tour of all the budget cuts made by the Conservatives when they were in power. I took them to the experimental farm in Frelighsburg. The Conservatives do not believe in science and they cut spending on agricultural science. I also took them to a cultural centre that we built because all the Conservatives did was cut spending on arts and culture. Quebeckers remember that all the Conservatives can do are cutbacks and austerity. We do not want that in Quebec.

* * *

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of Liberal inaction, people in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are being forced to cut back on groceries to keep up with rising prices. Meanwhile, the Conservatives continue to pad their pockets with donations from the same CEOs who are gouging Canadians.

Over the summer, people shared with me that they are exhausted and not able to make ends meet. Why are the Liberals taking a page out of the Conservative playbook and putting corporate greed ahead of everyday people?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that the NDP's recent hard right turn has taken them down the wrong path. It is too bad that they have caved to Conservative pressure.

We worked collaboratively for many months to introduce numerous rounds of changes to Canada's competition laws. These are significant signs of progress that would amount to better prices and more options for Canadians and include more powers to the Competition Bureau to crack down on anti-competitive behaviour. Those changes would make a real difference in Canada's economy.

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SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the poorest seniors are receiving hundreds of dollars less every year because Liberal policies created another GIS clawback.

This summer, I heard from seniors and their loved ones. They are drowning. Conservatives cut pensions and increased the retirement age, and the Liberals are punishing the poorest seniors. Canadians never win with Liberals or Conservatives.

When will the clawbacks end?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, not only do GIS, CPP and OAS go up, but they now also go up quarterly. In fact, there are no clawbacks.

The member knows full well that we have actually expanded the amount of money a senior on GIS might make before any money is clawed back. We have expanded that substantially. The member should know that.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House spent their summers listening to Canadians. We heard about grandparents and children getting access to the Canadian dental care plan. We heard about the need for a government that is focused on building more homes faster, growing our economy and making life cost less.

What we have seen the Conservatives do all summer is bet against our economy and bet against Canadians for their own political gain.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance share with us the good economic news we saw over the summer and what this means for Canadians and their families?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very hard work.

COVID and its economic aftermath have been hard for Canadians, and that is why it is important to recognize the good news we have had this summer. Canada was the first G7 country to lower interest rates, easing the burden on homeowners. Inflation has now been within the Bank of Canada's target range for seven months and wages have outpaced inflation for 18 months in a row. We have more work to do, and that is why we are focused on Canada and Canadians.

Oral Questions

● (1455)

[Translation]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have gone to Sacré-Coeur many times to meet with people from the Boisaco forestry company. The employees are feeling extremely insecure, and with good reason. They risk losing their jobs.

The order by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is a disaster for the forestry industry. It will kill jobs, close businesses and potentially wipe communities off the map. The industry represents 1,400 jobs in Quebec and \$900 million in economic benefits.

Will the minister take into account the human beings behind his radical policies and guarantee that he will not impose his order?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be back with you for the new session.

That said, might I remind my colleague from the Conservative Party that the Government of Quebec has committed since 2016 to presenting a woodland caribou recovery plan in Quebec. We are now in 2024, soon to be 2025, and we have been waiting eight years for the plan. In 2022, the Government of Quebec signed a joint letter with the federal government stating that they would have a plan by June 2023. The plan would specify how to protect at least 65% of caribou habitat.

The Government of Quebec committed to do that. If Quebec does not want a federal order, it simply needs to act.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am curious to know whether the minister can even find Sacré-Coeur on a map.

Life is already hard enough with inflation, the cost of living and interest rates, but now the Liberals are adding even more stress. The only way to get rid of the order is to get rid of this government and replace it with a Conservative government. We know that the Bloc Québécois voted with the Liberals 182 times to keep them in power.

Will the Bloc-Liberal coalition leave forestry workers alone once and for all?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if only you knew how many times I met with Quebecers this summer. They think it is completely ridiculous to talk about a coalition between the Liberal Party of Canada and the Bloc Québécois, even though we are capable of working together. Quebecers find the idea of such a coalition completely ridiculous.

However, we should not be surprised at comments like that coming from the Conservatives. Once again, we see how they have no interest in protecting the environment. They do not care about air quality, water quality or the future that we are leaving for our children and grandchildren. We think that we can support the economy, communities and the environment.

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

When the Prime Minister promised to quadruple the carbon tax scam, the leader of the NDP said, “Yes, sir.” He would do anything for his \$2.2-million pension. Now, the Canadian Trucking Alliance has released a damning report, which is saying that the carbon tax scam adds more than \$4 billion in costs to farmers, families and food.

Why do the Liberals not just call a carbon tax election now to let Canadians decide whether to quadruple or axe the tax for good?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a news flash. We had a carbon tax election in 2021, and the Conservative Party had a platform that said that they would put in place carbon pricing in this country. Maybe they just have to go to look back at their own platform.

Again this morning, the Parliamentary Budget Officer was in committee saying that eight out of 10 Canadian families, where carbon pricing applies, get more money than what they pay in pricing. Unfortunately, the Conservative Party of Canada continues to spew lies and disinformation on this issue.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the PBO proved that the orange jumpsuit-wearing, handcuff-wearing minister is lying when he said that more Canadians pay into this.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1500)

The Speaker: I know it is the first day back for members. We have all spent time in our ridings. I am going to ask the hon. member to rephrase his question and to not use language that is normally considered unparliamentary.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn, from the top.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, what the orange jumpsuit-wearing, handcuff-loving minister does not understand is that the PBO proved Canadians pay more into the scam than what they get back, and it has done nothing to stop a single forest fire or flood. It is a scam and nothing else. The leader of the NDP continues to prop the carbon tax scam up so that he can get his \$2.2-million pension. That is why he voted in favour of it 24 times.

Call a carbon tax election now so Canadians can axe the tax and kick this carbon-tax, costly coalition to the curb.

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is really important for all members to choose their language and use their words judiciously in a way that is respectful to the House.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that kind of language from the member opposite is totally inappropriate, and quite frankly, Canadians deserve better. However, it is what we have come to expect from the Conservative leader and his caucus, who would—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, I could not hear the hon. minister give her response. It was difficult for me to hear to make sure the language was correct.

The hon. government House leader, from the top.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, the language from the member opposite was completely inappropriate, and quite frankly, Canadians deserve better. However, unfortunately that is what we have come to expect from the Conservative members and their leader.

The reason they are focusing on the price on pollution is that they want to distract Canadians from their real agenda, where they cut pensions for seniors, cut child care for families and cut and defund the CBC at a time of increased disinformation. They want to hide their real agenda from Canadians because they know that they will not like it. However, they need to be under that scrutiny and they need to be honest with Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Again, I would ask members on all sides to please make sure that they address the House only when they have been recognized by the Speaker to hold the floor.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

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[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 30, Quebec will move forward on behalf of patients and their families and implement its own legislation to regulate advance requests for medical assistance in dying.

Six professional associations are calling on the federal government to harmonize the Criminal Code with Quebec's legislation. The Collège des médecins du Québec said, and I quote, "We deplore the fact that Ottawa has not yet amended the Criminal Code to authorize this well-established procedure, which has consensus in Quebec."

Will the Minister of Justice listen to patients, doctors and the science and amend the Criminal Code?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have listened to what Quebec has to say. This is a very sensitive topic and we need time to consider not only the legal implications of these remarks, but also to engage in a national dialogue. The dia-

logue is not limited to my provincial and territorial counterparts. It extends to the entire country because it will have consequences. My discussions with my hon. colleague opposite will continue.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since February 2023, the Minister of Justice has been repeating that he is consulting the provinces, that he is reflecting carefully and that advance requests are complicated. Meanwhile, 83% of Canadians and 87% of Quebecers support this option.

While the minister dithers, Quebec has passed a law. Patients are waiting for this to be implemented, and doctors want to practise with peace of mind. Does the minister understand that there is a difference between studying an issue thoroughly and dragging his feet while people suffer?

• (1505)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, medical assistance in dying is a deeply personal and complex choice. I have tremendous respect for the work that Quebec has done on advance requests.

Canada has a single Criminal Code, and for good reason. Canadians deserve consistent standards and clarity about what is criminal. There is no quick way to safely allow an exception for Quebec on this issue. The conversation does not end there. We are committed to working with Quebec to determine the next steps.

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[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up. Costs are up. Crime is up. Time is up. Just last week, we heard that a million people in Ontario were accessing food banks. Meanwhile, the NDP leader supports the Prime Minister, keeps him in power and supports his crushing carbon tax increases.

I just finished a successful by-election campaign. Why will the NDP-Liberals not let Canadians decide about the carbon tax and call a carbon tax election now?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome my new colleague to this place. It is important, of course, to always be open and transparent with Canadians. What we hear is someone else who knows how to repeat three-word slogans as well as be able to deliver for the media. What the members opposite are doing is trying to evade what they actually plan to deliver for Canadians. I hope that the member opposite can be more honest and transparent with Canadians moving forward.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up. Costs are up. Crime is up, and now time is up. Canadians are feeling more unsafe than ever. Violent crime is up 50%. Sex assaults are up 75%. Car thefts are up 46%, and shockingly, violent gun crime is up over 100%.

Will the Liberals finally join Conservatives in protecting Canadians and demanding jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my fundamental job is to keep Canadians safe. Here is what we have been doing in the last 12 months. We have increased—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would appreciate being able to hear the hon. member's response.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada from the top, please.

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, my fundamental job is to keep Canadians safe. Here is what I have been doing in the last 12 months. I have proposed new offences for money laundering that Conservatives voted against. I have increased the penalties for violent carjackings that Conservatives voted against. I and my colleague the Minister of Public Safety have put forward \$160 million to aid the CBSA and law enforcement in detecting and stopping car thefts. Car thefts are down 17% over the last six months compared to last year.

There is still more work to do. We are going to continue to do that work. While the Conservatives shout slogans, we are going to keep Canadians safe.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that criminals have nothing to fear under the NDP-Liberal legislation. Bill C-48 has done nothing to stop the crime in our communities. Instead of listening to premiers and law enforcement, who have called for bail reform, the justice minister pretends that C-48 is a success. It is an abject failure.

When will the minister stop protecting criminals and start standing up for victims by reversing their catch-and-release policies?

• (1510)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent the summer listening to victims. What they talked to me about was intelligent policies and approaches to crime. What we did is pass in the chamber, thankfully with unanimous support, bail reform.

The job is now in the provinces to ensure that that bail reform bears fruit. What am I talking about? The people who decide bail decisions are justices of the peace and primarily provincial court judges appointed at the provincial level. The people who appeal bail decisions, such as my colleague in his former capacity, are provincial crown attorneys who are under the direction of provincial premiers and provincial attorneys general. When there is not enough jail space to keep people in jail who do not deserve bail, that is a provincial responsibility.

Oral Questions

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this day 50 years ago, 32 women across Canada took an oath to become the RCMP's first female officers. They became known as Troop 17. Today we celebrate them and all women who have taken the oath since who selflessly serve in the RCMP to keep Canadians safe.

Can the Minister of Public Safety update the House on the efforts made to encourage more women to follow in their footsteps and join the RCMP?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, 32 brave women took the oath to become the first female RCMP officers. Despite facing challenges and discrimination throughout their careers, the women of Troop 17 persevered and have inspired thousands of women to proudly serve in the RCMP. Today, more than one-fifth of the RCMP regular members are women, and the RCMP continues its effort to recruit even more women to join the force.

I know all colleagues will join me in celebrating the women of Troop 17 and all those who proudly serve in the RCMP today.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up. Costs are up. Crimes are up. Time is up. Now foreign access to northern cod is up. With the backing of the six Liberal Newfoundland and Labrador MPs, the government broke its promise to allocate the first 115,000 tonnes of northern cod to the inshore harvesters, and it caved to NAFO pressure to allow foreign countries back in with 5% of the northern cod quota.

Does the minister work for foreign nations, or does she work for Canadians?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the cultural, economic and historical importance of cod to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why, after a 30-year shutdown, I announced the end of the northern cod moratorium. This modern fishery will generate significant benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador while supporting good-paying jobs.

Oral Questions

Our government is committed to managing a sustainable, prosperous fishery that benefits all generations, present and future.

[English]

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up. Costs are up. Crimes are up, and time is up for the atrocious Liberal fisheries minister. She has failed to protect one of Atlantic Canada's most important industries, the lobster fishery. In my riding, there are no DFO enforcement officers along the Canada-U.S. border. Poachers from Maine are illegally fishing lobsters in our waters. They are stealing Canada's natural resources.

Sixty New Brunswick fishing boats held a peaceful protest Saturday, calling on the minister to enforce the law and protect Canadian sovereignty. Will she do her job, or will the Prime Minister fire her?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our fishery officers have a very difficult job and they do it every day. The opposition keeps repeating ad nauseam that there is no enforcement happening on the water, but that claim is utterly false and frankly irresponsible. The work is being done—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest had the opportunity to ask his question. I am going to ask him to please hold his comments and let the minister respond to his question. I am certain he will have an opportunity to ask questions again on the same issue.

[Translation]

The hon. Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

• (1515)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague that while he might have a loud voice, I have one too.

We are deploying the additional staff and resources needed to protect our oceans and resources.

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes, costs and crime are up. Fisheries officers are refusing to patrol the Maritimes because the Liberals will not let them enforce the law. Poachers are attacking with shotguns and knives. Meanwhile, Liberal fisheries minister number six lives in denial, refusing to listen to the union. There are 20,000 pounds of lobster being poached a day through the Saulnierville wharf alone. Americans are fishing in Canadian waters.

Will the Prime Minister listen to fishermen for a change and call an election so Conservatives can fix the fishery?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my

colleagues to listen to the English interpretation of what I am about to say in French. The claims currently being made here in the House are completely untrue. Fishery officers are doing their job.

We, on this side of the House, are not putting on a show. This issue is too important. It is a matter of maritime security.

I really want to reassure the public. The things being said are irresponsible. We are going to keep on doing our job the right way, as we should.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I was pleased to join the Minister of Health to sign two new health care agreements with British Columbia. These agreements will enhance wages for personal support workers and improve accessibility and affordability to medication across B.C. Canadians believe in our health care system, and we must continue to build up a health care system for all generations.

Could the Minister of Health please share with us how these agreements will support health care in B.C.?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond Centre for his advocacy for health, making sure that we have the greatest health system in the world.

We are seeing that unfold in British Columbia with an agreement that is going to make sure that health care assistants, with some called “personal support workers”, are getting a fair wage, making sure that we work in partnership with the people who keep our hospitals, long-term care facilities and assisted care facilities going, as well as with an essential agreement on pharmacare, making sure that every person in British Columbia has access to the contraceptives they need, to the diabetes medication they need and, yes, to menopause hormone treatment. These are huge things for our health system.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' failure to fund services through Jordan's principle is endangering first nations youth. In fact, in Winnipeg, Spirit Horse Therapy is owed almost \$400,000, and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society says that the government's neglect is putting kids at risk.

When will the Liberals respect their legal obligations to Jordan's principle and ensure the health and safety of first nations youth?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be part of a government that puts indigenous children first. First nations children are getting the services they need after a decade of neglect, with the previous Conservative government ignoring their needs, leading to historic lawsuits and, of course, the compensation required to make up for such a terrible omission.

We are making it right. We are ensuring that no first nations child goes without the care they deserve.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The Northvolt plant is going to be built on the contaminated land of the Canadian Industries Limited former explosives plant and could end up polluting the Richelieu river. There are impacts on areas of federal jurisdiction and 4,000 people have signed a petition calling for a federal assessment. The mayors of Saint-Basile-le-Grand and McMasterville are wondering about the impacts of Northvolt.

Will the minister use his authority under the legislation and order an environmental assessment on the impact of the Northvolt project in Quebec?

• (1520)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for the question. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has indeed received a request for an assessment of the project. That assessment, as is usually the case, is ongoing and the agency will make a recommendation to me in the weeks to come.

However, I would like to share something with the House. The leader of the Green Party and I, as well as many people in Canada, are very confused about the NDP's position on the issue of carbon pricing. I went doorknocking on the weekend in LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, and it is incredible how many people told me that they did not understand the NDP's position that would put Quebec and the entire country at a disadvantage.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Before we move to the point of order, I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable P.J. Akeagok, Premier of Nunavut.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, and I seek unanimous consent to table this picture of the

Oral Questions

Minister of the Environment wearing an orange jumpsuit and handcuffs.

The Speaker: The hon. member is a very experienced member, and she knows that props in the House are not appropriate. There were several noes. I did indeed hear noes.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, during question period, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn referred to the Minister of Environment “lying”. In the past, when members have used such unparliamentary language, they have been forced to apologize and retract their statements or else they would not be allowed to speak. I would ask that you review that he in fact said that the minister was lying, and ensure that he apologizes in this place and that he retracts that statement.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary. Normally, that would be the way forward, but today, the chair had asked members who had used words that were unparliamentary to rephrase their questions. It happened at the top. We did that today, but normally, and I will say this to all members, the Speaker will be asking for members to formally withdraw those comments going forward. Today, being the first day coming back, perhaps we are all getting our sea legs once again.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill is rising again on a point of order.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, it is unparliamentary for other members to impugn the motives of other parliamentarians. In doing so with her speech, the parliamentary secretary just suggested that my colleague uttered a falsehood, which he did not because the Minister of the Environment was in fact arrested in—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, but we are getting into a moment of debate. The chair has already made a ruling on this issue, and we are moving on to other issues.

* * *

[Translation]

PREVENTION OF ACOUSTIC INCIDENTS

The Speaker: The Chair would like to make a short statement on the prevention of acoustic incidents during House sittings.

Members will recall that, on June 10, 2024, the House had to suspend its proceedings following an acoustic incident. The suspension was necessary to ensure a safe environment for everyone, in particular the interpreters assigned to the sitting.

For a number of months, the House administration has been actively working, along with its partners, to find solutions to further minimize the risk of acoustic incidents.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Earlier today, members received a communiqué by email with information on new prevention measures and a reminder about a few best practices. In summary, members should pay close attention to their microphones at all times. In practice, this means that members must refrain from getting too close to microphones or placing items near them. It goes without saying that earpieces must never be placed near a microphone.

• (1525)

[Translation]

Loud sounds near a microphone pose a risk. Therefore, members are asked to pay particular attention to the sound level of their earpieces, especially when the earpieces are not in use.

[English]

I would also ask members to please place their earpieces in the location marked on their desks, or inside them, if they are not wearing them on their ears. Members should also put their earpieces away inside their desks when they leave the chamber. This is an easy way to minimize the risk of acoustic shock and, therefore, of injuries

[Translation]

Should another serious incident take place in the future, in order to ensure a safe work environment, the sitting may be suspended until the source of the problem has been identified and the necessary adjustments have been made to prevent a new incident.

[English]

I would like to take this opportunity to mention another measure that will be implemented as of today. At key moments during a sitting, for example, when a large number of members are leaving the chamber after Oral Questions, the volume of earpieces located in and near the chamber will be reset to zero. This procedure will ensure that nearby microphones are less likely to pick up unwanted sounds. Members using their earpieces at that time will have to readjust the volume, while paying particular attention to the sound level. The chair occupants will announce when the volume is being reset until members get used to the new procedure.

[Translation]

Lastly, the Chair wishes to confirm that the House administration will continue to support members with special needs or who require auditory accommodations for House sittings.

I thank all members for their attention.

[English]

As I just mentioned in my statement, the volume of earpieces will now be reset. Members using their earpiece at this time will have to adjust the volume, and I thank them for paying particular attention to the sound level.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition. This return will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled “Implementing a Red Dress Alert in Canada”.

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

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 67th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 67th report later this day.

* * *

*[English]***PROMOTION OF SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL AGE ACT**

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-412, An Act to enact the Protection of Minors in the Digital Age Act and to amend the Criminal Code.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and introduce this bill that would ensure that Canadians are protected online without infringing upon their civil liberties.

Canadians are paying the price from a failure of the Liberals to provide necessary protection from online threats while they create costly censorship bureaucracies. This common sense legislation would modernize existing criminal offences to protect Canadians from harm as it occurs online with special provisions to protect minors. The bill would modernize the existing crime of criminal harassment to address the ease and anonymity of how it happens online, would provide mechanisms specifically designed to protect minors who are online and would update Canada's existing laws on the non-consensual distribution of intimate images to ensure that the non-consensual distribution of highly realistic intimate images created by artificial intelligence is criminalized, while preserving the existing provisions in current law about fair use.

Canadians need a common sense approach to tackle criminal harassment online, while ensuring that their civil liberties are protected, and this bill would do just that.

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

* * *

• (1530)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): If the House gives its consent, I move that the 67th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

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

It is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion.

All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CHUCK STRAHL

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, at the conclusion of Oral Questions on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, the House observe a moment of silence for the late Honourable Chuck Strahl, that afterwards, the Speaker, a member of the Conservative Party, a member of each of the other recognized parties, a member of the Green Party and the member from Chilliwack—Hope each be permitted to make a statement to pay tribute, and that the time taken for these proceedings shall be added to the time provided for Government Orders.

[Translation]

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

It is agreed.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

LIVING COST DIFFERENTIAL ALLOWANCE

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by 578 Canadians from across the country regarding the removal of the living cost differential allowance for federal employees in Grande Cache. The allowance was reduced from a one to a zero on the scale set by the National Joint Council, stripping away critical support.

The petitioners call on the government to reinstate the allowance at a level of one to reflect the true cost of living in Grande Cache.

LET'S'EMOT REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, petitioners in my riding are calling on the Government of Canada to provide additional funds to support the construction of the Lets'emot Regional Aquatic Centre in Agassiz, B.C., which has seen its projected costs skyrocket. The name "Lets'emot" means "one heart, one mind" in the Halq'eme'ylen language.

Residents of the District of Kent, Harrison Hot Springs, Seabird Island, Cheam, Stó:lo, Sts'ailes, Sq'ewlets, Skawahlook, Popkum and Peters first nations, and the Fraser Valley Regional District electoral areas C and D all support this project and are looking for the government to provide an innovative approach where reconciliation is put into action.

When communities want to build a facility off reserve but for surrounding indigenous communities, the Treasury Board guidelines do not allow for that to happen.

My residents want the government to think innovatively and support this project the way it should.

WILD PACIFIC SALMON

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today with a petition of great concern to many of my constituents. I heard about this issue all summer, the need for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to have removed from its statutory mandate the promotion of aquaculture in order to put the priority for DFO to be on the protection of coastal ecosystems. The petitioners note that for British Columbians, the protection of wild salmon is as important as the protection of the French language is for the Québécois.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to protect those areas in which migratory juvenile salmon travel and to ensure that the presence of fish farms and aquaculture are not too close to the areas where wild fish absolutely need that habitat. They have numerous bullet points to this petition.

I will summarize by saying that they want action to protect wild Pacific salmon and protect it from for-profit foreign fish aquaculture.

• (1535)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on this first day back of the fall sitting of our Parliament to present a petition on behalf of petitioners who would remind us that folks with disabilities across the country continue to disproportionately live in poverty.

They make it clear that this is because federal and territorial programs are below the poverty line. They note that the Canada disability benefit was promised as a benefit to reduce poverty for persons with disabilities in the same manner as the guaranteed income supplement and the Canada child benefit. However, instead, the proposed Canada disability benefit from budget 2024 is nothing that the disability community had been calling for, falling well short of the many promises made by the Liberal government.

The petitioners note that the maximum amount is just \$200 a month, that it requires a new application process in contravention of section 11(f) of the Canada Disability Benefit Act and that it is restricted to folks who have the disability tax credit, which is long known for the many barriers to access.

The petitioners call on the government, in short, to fix the Canada disability benefit. They go on to itemize the numerous ways that this needs to be done, first, by fully funding the benefit to actually lift folks out of poverty with the urgency seen with the CERB, the Canada emergency response benefit, for example. They go on to call for the government to automatically enrol folks with disabilities who are already a part of provincial and territorial programs, rather than using this disability tax credit. They call on the government to tie it to an individual's income as opposed to household income.

In short, it is a clear set of principles and actions that could be taken to fix the Canada disability benefit. I am glad to present this petition on behalf of over 3,000 people who have signed it.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2701, 2703 to 2705, 2712, 2716, 2718, 2724, 2726, 2739, 2742, 2744, 2747, 2753, 2756, 2757, 2760, 2762, 2765, 2766, 2770, 2771, 2773, 2774, 2776 to 2780, 2782, 2783, 2788, 2791, 2792, 2794, 2795, 2799, 2800, 2803, 2805, 2808, 2811, 2812, 2814, 2815, 2817, 2819 to 2821, 2827, 2828, 2830, 2832, 2833, 2836, 2838, 2843, 2849, 2851, 2853, 2854, 2859, 2861, 2862, 2872, 2876, 2887 to 2890, 2895, 2897 to 2899, 2901 and 2903.

[Text]

Question No. 2701—**Mr. Andrew Scheer:**

With regard to government hospitality expenditures related to the government's supply and confidence agreement with the NDP, including any expenses related to all meetings, negotiations, or other events attended by those involved in the agreement: what are the details of such expenditures since the beginning of the 44th Parliament, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) vendor, (iv) event description, (v) amount, (vi) number of attendees, (vii) names of the attendees?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office searched the departmental financial system and has not identified any information regarding government hospitality expenditures related to the government's supply and confidence agreement with the NDP, or any expenses related to all meetings, negotiations, or other events attended by those involved in the agreement.

Question No. 2703—**Ms. Lori Idlout:**

With regard to requests submitted through Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative, broken down by fiscal year since the program's inception: (a) what is the total number of requests received from (i) parents or guardians of Indigenous children, (ii) Indigenous children at the age of consent in their province or territory, (iii) an individual authorized to represent an Indigenous child, parent, or guardian, (iv) businesses where the requester has authorized the business to represent them; (b) what is the total amount of funding requested through these programs by (i) 511825 Ontario Inc., (ii) Maryhomes Inc., (iii) Enterphase Child & Family Services, (iv) Hatts Off Inc., (v) Unison Treatment Homes for Youth Inc., (vi) Kom's Kid Kare Agency, (vii) Kushions Inc., (viii) Hand in Hand Children's Services; and (c) what measures does the government have in place to ensure that funding applied for by for-profit corporations is delivered in full to the children who need care?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the Jordan's Principle and Inuit Child First Initiatives collect a range of information on all requests, whether approved or denied, however data on the requestor is not collected in a standardized format that allows for a breakdown by those eligible to send requests. Due to the extremely high volume of requests received by Jordan's Principle by email, fax or phone by either the National Call Centre or regional focal points, reporting on data collected in a non-standardized format is complex. For example, in 2023-24, a total of 145,769 requests were approved through Jordan's Principle for 2.17 million products, services and supports for First Nations children. Specific to the Inuit Child First Initiative, in 2023-24 a total of 12,822 requests were approved for 92,800 products, services and supports for Inuit children.

Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, is continuing to increase funding for products, services and supports to First Nations children. Since 2016, the department has invested more than \$8.1 billion to support meeting the needs of First Nations children through Jordan's Principle, working collaboratively with the First Nations Parties, and enhancing operations to meet the growing volume of requests.

Routine Proceedings

In previous years, typical requests through Jordan's Principle included supports for mental health, special education, dental, physical therapy, speech therapy, medical equipment and physiotherapy. The initiative has evolved to address requests for services that are very different in type than previously submitted to ISC. Jordan's Principle is seeing an increase in socioeconomic supports such as rent, groceries and utilities which has contributed to the increase in requests, complexity and processing times. However, while the types of requests have evolved over time, the goal of ensuring that First Nations children have an equal chance to thrive as other children in Canada remains.

The department is working towards improving operational and technological efficiencies to streamline workloads and reduce manual processes to improve service timelines. For example, ISC developed measures in 2023 to help address backlogs, such as measures to manage call volumes; the use of surge teams to address backlogs; hiring additional staff; measures to manage staff retention; and use of technology.

The Jordan's Principle National Call Centre has seen a steadily increasing volume of calls, in addition to the usual peaks in calls at different times of the year, such as in August, when there is an influx of school-related requests. For example, from March 2022 to March 2023, the call volume increased by approximately 300%.

As for part (b) of the question, ISC provides funding to First Nations child and family services agencies, which are established, managed and controlled by First Nations and delegated by provincial authorities to provide prevention and protection services. In areas where these agencies do not exist, ISC funds services provided by the provinces and Yukon but does not deliver child and family services. These services are provided in accordance with the legislation and standards of the province or territory of residence. As of January 1, 2020, service providers delivering child and family services to Indigenous children must comply with the national principles and minimum standards set in An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families.

ISC uses a prevention-based funding model to support early intervention and alternatives to traditional institutional care and foster care, such as the placement of children with family members in a community setting. The program provides 3 streams of funding: operations, namely, core and operational funding for protection services (such as salaries and overhead); prevention, namely, resources for enhanced prevention services; and maintenance, including the direct costs of placing First Nations children into temporary or permanent care out of the parental home, such as foster care rates and group home rates.

Questions relating to child and family services and funding provided for Inuit and Métis children and First Nations children living off reserve should be directed to the appropriate provincial or territorial ministry.

As for part (c) of the question, ISC has measures in place to ensure that the funds expended through the Jordan's Principle and Inuit Child First Initiatives to requestors for approved products, services and supports reach the child/children for whom the request was approved.

ISC investigates complaints and concerns such as: invoicing irregularities; concerns regarding the appropriate delivery of products, services, and supports; potential and/or suspected misuse of approved funds; and complaints related to child safety. Findings can result in a range of actions, including supporting the requestor to become compliant with ISC financial requirements, denial of future requests, consultations with the Department of Justice, and engaging with Assessment and Investigation Services Branch of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to support investigations when there are allegations of fraud.

Question No. 2704—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to the Greenland Halibut in Nunavut, since 2017: (a) what are the details of all assessments of Greenland Halibut stocks, including the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) conclusions; (b) what are the details of all Greenland Halibut fisheries management decisions, including the (i) date, (ii) scientific assessment used to justify the decision, (iii) decision on total allowable catch and sharing arrangements; (c) what investments has the government made to improve data collection on Greenland Halibut to make more informed decisions on Greenland Halibut fisheries; and (d) what efforts has the government made to incorporate Inuit traditional knowledge and Inuit science in Greenland Halibut data collection and fisheries decisions?

Hon. Diane LeBouthiller (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Greenland Halibut in Nunavut, since 2017, in response to part (a) of the question the offshore Greenland Halibut stock is shared between Canada and Greenland. It is assessed jointly by both countries through the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, or NAFO, Scientific Council every 2 years, which is reviewed by subject matter experts from both countries.

Since 2017, NAFO Scientific Council has conducted stock assessments in 2018, 2020 and 2022. The details and results of these stock assessments can be found on the NAFO website.

As for part (b) of the question, each year, TAC decisions are based on the most recent advice of the NAFO Scientific Council.

The total allowable catch (TAC) for 2017 and 2018 was set at 16,150 tonnes by Canada. Distribution of the TAC between Divisions 0A and 0B were set at 8,575 tonnes and 7,575 tonnes, respectively, and included the allocation of 100 tonnes from Division A to be fished by Nunavut-based harvesters to help develop inshore fisheries inside the Nunavut Settlement Area.

The TAC for 2019 and 2020 was set at 18,185 tonnes by Canada. Distribution of the TAC between Divisions 0A and 0B were set at 9,592.5 tonnes and 8,592.5 tonnes, respectively, and included the allocation of 100 tonnes from Division A to be fished by Nunavut-based harvesters.

For 2021 and 2022, Canada maintained the 2020 TAC and distributions between Divisions 0A and 0B.

Routine Proceedings

In 2023, Canada and Greenland lowered their TACs by 9.25% to 16,502.5 tonnes in consideration of NAFO Scientific Council advice, taking a precautionary approach that balances the overall sustainability of the fishery with the economic needs of Indigenous communities and Canadian fish harvesters. Distribution of the TAC between Divisions 0A and 0B were set at 8,704.99 tonnes and 7,797.51 tonnes, respectively. Allocations to fleets in Division 0A remained the same, including the allocation of 100 tonnes to be fished by Nunavut-based harvesters. Division 0B enterprise and special allocations were reduced proportionally.

In 2024, Canada maintained the 2023 TAC and distributions between Divisions 0A and 0B.

As for part (d) of the question, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO, supports surveys in NAFO Divisions 0A and 0B through a Collaborative Agreement with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources using the R/V Tarajoq research vessel. DFO's financial contributions to the surveys were \$1,239,300 in 2022-23 and \$1,534,263 in 2023-04.

Following a change in the research vessel, DFO invested in new research to develop a model-based calibration approach to align survey data from the new time series with the previous time series. Please refer to Science Advisory Report 2023/020.

DFO has contributed to collaborative research through the Ocean Tracking Network to quantify Greenland Halibut habitat use and movement patterns, and movement of fish among fishing areas.

Lastly, in response to part (d) of the question, DFO seeks advice on Greenland Halibut from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, or NWMB, in accordance with the Nunavut Agreement. The NWMB provides advice and recommendations on the Canadian TAC, distribution, and allocation for Subarea 0. This decision considers both the immediate and long-term health of Canada's Greenland Halibut fishery to grow a stronger, more sustainable fishery.

In collaboration with the Government of Nunavut, DFO has conducted surveys at Scott Inlet, Pond Inlet, and Broughton Island documenting Greenland Halibut distribution, fish size, and catch rates to support emerging fishery development by the communities of Clyde River, Pond Inlet, and Qikiqtarjuaq.

Question No. 2705—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to members of the Border Services (FB) group who work at the Canada Border Services Agency and the commitment made by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat during the 2021 round of bargaining to resubmit the Border Services (FB) group's proposal to introduce legislative amendments providing enhanced early retirement benefits under the public service pension plan, to facilitate an expedited opportunity to bring forward its related business case to the Public Service Pension Advisory Committee (PSPAC), and to facilitate a streamlined process to have these issues reviewed and ensure that related recommendations are brought forward in a timely manner: (a) who has the government consulted with through this process, including, but not limited to, members of the Border Services (FB) group, through their bargaining agent; (b) what information, advice, and recommendations have the (i) PSPAC, (ii) Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), (iii) Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSPIB), presented to the Treasury Board; (c) what information, statements, advice, and recommendations has the Treasury Board presented to the (i) PSPAC, (ii) PSAC, (iii) PSPIB; (d) what is the timeline to implement the promised changes; and (e) what steps still need to be taken to ensure these changes take place?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response

to part (a) of the question, as per the 2021 agreement between the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the proposal to extend eligibility for early retirement benefits to the Border Services (FB) group was brought forward for consultations held through the Public Service Pension Advisory Committee, or PSPAC. The PSPAC was established pursuant to the Public Service Superannuation Act. It is composed of six employer representatives, six employee representatives, and one retiree representative. Members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada are represented on this committee.

With respect to part (b) of the question, in December 2023, the PSPAC completed a comprehensive assessment of the proposal to extend eligibility for early retirement benefits to the Border Services (FB) group and provided a recommendation to the President of the Treasury Board. The advice of the Public Service Alliance of Canada is reflected in the PSPAC recommendation to the President of the Treasury Board. The Public Sector Pension Investment Board was not involved in the development of this proposal.

With respect to part (c) of the question, after receiving the PSPAC's recommendation in December 2023, the President of the Treasury Board responded to the PSPAC to acknowledge its recommendation and communicate that she had taken it under advisement.

With respect to part (d) of the question, on June 13, 2024, the President of the Treasury Board announced the Government of Canada's intention to expand early pension eligibility for certain public safety and security workers, including frontline members of the Border Services (FB) group. Per the President's announcement, legislative amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Act are expected to be introduced in Parliament in the fall of 2024.

Lastly, with respect to part (e) of the question, in order to implement the changes to expand early pension eligibility for certain public safety and security workers, including frontline members of the Border Services (FB) group, legislative amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Act will need to be passed by Parliament and amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Regulations will need to be approved by the Governor in Council. Considerable pay and pension system changes will also need to be completed before the changes can be operationalized.

Question No. 2712—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to the statement from the Minister of Health on March 20, 2024, indicating that Health Canada is pursuing legislative and regulatory mechanisms to place restrictions on the flavors of nicotine replacement therapies: (a) what specific studies have been conducted by Health Canada related to the impact of such a restriction; and (b) what are the details of all studies in (a), including, for each, the (i) date the study was completed, (ii) names and titles of who conducted the study, (iii) methodology, (iv) findings, (v) website location where the study can be found online?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the notice of intent, found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/notice-intent-address-risks-youth-appeal-access-nicotine-replacement-therapies.html> and published by the department on March 20, 2024, Health Canada is considering legislative and regulatory mechanisms to address access and potential youth appeal of nicotine replacement therapies, or NRTs. New requirements, such as but not limited to specific requirements for labelling and packaging, as well as restrictions related to colours, flavours, advertising and place of sale, are being considered.

Health Canada is considering many sources of input as it continues to develop a proposed path forward, such as, for example, the publicly available information below. Please note that information on sources of input related to regulatory mechanisms will be published as part of a regulatory impact analysis statement along with any regulatory measures in the Canada Gazette, where appropriate.

Here are some examples of publicly available information: “Canada Gazette, Part 1, Volume 155, Number 25: Order Amending Schedules 2 and 3 to the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act (Flavours)”, at <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2021/2021-06-19/html/reg2-eng.html>; and the “Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (CTNS): summary of results for 2022”, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-tobacco-nicotine-survey/2022-summary.html>.

Question No. 2716—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), as of March 31, 2024: (a) how many employees or full-time equivalents (FTEs) are currently employed by IRCC; (b) how many of these employees or FTEs are classified as EX or above; (c) how many of these employees or FTEs are classified below the EX level; (d) of the employees or FTEs that are classified as EX or above and below EX, how many work (i) physically full-time in a government office, (ii) completely remotely, (iii) in a hybrid situation, where they work certain days in the office and certain days remotely; (e) for hybrid workers, how many days per week are they required to come to an office location; (f) what monitoring is done by IRCC to ensure that remote and hybrid employees are putting in the equivalent to a full day while working remotely; (g) what remedial action is undertaken when a supervisor has discovered that an employee is not putting in the equivalent to a full day while working remotely, and what thresholds or limits have been established by IRCC before formal action is taken, such as loss of pay or termination; (h) how many instances of remedial and formal action were taken in the 2023-24 fiscal year; and (i) if remedial or formal action is not taken when the situation outlined in (g) occurs, why not?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, is concerned, in response to part (a) of the question, according to IRCC’s Departmental Human Resources System, PeopleSoft, IRCC counts 14,034 employees who are currently employed by IRCC.

In response to part (b) of the question, of the employees in (a), IRCC counts 272 employees as EX or above.

In response to part (c) of the question, of the employees in (a), IRCC counts 13,762 employees below the EX level.

With respect to part (d) of the question, of the employees that are classified as EX or above and below EX, based on departmental records, approximately 2.6% of IRCC employees work from a government office every day, approximately 47.4% of IRCC employees work completely remotely, and approximately 50% of IRCC

employees are in a hybrid situation, working certain days in the office and certain days remotely.

In response to part (e) of the question, IRCC employees following a hybrid work schedule are required to come into the office a minimum of 40% of their regular schedule on a weekly or monthly basis.

In response to part (f) of the question, managers are responsible for ensuring the employees adhere to the conditions set out in their telework agreement, including those governing their hours of work.

With respect to part (g) of the question, a range of corrective administrative or disciplinary measures may be imposed should an employee not abide by the conditions set out in their telework agreements, including those governing their hours of work. The appropriate remedial action is established on a case-by-case basis and can include, without being limited to, a letter of expectations, a revocation of the telework agreement, administrative recovery of salary owed, rejection on probation, term non-renewal, oral or written reprimand, suspension or termination of employment.

With respect to part (h) of the question, 21 instances of remedial and formal action were taken in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Lastly, with respect to part (i) of the question, remedial action will always be taken to ensure the situation is rectified and does not reoccur.

Question No. 2718—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the RCMP’s Canadian Firearms Program in British Columbia (BC): (a) how many full-time individuals are currently employed by the program in BC; (b) how many staff members in BC work exclusively remote or from home; (c) how many BC staff members work exclusively in person; (d) what percentage of all BC work hours are spent (i) in person, (ii) remotely or at home; and (e) what is the (i) average salary, (ii) total annual expenditures on salaries, for BC employees of the Canadian Firearms Program?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, a) As of May 23, 2024, there are 22 full-time individuals employed by the Chief Firearms Office, the CFO, in British Columbia.

In terms of part (b) of the question, there are no employees with the British Columbia CFO working exclusively remote or from home.

(c) With regard to part (c) of the question, all employees with the British Columbia CFO work exclusively in person.

With regard to part (d)(i) of the question, 100% of the employees are working in person.

With regard to part (d)(ii) of the question, there are no employees with the British Columbia CFO working remote or from home.

With regard to part (e)(i) of the question, based on fiscal year 2023-24, the average salary is \$73,924.

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Lastly, concerning part (e)(ii) of the question, based on fiscal year 2023-24, the total expenditures on salaries for the British Columbia CFO is \$1,922,013.

Question No. 2724—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the residence located in Winnipeg previously known as Lions Place: (a) did the City of Winnipeg or the Government of Manitoba contact the federal government to request assistance in maintaining non-profit ownership of Lions Place; (b) what measures did the federal government undertake to assist, prevent or otherwise shape the sale of Lions Place to its purchaser, Mainstreet Equity; (c) what financing or support did the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provide to the previous owner of Lions Place, Lions Housing Centres Inc., prior to its sale to Mainstreet Equity, broken down by year and dollar amount; (d) what financing or support did the CMHC provide to Mainstreet Equity to assist with its purchase of Lions Place, broken down by year and dollar amount; (e) did any CMHC board members recuse themselves from participating in votes or decisions surrounding the sale of Lions Place; and (f) since January 1, 2015, has any CMHC board member recused themselves from decisions surrounding the sale or purchase of a residential property?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), as of October 1, 1998, under the Social Housing Agreement, or SHA, found at <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/about-us/social-housing-information/administration-of-social-housing>, CMHC transferred Lions Place, a 287-unit building located at 610 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg to the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, the MHRC. Under the terms of the SHA, MHRC, was given the responsibility, rights for the management and administration for the social housing programs and projects listed under the SHA.

With regard to part (b), the federal government does not intervene in private sale transactions.

With regard to part (c), CMHC provided a direct loan of \$12.5 million to Lions Club of Winnipeg. Seniors, Lions Place, a 287-unit building at 610 Portage Ave, Winnipeg, which was paid in full by August 1, 2018.

With regard to part (d), further information can't be provided as disclosing any detail would compromise client privacy and CMHC is unable to confirm or deny specifics.

With regard to part (e), Operational matters are outside of the scope of the CMHC board of directors.

With regard to part (f), Operational matters are outside of the scope of the CMHC board of directors.

Question No. 2726—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the testimony from the Information Commissioner on May 16, 2024, at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in which she said that "We are now looking at a total funding shortfall of \$700,000 which represents a reduction in my budget of approximately 5%": why did the government make this reduction to the Information Commissioner's budget?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, The 2024-25 Main Estimates included funding of \$15,344,268 in program expenditures funding for the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada. This is an increase of approximately 8% relative to \$14,212,216 in program expenditures funding presented in the estimates in 2023-24.

This additional funding for the office reflects salary increases due to new collective agreements. Similar funding top-ups are allo-

cated to 90 organizations across government. Amounts are calculated using a longstanding process based on the number and classifications of employees at a specific point in time.

TBS will continue to work with the Information Commissioner to address financial pressures faced by her office.

Question No. 2739—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to Possession and Acquisition Licenses (PAL) and Restricted Possession and Acquisition Licenses (RPAL) applications for renewal or first licensing, as of December 31, for each year from 2016 to 2023, inclusively, broken down by type of application (New PAL, Renewal, Minor PAL, or Transfer), and province or territory of application: (a) how many applications have been in processing for over (i) one month, (ii) three months, (iii) six months, (iv) one year, (v) 18 months; (b) how many of the applications required secondary and tertiary reviews; (c) how many applications were delayed due to administrative issues; (d) how many employees or full time equivalents were employed at the Canadian Firearms Program office to process applications; and (e) how many PAL or RPAL renewal applications remained in processing six months after the listed expiry date on the license?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity) (Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The RCMP is a decentralized organization comprised of over 700 detachments in 150 communities across the country. The RCMP concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted, and this could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 2742—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the High Frequency Rail project and the options analyzed by CPCS Transcom Limited (CPCS) and WSP Global Inc. (WSP), to enhance passenger rail service in Southwestern Ontario: (a) on what date was the analysis provided to the Minister of Transport; (b) what are the details of the findings of the analysis; (c) on what date will the findings be made available on the government's website; and (d) how much did the government pay CPCS and WSP for these analyses?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my office was provided the analysis in May 2024.

Transport Canada is currently in the process of reviewing the analysis and determining next steps. The findings will be included in a summary report that is scheduled for publication on Transport's Canada website in the coming months.

The Government of Canada paid CPCS Transcom Limited and WSP Global Inc. \$1,068,424.36 to carry out its study of how to improve intercity passenger rail service in southwestern Ontario.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2744—Mr. Randy Hoback:**

With regard to Canada's Heads of Mission to each G7 member state, since January 1, 2022, and broken down by year: (a) how much has been spent on lobbyists and consultants, in total and broken down by embassy or high commission; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of service (lobbying or consulting); and (c) what are the details of each contract for lobbying or consulting for any embassy or high commission in a G7 country abroad, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the services, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced or competitive bid)?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Global Affairs Canada undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The department concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Information on contracts worth more than \$10,000 is available on the Open Government site, under Proactive Disclosure at the following link: <https://open.canada.ca/en>.

Question No. 2747—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to Policy Horizons Canada and the May 2024 report entitled "The Disruptions on the Horizon": (a) which individuals or organizations, outside of the Government of Canada, contributed to the report; (b) were any of the individuals or organizations in (a) paid to participate, and, if so, how much was each paid; (c) what kind of format was used to gather opinions from individuals or organizations; (d) what specific questions were posed to the individuals or organizations in (a); (e) did Policy Horizons Canada attempt to gather the opinions of individuals or organizations outside of those that participated, and, if so, what are the details, including (i) their names, (ii) the reason provided to Policy Horizons Canada for why these individuals or organizations chose not to participate; (f) what was the total cost to research, prepare and publish the report; (g) has a lessons-learned exercise been conducted following the release of the report, and, if so, what were the results; and (h) is there a follow-up report anticipated and, if so, what are the details, including (i) the estimated date of release, (ii) the proposed budget, (iii) the focus of that report, (iv) whether the same individuals and organizations be consulted, (v) whether the lessons learned from the current report be incorporated into the upcoming report?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the disruptions assessed in the report were derived from a literature review, expert interviews with individuals, conversations with policy makers within the Government of Canada, workshops with foresight practitioners, as well as Policy Horizons Canada's ongoing foresight work aimed at analyzing what is changing in our society, what is driving that change, and what new realities could emerge.

To assess the disruptions, Policy Horizons gathered and analyzed input from around 500 stakeholders, colleagues, and foresight experts across the Government of Canada and beyond who responded to the survey. Participants did not represent an organization; they voluntarily responded to a survey as individuals.

The individuals were selected by Policy Horizons Canada for their expertise in one or several domains covered by the disruption.

Policy Horizons Canada composed the survey participant list to include a variety of background and perspectives. All participants are part of Policy Horizons Canada's larger expert network. About 53% of the survey respondents, or 258 people, were from the Government of Canada, and 47%, or 233 people, were from outside of the Government of Canada. The names of participants were not collected as part of the survey.

In response to part (b) of the question, no one was paid to participate in any part of the research or survey. Individuals responded on a volunteer basis.

As for part (c) of the question, the disruptions assessed in the report were derived from a literature review, expert interviews with individuals, conversations with policy makers within the Government of Canada, workshops with foresight practitioners, as well as Policy Horizons Canada's (Policy Horizons) ongoing foresight work aimed at analyzing what is changing in our society, what is driving that change, and what new realities could emerge.

As for part (d) of the question, the following questions were asked in the survey: "Assess each of the following disruptions (35 in total) based on likelihood and impact—how likely it is to occur and how much impact it could have, if it were to occur.

Select what you think the likelihood and impact of the disruption would be on a scale of 1-5 (1 being low, 5 being high)."

"Think of each disruption as a future where a circumstance reaches a critical point and becomes the new normal, or a significant event happens.

Select the option that indicates when you think each disruption could occur, in years. Select 10 if you think the disruption could occur in 10 or more years."

"Assess each of the following seven disruptions based on interconnections—if one disruption were to occur, which related disruptions would be more likely to occur.

Select two related disruptions for each disruption."

As for part (e) of the question, Policy Horizons Canada sent the survey to approximately 2000 people within their expert network. Nearly 500, namely, 491, people responded. As participation was voluntary, reasons why individuals chose not to participate was not provided.

Part (f) of the question touched on the total cost to research, prepare, and publish the report. Internal resources provided: the salary for the project team, namely, two EC-06, one EC-04, for approximately 11 months. This includes the development of the report as well as the initial dissemination across the Government of Canada, including workshops, presentations and Futures Week sessions; the salary for communications work, namely, one IS-05, one IS-04, for approximately one week. In addition, executives and staff of Policy Horizons provided input and review.

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External resources included the software license to undertake the survey, a cost of \$2,192.00; and graphic design work and report layout, a cost of \$8,463.70.

With regard to part (g) of the question, as the report was published on May 7, 2024, a lessons-learned exercise has not been conducted at this time.

Lastly, with regard to part (h) of the question, Policy Horizons Canada, as the Government of Canada's centre of excellence in foresight, intends to continue its Disruptions on the horizon work. The content and details regarding future reports have not been determined at this time.

Question No. 2753—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to visas for international students in Canada: how many international students (i) are currently studying in Canada, (ii) are studying at institutions accredited by Universities Canada, (iii) are studying at institutions that are members of the National Association of Career Colleges, (iv) have transferred institutions within Canada during their period of study, (v) are in a K-12 program?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, manages the international student program and is responsible for issuing study permits to foreign nationals seeking to study in Canada. While IRCC tracks the total number of study permit holders, in the absence of an exit control system, it is not guaranteed that all these study permit holders are currently residing in Canada as international students can leave the country at any point in time after arrival.

Here is the information that IRCC is able to share.

On May 3, 2024, 1,073,435 study permit holders held a valid permit to study in Canada, and 341,531 of them were studying at institutions accredited by Universities Canada. The data in part (iii) is not tracked by IRCC. The information in part (iv) is not recorded in IRCC's database, so IRCC is unable to provide the requested information based on the available data. Of the above-mentioned study permit holders, 159,055 are at the K-12 level study level.

Question No. 2756—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the government's Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund applications and the statements made by the Mayor of Merritt, Michael Goetz, and the Mayor of Princeton, Spencer Coyne, both in British Columbia, that their municipalities' applications for funding under this program were denied by the government without explanation: (a) why was Merritt's application denied; (b) why was Princeton's application denied; and (c) how do these funding rejections align with the Prime Minister's statement to these communities after the flooding that he and his government would "have their backs"?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the government's applications under the disaster mitigation adaptation fund, the DMAF, and the statements made by the Mayor of Merritt, Michael Goetz, and the Mayor of Princeton, Spencer Coyne, in response to part (a) of the question, the DMAF is a national, merit-based, competitive program, and projects are assessed based on the information provided in the project application only. Officials from Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, or HICC, have met with Merritt to discuss the results of the process. HICC recognizes the importance of all projects it receives but funds are limited, and there were hundreds of projects that needed to be considered in the last round.

With respect to part b), DMAF is a national, merit-based, competitive program, and projects are assessed based on the information provided in the project application only. HICC officials will meet with Princeton to discuss the results of the process towards the end of June. HICC recognizes the importance of all projects it receives but funds are limited and there were hundreds of projects that needed to be considered in the last round.

With respect to part c), DMAF has been consistently oversubscribed since its inception in 2018, and, during the latest intake, the program received applications requesting more than six times the \$900 million of funding available. The department received hundreds of well-prepared applications for important projects to improve the resilience of communities from coast to coast to coast. Due to the high level of interest, the department was unable to provide funding to all projects.

Question No. 2757—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to Destination Canada: (a) how much economic activity is generated in Canada each summer from the domestic tourism industry; (b) of the economic activity in (a), how much and what percentage of (i) passengers, (ii) economic activity, is from domestic tourists who arrived via automobiles or road trips; and (c) what is Destination Canada's position on the statement regarding car trips that was made by the Minister of Health on May 30, 2024, that "They can enjoy their 10 hours in the car and let the planet burn"?

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, in the third quarter of 2023, approximately \$27.5 billion in economic activity was generated by Canadian residents travelling domestically, according to the Statistics Canada National Travel Survey.

With regard to part (b), Destination Canada does not have access to data on domestic travel by mode of transport. However, data specifically on domestic trips by Canadian residents can be found publicly at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=2410004501>.

With regard to part (c), Destination Canada does not have a comment on the Minister of Health's statement.

Question No. 2760—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the change announced by the Prime Minister on May 24, 2024, that Catherine Blewett, the Secretary of the Treasury Board, was being reassigned to become a Senior Official at the Privy Council Office (PCO): (a) what will her responsibilities be as a Senior Official at the PCO; (b) why was the Senior Official position not listed in the last organizational structure chart published by the PCO in April 2024; (c) where will the Senior Official position fit in to the PCO's organizational structure chart; and (d) how many days per week will she be required to show up in person at the PCO in Ottawa?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the change announced by the Prime Minister on May 24, 2024, that Catherine Blewett, the Secretary of the Treasury Board, was being reassigned to become a Senior Official at the Privy Council Office (PCO), the response is as follows to part (a) of the question, senior official positions at PCO are determined on a case-by-case basis in response to organizational needs and are often employed for transitions in the senior ranks of the public service.

As for part (b), senior official positions at PCO are not listed in the organizational structure chart, due to the temporary nature of the role.

With regard to part (c), senior official positions generally report to the Clerk of the Privy Council, including the position Catherine Blewett is holding.

With regard to part (d), pursuant to the Privacy Act, details of an employee's work agreement are considered personal information and therefore cannot be disclosed.

Question No. 2762—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to the statement on page 99 of the 2023 Fall Economic Statement that "The government will begin purchasing up to an annual maximum of \$30 billion of Canada Mortgage Bonds, starting as early as February 2024": (a) when did the government begin purchasing the bonds; (b) what is the amount and value of the bonds purchased to date; (c) what are the government's projections in relation to how much of the \$30 billion in bonds per year the government expects to default or write-off; and (d) what specific measures, if any, are in place to ensure that the government's finances are not adversely impacted by any increase in the default rate of these bonds?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the government conducted its first purchase of Canada mortgage bonds, or CMBs, on February 14, 2024.

With respect to part (b), to date, the government has purchased \$11 billion of Canada mortgage bonds. More details on Canada mortgage bonds purchased by the government are available at the Bank of Canada website at <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/markets/canada-mortgage-bonds-government-purchases-and-holdings/>.

As of May 31, 2024, the market value of the government's CMB portfolio was equivalent to \$11.1 billion.

Although the government tracks the fair value of its CMB portfolio, CMBs are accounted for at amortized cost, not at their fair value. Consequently, movement in CMB value has no financial impact on the portfolio.

With respect to part (c), the government does not expect any incremental losses on these holdings due to existing federal government guarantees. It does not expect defaults or write offs.

Furthermore, for a variety of reasons, mortgage default rates in Canada have historically been low.

Given all these structures in place, there has not been a default on CMBs since the introduction of the program in 2001.

With respect to part (d), due to the existing guarantee mechanisms in place that protect CMBs against default risk and that sig-

nificantly mitigate risk, the purchase of CMBs does not increase the government's risk exposure.

Question No. 2765—Mrs. Rachael Thomas:

With regard to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) decision, announced in June 2024, that it would require online streaming services to pay five percent of their Canadian revenues to CRTC as part of implementing the measures contained in Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts: (a) how many different streaming services does the CRTC expect to receive payments from; (b) how much annual revenue does the CRTC expect to receive; (c) what assurances, if any, has the CRTC received to ensure that the 5% percent is not passed on to consumers in the form of higher subscription prices; and (d) what analysis, if any, was done on the impact of higher subscription prices as a result of the payment requirement on inflation or the cost of living?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal that regulates broadcasting and telecommunications in the public interest. It holds public consultations and makes decisions based on the public record.

The Online Streaming Act, which amended the Broadcasting Act, requires the CRTC to modernize the Canadian broadcasting framework and ensure that online streaming services make meaningful contributions to Canadian and Indigenous content.

Immediately after the new legislation was adopted, the CRTC published a regulatory plan and launched four public consultations, including one on what base contributions online services must make to support the Canadian broadcasting system.

During the public consultation on contributions, the CRTC received more than 360 detailed submissions and held a three-week public hearing where it heard from over 120 groups. Based on the public record, the CRTC decided online streaming services that make \$25 million or more in annual revenues in Canada are required to contribute 5% of their Canadian revenues to support the Canadian broadcasting system.

The CRTC does not receive the base contributions. The contributions will be made directly to independently administrated funds. Online streaming services also have some flexibility, for example, to direct parts of their contributions to support Canadian television content directly.

The CRTC estimates that 13 audio and audiovisual services belonging to nine ownership groups will be required to make a base contribution.

With regard to part (b), the CRTC does not receive the base contributions. The contributions will be made directly to independently administrated funds.

In terms of part (c), the CRTC does not have the authority to regulate the pricing of online streaming services.

With regard to part (d), the CRTC does not have the authority to regulate the pricing of online streaming services.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2766—Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to the revelation by the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) at the Standing Committee on Finance on June 3, 2024, that "the government has economic analysis on the impact of the carbon tax itself and the OBPS. We've seen that, staff in my office, but we've been told explicitly not to disclose it": (a) who in the government issued this gag order on the PBO; (b) what were the findings of any economic analysis which was subject to the gag order; (c) why was the gag order issued; and (d) how does the gag order comply with the Prime Minister's commitment in 2015 to provide Canadians with the most transparent and open government in the world?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has a collaborative relationship with the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO. We always have and always will cooperate fully with the PBO's requests, including by providing all the specific documents and information that respond to the parameters of his requests.

Environment and Climate Change Canada, or ECCC, like all departments in the government, routinely gives the PBO privileged access to data sets to support him in the creation of high-quality analysis.

These data sets are not analysis, they are raw data, and they can sometimes contain sensitive private data. They respond to a specific request for information from the PBO and do not represent any kind of comprehensive economic analysis.

Occasionally, data shared with the PBO may contain sensitive information that relates to specific companies. In order to protect their privacy and respect business confidentiality, such data must be managed in accordance with the Statistics Act.

ECCC recognizes the PBO's discretion to release some or all of the information as he sees fit and trusts the PBO will manage the information he receives in accordance with his mandate and any relevant legal requirements. We have reviewed all of the data in the material that was released on June 13 and are confident that none of it is confidential and can therefore be disclosed publicly.

The PBO's analysis of Canada's carbon pollution pricing system confirms that the majority of households receive more in Canada Carbon Rebate payments than they face in direct costs due to pricing.

Climate change is imposing increasing costs on Canadians, and Canada has made an international commitment to tackling this global challenge.

The Government made the decision to place a price on pollution because it is widely recognized as the most cost-effective way of reducing carbon pollution that causes climate change. It reduces the pollution that drives more extreme climate impacts, and orients Canada's economy to capture the advantages of a net zero transition.

Any comprehensive analysis of the economic benefits of carbon pricing would also need to include the financial investments that result in part from carbon pricing regimes. Putting a price on carbon pollution encourages businesses to find ways to be more efficient, invest in cleaner technologies, and shift toward cleaner energy sources.

The Government looks forward to receiving the PBO's revised report in the fall and hopes it includes a more comprehensive analysis of carbon pricing that includes all the costs of climate change and the economic benefits of taking action to combat it.

Question No. 2770—Mr. Dane Lloyd:

With regard to cyberattacks on government servers since January 1, 2021, broken down by department or agency and by year: (a) how many attempted cyberattacks are estimated to have occurred; (b) how many cyberattacks resulted in the server or data being compromised in any way; (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by the resulting damage (data stolen, server mined, unknown, etc.); (d) for each instance where data was stolen or compromised, (i) what was the date, (ii) how many individuals' data was involved, (iii) how were the affected individuals notified, (iv) what is the incident summary; and (e) for each instance in (b) where an individual's data was not involved, (i) what was the date, (ii) what is the incident summary, (iii) what damage, if any, was caused to any government servers, networks, or equipment?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of its mandate, Communications Security Establishment Canada, CSE, protects electronic information and information infrastructures that are of importance to the Government of Canada, helping to thwart criminal or state-sponsored cyber threat activity targeting our systems. Every day, CSE uses its sophisticated cyber capabilities and technical expertise to identify and defend against threats to Canada's information systems and networks, and to take active measures to address them.

The definition of the term "cyberattack" is highly variable. CSE uses the term "malicious cyber attempts" to capture unsuccessful attempts to identify vulnerabilities and penetrate a system. CSE does not track disaggregated statistics regarding malicious cyber attempts on government servers or websites. However, as outlined in the recently released 2023-2024 Annual Report, CSE's Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, known as the cyber centre, blocked an average of 6.6 billion potentially malicious actions a day ranging from routine scans to sophisticated intrusion attempts.

When a cyber incident occurs, responding rapidly and taking the right steps can significantly reduce the potential harm and speed up the recovery process. The cyber centre's definition of a cyber incident covers a wide range of attempted threat activity, whether successful or not. During 2023-24, the cyber centre helped respond to 2,192 cyber security incidents across the Government of Canada and Canadian critical infrastructure. This is slightly more than the previous year.

CSE and its cyber centre generally do not comment on cyber incidents. However, since January 1, 2021, CSE has publicly acknowledged its involvement in supporting government partners who have experienced cyber incidents. On January 19, 2022, a cyber incident was detected against Global Affairs Canada, or GAC. CSE and its cyber centre, in conjunction with government partners including the Treasury Board Secretariat's Office of the Chief Information Officer and Shared Services Canada, worked together to respond to the incident. In March 2022, CSE and its cyber centre worked with the National Research Council in response to a cyber incident. In October 2022, CSE and its cyber centre worked with the IT branch of the House of Commons Administration in response to a cyber incident. The cyber centre provided cyber security assistance and support to ensure that critical services for parliamentarians and House of Commons staff remain functioning. In September 2023, CSE and its cyber centre reported several distributed denial of service campaigns, also known as DDoS campaigns, targeting the Government of Canada, provinces and territories, as well as the financial and transportation sectors. The cyber centre worked with government partners and supporting organizations outside the government as well. In January and February 2024, CSE and its cyber centre worked with colleagues at GAC as they managed a cyber incident. In February 2024, CSE and its cyber centre worked with colleagues at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, as they managed a cyber incident. In March 2024, CSE and its cyber centre worked with colleagues at the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC) and Global Affairs Canada as they managed a cyber incident.

Given the constantly evolving threat environment in which CSE operates, for reasons of national security, CSE is unable to provide any additional information. Releasing the requested detailed information would allow hostile actors to gain insights into our security and processes that would jeopardize CSE's operations, thereby compromising national security.

Question No. 2771—**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:**

With regard to applications received by the government to run supervised consumption sites, since 2015 and broken down by province or territory: (a) what are the addresses and services offered or potentially offered for each application received; and (b) for each application in (a), broken down by address or site, is the status of the application (i) received but a decision has not yet been made, (ii) approved but not yet operational, (iii) approved and operational, (iv) rejected?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, comprehensive information on applications received by the government to run supervised consumption sites since 2015, including details such as province or territory, city and location, approval and expiration dates, and authorized services, is available at the Supervised consumption sites: Status of applications website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/supervised-consumption-sites/status-application.html>. This resource provides insights into sites currently offering services under a valid exemption from section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, authorized sites not currently offering services, open applications pending approval, and refused applications that did not receive an exemption under section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Routine Proceedings

Web tables are generally updated monthly and therefore may not reflect the current status as of today.

Question No. 2773—**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund applications received from communities in British Columbia since 2021: (a) what are the details of all applications which were denied funding, including, for each, the (i) name of the city, town or municipality, (ii) date of the application, (iii) disaster event related to the application, (iv) reason that the funding was denied; (b) what specific criteria is used, including any scoring or grading system, to determine whether an application is approved or denied; and (c) if a scoring or grading system was used, what score or grade was given to each application in (a)?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund applications received from communities in British Columbia since 2021, in response to parts (a) and (c), the Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund is a national, merit-based, competitive program. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, or HICC, recognizes the importance of all projects it receives, however funds are limited, and there have been hundreds of projects considered within the specified timeframe. In processing Parliamentary Returns, the Government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and project-specific details have been withheld on the grounds that it constitutes provincial and third-party confidential information protected under the ATIA.

HICC officials extend an offer to meet with recipients individually to discuss the results of the process. It is at the discretion of applicants to communicate their application information and status publicly.

With respect to part (b), the Applicant Guide contains details regarding criteria. It can be found at <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/alt-format/pdf/dmaf-faac/dmaf-faac-applicant-guide-demandeur-en.pdf>.

Question No. 2774—**Mr. Ben Lobb:**

With regard to meetings held between the US Ambassador, David Cohen, and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry or the Deputy Minister: what are the details of all meetings in which the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act has been raised, including, the (i) date and time, (ii) names and titles of those in attendance, (iii) location, (iv) summary of the discussions?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was no meeting between the U.S. Ambassador, David Cohen, and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry or the deputy minister during which the artificial intelligence and data act was raised.

Question No. 2776—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to international trips taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all trips where the minister has introduced and discussed topics related to fisheries and fisheries management, including, for each, (i) the names and titles of those in attendance, (ii) the date and time of the meeting, (iii) the location of the meeting, (iv) a summary of the specific topic discussed at the meeting?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Oceans Act and the Fisheries Act, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard is responsible for the proper management and control of fisheries, and the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat. To carry out this broad mandate, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, supports its minister through co-operation in regional fisheries management organizations such as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

Under the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Act, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the conduct of diplomatic and consular relations on behalf of Canada, which includes providing legal advice to DFO on international law questions and coordinating Canada's treaty adoption process from the negotiating mandate to the entry into force including with respect to fisheries and fisheries management.

In response to parts (i) to (iv) of the question, Global Affairs Canada does not have a central information management system that systematically captures when and if the current and former ministers of Foreign Affairs introduced or discussed topics related to fisheries and fisheries management during meetings conducted on international trips.

After a manual search of records since November 4, 2015, Global Affairs Canada officials provided briefing materials specific to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on fish or fisheries management for 35 international trips. Further validating the specific instances during these trips in which fisheries and fisheries management were introduced or discussed is not possible within the time provided for a response without risking the disclosure of information that is inaccurate or misleading, or would be injurious to the conduct of Canada's international affairs.

Question No. 2777—Mr. Bernard Généreux:

With regard to individual expense receipts submitted by a board of director, chair, or CEO, at Export Development Canada, since 2018: what are the details of all items expensed, including the (i) dollar value of each expense, (ii) product or service expensed, (iii) name of the venue for the product or service expensed, (iv) name of the city in which it was expensed, (v) reason for the expense, (vi) name and title of the individual it was expensed under?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (i) to (vi) of the question, Export Development Canada, or EDC, undertook an extensive preliminary search to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. EDC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Export Development Canada is governed by a Board of Directors whose representatives are primarily from the private sector. The Board's responsibility is to supervise the direction and management of EDC and oversee its strategic direction as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Board members are appointed by the Government of

Canada, and report to Parliament through the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development.

The Export Development Canada Board of Directors has comprised 10-12 members per calendar year since 2018, including the Board Chair. The total number of members having served on the Board since 2018 is 21. The Board and its committees meet in-person 3-4 times annually.

Export Development Canada is guided by the guidelines and regulations concerning the management and governance of Crown corporations set by the Treasury Board Secretariat. The Travel and Hospitality Expense Policy for the Boards of Directors of EDC and Development Finance Institute Canada, or FinDev, and the External Communications and Representation & Orientation, Training and Development Policy for the Board of Directors articulate the Board's travel parameters.

Export Development Canada's President and Chief Executive Officer works with the Executive Management Team to oversee day-to-day operations and execute the business strategy as outlined in EDC's Corporate Plan. Although a member of the EDC and FinDev Canada Boards, the CEO is covered under the EDC Employee Travel Guideline rather than the Board Travel and Hospitality Expense Policy.

Current executive and Board of Director disclosures are publicly available online at <https://www.edc.ca/en/about-us/corporate/disclosure/travel-hospitality-expenses.html>.

Question No. 2778—Mr. Bernard Généreux:

With regard to the funding provided by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) to the MaRS Discovery District (MaRS): what are the details of all agreements between ISED and MaRS since November 4, 2015, including, for each, the (i) value of any funding received, (ii) form of funding received, (iii) date that the agreement was agreed to by both parties, (iv) details on the purpose of the agreement, (v) intended use of the funding by MaRS in their role as a registered charity?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada has not provided funding to the MaRS Discovery District since November 4, 2015.

Question No. 2779—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the construction and planned construction of all ships under the Canadian Surface Combatant procurement project of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy, since the program was introduced: (a) for each ship, what percentage of all materials and equipment was initially planned to be of Canadian manufacturing and origin, and what was the percentage at the time of completion; and (b) what is the specific origin and manufacturer of all materials and equipment used?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Canadian Surface Combatant project, the CSC project, is currently in definition phase, the design of ships is not finalized and, consequently, construction has not commenced. As such, Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, is not yet able to provide the percentage of all materials and equipment planned to be of Canadian manufacturing and origin. The selection of equipment for incorporation into the ship is ongoing, and PSPC is making every effort to maximize Canadian manufacturing and content wherever feasible.

To this end, PSPC has signed or is in the process of negotiating contracts with numerous Canadian suppliers. PSPC has engaged companies from five different provinces to work on the CSC project and will continue to work to expand the list of Canadian suppliers working on the ships.

Question No. 2780—**Mr. Clifford Small:**

With regard to the 2017 mandate of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to negotiate timelimited Rights Reconciliation Agreements with First Nations in Atlantic Canada and Quebec: what are the details of all agreements under this mandate, including, for each, (i) the name or title of the agreement, (ii) a detailed summary, (iii) the date that the agreement was signed, (iv) the names of the First Nations with whom DFO signed the agreement, (v) the names and titles of the individuals at DFO who signed the agreement?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the term of the 2017 Rights Reconciliation Agreement mandate, 8 agreements with 14 of the 34 Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey First Nations in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, the Gaspé region of Quebec, as well as the Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik in New Brunswick were reached, namely, The Interim Fisheries Implementation Agreement was signed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, including the Canadian Coast Guard, or DFO, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, or CIR, and by the Chiefs of Ełsipogtog First Nation and the Esgenoôpetitj First Nation. The agreement was signed on August 16, 2019. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the First Nations' Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; support the First Nations' capacity to participate in the fisheries by providing funding to acquire fisheries' access, such as licences and quota, as well as vessels and gear; and, establish a future negotiation process regarding the co-development of a collaborative fisheries management approach.

The Fisheries Resources Agreement was signed by the Minister of DFO, the Minister of CIR and by the Chief of Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation, formerly Maliseet of Viger First Nation. The agreement was signed on August 23, 2019. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the First Nation's Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; support the First Nation's capacity to participate in the fisheries by providing funding to acquire fisheries' access, such as licences and quota, as well as vessels and gear, and funding for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities; and, establish a new collaborative management process, implemented through an operational joint committee and an executive committee, comprised of DFO and First Nation representatives, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the First Nation.

The Rights Reconciliation Agreement on Fisheries was signed by the Minister of DFO, the Minister of CIR and by the Chief of Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government, or LMG. The agreement was signed on April 16, 2021. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize LMG's Aboriginal right to fish for food, social, and ceremonial purposes, and Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; support the First Nation's capacity to participate in the fisheries by providing funding to acquire fisheries' access, such as licences and quota, as well as vessels and gear, and funding for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities; and, establish a new collaborative management process, implemented through a Co-Governance Fisheries Committee and an Executive Oversight Body, comprised of DFO and LMG's representatives, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the LMG.

The Collaborative Fisheries Management Agreement was signed by the Minister of DFO, the Minister of CIR and by the Chief of Abegweit First Nation. The Agreement was signed on April 14, 2023. The purpose of this Agreement is to: recognize the First Nation's Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; provide funding to the First Nation for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities; and, establish a new collaborative management process, implemented through a Joint Operational Committee and an Executive Oversight Board, comprised of DFO and First Nation representatives, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the First Nation.

The Hybrid Fishery Agreement was signed by the Minister of DFO, the Minister of CIR, and by the Chief of Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik, or PNS, and President of the Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc. The agreement was signed on April 27, 2023. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the PNS's Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes, and Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; support the First Nation's capacity to participate in the fisheries by providing funding to acquire fisheries' access, such as licences and quota, as well as vessels and gear, and funding for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities; and, establish a new collaborative management process, implemented through a Joint Committee, comprised of DFO and First Nation representatives, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the First Nation.

Routine Proceedings

The Agreement on Fisheries was signed by the Minister of DFO, the Minister of CIR, and by the Chiefs of the Nation Micmac de Gespeg and the Micmacs of Gesgapegiag. The agreement was signed on June 2, 2023. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the First Nations' Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; support the First Nations' capacity to participate in the fisheries by providing funding to acquire fisheries' access, such as licences and quota, as well as vessels and gear, and funding for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities; and establish a new collaborative management process between DFO and Gespeg and Gesgapegiag, implemented through a Fisheries Committee and an Executive Committee established with each First Nation, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the First Nation.

The Annex "A" Interim Collaborative Fisheries Management Agreement was signed by the Minister of DFO, and by the Chiefs of Elsipogtog First Nation and Esgenoôpetitj First Nation on June 20, 2023. The purpose of this agreement is to establish a new collaborative management process between DFO and Elsipogtog and Esgenoôpetitj First Nations, implemented through a Joint Operational Management Committee and an Executive Oversight Committee, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the First Nations; and, provide funding to the First Nations for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities.

The Rights Implementation Agreement on Fisheries was signed by the Minister of DFO, the Minister of CIR, the Co-Chair of Mi'gma'w'e'l Tplu'taqnn Inc., or MTI, and the Chiefs of the following First Nations: Amlamgog, Fort Folly; L'nu Menigug, Indian Island; Metepenagiag, Red Bank; Natoaganeg, Eel Ground; Oinpegitjoig, Pabineau; and Tjipogtotjig, Buctouche. The agreement was signed on July 5, 2023. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the First Nations' Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood; support the First Nations' capacity to participate in the fisheries by providing funding to acquire fisheries' access, such as licences and quota, as well as vessels and gear, and funding for implementation and governance related to fisheries management activities; and establish a new collaborative management process between DFO and MTI, through a Joint Technical Committee and an Oversight Board, to discuss, share information and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of DFO on various fisheries issues of interest to the First Nation.

Question No. 2782—Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:

With regard to the April 7, 2021 decision of the former Minister of Justice, Hon. David Lametti, ordering a new trial for Jacques Delisle: (a) what are the details of all legal advice received by the former minister regarding the holding of a new trial, including, for each instance, (i) the identity of the person who provided the advice, (ii) the mandate conferred by the minister, (iii) the evidence reviewed; and (b) what are the details of the 2017 Criminal Conviction Review Group (CCRG) report on former justice Delisle's case, including the (i) evidence reviewed, (ii) conclusion, (iii) recommendation made to the minister?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the April 7, 2021, decision of the former Minister of Justice ordering a new trial for Jacques Delisle, the details of all legal advice received by the former minister regarding the holding of

a new trial, including the identity of the person who provided the advice, the mandate conferred by the minister and the evidence reviewed, is subject to solicitor-client privilege. However, we can advise that retired Ontario Court of Justice judge Paul Belanger provided legal advice in this matter as an outside special advisor, and the Criminal Conviction Review Group, the CCRG, provided its own legal advice to the minister as part of its briefing materials.

With respect to details of the 2017 Criminal Conviction Review Group's report on former Justice Delisle's case, including the evidence reviewed, conclusion, and recommendation made to the minister, the CCRG's investigation report is, in all cases of post-conviction review where an investigation report is created, confidential and privileged. It is only ever shared with the applicant and the relevant prosecuting authority pursuant to an undertaking not to disclose further. In this case, however, the report was made public through the court process involving Mr. Delisle despite the aforementioned undertakings having been provided. As such, while privilege on the basis of sections 19 and 21 of the Access to Information Act would normally apply, a copy of the report has been made public and can be accessed through the registrar of the Quebec Superior Court.

Question No. 2783—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to the government's purchase of GeneXpert Systems for rapid diagnostic testing acquired to facilitate access to rapid testing for SARS-CoV-2: (a) how many GeneXpert Systems are owned by Health Canada and, of those, how many are currently being operated; (b) what kinds of testing are the machines currently being used for; (c) is the government planning on using the full range of testing capabilities of the GeneXpert Systems to test for other infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C; and (d) is there a plan for the use of the GeneXpert systems to help counter increasing rates of new HIV and Hepatitis C cases, and, if so, (i) how will new locations be chosen and will community-based organizations be prioritized, (ii) will this plan include provisions for training operators to ensure proper use and accurate results, (iii) will this plan have provisions to ensure the financial sustainability to guarantee ongoing operations?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, has 457 GeneXpert Systems, some of which were received on behalf of Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC; 260 of these systems have been deployed by PHAC.

In terms of Part (b), the vast majority of GeneXpert Systems distributed by PHAC are currently being utilized for respiratory virus testing, in other words for SARS-CoV-2, Influenza A, Influenza B and Respiratory Syncytial Virus. Additionally, pilots are under way for community-based testing for tuberculosis and for sexually transmitted and blood borne infections, or STBBIs, at three sites.

With regard to part (c), the GeneXpert Systems were purchased for use during the COVID-19 pandemic for respiratory virus testing. PHAC is currently investigating their capability for other pathogens.

Routine Proceedings

As for part (d), PHAC is currently exploring the feasibility of using the GeneXpert Systems for HIV and Hepatitis C testing. However, neither of the HIV and Hepatitis C tests for these systems have been approved for use in Canada.

Future plans will depend on the results of the pilots currently under way.

Question No. 2788—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to complaints received by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total number of complaints (i) received, (ii) resolved; (b) what was the average resolution time, in days, for complaints regarding (i) radio, (ii) television, (iii) telecommunications, (iv) other, broken down by type; (c) what is the total number of complaint proceedings (i) started, (ii) completed; and (d) what is the average completion time, in days, for proceedings in (i) radio, (ii) television, (iii) telecommunications, (iv) other?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, has received over 117,000 complaints. A comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information which is not possible in the time allotted as it could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 2791—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to the Next Generation Human Resources and Pay system's development, procurement and test trials: (a) how much has been spent to date on the system; (b) which companies bid on the project; (c) how many points were attributed to the bid of each company in (b); (d) which company or companies were chosen to test their systems in government departments; and (e) for each company that was chosen to test their systems, which departments, agencies, or other government entities, did each of these companies test their systems in?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to part (a) of the question, to date, \$79,465,823.04, including taxes, has been spent on the new system.

With respect to part (b), seven vendors submitted bids to participate in the invitation to qualify process that closed in October 2018, including Canada Workday ULC, Ceridian Canada Ltd. (Dayforce), Freebalance Inc., Infor (Canada) Ltd, Oracle, Saba Software Inc., and SAP Canada Inc. Based on that process, SAP Canada Inc, Ceridian Canada Ltd. (Dayforce), and Canada Workday ULC were deemed eligible to bid on the resulting request for proposals in May 2019. In September 2021, following two years of functional and technical assessments of the solutions proposed by these three vendors, the Government of Canada signed a contract with Ceridian to test Dayforce.

With respect to part (c), details on the results of the evaluation, including point totals, cannot be released as it is third-party confidential information.

With respect to part (d), Ceridian Canada's Dayforce solution was tested in departments. Information on the testing can be found in the final findings report published in February 2024 at <https://www.canada.ca/en/shared-services/corporate/publications/2023-24/next-generation-hr-pay-final-findings-report.html>.

With respect to part (e), as noted in the final findings report, the system was tested with the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Crown-Indigenous Relations

and Northern Affairs Canada, Indigenous Services Canada and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

Question No. 2792—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to Canada Post's climate action targets: (a) how much has Canada Post spent on carbon offsets each year since 2015; and (b) how much has Canada Post spent to date on solar panels (i) in total, (ii) broken down by province or territory, (iii) broken down by location or post office?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Canada Post's climate action targets, Canada Post is a Crown Corporation that operates at arm's length from the Government and has the mandate to be financially self-sustaining in a highly competitive sector that includes global companies like Amazon, FedEx and UPS. Canada Post has a unique and long-standing mandate that requires the national postal service to be funded through revenues generated from the sale of products and services, and not through taxpayer dollars. Therefore, the requested information regarding how much Canada Post has spent on carbon offsets each year since 2015 is commercially sensitive and has always been treated as confidential.

With a large and diverse building portfolio across the country, Canada Post is committed to reducing emissions from its facilities. Canada Post facilities that have solar panels include the Letter Carrier Depot, or LCD, West Depot Toronto, in Ontario; the LCD Scarborough, in Ontario; the Albert Jackson Processing Centre, in Ontario; the Halifax Regional Office & Mail Processing Plant, in Nova Scotia; and the LCD Northwest Calgary, in Alberta.

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 2794—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), broken down by year since January 1, 2019: (a) how many cases of (i) gender discrimination, (ii) disability discrimination, were filed against the CPPIB; (b) of the cases in (a), how many were settled without formal litigation; (c) how many nondisclosure agreements were signed by former employees related to the cases in (a); (d) what percentage of the employee disciplinary actions and terminations were handled (i) internally by employee relations, (ii) by external counsel; (e) what is the breakdown of the number of discrimination cases filed against the CPPIB in each of its offices located in (i) Brazil, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) India, (iv) London, (v) New York, (vi) San Francisco, (vii) Toronto; (f) which law firms were hired to represent the CPPIB and, broken down by city, what was the total amount in legal fees paid to each firm; (g) how much was paid in legal fees for (i) employee terminations, (ii) employee-initiated legal action against the CPPIB for which the CPPIB retained legal counsel; (h) what was the total severance paid out in each of its offices located in (i) Brazil, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) India, (iv) London, (v) New York, (vi) San Francisco, (vii) Toronto; (i) which law firms were hired and retained by the CPPIB in the offices located in (i) Brazil, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) India, (iv) London, (v) New York, (vi) San Francisco, (vii) Toronto; (j) what were the legal fees paid annually for each of the law firms retained by the CPPIB to defend the CPPIB; (k) how many female employees were terminated through restructuring from Senior Associate level to Managing Director level for each of its offices located in (i) Brazil, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) India, (iv) London, (v) New York, (vi) San Francisco, (vii) Toronto; (l) how many female employees were terminated through voluntary resignations from Senior Associate level to Managing Director level for each of its offices located in (i) Brazil, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) India, (iv) London, (v) New York, (vi) San Francisco, (vii) Toronto; (m) how many (i) female, (ii) male, employees were promoted above the Senior Associate level; (n) what is the percentage of female departures from the Executive and Senior management pool from the CPPIB in its entirety and for each of its offices located in (i) Brazil, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) India, (iv) London, (v) New York, (vi) San Francisco, (vii) Toronto; (o) what is the number of disability accommodation cases for (i) long-term, (ii) short-term, (iii) permanent, disability that were sent through Manulife; (p) how many employees who went through a Manulife accommodation remain with the CPPIB; (q) how many of the employees who remain with the CPPIB have been promoted in the last five years; (r) how many formal complaints brought by employees went through (i) a CPPIB Clearview Connects Whistleblower process, (ii) a CPPIB Conduct Review Advisor, (iii) a Legal and Compliance CPPIB, (iv) human resources; and (s) broken down by each part of (r), how many of the complainant employees remain employed by the CPPIB?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, the CPPIB, is neither a department nor an agency of the Crown and is therefore not subject to the same guidelines for disclosure. The CPPIB is subject to disclosure requirements as set out in the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act and reports to federal and provincial finance ministers and Canadians.

Question No. 2795—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to Elections Canada (EC) and Communications Security Establishment Canada's reports on "Cyber threats to Canada's democratic process - 2023 update" and "Cyber security guidance for elections authorities (ITSM.10.020)": (a) what measures has EC taken since the last general election to safeguard the integrity of elections, candidates and campaigns against cyber threats, including (i) deep-fakes, (ii) artificial intelligence, (iii) bots, (iv) other attacks on telecommunication infrastructure (such as "distributed denial of service" attacks) that aim to disrupt, interfere with or sway elections as warned against in the reports; (b) for each measure in (a), (i) what was the cost, (ii) when was it implemented, (iii) how and from whom was the measure originally proposed; and (c) are there any threats which EC does not have the capacity to fully guard against, and, if so, what are they, and has EC sought assistance from the government or any other entity to guard against such a threat, and, if so, what are the details?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speakers, Elections Canada's mandate is to administer elections and make sure Canadians can exercise their democratic rights to register, vote and be a candidate. Regarding cyber threats and cyber security, the

agency has extensive coordination with security agencies and partners, including the Communications Security Establishment, and continually evolves its security infrastructure.

Safeguarding the integrity of the election requires a robust ecosystem that is much larger than only Elections Canada. The agency works during and outside of the electoral period to coordinate with other federal organizations to share information and detect and respond to any threats to the integrity of an election. This includes Communications Security Establishment Canada, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Public Safety Canada, Global Affairs Canada, and the Commissioner of Canada Elections, all of which have distinct and important roles to play in protecting the integrity of the electoral process. Some threats to elections reach beyond the realm of electoral management and come in many different forms and target different stakeholders, including Elections Canada and election workers, as well as electors, political entities, and other organizations. As such, the security agencies and partners that Elections Canada coordinates with play a vital role in identifying, understanding, adapting, and mitigating or eliminating threats to the electoral process.

Elections Canada maintains a strong security position and abides by government-wide best practices, including: adhering to Government of Canada security standards; implementing security by design, making security a foundational part of every new IT system or process that we develop; ensuring all new technology solutions are designed to meet the stringent Government of Canada cyber security suite of policies and standards; and continually training employees and field staff on how to safeguard information and practice good cyber safety.

Elections Canada's holistic approach to security means there are no specific costs to detail for the topics listed in sub question (a), as these costs are built into the various project and general IT costs that are undertaken by the agency as part of our overall security infrastructure. Elections Canada's security approach also consistently evolves to match the threat landscape and advice from security agencies and partners.

Routine Proceedings

With respect to the important issues detailed in sub question (a), and in particular threats arising out of the use of artificial intelligence and deep fakes, Elections Canada has been and continues to be active in engaging domestic and international partners to identify mitigation strategies. This includes the organization, in partnership with Elections Ontario, of a conference in January 2024 with Canada's federal, provincial and territorial Chief Electoral Officers to discuss AI and its possible future impacts on the electoral environment and gain insights from invited experts from Canada and the US. The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada has also engaged with the Government and members of the Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC) on these matters and welcomes the opportunity to further discuss them within the context of Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

Lastly, it is important to note that candidates, political parties, and third parties also have a role to play in this area and can do so by understanding and adapting to the threats they face, protecting their IT infrastructure and data, ensuring the information about the electoral process that they share is accurate, and promoting digital literacy and critical thinking.

More information on Elections Canada's work in this area, and the threats to the election that the agency has identified, can be found on our website, Election Integrity and Security – Elections Canada, at <https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=int&document=index&lang=e>, and in Elections Canada's Institutional Report, prepared for the Public Inquiry on Foreign Interference, at <https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/oth/foin&document=p1&lang=e>.

Question No. 2799—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its reliance on the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) for their "independent, expert advice" (source: Order Paper question Q-2554): (a) in 2020 and 2021, what specific studies demonstrated that the COVID-19 vaccines would prevent (i) all, (ii) any, transmission of SARS-CoV-2; (b) what specific studies demonstrated that the COVID-19 vaccines were ineffective or would not completely prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2; (c) in 2020 and 2021, what specific data was provided by the manufacturers of the approved COVID-19 vaccines in Canada that demonstrated that the COVID-19 vaccines were effective in preventing transmission of SARS-CoV-2; (d) with respect to informed consent in 2021, how was the uncertainty or "unknown" evidence around "the effectiveness against virus transmission, and long-term effectiveness against infection and severe disease" communicated to the Canadian public and medical professionals administering the vaccines; (e) without certainty that the vaccine would prevent transmission, what was the rationale provided to the Office of the Prime Minister from the Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada or NACI in support of the following measures in relation to only unvaccinated healthy individuals presenting with no symptoms (i) PCR testing before entering the country, (ii) quarantining individuals before entering the country, (iii) showing one's vaccine status through a vaccine passport, (iv) preventing their travelling on federally-regulated transportation; (f) who advised the Office of the Prime Minister about the uncertainty of the COVID-19 vaccines with respect to its inability to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV2 and when; (g) what was the source of the messaging used by (i) the Chief Public Health Officer, (ii) the Deputy Chief Public Health officer, (iii) the Chief Medical Officer of Health Canada, (iv) the Minister of Health, (v) the Prime Minister, (vi) other government or public health officials, to state that COVID-19 vaccination would protect others, implying it stopped viral transmission; and (h) who approved the messaging in (g)?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) to (c) of the question, the health and safety of Canadians are the utmost priority for Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC. Health Canada has a rigorous scientific review system in place to ensure vaccines are safe and effective in preventing the dis-

eases they target. Before a vaccine can be approved for sale in Canada, it undergoes an in-depth review of evidence for safety, efficacy, and quality by Health Canada. Evidence provided to Health Canada includes data from pre-clinical studies, including toxicology studies, clinical trials as well as data demonstrating that manufacturing processes ensure the consistency and quality of the vaccine. Once vaccines are authorized, Health Canada releases information about the vaccine, including summaries of the data considered by Health Canada. This includes non-clinical, clinical and other studies, as well as how the decision was made. For coronavirus disease 2019 vaccines, this information can be found on Health Canada's website at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/>.

COVID-19 vaccines are indicated for active immunization to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2. The approval of the vaccines was based on safety and efficacy data collected in non-clinical studies and clinical trials. Clinical data for these vaccines is available on the clinical information on drugs and medical devices website at https://clinical-information.canada.ca/search/ci-rc?f%5B0%5D=drug_brand_name%3A%22COMIRNATY%20OMICRON%20XBB1.5%22#tabs-0-laurier_content-1.

Clinical trials were not designed to demonstrate that vaccines were effective in preventing the transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Once available on the market, the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines are continuously monitored and evaluated by Health Canada and PHAC. Vaccine manufacturers are obliged to continue to collect information about the long-term safety and effectiveness of their products. Evidence from peer-reviewed studies from domestic and international sources published in the medical literature established the effectiveness of vaccination in reducing disease transmission.

With respect to parts (d) to (f) of the question, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, or NACI, provides PHAC with ongoing and timely medical, scientific, and public health advice relating to immunization. The health and safety of Canadians has always been a priority. Leading up to and during the height of the pandemic, officials were briefed regularly on developments in relation to COVID-19.

In 2021, early NACI guidance to PHAC and stakeholders initially emphasized uncertainty surrounding the ability of COVID-19 vaccines to prevent infection and transmission and duration of protection following vaccination, and communicated the need for ongoing monitoring. As the pandemic progressed, emerging evidence suggested some degree of prevention of infection and transmission was achievable with COVID-19 vaccination and this was reflected in NACI's advice.

Routine Proceedings

The emergence of each new variant required re-assessment of how the vaccines were performing, including against infection and transmission. The emergence of the highly transmissible Omicron variant at the end of 2021 introduced new complexities, making the prevention of infection and transmission from COVID-19 vaccination, including from booster doses, less certain. All NACI advice regarding COVID-19 vaccines is published online at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html> and is representative of the evidence available at the time each statement was written. In addition, starting in March 2021, summaries of NACI advice were also provided by PHAC to succinctly communicate the key points and implications of the NACI guidance to the public.

Informed consent occurs through discussion between health care providers and patients on the risks and benefits of a vaccine. In order to support these informed consent discussions, PHAC communicated the evolving evidence on vaccine effectiveness to health-care providers throughout the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. This began in December 2020 when PHAC launched a series of webinars that communicated what was known and not yet known about the newly authorized vaccines from clinical trial data, as well as recommendations for their use. PHAC continued to deliver webinars to update health care providers as evidence emerged throughout 2021 and 2022. Additionally, as noted, NACI statements and the Canadian Immunization Guide were updated to reflect the most recent evidence on vaccine effectiveness as it emerged. PHAC's webinars for healthcare providers on COVID-19 vaccines can be found at <https://canvax.ca/public-health-agency-canada-phac-vaccine-confidence-webinar-series>.

With respect to part (g), the NACI secretariat was the source of messaging for all officials, supported by PHAC, as well as Health Canada in its role regulating drugs and health products to support public safety.

With respect to part (h), these messages were approved by the president of PHAC and Health Canada's deputy minister.

Question No. 2800—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to Transport Canada and meetings concerning Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP): (a) when Patrick Juneau was the Director of Aviation Safety Policy and Intelligence at Transport Canada, did he meet with any United States officials on the subject of UAP, and, if so, what are the details of all such meetings, including, for each, (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the names and titles of those in attendance, (iv) what was discussed or agreed upon; (b) have any Transport Canada officials other than Patrick Juneau met with any United States officials on the subject of UAP, and, if so, who and what are the details of all such meetings attended by any Transport Canada official, including, for each, (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the names and titles of those in attendance, (iv) what was discussed or agreed upon; and (c) what are the details, including the website where the agreement can be read, of any UAP information sharing agreements that Transport Canada is aware of, between Canadian entities and American entities?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, Transport Canada can confirm that Mr. Juneau did not have any meetings specific to Unidentified Aerial Phenomena with United States officials.

With respect to part (b), Transport Canada did not locate any meeting notes or records of decisions of meetings occurring about Unidentified Aerial Phenomena with United States officials.

As for part (c), Transport Canada did not locate any records pertaining to information sharing agreements about Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

Reports filed in Civil Aviation Daily Occurrence Reporting System on Transport Canada's website are publicly available at CADORS: Query, at <https://www.wapps.tc.gc.ca/saf-sec-sur/2/cadors-screaq/q.aspx?lang=eng>.

Question No. 2803—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to requests received by Health Canada related to decriminalization from provinces, municipalities or Indigenous communities, since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such requests, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) name and title of the person who made the request, (iii) entity represented by the person making the request, (iv) summary of the request, (v) response by Health Canada?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as to the request by the City of Vancouver, the final submission was made on May 28, 2021, by the city manager. The proposed model would decriminalize personal possession of small amounts of controlled substances for adults over 18 within city limits. Specific thresholds were proposed for common drugs. Personal possession of other drugs was proposed as a three-day supply, as determined by police. Individuals in possession of drugs below thresholds for personal use would not be arrested or have their drugs seized. Instead, they would be given a voluntary referral to a health care resource. The proposed exemption would not apply where there is evidence to indicate intent to traffic. The request has been suspended at the request of the City of Vancouver since June 2022.

As to the request by the Province of British Columbia, please refer to the website of the Province of British Columbia for publicly available information on this request. Health Canada granted B.C.'s original request for an exemption on May 31, 2022. This exemption was amended in September 2023 to add additional targeted exceptions to where they would apply. The exemption was amended again in May 2024 to prohibit possession in public spaces. The exemption expires on January 31, 2026.

As to the request by Toronto Public Health, please refer to the website of the City of Toronto for publicly available information on this request. Toronto Public Health's request was refused on May 17, 2024.

Question No. 2805—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Department of National Defence's decision to move employees working out of offices at 400 Cumberland Street to the Major-General George R. Pearkes Building due to safety concerns: (a) how much is the move expected to cost, in total and broken down by type of expense; (b) how many employees are being moved; (c) did the department make any representations to the Minister of Justice that the government's catch and release justice policies were creating safety concerns for their employees, and, if so, what are the details; and (d) if the department did not make any such representations to the Minister of Justice, why were they not made?

Routine Proceedings

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as to part (a), the overall cost of moving National Defence employees from the 400 Cumberland location to the Major-General George R. Pearkes Building is estimated at approximately \$1 million. This amount includes approximately \$20,000 for space cleaning and building preparation, and \$980,000 for moving personnel and equipment.

As to part (b), up to 995 National Defence personnel will be moved from 400 Cumberland to the Pearkes Building.

As to parts (c) and (d), National Defence did not make any representations to the Minister of Justice on this topic.

National Defence takes seriously the safety and security of its personnel. Canadian Forces Military Police respond to incidents within their jurisdiction at Department of National Defence establishments. Incidents taking place in locations where there is concurrent jurisdiction with the civilian police are deferred to the police of primary jurisdiction, which in this case was the Ottawa Police Service.

Question No. 2808—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) approval of the modRNA COVID-19 vaccines manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna and distributed throughout Canada, its mechanism of action and the elements of which they are comprised: (a) how many copies of the modRNA molecule are in a single dose, for both the Pfizer and Moderna products, (i) for adults, (ii) for children; (b) how many copies of the antigen are in a single adult dose of Novavax; (c) if there is a significant numerical difference between the answers for (a) and (b), does this affect the immunological response; (d) how many copies of dsDNA are found in a single 30 microliter adult dose of (i) Pfizer's product, (ii) Moderna's product; (e) was a request made to Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna regarding the DNA size distribution in the vaccine and, if so, (i) what proportion of the total DNA quantity were under 200bp, (ii) what was the average, range and standard deviation; (f) what is the function of the modRNA; (g) what is the function of the lipid nanoparticles (LNPs); (h) what is the specific role(s) of N1-methyl-pseudouridine as used in the modRNA of the vaccines; (i) what safety data was available to HC at the time of approval and is currently available, regarding any and repeat exposure to the following in human cells (i.e., safety, efficacy, toxicity): (i) large amounts of N1-methyl-pseudouridine, (ii) dsRNA, (iii) cytosolic DNA, (iv) lipid nanoparticles; (j) with regard to the research underpinning (g), has a risk assessment been performed of the LNPs separately from that of the drug product for safety, toxicity; (k) does HC have any degradation data for the modRNA in the vaccines and, if so, what does the data show; (l) what is the duration of action of modRNA from the COVID-19 mRNA in the body and how was that measured; (m) in what cells and organs is spike protein most likely to be produced in the body; (n) in which cell types and tissues does the modRNA remain for the longest period of time and second longest period of time, and what are the time periods; (o) for what period of time does a person injected with modRNA produce spike protein; (p) is the production of spike protein dependent on cell type; (q) is there a known correlation between the amount of modRNA in the vaccine and the amount of spike protein produced by the cells; (r) has HC performed a risk assessment on the immunological, toxicological and carcinogenicity of the spike protein and, if so, what was the analysis, and, if not, why weren't these risk assessments considered necessary; (s) if production of spike protein antigen is prolonged for greater than three to five days, does prolonged exposure lead to ongoing production of antibodies; (t) if the answer to (s) is negative, will a study or investigation be undertaken to determine this; (u) if the answer to (s) is affirmative, and if antibodies are the indicator of immunity, why does efficacy wane with time when the antigen production is prolonged; (v) has the purity of the modRNA contained in the COVID-19 vaccines been determined; (w) if the answer to (v) is affirmative, what is the present accepted limit of fragmented and truncated modRNA; (x) if the answer to (v) is negative, why hasn't the purity of the modRNA been established; (y) if production of spike protein expression is prolonged for more than three to five days, are there harmful sequelae to prolonged exposure; and (z) if the answer to (y) is affirmative, what are those harmful sequelae?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) to (z), the

health and safety of Canadians are the utmost priority for Health Canada. Health Canada has a rigorous scientific review system in place to ensure vaccines are safe and effective in preventing the diseases they target. More information on these standards and how Health Canada regulates vaccines for human use in Canada can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/biologics-radiopharmaceuticals-genetic-therapies/activities/fact-sheets/regulation-vaccines-human-canada.html>. Once vaccines are authorized, Health Canada releases information about the vaccines, including summaries of the data considered by Health Canada. This includes non-clinical, clinical and other studies, as well as how the decision was made. This information can be found on Health Canada's website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/drug-products/drug-product-database.html>.

Information requested regarding the strength of each of the COVID-19 vaccines, dosing information and information on the mechanism of action can be found in the product monographs: Nu-vaxovid XBB.1.5, at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/nuvaxovid-xbb-1-5-pm-en.pdf>; Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5, at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/comirnaty-omicron-xbb-1-5-pm-en.pdf>; and Spikevax XBB.1.5, at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/spikevax-xbb-1-5-pm-en.pdf>.

The manufacturing data provided to Health Canada demonstrated the ability to produce a vaccine with consistent quality. Levels of impurities, including dsDNA, are strictly controlled during the manufacturing process and before the product is released on the market, to ensure product quality and safety. The sponsor provided sufficient information to support the consistency of production and quality of the product. These requirements are informed by science and are aligned with international standards, including the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use.

The mRNA in the COVID-19 vaccines uses modified nucleosides to avoid activation of the cellular immune response and destruction of the mRNA, to enhance translation and to improve stability. Various modifications to the mRNA sequence have been introduced for maintaining antigen conformation, that is, ensuring the 'shape' of the antigen is capable of generating the desired immune responses. Detailed characterization studies were performed to provide assurance that the drug substance consistently exhibits the desired characteristic structure and biological activity. Additional information can be found in the summary basis of decision, or SBD, documents published by Health Canada, which provide an overview of the data examined. These can be found by accessing the COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments Portal, at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/>.

Routine Proceedings

Studies on the biodistribution and pharmacokinetics of the lipid nanoparticle-formulated modified mRNA were conducted and were submitted as part of the preclinical and early clinical trial phase data packages that companies are required to submit to regulatory agencies, including Health Canada. The preclinical data provided demonstrated that vaccine-produced spike protein is rapidly broken down and does not persist in the body. This data was analyzed by Health Canada prior to authorizations being granted for the COVID-19 vaccines. The outcomes of some of these studies can be found in the summary basis of decision for each product, available on the Drug and Health Product Portal, at <https://dhpp.hpfb-dgp-sa.ca/review-documents>.

The benefits of vaccines authorized in Canada continue to outweigh the risks. Health Canada, PHAC, the provinces and territories, and manufacturers continue to closely monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines. Health Canada and PHAC receive reports of adverse events following immunization with COVID-19 vaccines in Canada through the Canada vigilance program, or CVP, and the Canadian adverse events following immunization surveillance system, or CAEFISS. Adverse events following immunization are routinely monitored. Information on adverse events following immunization with COVID-19 vaccines, including breakdowns of reports by vaccine name, age and sex, are published on the Government of Canada website at <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccine-safety/>. All signals are monitored and investigated.

Question No. 2811—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to Global Affairs Canada's obligations detailed in the *Voices at Risk* guidelines, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of any efforts Canadian officials have made to advocate for the release of detained human rights defenders in each country where Canada has a diplomatic presence, including the number of requests for prison visits made by Canadian missions, and the response of detaining authorities; and (b) what are the details of any efforts made to attend trials of human rights defenders in each country where Canada has a diplomatic presence, including the number of requests to attend these hearings made by Canadian missions, and the response of detaining authorities?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the promotion and protection of human rights is a long-standing foundation of Canadian foreign policy. Human rights are essential to Canada's identity, prosperity and security, and a key component to addressing global challenges. Canada is strongly committed to taking action to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all, both at home and abroad. This action includes constructive engagement on human rights within the United Nations system. Canada advocates through bilateral diplomacy and technical assistance, public advocacy, support for local and international human rights defenders and civil society entities, including women's rights organizations and women human rights defenders, the imposition of sanctions and export bans, and actions in regional and global multilateral forums.

Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders, found at https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/rights_defenders_guide_defenseurs_droits.aspx?lang=eng, provides practical advice, tools and resources to Canadian officials supporting human rights defenders, or HRDs, around the world. As section 4.1 of the guidelines indicates, when the HRD at risk is a Canadian citizen, it is considered a consular case. In these instances, Canada can seek to leverage specific mechanisms

for engagement due to the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, found at https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=III-6&chapter=3. However, these efforts can be complicated when the Canadian citizen HRD has dual or multiple citizenships, given that the degree to which dual citizenship is accepted or recognized varies from country to country. In all cases, regardless of the citizenship of HRDs, Canada's approach is tailored to local contexts and circumstances, and respond to the specific needs of the HRDs.

Section 3.9 of the guidelines provides information on attending trials and hearings, and visiting detained HRDs, recognizing that these efforts can demonstrate a clear and visible expression of Canada's concern, enable officials to monitor legal proceedings and observe whether due process is respected, and allow networking opportunities with human rights organizations, other diplomats and local authorities working on cases of concern. It is recognized that local authorities do not always allow foreign diplomats to attend trials and may implement restrictions on visiting HRDs in detention, even in the cases of Canadian citizens.

Section 3.1 further outlines that missions are encouraged to monitor relevant situations and report regularly on developments in their countries of accreditation, with information being shared with the relevant geographic bureau at headquarters, the human rights and indigenous affairs policy division and other units as appropriate. The management of this documentation requires serious considerations with respect to the protection and safety of the HRDs. Operational safeguards must be applied to ensure respect for confidentiality, the protection of sources and the security of information, to avoid heightening the risks faced by the HRDs and diminishing Canada's ability to provide support.

Routine Proceedings

GAC does not systematically track all HRD cases on which Canada is engaged in a centralized database. Producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require manual collection and review of information held by the human rights and indigenous affairs policy division, the consular affairs bureau and the geographic bureaus at headquarters, as well as by GAC's network of 182 missions across 112 countries. It would also require significant due diligence measures to ensure any information released does not put HRDs more at risk and is compliant with the principles of the Privacy Act and other related legislation, which includes consulting with, and obtaining consent from, HRDs or their representatives. This is not possible in the time allotted for a response without risking the disclosure of information that is incomplete, inaccurate or misleading, which could cause extremely grave injury to the HRD or other individuals or entities, or could be injurious to the conduct of Canada's international affairs.

Finally, the government is aware of Bill C-281, an act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), the Broadcasting Act and the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act, which is currently being studied by the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This proposed legislation would, among items, impose new reporting requirements on the government with respect to Canada's efforts to advance human rights internationally as part of Canada's foreign policy and Canada's advocacy on behalf of prisoners of conscience. As outlined by GAC officials during the study of the bill by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, while the department welcomes efforts to increase transparency with respect to Canada's work on human rights globally, such a proposal could risk impeding diplomatic actions and could endanger the safety of the individuals concerned. The government supported a version of the bill at third reading stage in the House of Commons that contained amendments to address the most significant of these concerns, and it will continue to monitor the progress of the bill as it proceeds through the legislative process.

Question No. 2812—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD): (a) how do the CAF and NORAD determine what is a threat or worthy of a response when an Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) report is made; (b) is there a specific criterion or checklist that is used related to (a), and, if so, what are the details; (c) how many reports of UAP have been made in the last two years; (d) when there is a report of a UAP, which entities are the reports shared with; and (e) have there been any interceptions since the high-altitude balloon incident, and, if so, what are the details of each, including the date and summary of the incident?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, and the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, have standard procedures to detect, identify and assess airborne objects. Specifically, NORAD responds to unknown radar tracks by correlating radar data with various data sources and means, including NORAD aircraft, to inspect the source. If NORAD assesses that an object does not present a threat, it will continue to monitor and be prepared to respond as appropriate, in coordination with other government departments and agencies.

With regard to part (b), both the CAF and NORAD utilize checklists to determine what may constitute a threat. National Defence applies the principles of the Access to Information Act, and protects information on the grounds that disclosing certain information could be injurious to national security and defence. Therefore, the contents of the checklists cannot be disclosed.

With regard to part (c) and (d), reporting on unidentified aerial phenomena, UAP, can be undertaken at multiple levels, including at local and national levels, through organizations internal and external to the Government of Canada. Thus, details for parts (c) and (d) are not held exclusively by National Defence and cannot be provided within the allotted time.

With regard to part (e), NORAD has used aircraft to inspect several airborne objects since March 2023, all of which were correlated to hobby balloons. The most recent of these events occurred in February 2024 over the state of Utah. NORAD has conducted no intercepts of airborne objects since February 2023.

Question No. 2814—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to vessel registrations, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) how many pleasure crafts, broken down by new and used, were registered in Canada that had a total sales price (i) below \$250,000, (ii) between \$250,000 and \$500,000, (iii) above \$500,000 up to \$1 million, (iv) above \$1 million?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada does not collect information on purchase price or value of a registered vessel.

The total number of pleasure crafts registered from 2016 to 2024 was 5,949 vessels.

For year 2016, 534 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 48 total new pleasure crafts registered and 486 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2017, 648 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 63 total new pleasure crafts registered and 585 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2018, 673 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 69 total new pleasure crafts registered and 604 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2019, 712 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 83 total new pleasure crafts registered and 629 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2020, 574 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 37 total new pleasure crafts registered and 537 total used pleasure crafts registered.

Routine Proceedings

For year 2021, 812 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 77 total new pleasure crafts registered and 735 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2022, 874 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 92 total new pleasure crafts registered and 782 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2023, 807 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 69 total new pleasure crafts registered and 738 total used pleasure crafts registered.

For year 2024, 315 total pleasure crafts were registered, with 11 total new pleasure crafts registered and 304 total used pleasure crafts registered.

Question No. 2815—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to the government's approach to oil sands mining effluent and the Crown-Indigenous Working Group (CIWG) for the Potential Oil Sands Mining Effluent Regulations: (a) what is the government's current plan for dealing with effluent, including the (i) scope of the plan, (ii) key deliverables, (iii) stakeholder engagement process, (iv) key dates in the plan, (v) current status of work items; (b) what is the current status of the work undertaken by the CIWG; (c) on what dates has the CIWG met to date, and on what dates are future meetings planned; and (d) what is the CIWG's workplan, including any goals it is trying to accomplish, and by what date is each goal projected to be met?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2021, Environment and Climate Change Canada, ECCC, and nine indigenous communities established the Crown-indigenous working group for potential oil sands mining effluent regulations, CIWG. The CIWG is exploring options to manage the buildup of oil sands mine water in tailings ponds located in the Athabasca oil sands region. One of the options under consideration is regulations that, if developed, would place strict protective conditions on the release of treated effluent to the Athabasca River. Any such regulations would be developed with protective standards reflecting available scientific information and indigenous knowledge. The key deliverables of the CIWG will include recommendations on the path forward for managing the buildup of oil sands mine water.

Last fall, the public and stakeholders were invited to provide input on an introductory paper, found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-pollution/sources-industry/mining-effluent/oil-sands.html>, which included an update on the work completed by the CIWG to date, an overview of the collaborative process established through the CIWG and an opportunity for early feedback. The release of the introductory paper was accompanied by targeted engagement sessions with stakeholders and interested parties, including provincial and territorial governments, oil sands mine operators, environmental non-governmental organizations, academia and indigenous communities not included on the CIWG. In May 2024, ECCC published a “what we heard” report, found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-pollution/sources-industry/mining-effluent/oil-sands/summary-report-introduction-crown-indigenous-working-group.html>, summarizing input received on the introductory paper. ECCC plans to publish a discussion paper, accompanied by further stakeholder engagement, by the end of 2024.

ECCC has been meeting regularly with the CIWG since the group was established in 2021 and leverages subgroups that have

been established. The current focus of the CIWG is publishing a discussion paper by the end of 2024, completing an assessment of available treatment technologies, developing aquatic toxicity and monitoring requirements and developing an approach for incorporating indigenous knowledge.

Question No. 2817—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) recreational fishing survey in Canada, released every five years from 1990 to 2015: (a) why has the 2020 survey not yet been released on the DFO's website; (b) was the 2020 survey conducted, and, if not, why not; and (c) when will the next recreational fishing survey be conducted and when will those results be released to the public?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the recreational fishing survey in Canada by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO, released every five years from 1990 to 2015, DFO, in collaboration with provinces and territories, has conducted a survey of recreational fishing in Canada every five years from 1990 to 2015. The survey for the 2020 reference year was not conducted for several reasons, including the COVID pandemic. DFO is currently working to assess options for this survey work and will be engaging with relevant partners, including provinces and territories, to discuss resources and timelines.

Question No. 2819—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the Auditor General of Canada's 2024 Report 7 entitled “Combating Cybercrime”, paragraph 7.6 of which states that the RCMP “has a mandate to investigate the greatest criminal threats to Canada, including cybercrime, transnational and serious organized crime, and threats to national security”: (a) since January 1, 2016, how many cybercrime case reports has the RCMP received; (b) in how many of the cases reported in (a) did the RCMP or other police forces lay charges; (c) how many of the cases in (b) resulted in convictions; (d) how many of the cases in (c) resulted in funds being returned to victims if the crime involved financial loss; (e) how many cases has the RCMP pursued alongside other jurisdictions; (f) in how many of the cases in (e) did the RCMP or other police forces lay charges; (g) how many of the cases in (f) resulted in convictions; and (h) how many of the cases in (g) resulted in funds being returned to victims if the crime involved financial loss?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP does not have the ability to report solely on “pure cybercrime” offences, which are crimes that target technology itself and can only be committed using computers, networks and digital devices. Common offences include ransomware, malware and distributed denial of service attacks.

Some information on cybercrime statistics is available on the Statistics Canada website at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb11/en/tv.action?pid=3510000201>. The information reported on the Statistics Canada website contains the information by every police force in Canada, including the RCMP.

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Recognizing the importance of strengthening Canada's capacity to counter cybercrime, in 2020, the Government of Canada provided the RCMP with approximately \$137.5 million to establish the national cybercrime coordination centre, NC3, to work with domestic and international law enforcement and other partners to investigate and combat cybercrime.

The RCMP has also invested an additional \$78.9 million to increase its federal policing capacity, including by establishing specialist cybercrime teams across the country.

With regard to (a) (b) and (e), the RCMP undertook an extensive preliminary search to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The RCMP is a decentralized organization comprising over 700 detachments in 150 communities across the country. The RCMP concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted, and this could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

With regard to (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h), the RCMP does not have this information.

Question No. 2820—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the Auditor General of Canada's 2024 Report 7 entitled "Combating Cybercrime", paragraph 7.23 of which states that "We found that the centre did not forward 7 of 26 (27%) of the requests we reviewed from international partners to domestic police agencies to see whether that had evidence relevant to the investigation,": (a) what proportion of the requests which the RCMP did not forward to domestic police agencies were held back for (i) lack of sufficient evidence, (ii) lack of credible evidence, (iii) inadmissible or unlawfully collected evidence, (iv) other reasons; and (b) what were the other reasons in (a)?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cybercrime investigations are complex and multi-jurisdictional, especially given that cybercriminals can perpetrate their actions from anywhere in the world. Therefore, it is essential that all relevant parties work together in a coordinated fashion to better protect Canadians.

Recognizing the importance of strengthening Canada's capacity to counter cybercrime, in 2020, the Government of Canada provided the RCMP with approximately \$137.5 million to establish the national cybercrime coordination centre, NC3, to work with domestic and international law enforcement and other partners to investigate and combat cybercrime. The RCMP has also invested an additional \$78.9 million to increase its federal policing capacity, including by establishing specialist cybercrime teams across the country.

The NC3's ability to collect, analyze, share and coordinate international requests with domestic police agencies for assistance will improve as the program continues to work toward its full operating capability in 2024-25, including with the ongoing implementation of a new case management system, referred to as the national cybercrime solution, to collect, analyze and exchange operational cybercrime data with law enforcement partners domestically and internationally.

The RCMP undertook an extensive preliminary search to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The RCMP is a decentralized organization comprising over 700 detachments in 150 communities across the country. The RCMP concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted, and this could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 2821—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces' reconstitution and readiness: (a) how many pilots at 3 Wing Bagotville are qualified to fly CF-18s; and (b) how many pilots at 4 Wing Cold Lake are qualified to fly CF-18s?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Air Force, RCAF, currently has a fill rate of 64% for frontline fighter pilot squadrons. Detailed information regarding pilot numbers is considered sensitive, as it can provide adversaries with information about CF-18 and broader NORAD capabilities, which could then be injurious to the defence of Canada and North America.

As the RCAF transitions to a fifth generation fighter, work is ongoing to ensure appropriate fighter pilot levels. National Defence is undertaking a multipronged approach to increase personnel numbers and pilots in particular. For example, the RCAF established an attractions team that participated in over 125 events in 2023, including air shows, exhibitions, career fairs and sporting events. The team complements wider CAF recruitment efforts that showcase existing recruiting allowances, pay incentives and subsidized education programs. In addition, the RCAF is streamlining its pilot training courses, which has reduced wait times by over 40% for the initial phases of pilot training.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2827—Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the Historical Section of Global Affairs Canada (GAC): (a) what is the mandate of the section and the job description, background and qualifications of the current head of the section; (b) where are the records of the section currently held; (c) is there an index or listing accessible to the public of the records currently held by the section; (d) what policies and procedures exist for the transfer of records from the section to Library and Archives Canada, and what transfers have taken place from January 1, 2000, to present, including transfers of records of security and intelligence in 2016; (e) which records relating to security and intelligence are currently held by the section; (f) where is the historical record Department of External Affairs (DEA) file 50207-40; (g) what research has been conducted by the section, or other sections or individuals in GAC and its predecessor departments, on the LGBT Purge from 1950 to 1990, policies which singled out gay and lesbian potential recruits and employees of the DEA for discriminatory treatment; (h) what records exist in the section about the impact of the policies referred to in (g); (i) what records exist in the section of communication between Canadian posts abroad and headquarters in Ottawa during the period from 1950 to 2000; (j) what records are held by the section with respect to the debate over extension of equal employment benefits to gay and lesbian employees of the department from 1985 to 2000 with same-sex partners; and (k) what records exist in the section about former heads of mission and senior public servants in the DEA, including former Ambassadors John Watkins and David Johnson, and former Assistant Under Secretary of State John Holmes?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) to (k), the historical section is a research unit within Global Affairs Canada, GAC, whose mandate is to increase public understanding of the history of Canadian diplomacy and of GAC. The section has published a three-volume administrative history of the Department of External Affairs, as GAC was previously known, and is responsible for the “Documents on Canadian external relations” series, found at <https://gac.canadiana.ca/view/ooe.b1603413E>. The section also hosts internal history-related events for departmental staff. The current head of the section was appointed in 2020 through the external selection process 19-EXT-EA-KD-1023312, found at <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/prrs-srpf/applicant/page1800?poster=1317318>. The classification standard, including a benchmark description of duties, for the head of the historical section, HR-04, can be found on the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat website at <https://acoc-acco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/HR-eng.pdf>.

There is no complete publicly available listing of records currently held by the historical section, which, it should be noted, is neither a departmental archive, nor the departmental repository for security and intelligence records or for official communications between Canadian posts abroad and headquarters in Ottawa from 1950 to 2000.

Records created by the historical section in fulfilment of its mandate are maintained within the department in accordance with government record-keeping policy, while records of the section that have been identified as having historical or archival value are transferred to Library and Archives Canada, LAC, once they no longer serve an ongoing business need as per sections 12 and 13 of the Library and Archives of Canada Act.

All records transferred to the LAC are under the care of that institution, subject to any agreements on transfer agreed to between GAC and the LAC. The records specific to security and intelligence that were transferred in 2016 are under the care of the LAC, and the finding aids for this material are available publicly and free of charge from that institution.

Finally, the records held by the department related to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, LGBT, purge from the 1950s to the 1990s, including but not limited to references to file 50207-40, references to records about the impact of these discriminatory policies, references to records about the extension of equal employment benefits to gay and lesbian employees, and references to records about senior public servants in the Department of External Affairs in relation to these discriminatory policies, have been captured as part of the department’s response to the Fourth Supplementary Agreement, from phase II of the archival research project, of the LGBT class action litigation. Lists of these records have been provided to the parties, in accordance with the terms set out in the Fourth Supplementary Agreement for selection and eventual public release upon the conclusion of this process.

Question No. 2828—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the contracts and services provided to the Department of Justice (DOJ) from January 1, 2016, to May 31, 2024, by Canadian Development Consultants International Inc. (CDCI) in connection with legal proceedings brought by survivors of the LGBT Purge from 2016 on, including the 2017 class action lawsuit: (a) what are the details of all agreements entered into between CDCI and the DOJ, including (i) the mandate and scope of the research to be conducted, (ii) the terms of reference, (iii) any restrictions on the records to be searched for by security classification, subject, or otherwise; (b) what are the details of all reports submitted by CDCI to the DOJ during their mandate, including the (i) dates, (ii) titles, (iii) subject matter and summary of the content; (c) are these reports available for access by the public, and, if not, on what legal basis is access limited or denied; and (d) what is the legal basis for the claim of solicitor-client privilege with respect to ATIP request A-2023-00288, for four reports prepared by CDCI, and why was this not considered pursuant to litigation privilege as opposed to solicitor-client privilege?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Development Consultants International Inc., CDCI, provided services to the Department of Justice for the purpose of litigation. The litigation is ongoing, as the terms and deliverables under the settlement of the class action lawsuit have not yet concluded. Therefore, the reports and related details, such as the mandate and scope of the research, the terms of reference and the restrictions on the records to be searched, cannot be disclosed as they are subject to litigation privilege and solicitor-client privilege. In response to access to information request A-2023-00288, the four reports prepared by CDCI were all exempt on the basis of section 23 of the Access to Information Act because of solicitor-client privilege and/or litigation privilege.

Question No. 2830—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to locomotive inspections conducted by Transport Canada (TC): how many inspections did TC conduct in British Columbia since 2019 related to locomotive spark arresting devices referenced in Section 15.1 of the Railway Locomotive Inspection and Safety Rules Locomotives Design Requirements (Part II), broken down by the (i) date and location of the inspection, (ii) owner of the locomotives, (iii) number of locomotives inspected, (iv) presence of deficiencies, (v) remedial actions ordered?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada is responsible for regulating the safety of railway operations, pursuant to the Railway Safety Act and part II of the Canada Labour Code.

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Under the Railway Safety Act, railway companies are ultimately responsible for maintaining their operations and infrastructure in accordance with the regulatory regime. The department's role is to monitor federally regulated railway companies for compliance with rules, regulations and standards through oversight activities including audits and inspections.

The railway locomotive inspection and safety rules outline the design and inspection requirements for locomotives operated by companies subject to the Railway Safety Act.

Under the rules, railway companies are responsible for the inspection and repair of all locomotives to ensure safe operation. Transport Canada's oversight is conducted to ensure company inspections are performed as per the rules and that locomotives placed or continued in service are free from the safety defects prescribed in part III of the rules, including the safety defects pertaining to internal combustion engines outlined in sections 26.1 and 26.2 of these rules as follows:

26.1 The engine and engine room shall be kept free from accumulation of oil, grease, fuel oil, and other combustible material. Pollution control tanks shall be kept free from leakage and/or overflow.

26.2 Locomotives operated in service during the fire season, shall have exhaust passages on the discharge side of spark arresting devices or turbo-chargers kept free of oil accumulation and carbonaceous deposits in excess of 1/8 inch (3 mm) in thickness.

In the province of British Columbia, Transport Canada inspected 1,072 locomotives from 2019 to 2023. The inspections were conducted in 35 yards, maintenance facilities and stations across the province, covering locomotives from 15 companies, which included CN Rail, BNSF Railway, Canadian Pacific Kansas City Limited, VIA Rail Inc., Southern Railway of British Columbia and White Pass & Yukon Route Railway. The inspections found that 1,018 locomotives were compliant to the internal combustible engine requirements and 54 were found non-compliant to these internal combustible engine requirements.

For all locomotives inspected, Transport Canada provided a report to the company identifying the non-compliant items as applicable. As such, companies were provided 14 days to respond to Transport Canada inspectors with corrective measures. In all cases, satisfactory actions were taken by the company.

Question No. 2832—**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to the Housing Accelerator Fund and the government's response to Order Paper question Q-2531: was there any funding provided to areas in Ontario, such as counties or upper-tier municipalities, that were not included in the response, and, if so, what was the amount of funding provided to each area, broken down by type of housing funded?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the housing accelerator fund and the government's response to Order Paper Question No. 2531, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation determined that the entities in question, such as counties or upper-tier municipalities in the areas in Ontario, did not meet the eligibility criteria for the housing accelerator fund program. Eligibility is contingent upon having delegated authority to oversee land use planning and development approvals.

The housing accelerator fund is cutting red tape to fast-track the construction of more than 550,000 new homes over the next decade, and the federal government is finalizing agreements with more than 60 small and rural communities. Combined, these agreements will deliver more than \$176 million to fast-track the construction of over 5,300 homes in the next three years and more than 51,000 homes over the next decade for rural Canadians.

Question No. 2833—**Mr. John Barlow:**

With regard to the government's Clean Fuel Regulations and Clean Fuel Standard: what is the projected impact that the regulations and the standard will have on Canada's gross domestic product, broken down by year between now and 2030?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, information on the GDP, or gross domestic product, impact estimates of the clean fuel regulations for 2030 is included in the regulatory impact analysis statement, published along with the regulations in 2022 at <https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2022/2022-07-06/html/sor-dors140-eng.html>.

To evaluate the direct impact of the regulations, as well as the effect of relative price changes on Canadian economic activity and GHG, or greenhouse gas, emissions, a macroeconomic analysis was completed. When these effects are taken into account, it is estimated that the regulations will result in an overall GDP decrease of up to \$9.0 billion, or up to 0.3% of total GDP, while reducing up to 26.6 megatonnes of GHG emissions in 2030, using an upper bound scenario where all credits are sold at the marginal cost per credit.

The regulations will work in combination with other federal, provincial and territorial climate change policies to create an incentive for firms to invest in innovative technologies and fuels by setting long-term, predictable and stringent targets. The broad range of compliance strategies allowed under the regulations will also allow fossil fuel suppliers the flexibility to choose the lowest-cost compliance actions available. If the regulations induce more long-term innovation and economies of scale than projected in the estimates presented in this analysis, then the regulations could result in lower costs and greater benefits, particularly over a longer time frame.

The social cost of carbon is a monetary measure of the net global damage from climate change that results from an additional metric ton of CO₂ emissions for a given year. Since the publication of the clean fuel regulations in July 2022, the federal government has updated the social cost of carbon estimates, aligned with updates made by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Taking this into account, it is expected that the monetized benefits of the regulations will exceed their costs, over the full time frame of analysis, 2022 to 2040.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2836—Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the RCMP and the Auditor General of Canada's 2024 Report 7 entitled "Combatting Cybercrime", paragraph 7.23 which states that "We found that the centre did not forward 7 of 26 (27%) of the requests we reviewed from international partners to domestic police agencies to see whether that had evidence relevant to the investigation,": what proportion of the requests which the RCMP did not forward to domestic police agencies were held back for (i) lack of sufficient evidence, (ii) lack of credible evidence, (iii) inadmissible or unlawfully collected evidence, (iv) other reasons, broken down by reason?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cybercrime investigations are complex and multijurisdictional, especially given that cybercriminals can perpetrate their actions from anywhere in the world. Therefore, it is essential that all relevant parties work together in a coordinated fashion to better protect Canadians.

Recognizing the importance of strengthening Canada's capacity to counter cybercrime, in 2020, the Government of Canada provided the RCMP with approximately \$137.5 million to establish the national cybercrime coordination centre, or NC3, to work with domestic and international law enforcement and other partners to investigate and combat cybercrime.

The RCMP has also invested an additional \$78.9 million to increase its federal policing capacity, including establishing specialist cybercrime teams across the country.

The RCMP NC3's ability to collect, analyze, share and coordinate international requests with domestic police agencies for assistance will improve as the program continues to work towards its full operating capability in 2024-25, including the ongoing implementation of a new case management system, referred to as the national cybercrime solution, to collect, analyze and exchange operational cybercrime data with law enforcement partners domestically and internationally.

The RCMP undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The RCMP is a decentralized organization comprised of over 700 detachments in 150 communities across the country. The RCMP concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted, and this could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 2838—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the Auditor General of Canada's Report 7 entitled "Combatting Cybercrime", paragraph 7.47 which states "a decision was made by the CRTC to delete data on the devices on an accelerated time frame after obtaining the consent of the owner of the devices. The CRTC subsequently contacted the law enforcement agency to inform it that the data on the devices had been deleted and that a warrant was no longer viable. However, we found that the statement made to the law enforcement agency was incorrect, as the data on the devices was deleted at a later date.": (a) what was the rationale for the CRTC to delete data on devices after the law enforcement agency issued a production order to the CRTC in relation to that investigation; (b) on what dates was the data deleted; and (c) on what date did the CRTC contact the device owner to seek permission to delete files?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the CRTC fully complied with the production order and provided law enforcement with exact copies of all of the data that the CRTC extracted from the devices.

The CRTC is not legally permitted to keep devices obtained during an investigation indefinitely, and the device owner's lawyer requested the return of the devices. Given that the devices contained programs, e.g., malware, and data that could have been used for malicious purposes, these files were removed from the devices prior to their return.

Regarding part (b) of the question, given that the devices contained programs, e.g., malware, and data that could have been used for malicious purposes, these files were removed from the devices prior to their return. The files were removed on April 14, 2022.

With regard to part (c), the CRTC is not legally permitted to keep devices obtained during an investigation indefinitely, and the device owner's lawyer requested the return of the devices. Given that the devices contained programs, e.g., malware, and data that could have been used for malicious purposes, these files were removed from the devices prior to their return. On April 12, 2022, CRTC staff obtained permission from the device owner to remove the files.

Question No. 2843—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the government's commitment to close the infrastructure gap on First Nations reserves by 2030: (a) does the Minister of Indigenous Services agree with the Auditor General of Canada's findings in the 2024 Reports 2 to 4 to the Parliament of Canada, which said that Indigenous Services Canada is not on track to end the housing infrastructure gap; (b) does the government believe it is on track to meet the mandate assigned to the Minister; and (c) in what year does Indigenous Services Canada believe the infrastructure gap facing First Nations will close?

Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), the Minister of Indigenous Services and the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities welcomed the report of the Auditor General of Canada on housing in first nation communities.

ISC accepted the Office of the Auditor General's recommendation that it work with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in collaboration with first nations, to develop and implement a strategy to close the housing gap by 2030. In particular, the department committed to engaging with first nations partners on establishing measurable targets and tracking progress, aligned to available funding, as part of the implementation of the co-developed national first nations housing and related infrastructure strategy.

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Since 2016, the Government of Canada, through Indigenous Services Canada, has increased targeted funding for housing on reserve by over 1,300%. Between 2016 and March 31, 2024, ISC has invested \$2.39 billion in targeted funding to support first nations housing. This is supporting the construction, renovation and retrofit of over 19,000 homes on reserve, of which 9,431 are complete. An additional \$1.75 billion in funding, secured in budget 2022, will be invested in first nations housing through 2026-27. While these investments are making an impact, ISC acknowledges that there is more work to do to close the housing gap on reserve. The department continues to work with its partners to support first nations in addressing their self-determined housing priorities and to close the infrastructure gap by 2030.

In support of this objective, budget 2024 announced new indigenous housing and community infrastructure investments of \$918 million over five years to accelerate work to narrow housing and infrastructure gaps in first nations, Inuit and Métis communities, including \$426 million for first nations on reserve. This brings the total of Government of Canada commitments to over \$4.5 billion.

In response to part (b) of the question, closing the infrastructure gap on reserve is a whole-of-government commitment that requires co-operation among multiple responsible ministers and federal organizations that invest in first nations infrastructure (e.g., Infrastructure Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation).

While significant investments have been made and initiatives are under way to transfer infrastructure service delivery to first nations communities, the Government of Canada knows there is more work to do. ISC is actively working directly with first nations, first nations organizations and other federal organizations to identify what further measures and investments may be required to close the infrastructure gap by 2030. For example, the Minister of Indigenous Services has hosted two round table discussions to date on economic reconciliation with indigenous leaders, financial sector executives and senior federal government representatives. The infrastructure gap was discussed at both round tables, as were possible solutions; the “What We Heard” reports for the February 2024 and May 2024 discussions are publicly available online.

In response to part (c), the government is committed to its continued work with partners to close the infrastructure gap by 2030. Budget 2024 commitments further demonstrate this commitment.

Question No. 2849—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the \$36 billion in planned spending reductions for the Canada Health Transfer announced in 2011: what services were impacted by the spending reduction, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) year, (iii) health field?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December 2011, the Government of Canada announced that the Canada Health Transfer, or CHT, would continue to grow at six per cent annually from 2014-15 to 2016-17, and, beginning in 2017-18, the CHT would grow in line with a three-year moving average of nominal gross domestic product, or GDP growth, with funding guaranteed to increase by at least three per cent per year.

The December 2011 announcement effectively extended the six per cent CHT escalator for three additional years beyond the legis-

lated time frame set out in the September 2004 10-year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, which was to end in 2013-14. This resulted in the CHT continuing to grow at six per cent annually for 2014-15 to 2016-17, thereby providing provinces and territories with additional CHT growth in those years. Since that time, the CHT has grown at an average annual rate of almost five per cent under its current GDP-based escalator, which provides provinces and territories with ongoing and predictable funding for healthcare. In addition, budget 2017 included a targeted investment of \$11 billion in federal funding over 10 years to improve home and community care and mental health and addiction services.

Estimates of hypothetical gains or losses that might have occurred, such as the \$36-billion estimate provided by the Council of the Federation, or CoF, in 2012, do not account for these additional investments in the years following.

Looking forward, budget 2024 confirmed the government's commitment under the “Working Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians” funding plan, first announced by the Prime Minister on 7 February 2023, to provide eligible provinces and territories with a five per cent CHT growth guarantee, to be paid through annual top-up payments, for the five-year period 2023-24 to 2027-28. The growth guarantee is currently valued at \$15.3 billion over the 10-year duration of the “Working Together” plan, which ends in 2032-33.

Historical data from 1980 to 2024 for the CHT and other major federal transfers, broken down by province and territory and by year, can be found at the following link: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/4ee1558-45b7-4484-9336-e692897d393f/resource/b7d86b5e-0615-4601-bb36-559953e374ef>

Question No. 2851—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to real estate sector investments made by the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSPIB), since fiscal year 2015-16: (a) what is the total value of assets held in (i) residential, (ii) retirement, real estate; (b) in what ways does the PSPIB prioritize worker, community and societal health and well-being when considering its investments in residential and retirement real estate; and (c) does the PSPIB consider renovations or repositioning in its assessments of investments in residential or retirement real estate?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a non-agent crown corporation, the public sector pension investment board, or PSPIB, upholds an autonomous, arm's-length operating mandate. PSPIB is subject to disclosure requirements as set out in the Public Sector Pension Investment Board Act and the Access to Information Act and reports to the President of the Treasury Board. Information concerning the activities of PSPIB is presented in the annual report tabled in Parliament by the President of the Treasury Board.

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The PSPIB's "2024 Annual Report" is available at the following link: https://www.investpsp.com/media/filer_public/03-our-performance/annual-report-2024/pdf/PSP-2024-annual-report-en.pdf

Question No. 2853—**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the decision to alter the remote work policy for federal employees to require them to appear three days in-office: (a) what are (i) the names of all individuals involved in the decision making process, (ii) the criteria used to justify the change, (iii) the needs assessments and office capacity assessments conducted, (iv) productivity indicators used to make the decision; and (b) how do these productivity indicators compare to those in the departmental plans?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a)(i) and (a)(ii) of the question, the "Direction on prescribed presence in the workplace", found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/staffing/direction-prescribed-presence-workplace.html> and as introduced in December 2022 and fully implemented since March 31, 2023, required employees who are eligible for a hybrid work arrangement to work onsite a minimum of two to three days per week, as determined by the deputy head of each department. The updated direction of May 1, 2024, now confirms a minimum requirement of three days per week as of September 9, 2024.

This decision was taken by the then secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, Catherine Blewett, and the chief human resources officer, Jacqueline Bogden, following close consultations with and the endorsement of deputy ministers from across departments and agencies.

The direction was updated to maximize the benefits of presence in the workplace. These include in-person connections, collaboration within and among teams, enhanced opportunities for peer learning, and effective onboarding of new talent. Human connections, strengthened through in-person presence, contribute to a strong culture of performance and service to Canadians in alignment with the values and ethics of the public service. The direction was also updated to bring greater fairness and consistency to how hybrid work is implemented, so that the experience of working in the public service or receiving services is the same across the government and across the country. This approach is consistent with many provincial and territorial governments and private sector organizations.

In response to part (a)(iii), TBS consulted broadly on the updated direction, notably with Public Services and Procurement Canada, or PSPC, to ensure that the adjustment to onsite work requirements aligned with the government's commitment to reduce its office footprint by 50%. Departments and agencies continue to work with PSPC to ensure that workplaces can accommodate the common hybrid work model, namely by implementing unassigned workspaces.

In response to part (a)(iv) and part (b), the performance of individual employees is measured and managed annually at the departmental level, based on pre-established work objectives and competencies, through performance management processes. Individual performance targets are typically different from and not directly comparable to measures presented in departmental plans, which examine performance at a broader program or activity level.

Question No. 2854—**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the decision of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) that "recreational fishing for Chinook salmon will be closed on the Skeena River watershed and all rivers and lakes in Region 6 flowing into PFMA 3 to 6, not including the Kitimat River and Nass River watersheds,": (a) how does this decision relate to the DFO's allocation policy; (b) on what empirical data was this decision based; (c) given previous seasons since 2018 have also seen similar closures, what evidence does the DFO have regarding the efficacy of this measure; (d) given the DFO forecasts a 2024 Skeena Chinook return of 28,000 fish, which is lower than last year's return and far below the historic average, how is the DFO improving management to ensure both conservation and recreational opportunities in future seasons; (e) what does the DFO estimate the impact of the Alaskan commercial fishery's interception of Skeena-bound Chinook salmon will be in 2024; and (f) what conservation measures are being imposed on other fisheries that catch Skeena Chinook?

Hon. Diane Lebovillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the decision of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO, that "recreational fishing for Chinook salmon will be closed on the Skeena River watershed and all rivers and lakes in Region 6 flowing into PFMA 3 to 6, not including the Kitimat River and Nass River watersheds", (a) DFO relies on "An Allocation Policy for Pacific Salmon (1999)" as the guiding framework to determine allocations among harvest groups for anadromous Pacific salmon in British Columbia and Yukon. As per the policy, directed recreational fisheries for Chinook may be permitted when abundance is sufficient to meet conservation objectives and subject to the priority for first nations food, social and ceremonial fisheries. As with many northern British Columbia and southeast Alaska Chinook salmon stocks, the population of Skeena River Chinook salmon has experienced a prolonged decline in abundance over the last two decades. The number of adult fish returning to the watershed to spawn in the past six seasons has been particularly low. In support of conservation and first nations allocation priorities, the department has implemented restrictions and/or prohibited retention of Skeena River Chinook salmon in recreational and commercial fisheries during this period.

In response to (b), DFO develops and implements management measures for Pacific salmon on the basis of pre-season forecasts and, where available, in-season information on abundance. Due to changes in large-scale environmental conditions, the variability between pre-season and in-season estimates of abundance has increased. For Skeena River Chinook salmon, pre-season forecasts of expected abundance are developed utilizing information on prior year parent spawning abundance and the relationship between adult spawners and returning adults four and five years later. When the estimated pre-season abundance indicates that the number of Chinook salmon may not be sufficient to achieve conservation or first nations food, social and ceremonial allocations, restrictions are implemented to reduce or avoid interception in lower-priority recreational and commercial fisheries.

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In response to (c), declining and variable rates of survival observed between the egg to adult life stage of Chinook salmon in northern British Columbia over the past two decades, referred to as the spawner recruit relationship, indicate that fewer Chinook salmon are surviving to adulthood than in the past. During periods of declining recruitment, ensuring that sufficient numbers of Chinook salmon are allowed to reach their spawning grounds is a primary fishery management objective intended to support future production. Prohibiting retention of Chinook salmon in recreational and commercial fisheries allows fish that would otherwise have been captured to pass to spawning areas or provide opportunities for first nation food, social and ceremonial fishery harvest. Restriction of fisheries and/or prohibition of retention of Chinook salmon is the primary means of protecting Chinook salmon that have reached maturity and are migrating to spawning areas.

With respect to part (d), over the past six seasons, in response to the two-decades long decline of Chinook salmon in the Skeena River watershed, DFO has implemented a precautionary approach to the administration of fishery opportunities directed at Skeena River Chinook salmon. In accordance with “An Allocation Policy for Pacific Salmon (1999)”, opportunities for recreational fishery harvest of Chinook salmon are permitted if conservation needs and first nations food, social and ceremonial fishery allocations are likely to be met. During periods of poor Chinook salmon production and/or survival, the opportunity to harvest Chinook salmon in recreational fisheries will be reduced to achieve these priorities.

In response to part (e), management of the U.S. southeast Alaskan commercial fishery harvest of Skeena River Chinook salmon is administered through the Pacific Salmon Treaty, or PST, chapter 3. The treaty establishes conservation objectives and harvest parameters for both Canadian and U.S. fisheries on the basis of aggregate abundance indices for mixed stock fisheries and indicator stocks. U.S. commercial fisheries do not specifically target Skeena River Chinook salmon; rather, fish are intercepted in mixed-stock fisheries targeting southeast Alaska, southern U.S. and British Columbia Chinook salmon stocks. Declining abundance of Chinook salmon in northern British Columbia and southeast Alaska has resulted in lower total allowable harvests permitted in these fisheries under PST harvest provisions. In other words, as abundance declines, more restrictive, precautionary measures have been implemented in both U.S. and Canadian fisheries for Chinook salmon administered pursuant to the PST. The total annual harvest of Chinook salmon in southeast Alaskan commercial fisheries has declined by about 50% in the past two decades. The majority of Chinook salmon captured in southeast Alaskan commercial fisheries originate in the southern U.S. Columbia River, non-Skeena River British Columbia and southeast Alaska Chinook salmon stocks. Of the total annual southeast Alaska aggregate abundance-based management, or AABM, fishery Chinook salmon harvest, approximately 1.7-3.0% is estimated to be comprised of Northern B.C.- Chinook salmon. Of the total annual mortalities of Skeena Chinook, harvest in AABM southeast Alaska fisheries accounts for approximately 15% of total Skeena Chinook mortalities.

In response to part (f), for 2024, the following measures are being implemented to reduce impacts to Skeena River Chinook: The Skeena River in-river recreational fishery is closed to the retention of Chinook salmon, and for the marine area and approach waters

adjacent to the Skeena River, a series of recreational harvesting restrictions are being implemented to reflect the fact that any Chinook salmon present are of mixed-stock origins, with tighter restrictions being implemented around the historical peak timing of Skeena Chinook salmon migration. That is, from June 14-22, 2024, the retention limits for Chinook salmon were reduced from two per day to one per day; from June 23 to July 17, 2024, no retention of Chinook salmon was permitted; from July 18 to August 10, 2024, retention was limited to one Chinook salmon per day; and from August 11, 2024 to March 31, 2025, retention is limited to two Chinook salmon per day. Further, there are no targeted commercial fishing opportunities for Skeena Chinook salmon; retention of Chinook salmon in any commercial gillnet or seine fisheries as bycatch is not permitted; and the area F commercial troll fishery start date is delayed to mid-August and will occur after Skeena Chinook have historically transited the fishing area.

Question No. 2859—**Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the available funding streams that (i) support Indigenous veterans' mental health, (ii) support Indigenous Veterans in finding employment after service; (b) of the funding streams in (a), what is the total amount of funding that remained unspent, uncommitted, or undelivered; and (c) what criteria or justifications were used to evaluate and reject the Burns Way Program which has been established to improve mental health services for Indigenous, non-Indigenous and minority veterans and their family members?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the mental health and well-being of those who selflessly served Canada is a priority for the Government of Canada. Veterans Affairs Canada, VAC, is committed to ensuring eligible veterans, Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, personnel, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, members, and their families have access to the mental health support they need, when they need it.

The VAC assistance service has mental health professionals who are indigenous or have extensive experience working with the indigenous community, approximately 5.09% of the network. Should individuals choose to, they may invite a person of their choice such as an elder, a family member, community member or other to accompany them and offer emotional support at their counselling sessions with a mental health professional.

Additionally, a complete suite of mental, physical and family well-being solutions is available with LifeSpeak. It offers videos, blogs, articles and self-help for the indigenous community. A variety of topics include cultural sensitivity, building resilience, empowerment, history and mental health.

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Operational stress injury social support, OSISS, is a peer support network that offers serving and former CAF members, Canadian Rangers and their families someone to talk to who has first-hand experience. OSISS offers a national indigenous group. This is a sacred safe space for indigenous veterans with an operational stress injury, OSI, to come together and share unique lived experiences, all through an indigenous lens.

The network of OSI clinics is composed of 10 OSI clinics and 11 OSI satellite service sites located across Canada. These are funded by Veterans Affairs Canada and operated by provincial health authorities. OSI clinic services are available to eligible veterans, including indigenous veterans, as well as currently serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, active and former members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and their family members. These services are offered both in-person and virtually, and include educational sessions, comprehensive assessments for disability benefits, assessments for treatment, individual and group treatments, and couples and family interventions.

Since April 1, 2022, veterans and serving reserve force members who apply for a disability benefit for certain mental health conditions can now receive immediate mental health coverage under the mental health benefit.

Mental health first aid, which provides mental health literacy to the veteran community at large and a variety of online tools, including the PTSD coach Canada mobile application, and the interactive resource caregiver zone, which provides instruction, education, videos and tools on a wide range of caregiving topics to family members taking care of veterans, are supported and funded by Veterans Affairs Canada.

The veteran and family well-being fund provides grants and contributions to private, public, academic and indigenous organizations to conduct research and implement initiatives and projects that support the well-being of all veterans and their families. This includes projects and initiatives that address mental health, employment/retraining, transition to civilian life and homelessness.

The joint federal research funding program provides grants and contributions to conduct research with the goal of driving progress on new knowledge and understanding of military member, veteran and family well-being.

Indigenous organizations are eligible recipients under the terms and conditions of both programs.

With regard to part (b), the veteran and family well-being fund and the joint federal research funding program funding have not been unspent, uncommitted or undelivered in any fiscal year.

With regard to part (c), Veterans Affairs Canada has no record of any applications from the Burns Way program to the veteran and family well-being fund or the joint federal research fund.

Question No. 2861—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to vessel and related policies that support owner operator in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, since February 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all consultations and engagement sessions that have been undertaken or are currently scheduled as part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) efforts to better understand inshore fish harvesters and association representatives concerns, including the (i) date of the consultation or engagement session, (ii) organization or individuals consulted, (iii) recommendations heard in each consultation or session; and (b) what

resources has the DFO allocated for the purposes of the consultations in (a), including the (i) number of staff, (ii) budget, (iii) administrative resources?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, hosted a series of engagement sessions in Atlantic Canada and Quebec to better understand stakeholder concerns about the role its inshore vessel and related policies play in supporting owner-operator objectives. These engagements focused on how owner-operator is central to the inshore fisheries and designed to promote viable and profitable operations for the average fishing enterprise in coastal communities, by requiring those who are issued licences to personally participate in the activities authorized in those licences, so the benefits associated with a licence remain in the hands of independent owner-operators.

All participants were presented with the same background material and engagement questions. While questions were presented in a sequential order, participants were not required to answer each question in turn; rather, participants could respond in the order of their choosing. This was intended to permit harvesters to inform DFO on the issues they felt were most important.

With regard to part (i), the dates are as follows: Moncton, NB, March 7, 2023; Deer Lake, NL, March 14, 2023; Gander, NL, March 23, 2023; Gaspé, QC, March 27-28, 2023; Saint John, NB, March 28, 2023; Halifax, NS, April 4, 2023; and St. John's, NL, May 16, 2023.

With regard to part (ii), inshore industry participants from all East Coast DFO regions, there were 366 participants in person and 1800 questionnaire submissions. The following associations were consulted: Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union; Gulf Nova Scotia Fishermen's Coalition; Maritimes region exempted inshore fleets; Government of New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Fisheries; Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association; members of regional harbour authority advisory committees; Grand Manan Fishers Association; and Fundy North Fishers Association.

Other individuals/groups who participated in the engagements include: professional certification board members; fish processors; Dr. Dan Walker, Naval Architect, Memorial University; provincial government representatives; and the member of Parliament for South Shore—St. Margarets

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With regard to part (iii), recommendations are identified by themes. The decision to identify high-level themes reflects participant discussions during presentations, who viewed issues interrelatedly. The high-level themes allowed the department to capture the key opinions and common threads that emerged and helped to identify broader possible policy recommendations or areas for improvement that apply across the subject matters discussed. Theme recommendations include: applications of laws, regulations, and policies; administrative complexity; enterprise management; accessibility to enterprises and licences; safety, infrastructure and training.

Each consultation session was supported by four to six staff, attending in person and online from both regional and national headquarters.

Total expenses, inclusive of room rentals, audiovisual, etc. was \$56,437.

All administration was done by DFO staff as part of regular duties.

Question No. 2862—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the government's response to the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled "Foreign Ownership and Corporate Concentration of Fishing Licenses and Quota": (a) what are the details of all "in-depth engagement with Indigenous peoples and organizations, fishery participants, and key stakeholders" as part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) West Coast Fisheries modernization efforts, including the (i) date of the consultation, (ii) name of the fishery participant or rights-holding Indigenous group consulted, (iii) recommendations heard from the consultation; and (b) what resources has the DFO allocated for the purposes of the consultations in (a), including the (i) number of staff, (ii) budget, (iii) administrative resources?

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, has now begun a more in-depth and phased engagement about West Coast commercial fisheries modernization, WCCFM.

Both the study on foreign ownership and corporate concentration by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, FOPO, as well as the government response to the committee's recommendations have been discussed with some stakeholders during regularly scheduled meetings with senior DFO officials since FOPO's study concluded. The department looks forward to now expanding these conversations with a wider range of first nations and industry stakeholders as part of the WCCFM engagement.

Given that the more comprehensive engagement on WCCFM has just begun, DFO cannot at this time report out on dates, participant groups or recommendations heard from engagement on WCCFM. DFO officials are reaching out to groups over the summer and into early fall to discuss engagement and topics of focus.

DFO Pacific region has one full-time coordinator position at the CO-02 level within the regional fisheries management team dedicated to key topics within the scope of WCCFM. There is also a lead manager and director in each of the Pacific region fisheries management branch and the national headquarters fisheries policy team tasked with leadership on this initiative, as well as numerous subject matter experts and administrative staff supporting specific elements of the work. Additional regional and national staff will become involved as the phased WCCFM engagement proceeds. DFO has set aside necessary non-salary resources to support en-

agement through facilitated workshops on the key WCCFM topics.

Question No. 2872—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and its Voluntary Disclosure Program (VDP), since January 1, 2016: (a) how many (i) individuals, (ii) employers, (iii) corporations, (iv) partnerships, (v) trusts, have successfully used the VDP (i.e. their application for the VDP was accepted), broken down by year; (b) how many (i) individuals, (ii) employers, (iii) corporations, (iv) partnerships, (v) trusts, with accounts outside of Canada have successfully used the VDP, broken down by year; (c) how much in relief has been granted through the VDP, broken down by year and by (i) individuals, (ii) employers, (iii) corporations, (iv) partnerships, (v) trusts; (d) how many Canadians have been convicted of tax evasion related to money and other assets held overseas; and (e) how many Canadians have been convicted of tax evasion related to money and other assets held overseas?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above noted question, what follows is the response from the CRA for the time period of January 1, 2016, to June 17, 2024, that is, the date of the question.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c), CRA is not able to provide information in the manner requested as the voluntary disclosures program, VDP, does not track statistics in the requested format. Additionally, VDP applications are not always processed in the year they are received and are tracked based on the issue, e.g. income tax, GST, payroll, not based on the type of taxpayer. A taxpayer may file a single disclosure that has an impact on multiple business lines, resulting in multiple disclosures in the same VDP application.

With regard to parts (d) and (e), please note, questions (d) and (e) are identical. As the VDP is meant for taxpayers to correct unintentional errors, the program does not track cases of tax evasion. Therefore, the CRA does not have the information to provide for either question.

Question No. 2876—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the National Strategy for Drugs for Rare Diseases: (a) since January 1, 2023, including announced commitments by all departments and agencies, what is the dollar amount that has been provided to, or committed for the purpose of provision to, the provinces and territories, through the National Strategy for Drugs for Rare Diseases, broken down by purpose; (b) for which drugs, therapies, treatments, and diseases or conditions, and what dollar amount for each type, have funds been allocated, broken down by province; (c) what funds have been directed toward providing drugs, therapies, or treatment for patients diagnosed with Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH), broken down by province; (d) what funds have been directed to the provinces and territories for drugs, therapies, and treatments relating to PAH, broken down by province; and (e) which specific drugs, therapies, or treatments have been funded for treatment of PAH?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), on March 22, 2023, the Government of Canada announced measures in support of the first-ever National Strategy for Drugs for Rare Diseases, with an investment of up to \$1.5 billion over three years. As part of this first phase, the Government of Canada will provide up to \$1.4 billion over three years to provinces and territories through bilateral agreements.

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This federal investment will increase access to safe and effective drugs for Canadians with rare diseases. Provinces and territories will be able to add new drugs to their formularies and increase coverage of existing drugs. The new funding will also enable provinces and territories to improve screening and diagnostics so that patients with a rare disease have a better chance of getting access to effective treatments at the right time, which can mean significantly better health and overall quality of life for patients and their families.

We are implementing this strategy by working with provinces and territories towards the development of bilateral agreements. Funding for the bilateral agreements will be available April 1, 2024, and run until March 31, 2027.

On July 23, 2024, the Government of Canada signed the agreement to support drugs for rare diseases, DRD, with British Columbia. The Government of Canada will provide \$194 million to improve access to drugs for rare diseases, early diagnosis and screening, starting with the funding to support the province in providing access of two drugs under the National Strategy for Drugs for Rare Diseases: Poteligeo, for the treatment of mycosis fungoides or Sézary syndrome; and Oxlumo, for the treatment of hyperoxaluria type 1, will be made available to residents of B.C. These two drugs are the first drugs to be announced from the common list of new drugs that has been in development over the last year with provinces and territories.

With regard to parts (b), (c), (d) and (e), as noted in the response to (a), bilateral agreements with the other provinces and territories have yet to be signed at the time of this response, so funds have yet to be allocated. However, discussions with provinces and territories are under way to jointly determine a small set of new and emerging drugs that will be cost-shared and covered in a consistent way across Canada, for the benefit of patients. In addition to these drugs, the national strategy provides flexibility for jurisdictions to address their own unique circumstances, adding other new drugs to their formularies and increasing coverage of existing drugs.

Question No. 2887—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the awarding of the contract to CIMA+ for the site pre-engineering contract, of which one project included the bury of the transmission and distribution lines on the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project: (a) why was CIMA+ chosen to replace the original design consultant Stantec for the Gordie Howe International Bridge pre-engineering contract; (b) if CIMA+ was awarded the contract due to lower cost considerations over Stantec, what was the initial awarded contract cost, and what the final paid amounts to CIMA+; (c) were there any official memos between the Director of the Canadian Port of Entry, Joe Maghnieh, and former Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) Chairman, Dwight Duncan, regarding the awarding of the CIMA+ contract; (d) if so, what were the details of those memos regarding the awarding of the CIMA+ contract; (e) did the WDBA Chairman, Dwight Duncan, send any official memos to the Office of the Prime Minister over the awarding of the contract to CIMA+; (f) if so, what were the details of those memos over the awarding of the contract to CIMA+; (g) did the Office of the Prime Minister send any official memos to the Director of the Canadian Port of Entry, Joe Maghnieh, regarding the awarding of the CIMA+ contract; and (h) if so, what were the details of those memos regarding the awarding of the CIMA+ contract?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, WDBA, and the awarding of the contract to CIMA+ for the site pre-engineering contract, of which one project included the bury of the transmission

and distribution lines on the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, the response is as follows.

With respect to part (a), the premise to the question is factually inaccurate; CIMA+ was not chosen to replace Stantec. Early works for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project included multiple scopes of work. Stantec's contract included the design of the perimeter access road, "PAR", and design coordination with minor and major utilities and contract administration of the PAR early works construction contract. CIMA+'s contract included the design of the Hydro One transmission relocations and contract administration of the WDBA Hydro One transmission relocations.

With respect to part (b), CIMA+ was awarded the contract based on a competitive procurement that included both cost and technical considerations.

With respect to part (c), WDBA staff is unaware of any communications between Dwight Duncan and Joe Maghnieh.

With respect to part (d), based on the response to (c), WDBA has nothing to report.

With respect to part (e), WDBA staff is unaware of any communications between Dwight Duncan and the Office of the Prime Minister on this topic.

With respect to part (f), based on the response to (e), WDBA has nothing to report.

With respect to part (g), WDBA staff is unaware of any communications between the Office of the Prime Minister and Joe Maghnieh.

With respect to part (h), based on the response to (g), WDBA has nothing to report.

Question No. 2888—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the failure of the Schedule 40 pipe used on the Gordie Howe International Bridge project: (a) why did the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) ignore the independent engineering evidence of Kinectrics, Geotherm and Brierley, who all confirmed that the Schedule 40 pipe was the wrong pipe specified for this project; (b) why did the WDBA accept the opinion of CIMA+ private consulting engineer firm on this issue when they were the firm who specified the use of the Schedule 40 pipe and therefore were in a conflict-of-interest to make such a determination; and (c) why did the WDBA not seek an independent opinion on the Schedule 40 pipe after its failure as CIMA+ was in a conflict of interest on the issues with the Schedule 40 pipe?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the failure of the schedule 40 pipe used on the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, please note that this question relates to a dispute involving the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority or WDBA, its contractor Valard, and Valard's subcontractor Sterling Ridge Group Ltd., "SLR". WDBA, Valard, and SLR entered into a settlement regarding that dispute. The minutes of settlement require all parties, including Valard and SLR, to be bound by confidentiality with respect to the settlement.

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With respect to part (a), this question contemplates alleged facts that are inaccurate. WDBA did not “ignore” any of the various reports.

With respect to part (b), this question contemplates alleged facts and opinions that are inaccurate. WDBA considered all reports and all opinions of all involved parties.

With respect to part (c), this question contemplates alleged facts that are inaccurate. An independent expert was engaged.

Question No. 2889—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the tendering process and announcement that CIMA+ was to be awarded the pre-engineering contract for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project: (a) were there any official memos between the Chairman, Dwight Duncan, the Chief Financial Officer, Linda Hurley, and the Chief Executive Officer, Mike Cutillo, of the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority regarding the tendering process and CIMA+ being awarded the contract for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details of those memos regarding the tendering process and CIMA+ being awarded the contract for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the tendering process and announcement that CIMA+ was to be awarded the pre-engineering contract for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, please note that with respect to this tendering process that occurred in 2016, Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority’s procurement policy was followed.

With respect to part (a), there were no official memos between the Chairman Dwight Duncan, Linda Hurdle, and Mike Cautillo. The board of directors was generally advised of tender processes, including the CIMA+ tender.

With respect to part (b), the board of directors was advised of the tender process and approval was sought, and granted, to award the contract to CIMA+ based on the request for proposal, RFP, evaluation.

Question No. 2890—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the delays of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project: (a) were there any official memos sent between the Chief Communications Stakeholder Officer, Heather Grondin, the Chairman Dwight Duncan, the Chief Financial Officer, Linda Hurley, and the Chief Executive Officer, Mike Cutillo, of the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority regarding the error made by CIMA+ regarding the installation and subsequent failure of the Schedule 40 pipe; and (b) if so, what are the details of those memos regarding the error made by CIMA+ regarding the installation and subsequent failure of the Schedule 40 pipe?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the delays of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, the early works involving Valard, SLR, CIMA+, and others had no impact on the overall Gordie Howe International Bridge project schedule. All contracts associated with the early works were separate from the public-private partnership contract. Early works activities did not affect the schedule delay announced in January 2024. As such, there are no memos between the people identified in this question regarding early works and project delay.

Question No. 2895—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Public Health Agency of Canada’s (PHAC) work to prepare its Canadian Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) report: (a) with which governments, organizations, and associations is the PHAC partnering to ensure this report is completed; (b) from which data sources does the CCWIS collect information to inform the policies and programs aimed at improving child and family health

in Canada; and (c) by what date will the PHAC publish its second report using the CCWIS’s data?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), with regard to the Public Health Agency of Canada’s, PHAC, work to prepare its Canadian child welfare information system, CCWIS, report, PHAC collaborates with provinces and territories, other federal departments, and indigenous organizations to support work on the CCWIS. The development of the 2023/2024 report involved collaboration, input, and/or consultation with all provincial and territorial departments/ministries responsible for child welfare services, national indigenous organizations, Indigenous Services Canada, policy experts, and researchers from the scientific community; see the acknowledgements section of the report for a detailed list. For the 2024/2025 report, PHAC continues to develop partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders, in addition to sustaining these existing collaborations.

In response to (b), the CCWIS includes data from all provinces and territories and from Indigenous Services Canada. Ontario data are from the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, which receives information from its member agencies. Data from all other jurisdictions are from the provincial/territorial department or ministry responsible for child welfare services. Specific details about data sources and data coverage are included in table 1 of the 2023/2024 report.

In response to (c), it is expected that the 2024/2025 report, the second report using CCWIS data, will be published by March 31, 2025.

Question No. 2897—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to Indigenous Services Canada’s (ISC) capital allocation policies on school expansions and renovations: (a) on what basis does the department determine the level of funding to be determined for school expansions and renovations; (b) does the department consider students from neighbouring communities as part of its decision-making processes in allocating funding; (c) which regional ISC offices have ruled that they will no longer consider out-of-reserve children when calculating per-student funds for capital projects, including building renovations; (d) what is the total number of schools that have seen their allocation decline due to changes in how funding is allocated; and (e) what measures has ISC undertaken to ensure that affected communities, like the Sunchild First Nation, can continue to provide education to students from outside of their communities who attend their schools?

Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), during the feasibility stage of a project, a cost estimate is completed by a third party consultant. This cost estimate becomes the basis for the proposed funding required for a project. As the project moves forward, this cost estimate is continually updated. The size of a school is determined following ISC’s school space accommodation standards policy, known as the SSAS policy, based on the number of students at the design horizon, meaning the number of students that would be attending a school 10 years after its opening.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (b), the department allocates funding based on the highest health and safety risks and overcrowding concerns. Students from neighbouring communities affect the overcrowding scenario of a school, and this therefore contributes to a project's prioritization for the allocation of funds.

As per the 2023 SSAS, an enrolment projection is completed by a demographic specialist at the feasibility stage of a project to determine the design.

The enrolment projection considers the attendance of students from neighbouring communities, as found in space accommodation standards at sac-isc.gc.ca.

With regard to part (c), according to the policy update, an enrolment projection for any major construction or renovation project is done by a demographic specialist. This projection is to include off-reserve students who would attend the school on reserve.

With regard to part (d), ISC's funding allocations for school expansions and renovations, funding is allocated to approved projects and is not distributed across all schools; therefore, individual schools would not see an allocation decline in this regard.

With regard to part (e), ISC updated the SSAS in 2023 to require a demographic specialist to complete enrolment projections. This projection must include off-reserve students who would attend the school on reserve. This policy also applies to Sunchild First Nation. Prior to the 2023 update, the SSAS did not account for off-reserve students.

Question No. 2898—**Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to consultations for budget 2024: (a) were measures to assist individuals living with Celiac disease presented, and, if so, (i) by what organization, (ii) when; (b) why were no supports for those living with Celiac disease included in budget 2024; and (c) what initiatives are the federal government exploring to help with the high cost of gluten-free foods for those living with Celiac disease to include any possible changes to the Gluten-Free Food Tax Credit?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), as part of budget 2024 consultations, the key submission regarding measures to assist individuals living with celiac disease was presented by Celiac Canada on September 13, 2023. Prior to the tabling of budget 2024, the government also received correspondence from taxpayers, including correspondence forwarded by members of Parliament, regarding support for those with celiac disease.

With regard to (b), the incremental cost of gluten free foods for people with celiac disease was added to the list of eligible expenses for the medical expense tax credit, or METC, under the Income Tax Act, 2003 following in depth consultations with representatives of the community of persons with disabilities and with medical practitioners.

The purpose of the METC is to take into account above-average medical expenses incurred by Canadians in determining an individual's amount of tax owing, consistent with the principle that people with less discretionary income should pay less tax. The METC seeks to reduce the amount of tax owing by the portion of qualifying medical or disability related expenses in excess of the lesser of \$2,759 in 2024 and 3% of income. The 3% threshold represents above average medical expenses for these purposes. There is no upper limit on the amount of expenses that can be covered.

To ensure that tax relief is provided only for medical expenses that Canadians incur out of pocket, itemized receipts must be retained to support a claim under the METC and must be provided to the Canada Revenue Agency upon request. This approach applies generally to all expenses claimed under the METC, is consistent with the administration of other tax credits, and is important for ensuring the overall integrity of the tax system.

With regard to (c), the government is continually reviewing tax matters to ensure that the tax system is fair and as current as possible.

Question No. 2899—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the \$130 million over six years in budget 2024 to Fisheries and Oceans Canada, with \$20 million ongoing to address marine fuel cost pressures to address the unpredictability and volatility of marine fuel costs: (a) how much of the \$20 million in ongoing funding is a result of the carbon tax; and (b) how much will fuel costs be, in total dollars, increased for the Canadian Coast Guard by the carbon tax over the next five years after the proposed carbon tax increases are implemented?

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the \$130 million over six years in budget 2024 to Fisheries and Oceans Canada, with \$20 million ongoing to address marine fuel cost pressures to address the unpredictability and volatility of marine fuel costs, the Canadian Coast Guard, CCG, does not track the exact impact on fuel costs from the price on pollution, and therefore any answer to part (a) or (b) would be speculative and potentially misleading. Therefore, the CCG offers a nil response.

Question No. 2901—**Mr. Kyle Seeback:**

With regard to individual expense receipts submitted by a board of director, chair, or Chief Executive Officer, at Invest in Canada, since 2018: what are the details of all items expensed, including the (i) dollar value of each expense, (ii) product or service expensed, (iii) name of the venue for the product or service expensed, (iv) name of the city in which it was expensed, (v) reason for the expense, (vi) name and title of the individual it was expensed under, (vii) date?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (i) to (vii), Invest in Canada undertook an extensive preliminary search to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. Invest in Canada concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Routine Proceedings

Invest in Canada is governed by a board of directors whose representatives are primarily from the private sector. The board of directors is responsible for supervising and managing the Invest in Canada hub's business and affairs and for advising the minister and the chief executive officer on matters relating to the Invest in Canada hub's mandate. Board members are appointed by the Governor in Council.

The total number of members who have served on the board since 2018 is 15. The board and its committees meet virtually and in person three to four times annually.

Invest in Canada is guided by the guidelines and regulations set by the Treasury Board Secretariat for the management and governance of departmental corporations. The organization's travel policy and hospitality policy articulate the travel parameters for the chief executive officer and the board.

Current executive and board of director disclosures are publicly available online at <https://open.canada.ca/en>.

Question No. 2903—**Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to the National Research Council (NRC) buildings located at 435 and 445 Ellice Avenue, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, that were declared surplus in 2012: (a) at what point in time was it determined that the property, including both (i) the laboratory building, (ii) the office tower, would be maintained under federal government ownership; (b) whereas the removal of the laboratory building from the market was justified on the grounds of urgent need for laboratory space on behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, what has been the primary use of the laboratory since COVID-19 cases have declined nationally; (c) is the NRC considering placing this property on the market for private purchase at any time in the future; (d) what commitments did the NRC make to the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) concerning its intent to sell the property, including either (i) the laboratory building, (ii) the office tower; (e) what was the cause of delays on the approval of the MMF's draft offer to purchase the office tower for \$3,660,000 submitted in February 2021; (f) why did the NRC seek bids other than that offered by the MMF for the office tower following March of 2022; and (g) did the NRC engage in any negotiations with other potential bidders while the property, including both (i) the laboratory building, (ii) the office tower was for sale, and, if so, what are their names?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), in July 2020 the federal government confirmed that the two properties on the National Research Council Canada, or NRC, Ellice Avenue site would be retained for Canada's use in support of the response to pandemic preparedness by the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC. In fall 2020 the NRC began exploring options to sever the property, retaining the laboratory building for PHAC while enabling the office tower to be available as a separate property. In April 2022, the NRC confirmed to an interested third party that the office tower would be retained by the federal government.

With regard to (b), the NRC uses the laboratory building to support its Medical Devices Research Centre. In addition, PHAC leases space in both the laboratory and the office building.

With regard to (c), the NRC has not identified this property for purchase at this time.

With regard to (d), there was no commitment made to the Manitoba Métis Federation, the MMF, regarding the sale of the laboratory building. In fall 2020 the NRC agreed to explore the possibility of severing the property so that the office tower could be sold as a separate property. In April 2022, the NRC confirmed in writing that the office tower was not available for a separate sale.

With regard to (e), the NRC did not accept the MMF's draft offer to purchase the office tower in February 2021, as there had been no severance of the property, making the office tower not available to be sold.

With regard to (f), the NRC did not seek other bids for the purchase or sale of any buildings on the Ellice Avenue property following March of 2022.

With regard to (g), the NRC has not engaged in any negotiations with any other potential bidders for the property, since the Government of Canada declared the Ellice Avenue property as critical to retain for PHAC's needs in support of pandemic response.

* * *

• (1540)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 2626, originally tabled on June 27, and the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2700, 2702, 2706 to 2711, 2713 to 2715, 2717, 2719 to 2723, 2725, 2727 to 2738, 2740, 2741, 2743, 2745, 2746, 2748 to 2752, 2754, 2755, 2758, 2759, 2761, 2763, 2764, 2767 to 2769, 2772, 2775, 2781, 2784 to 2787, 2789, 2790, 2793, 2796 to 2798, 2801, 2802, 2804, 2806, 2807, 2809, 2810, 2813, 2816, 2818, 2822 to 2826, 2829, 2831, 2834, 2835, 2837, 2839 to 2842, 2844 to 2848, 2850, 2852, 2855 to 2858, 2860, 2863 to 2871, 2873 to 2875, 2877 to 2866, 2891 to 2894, 2896, 2900, 2902 and 2904, could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2626—**Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to the 2023 Canadian federal worker strike: (a) what was the total amount mistakenly paid out to striking employees; and (b) what is the amount that has not been collected back by the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2700—**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:**

With regard to the approval rate for French-speaking international students: how many study permit applications, other than extension applications, did Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada process in (i) 2023, (ii) 2024 to date, in total and broken down by country of residence?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2702—Ms. Lori Idlout:**

With regard to federal housing investments in the territories, since February 1, 2006, broken down by city and year: how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of (i) non-profit or community housing, (ii) cooperative housing, (iii) purpose-built rental housing, and how many units were developed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2706—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to the electoral district of Port Moody—Coquitlam, broken down by fiscal year since 2021-22: what are the details of all federal transit infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to municipalities, regional district associations or First Nations, national parks, etc.?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2707—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to all federal funding committed to the creation and maintenance of housing stock in the federal electoral district of Port Moody—Coquitlam, broken down by fiscal year since 2021-22: (a) what is the total amount committed, broken down by funding stream; (b) what was the total amount spent; (c) how much new housing stock was created; and (d) of the housing stock in (c), how much is (i) purpose-built rental housing, (ii) non-profit or community housing, (iii) cooperative housing, (iv) affordable housing for seniors?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2708—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to consultations undertaken by the government on the Canada Disability Benefit, held between November 15, 2023, and January 4, 2024: (a) what are the details of all such consultations, including the (i) date of the consultation, (ii) organizations that were consulted, (iii) recommendations that were made; (b) what are the details of all opportunities for public consultation, including (i) online engagement, (ii) in-person consultation; and (c) what are the details of all reports, discussion documents, or documents including recommendations for the Canada Disability Benefit, including the (i) title of the document, (ii) identifying number, (iii) date of the document, (iv) recommendations within the document?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2709—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to all federal grants and loans given to Starlight Investments, since January 1, 2006: (a) how much federal funding has been provided, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) fiscal year, (iii) funding type; and (b) how many housing units have been built as a result of the funding, broken down by (i) purpose-built rental housing, (ii) cooperative housing, (iii) non-profit or community housing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2710—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the Security Infrastructure Program (SIP) and the Expanded Security Infrastructure Program (ESIP), broken down by program, fiscal year and province or territory, since 2015-16: (a) how many applications were (i) received, (ii) funded, (iii) denied funding; (b) which projects were denied funding broken down by the reason they were denied; and (c) for each of the 600 approved projects under SIP, and the 173 approved projects under ESIP, (i) under what stream was the project approved (regular SIP, ESIP or the Severe Hate-Motivated, Incident stream), (ii) what was the total cost approved for the project, (iii) what was the total amount of federal funding delivered, (iv) what protection measures were funded by the project, (v) which eligible recipient classes did the project qualify under, (vi) if the recipient was a place of worship, what was the listed spiritual or religious belief that the organization identified in the application, (vii) what were the demographic groups identified as primarily benefiting from the project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2711—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to government procurement from entities currently banned from receiving investment in the United States by executive order due to posing security threats: (a) has any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, purchased any materials, goods, software or services from the following entities, (i) China Head Aerospace Technology Co., (ii) China Telecommunications Corporation, (iii) Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co. Ltd., (iv) Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., (v) ZTE Co. Ltd., since 2016; (b) if the answer for any of

the entities listed in (a) is affirmative, what are the details of all such purchases on contract, including, for each, the (i) name of the department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity that made the purchase, (ii) date, (iii) vendor, (iv) value or amount, (v) description of the goods or services, including the quantity of each, if applicable, (vi) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid), (vii) start and end dates, if applicable; and (c) what measures or policies are in place to ensure that purchases from these entities do not compromise Canada's national security and align with international commitments and sanctions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2713—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to government support for Eastern Canada ferry services and the Wood Islands-Caribou route: (a) what is the total cost to date for the design and construction of the new ferry; (b) what are the details of all contracts over \$1,000 entered into by the government related to the new ferry since November 4, 2015, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services provided; (c) what is the launch date for the new vessel; (d) how far behind schedule is the design and production of the new vessel; (e) since November 4, 2015, what has been the total cost for maintenance and repair of the MV Holiday Island and MV Confederation vessels; (f) of the vessels in (e), how many hours of downtime did each vessel have during the season; (g) how many crossings were lost due to vessel downtime; (h) what is the total loss of revenue due to vessel downtime; and (i) what is the total cost to secure interim ferries for the route, including the (i) purchase, (ii) lease, (iii) rental, (iv) maintenance, (v) repairs, (vi) retrofit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2714—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to federal Crown land which has been sold or donated for the purpose of building housing since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all such transactions, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) size of the land involved, (iii) sale price, if applicable, (iv) entity the land was sold or transferred to, (v) location, (vi) number of houses or units expected to be built on the land, (vii) number of houses or units built on the land to date, if known; and (b) what was the total square area of land transferred in (a), broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2715—Mr. Rob Moore:

With regard to Temporary Resident Permits (TRP), broken down by year for each of the last five years: (a) how many TRPs have been issued in total and broken down by those who applied (i) abroad prior to arriving in Canada, (ii) at a point of entry, (iii) while already in Canada; (b) for each part of (a), how many and what percentage of the applications required a police certificate or a criminal records check; (c) of the applications in (b), how many (i) did not include a police certificate or criminal records check, (ii) included documents which showed crimes that were severe enough to deny the TRP application; (d) how many individuals were given a TRP despite not submitting a police certificate or passing a criminal records check; and (e) what is the breakdown of (a) through (d) by country of origin?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2717—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the Department of National Defence and NORAD modernization: (a) how much of the \$38.6 billion announced for the modernization has been spent to date, in total, and broken down by project; (b) of the 20 project timelines announced in June 2022, which ones are (i) on track for the completion of the definition phase or to be finished within the stated time, (ii) delayed; and (c) for each project which is delayed, (i) what is the new projected completion date, (ii) what is the reason for the delay?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2719—Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the Canadian High Arctic Research Station (CHARS): (a) how many employees or full-time equivalents were employed at CHARS during the last 12 months; (b) how many foreign nationals have worked or researched at CHARS, broken down by year and country of origin for each of the last eight years; (c) which countries are currently allowed to send individuals to work at CHARS; and (d) what are the pre-screening security requirements for individuals to work at CHARS?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2720—Mr. John Williamson:

With regard to the action taken by the government to recognize Machias Seal Island as a part of Canada: (a) what specific actions, if any, have been taken to recognize the island as a part of Canada, broken down by each department and agency; and (b) on what date did each action in (a) take place?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2721—Mr. Greg McLean:

With regard to costs incurred by the government related to court cases and hearings associated with the deportation order or former deportation order of Muhammad Zain UI Haq: what are the costs incurred to date, including any legal costs as well as costs related to administering the hearings or court cases, in total and broken down by type of cost and action related to the expense (federal appeal, lower court, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2722—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) housing refugees in hotels, motels, dorms, or similar types of facilities in Alberta: (a) how many have been housed, broken down by year for the last two fiscal years; (b) what is the total number of refugees housed, per month, broken down by year for the last two fiscal years; (c) which hotels are being used; (d) how many hotel rooms were (i) paid for by IRCC, (ii) occupied; (e) what is the capacity of each hotel that is being occupied by refugees; (f) how many refugees are staying in each hotel; (g) what is the average length of time IRCC expects (i) an individual refugee, (ii) a refugee family, to be housed in a hotel room; (h) what is the average length of time that a refugee has been housed, funded by the government, in a hotel; (i) what is the average cost of such housing per night for each refugee; (j) what was the total cost IRCC paid hoteliers to house refugees on May 1, 2024; (k) what is the average hotel cost per refugee for daily meals and refreshments; (l) what was the total cost paid to hoteliers to feed refugees; (m) what are the countries of origin for the refugees housed; (n) what is the breakdown of refugees accommodated in Alberta by each country of origin; (o) how much federal funding was transferred to each municipality with federally-funded refugee reception centres (Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer); (p) how much federal funding has been transferred to Alberta for the purpose of dealing with the influx of refugees in the province; (q) how much federal funding was transferred to local not-for-profit, charitable, and non-governmental organizations in Alberta to deal with the influx of refugees in the cities of (i) Calgary, (ii) Edmonton, (iii) Red Deer, (iv) Medicine Hat, (v) Lethbridge, since 2022; (r) what are the names of the organizations in (q) and how much did each organization receive; (s) how many more refugees does IRCC currently project will require hotel accommodation in Alberta; (t) how many refugees have moved out of government-funded hotel rooms in Alberta and into personal accommodations; and (u) what is the summary of the terms and conditions of the financial agreement that IRCC has with hotels located in Alberta that house refugees and receive federal funding to provide this service, broken down by hotel, including the name of each hotel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2723—Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:

With regard to the policy on pathways to permanent residency for Hong Kong residents (hereinafter the policy), which falls under humanitarian and compassionate considerations: (a) how many applicants under the policy were approved in 2023, broken down by month; (b) how many applicants under the policy have been approved since the beginning of 2024, broken down by month; (c) what is the policy's specific admission target; and (d) what is the policy's maximum admission target limit for humanitarian and compassionate considerations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2725—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to loans disbursed through the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program, from 2015 to present, broken down by debtors' racial or ethnic background, gender, and immigration or citizenship status: (a) what is the average total outstanding loan balance; (b) what is the average outstanding loan balance of debtors who completed a graduate degree; (c) what is the average outstanding loan balance owed among debtors who completed a bachelor's degree; (d) what is the average outstanding loan balance owed by debtors who completed a college or polytechnic diploma; (e) what percentage of student debtors have missed at least one payment of their scheduled repayment plan; (f) what percentage of student debtors have missed at least (i) three months, (ii) six months, of scheduled payments; (g) what percentage of student loans have fallen into a default position; and (h) what is the average time taken by student debtors to repay their loan in full?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2727—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program: (a) what is the number of businesses which have applied, as of May 23, 2024, broken down by province or territory, to the (i) Access to Business Opportunities stream, (ii) Access to Capital stream; (b) what is the total number of businesses which have received funding or assistance, broken down by province or territory, through the (i) Access to Business Opportunities stream, (ii) Access to Capital stream; (c) what is the total funding, in dollars, distributed to the (i) Access to Business Opportunities stream, (ii) Access to Capital stream, for the fiscal years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23; (d) what is the average funding amount provided to each approved applicant, broken down by province or territory, through the (i) Access to Business Opportunities stream, (ii) Access to Capital stream; (e) how does the government quantify the program's level of success; and (f) does the government have any evidence or statistics which demonstrate that the (i) Access to Business Opportunities increased Indigenous business opportunities, (ii) Access to Capital allowed Indigenous businesses to expand, and, if so, what are they?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2728—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to the Firearms Act, the Firearms Buyback Program (hereinafter the program) and the firearms ban announced by the government on May 1, 2020: (a) what is the projected cost of the program and the firearms ban combined; (b) what is the projected launch date for the program; (c) what method will be used to confiscate firearms not voluntarily turned in once the amnesty period accompanying the firearms ban expires; (d) which agencies, departments and personnel will be called on to execute the program; (e) how many firearms were stolen from departments, agencies and personnel, broken down by year, since January 1, 2016; (f) of the firearms in (e), how many have been recovered; (g) are there short-term plans to require federal law enforcement personnel to (i) follow the same storage and transportation laws as licensed firearm owners or be charged with an offence under the Firearms Act for negligent storage and handling of a firearm if they do not, (ii) obtain a restricted possession and acquisition license prior to being issued a firearm; (h) how does the government expect the program and the ban to affect the number of annual violent firearm incidents; (i) when confiscating firearms from licensed owners, what solution will be offered when the value of the confiscated firearms substantially exceeds the proposed compensation amount that is outlined in the program; (j) is the program alone enough to substantially reduce the annual rate of violent firearm crimes that are committed; (k) what proof does the government have that the firearms banned by Order-in-Council SOR2020-96 are statistically more likely to be used in incidents of violent crime; and (l) why was the aforementioned firearms ban not done through an Act of Parliament instead of an Order-In-Council?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2729—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to the Veteran Homelessness Program: (a) how much funding was allocated to the program in federal budgets, in total and broken down by which federal budget the funding was allocated in; (b) how much funding (i) has been allocated to date, (ii) will be allocated to each of the two funding streams; (c) how much has the government spent to date on the program, in total and broken down by the type of expenditure; and (d) how much is the government projected to spend on the program in each of the next five years?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2730—Mr. Gérard Deltell:**

With regard to government dealings with the Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF) and those representing the fund, broken down by year since 2016 and by department or agency: (a) how much funding, including any funding provided through contracts, has been provided to the TAF, in total and broken down by initiative or type of funding; and (b) what are the details of any reports received from the TAF, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) author or entity that wrote the report, (iii) title, (iv) organizations, companies, or entities represented by the author, (v) amount of funding provided in relation to the report, both directly and indirectly?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2731—Mr. Michael Kram:

With regard to the Northern Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program: (a) how much money has been spent on the program to date, in total, and broken down by year and by site; (b) what specific work has been done at each site; (c) what is the detailed timeline for what work will take place each year between now and the completion of each reclamation project; (d) what are the details of each contract over \$50,000 signed by the government related to the program, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods and services, (v) details of how the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid); (e) have any of the liabilities, of each mine site, changed since 2019, and, if so, what (i) was the original liability, (ii) is the current liability, (iii) was the reason for the change in liability; and (f) if changes in liability occurred, in each case, what efforts were made by the government to mitigate these liabilities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2732—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to counterfeit goods discovered and seized by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), since January 1, 2020, and broken down by year: (a) what is the value of the goods discovered, in total, and broken down by year and by month; (b) for each seizure, what was the (i) date, (ii) quantity, (iii) estimated value, (iv) location or port of entry where the goods were discovered, (v) product description, (vi) country of origin; and (c) what is the estimated percentage of counterfeit goods which are intercepted by the CBSA versus those which are smuggled into Canada without being intercepted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2733—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to government measures to stop counterfeit goods from being sold in Canada: (a) what are the details of the specific measures the government has taken since 2016 to stop the sale of counterfeit goods in Canada; (b) how many individuals has the RCMP arrested for trafficking or attempting to sell counterfeit goods, broken down by year, since 2016; (c) what are the descriptions of all counterfeit items that were seized in relation to the arrests in (b), broken down by year; (d) what is the government's estimate on the value of the counterfeit goods sold each year in Canada, in total, and broken down by type of merchandise; (e) does the government have any policy prohibiting government employees from selling such products, and, if so, what is it; and (f) does the government have any policy which would prevent employees, or any other individuals who have been issued a government phone or mobile device, from using that device to sell counterfeit products, and, if so, what is it?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2734—Mr. Rob Morrison:

With regard to travel expenses incurred by the government for travel by a minister's exempt staff member, that was not disclosed through proactive disclosure, since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all such expenses, including the (i) title of the traveller, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) date, (v) total expenditures, broken down by type (airfare, accommodation, etc.); (b) why was the expenditure not reported through proactive disclosure; and (c) do any exempt staff members of ministers have certain travel expenses, such as trips home to see family, included as part of their employment agreement or contract, and, if so, how many staff members have this benefit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2735—Mr. Joël Godin:

With regard to the backlog in processing asylum claims: (a) how many claims are currently waiting to be processed; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by the claimant's country of origin; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) by how long it has been since the asylum claim was first made (less than a year, one to three years,

over three years, etc.); and (d) what are the government's goals, including a detailed timeline of when the backlog will be (i) reduced, (ii) eliminated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2736—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Humanitarian and Compassionate immigration category, in 2023: (a) what is the total amount of applications under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (b) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (c) what is the total amount of applications of Ukrainian origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (d) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications of Ukrainian origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (e) what is the total amount of applications of Haitian origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (f) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications of Haitian origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (g) what is the total amount of applications of Sudanese origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (h) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications of Sudanese origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (i) what is the total amount of applications of Hong Kongese origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (j) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications of Hong Kongese origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (k) what is the total amount of applications of Colombian origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (l) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications of Colombian origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; (m) what is the total amount of applications of Venezuelan origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed; and (n) what is the total number of individual names and the total number of applications of Venezuelan origin under this category that (i) have been submitted, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still waiting to be processed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2737—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to the government's efforts to recover funds from government contract recipients for any reason, including overpayment, failure to meet contractual obligations or any other reason, broken down by department or agency: what are the details of all such efforts which have taken place since January 1, 2022, including, for each, the (i) date of the contract, (ii) contract value, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of the products or services, (v) amount paid out, (vi) recovery amount sought by the government, (vii) amount recovered to date, (viii) reason for the recovery, (ix) date on which recovery efforts began?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2738—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to government expenditures on other professional services not elsewhere specified (Treasury Board code 0499 or similar), during the 2023-24 fiscal year: (a) what was the total amount spent on such services, broken down by each department, agency, or other government entity; and (b) what are the details of each expenditure, including the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the services, (v) details of how the contract was awarded (sole-sourced or competitive bid)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2740—Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) Call Centre, since it was established and until May 2024, inclusively, broken down by month and by province or territory of call origin: (a) how many phone calls were received by the centre; (b) how many calls went unanswered; and (c) how many employees or full-time equivalents were employed to answer calls at the centre?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2741—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to Statistics Canada's (StatCan) released data regarding "provisional deaths and excess mortality in Canada" which reported "significant excess mortality starting in January 2022" especially "among individuals younger than 45" and the Privy Council Office's (PCO) use of "Winning Communication Strategies" to "not shake public confidence" (ATIP, May 2021): (a) why did StatCan wait until September 2022 to publish excess mortality data amongst young Canadians when the data was available around March or April 2022; (b) who signed off on the data in (a); (c) what steps were taken to investigate the underlying reasons for this unusual finding of excess deaths in young persons; (d) who or what agency or entity informed the Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet about this finding; (e) how and when were these statistics communicated to provincial and territorial health ministers, regulatory health care colleges, chief medical officers and corner's offices, in order to provide Canadians with updated data to facilitate informed consent; (f) which officials at which agency or entity hosted press releases regarding this unusual rise in deaths among those Canadians under the age of 45 years; (g) as per the Public Health Agency of Canada's 'Cases Following Vaccination' reports from June 10, 2022 to September 23, 2022, what was the number of "COVID-19 Cases Deceased" for each week as of the week which ended on June 12, 2022 until the week which ended on August 28, 2022, broken down by the vaccine status of the individual, including those having received (i) no dose, (ii) a single vaccine dose, (iii) the primary program of two doses, (iv) one additional dose, (v) two additional doses; (h) according to the numbers in (f), which group had the largest number of "Cases deceased" each week; (i) specifically with respect to the unvaccinated group and the two additional doses group, during those weeks, which of these two groups demonstrated fewer COVID-19 outbreaks; (j) were there any press releases communicating the findings in (i) to the public; (k) what are the details of the memo drafted by the PCO in May 2021, that instructed recipients to skew statistics to minimize the impact of vaccine-related deaths or injuries, including (i) which agencies or entities and which specific officials received this memo, (ii) how did the agencies or entities carry out the PCO's instructions vis-a-vis statistical skewing, (iii) who at each agency or entity signed off on the report of the data; and (l) why is there a discrepancy between the data that was released on the StatCan website for "other ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality" from 2020 to 2022, a reported 16,043 deaths, and the value provided in the government response to Order Paper Question Q-1115, of 55,975 deaths for the same year and same category?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2743—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the participation of Global Affairs Canada, Canadian Heritage, Telefilm Canada, and the National Film Board of Canada at events, including South by Southwest (SXSW) Austin, SXSW Australia, Berlinale, the Academy Awards, and the Cannes Film Festival, since January 1, 2023, and broken down by each event: (a) what travel expenses were incurred by employees in attendance or in support of these events, in total and broken down by (i) accommodation, (ii) airfare, (iii) other transportation, (iv) meals or per diems, (v) other travel expenses, broken down by type; (b) what was the total amount spent on hospitality at each event; (c) what are the details of all hospitality expenditures, including, for each, the (i) event name, (ii) location, (iii) vendor, (iv) amount, (v) event description, (vi) number of attendees; (d) how many employees travelled to or attended each event; (e) how much was spent on tickets for each primary event; (f) how much was spent on tickets for each secondary event, such as an afterparty, including the name of each event; (g) what are the details of all contracts signed related to any of these events, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) location, (iv) amount, (v) description of the goods or services, (vi) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced or competitive bid); (h) what economic returns were directly attributed to these government entities participating in these events, including the (i) Key Performance Indicators used to gauge the success of each, (ii) details of any contracts obtained as a result of participating in each event; and (i) what are the future plans for involvement or attendance at these events and any projected expenditures related to these plans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2745—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the procurement, review and contents of the contract for the Pfizer COVID-19 mRNA vaccine signed by the former Minister of Public Services and Procurement in 2020: (a) when did the former Minister of Public Services and Procurement, the former Minister of Health and Health Canada initially receive the Pfizer contract; (b) which entities and agencies reviewed the contents of the Pfizer contract and who performed the review in each entity and agency; (c) which entities and agencies approved the final terms of the Pfizer contract and who signed the approval in each entity and agency; (d) did the contract specify whether their product was serialized by the manufacturer; (e) what is the purpose of product serialization by any drug manufacturer; (f) if the answer to (d) is negative, why not; (g) did the Pfizer contract provide unequivocal confirmation that their product was studied for its (i) efficacy to prevent infection of SARS-CoV-2, (ii) efficacy to prevent serious illness, (iii) efficacy to prevent hospitalization, (iv) efficacy to prevent death, (v) long-term side effects, (vi) ability to stop transmission of SARS-CoV-2, (vii) known adverse effects; (h) did the contract state that the mRNA vaccine was tested for its ability to stop transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to others; (i) with respect to the responses to (g) and (h), when was (i) Dr. Howard Njoo, (ii) Dr. Theresa Tam, (iii) Dr. Supriya Sharma, (iv) Dr. Caroline Quach-Thanh, (v) the Prime Minister, (vi) the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, (vii) the former Minister of Health, (viii) the former Minister of Transport, provided this information; (j) with respect to the responses to (g)(i) to (g)(vii), when was the Office of the Prime Minister informed about the limitations of the vaccine as listed in the Pfizer contract and who informed them; and (k) who approved the communications plan after the contract was received and analyzed in early 2021 that would inform Canadians that the Pfizer product was "safe and effective" and prevented transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to others?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2746—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Winnipeg Centre, between November of 2019 and May of 2024: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including, for each, (i) the name of the organization, (ii) the department, (iii) the program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) the date of the application, (v) the amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) the total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in this constituency that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including, for each, the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in this constituency by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including, for each, the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2748—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to government projects announced since November 4, 2015, with an initial projected cost of over \$5,000,000, that were completed within their original projected timeline and at or below the cost originally announced: (a) what are the details of all such projects, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) project description, (iii) date of the first project announcement, (iv) cost originally announced, (v) originally announced completion date, (vi) actual project cost, (vii) actual completion date, (viii) website address where the original announcement or press release can be found; and (b) how many and what percentage of such projects were completed (i) on time, (ii) at or below the originally announced cost?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2749—Mr. Scott Aitchison:**

With regard to government involvement, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in the creation of rental housing in Canada, including through both direct investments and bilateral agreements, between February 1, 2006, and November 4, 2015, broken down by program, province or territory, and by year for each part of the question: (a) how many new units were built as a result of federal funding; (b) how much funding was provided to support the construction of non-profit or community housing and how many units were built; (c) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of cooperative housing and how many units were built; and (d) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing and how many units were built with that funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2750—Mr. Scott Aitchison:

With regard to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) programs, CMHC's Affordable Housing Centre, and all other CMHC initiatives, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015: (a) how many new units were developed as a result of CMHC funding; (b) how much funding was provided to support the construction of non-profit or community housing and how many units were developed; (c) how much CMHC funding was provided to support the construction of cooperative housing and how many units were developed; and (d) how much CMHC funding was provided to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing and how many units were developed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2751—Mr. Scott Aitchison:

With regard to government involvement, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in the creation of rental housing in Canada, including through both direct investments and bilateral agreements, between February 1, 2006, and November 4, 2015, broken down by program, province or territory, and by year for each part of the question: (a) how many new units were developed as a result of federal funding; (b) how much funding was provided to support the construction of non-profit or community housing and how many units were developed; (c) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of cooperative housing and how many units were developed; and (d) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing and how many units were developed with that funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2752—Mr. Scott Aitchison:

With regard to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) programs, CMHC's Affordable Housing Centre, and all other CMHC initiatives, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015: (a) how many new units were built as a result of CMHC funding; (b) how much funding was provided to support the construction of non-profit or community housing and how many units were built; (c) how much CMHC funding was provided to support the construction of cooperative housing and how many units were built; and (d) how much CMHC funding was provided to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing and how many units were built?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2754—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the Canada Housing Benefit, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year: (a) how many households received the benefit; (b) how many seniors aged 65 or older received the benefit; (c) how many people living with disabilities received the benefit; and (d) how many Indigenous peoples received the benefit, broken down by identity such as (i) Inuit, (ii) Métis, (iii) First Nation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2755—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to temporary resident permits specific to victims of human trafficking, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many applications have been received; (b) how many permits have been issued; (c) how many permits were denied; (d) what is the breakdown of (a) to (c) by (i) year, (ii) month, (iii) gender, (iv) source country; (e) for permits in (b), what is the breakdown based on ministerial instructions 1(1), 1(2) and 2; and (f) what is the average wait time for an individual who applies for a temporary resident permit specific to victims of human trafficking?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2758—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Climate Action Incentive Payment or the Canada Carbon Rebate, broken down by province or territory and by fiscal year, since the introduction of the carbon tax: (a) how many individual tax filers opted in to receive the rural supplement; and (b) how many individual tax filers were eligible to receive the rural supplement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2759—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:

With regard to government involvement, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in the creation of rental housing in Canada, including through both direct investments and bilateral agreements, between February 6, 2006, and November 4, 2015: how many new units were (i) built, (ii) developed, as a result of federal funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2761—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to Immigration and Refugee Board hearings on refugee claims, in 2023: (a) for accepted written hearings, (i) what is the total number of persons on all applications, (ii) what is the amount of applications that had one person's name attached, (iii) what is the amount of applications that had more than one person's name attached, (iv) what is the amount of applications that had a marital partner's name attached, (v) what is the amount of applications that had one or more children's names attached, (vi) what is the amount of applications that had a dependent other than a marital spouse or a child attached, (vii) what is the total amount of persons' names on all applications; (b) of the total amount of persons' names accepted through written hearings, (i) what is the number broken down by country of origin, (ii) what is the amount of people for each age, broken down by age from 0 to 100 years old, (iii) what is the amount of people broken down by gender, (iv) what is the amount of people showing English language proficiency, (v) what is the amount of people showing French language proficiency, (vi) what is the amount of people showing both English and French language proficiency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2763—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to performance audits or similar types of assessments related to passport processing times, which were ongoing or have been conducted since May 1, 2022: what are the details of each audit or assessment, including, for each, the (i) start and end dates of the time period audited or assessed, (ii) summary and scope of the audit or assessment, (iii) findings, (iv) recommended changes to improve processing times, if applicable, (v) changes that were implemented, (vi) entity responsible for conducting the audit or assessment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2764—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to government expenditures on gala, concert or sporting event tickets, since January 1, 2023: what was the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) total cost, (iv) cost per ticket, (v) number of tickets, (vi) title of the persons using the tickets, (vii) name or title of the event for which tickets were purchased by, or billed to, any department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2767—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to projected government spending from now until 2030: (a) broken down by year, how much will be spent through the (i) 2 Billion Trees program, (ii) Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund, (iii) Agricultural Climate Solutions program; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a)(iii) by program stream?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2768—Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the temporary foreign worker programs for caregivers, broken down by year since 2019 until 2024: (a) what is the total amount of workers hired through the (i) Home Child Care Provider Pilot (HCCPP), (ii) Home Support Worker Pilot (HSWP); (b) broken down by province and territory, what is the total amount of workers hired under the (i) HCCPP, (ii) HSWP; (c) what is the median annual household income of families that hired workers through the (i) HCCPP, (ii) HSWP; (d) what is the average annual household income of families that hired workers through the (i) HCCPP, (ii) HSWP; (e) what is the total amount of families that hired a worker through the HCCPP that had an annual household income of (i) less than \$100,000, (ii) between \$100,000 and \$200,000, (iii) between \$200,000 and \$300,000, (iv) between \$300,000 and \$400,000, (v) between \$400,000 and \$500,000, (vi) between \$500,000 and \$600,000, (vii) over \$600,000; (f) what is the total amount of families that hired a worker through the HSWP that had an annual household income of (i) less than \$100,000, (ii) between \$100,000 and \$200,000, (iii) between \$200,000 and \$300,000, (iv) between \$300,000 and \$400,000, (v) between \$400,000 and \$500,000, (vi) between \$500,000 and \$600,000, (vii) over \$600,000; (g) what is the total amount of workers, broken down by year, who went on to gain permanent resident status who were hired under the (i) HCCPP, (ii) HSWP; (h) broken down by country of origin, what is the total amount of workers brought in through the (i) HCCPP, (ii) HSWP; and (i) what is the total amount of reports of abusive working conditions under the (i) HCCPP, (ii) HSWP?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2769—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to the Benefits Delivery Modernization programme: (a) what are the projected scope, full technology requirements, and projected procurement needs presented in the latest \$4.4 billion dollar budget for the programme in 2024, as announced by the Minister of Citizens' Services on May 6, 2024, at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities; (b) what is the itemized breakdown of how the \$4.4 billion is projected to be spent; (c) what are the details of travel expenses incurred by the government related to third-party contractors working on the programme since January 1, 2017, including the (i) dates, costs, and flight details of all flights expensed by third-party contractors, (ii) dates, costs, and locations of lodgings expensed by third-party contractors, (iii) dates, costs, and items charged as per diems expensed by third-party contractors; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c)(i) to (c)(iii) by (i) month, (ii) quarter, (iii) third-party contractor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2772—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:

With regard to expenditures on coaching since January 1, 2017, broken down by year and by department or agency: (a) how many contracts were signed by the government for coaching; (b) what was the total value of the coaching contracts signed; (c) what are the details of each contract or similar type of agreement for coaching public servants, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) type of coaching, (iv) purpose of the contract, (v) value, (vi) names and titles of the public servants receiving coaching; (d) what are the details of each contract or similar type of agreement for coaching ministers or exempt staff members, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) type of coaching, (iv) purpose of the contract, (v) value, (vi) names and titles of the individuals who received the coaching; (e) what are the details of each contract or similar type of agreement for coaching any individuals not covered in (c) or (d), including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) type of coaching, (iv) purpose of the contract, (v) value, (vi) names and titles of those who received coaching; and (f) for each contract in (c) through (e), (i) what was the desired outcome, (ii) how was the outcome measured, if it was measured, (iii) what outcome was achieved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2775—Mr. Bernard Généreux:

With regard to the list of over 300 meetings held on Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, submitted to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology on November 21, 2023: what are the details of each meeting, broken down by the (i) date that it occurred, (ii) names of all persons that attended, (iii) topic of discussion related to the meeting, (iv) proposed sections of the bill on which the amendments were discussed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2781—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry being listed on the Bilderberg Meetings website as a participant at the 2024 Bilderberg meeting in Madrid, Spain: (a) did the minister attend the meeting; (b) what was the minister's detailed itinerary while in Spain for the meetings; (c) what were the agenda items at the meeting; (d) did the minister meet with fellow participant Mark Carney while in Spain, and, if so, what did they discuss; (e) with whom did the minister have meetings with while at Bilderberg, and what was discussed at each meeting; and (f) were any costs incurred by the government related to the minister's attendance at the meeting, and, if so, what is the detailed breakdown of the costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2784—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the \$5 billion in funding through the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements to British Columbia, committed in the 2021 Fall Economic Statement, in response to extreme weather events: (a) how much of this commitment has been delivered to British Columbia to date, in total, and broken down by specific project funded; (b) when will the outstanding amount be delivered; and (c) what is required before the outstanding amount is provided to British Columbia?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2785—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to government knowledge of 69 shipping containers sent from Canada to the Philippines during the years of 2013 and 2014 by the export company Chronic Inc. and subsequently returned to Canada after being held in port for five years: (a) when did the issue first come to the attention of (i) Global Affairs Canada, (ii) Environment and Climate Change Canada, (iii) the Office of the Prime Minister, and what was the government's initial understanding of the situation; (b) was an audit, analysis, or other form of testing completed on the contents of these 69 shipping containers, and, if so, (i) who performed the audit, (ii) who requested that the audit be performed, (iii) what communications exist, if any, around the ordering and results of the audit, (iv) what were the results of the audit, specifically regarding the percentage of recyclable materials making up the contents of the shipping containers and the acceptability of the contents in relation to existing standards and thresholds, (v) was any of the waste considered hazardous, (vi) was the return of these shipping containers to Canada justified by the outcomes of the audits performed; (c) if the audit referred to in (b) demonstrated results within the acceptable threshold, why did the government decide to return the shipping containers to Canada; and (d) what action, including any legal remedies, is the government taking, or consideration taking, against Chronic Inc. and its owner?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2786—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada's wireless infrastructure, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) how much money has been collected in revenues from (i) wireless spectrum auctions, (ii) annual wireless spectrum licensing fees; (b) what were the total amounts given as grants and contributions towards the construction, improvement or expansion of wireless infrastructure; and (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by wireless provider or company directly impacted by the grant or contribution?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2787—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to Transport Canada and airport authorities, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total amount of taxes, fees, rent payments, and lease payments collected from airport authorities, broken down by airport; and (b) what are the total amounts given as grants and contributions to airport authorities for infrastructure improvements, broken down by (i) airport, (ii) project funded?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2789—Mr. Ryan Williams:**

With regard to complaints received by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total number of complaints (i) received, (ii) resolved; and (b) for all the complaints in (a), what are the types of bodies the complaints are between, broken down by (i) person to person, (ii) business to person, (iii) person to business, (iv) business to business?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2790—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to surveys commissioned by the Privy Council Office since January 1, 2019: (a) were there any surveys commissioned aiming to obtain polling or opinion data on (i) proposed government policies or legislation, (ii) government policies or legislation already in place, (iii) the performance of government departments or agencies themselves, (iv) the performance of the government itself, (v) the Canada Carbon Rebate, (vi) the Safer Supply Program, (vii) the exemption granted to British Columbia under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to decriminalize certain substances; and (b) for each survey in (a), (i) what was the purpose, (ii) what were all questions asked, (iii) what were the answers received, (iv) what costs were associated with the survey, in total and broken down by type of expense, (v) what external suppliers and consultants were used to commission the survey, (vi) what external suppliers and consultants were used to analyze and collect the results of the survey, (vii) how many responses were received, (viii) who did the survey target, (ix) was the survey available to all Canadians, and, if not, who was able to respond to the survey, (x) what year was the survey commissioned in, (xi) what department or agency issued the survey?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2793—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to Parks Canada, for each fiscal year between 2010 and 2024: (a) in which national parks did the agency operate life guard and surf guard programs; (b) how much funding did each park receive to administer these programs; (c) how many staff worked in each park in support of these programs; (d) how many visitors accessed each park, broken down by year; and (e) how many rescues or contacts were made under these programs, broken down by park?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2796—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to federal funding to non-governmental organizations that advocate pro-life or anti-abortion views, broken down by department and agency and by fiscal year since January 1, 2006: (a) what organizations received federal funding; and (b) how much federal funding was received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2797—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to federal investments in Canada's oil and gas sector, since January 1, 2006: how much federal funding has been provided to (i) Cenovus Energy Inc., (ii) Suncor Energy Inc., (iii) Imperial Oil Ltd., (iv) Enbridge Inc., (v) Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., broken down by company, year, and type of funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2798—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to federal court cases, since January 1, 2006: how many court cases have been initiated by the federal government against Indigenous organizations and governments, broken down by year and by affiliation (i) Inuit, (ii) Métis, (iii) First Nation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2801—Mr. Greg McLean:

With regard to government funding of non-governmental organizations or groups, from November 4, 2015, to the present: (a) how much money has the government allocated to Dunsky Energy + Climate Advisors and what are the details, including, the (i) department, agency or other government entity, (ii) date of the funding, (iii) amount and deliverables expected; (b) of the allocations in (a), which ones were (i) sole-sourced, (ii) awarded through a competitive bidding process; (c) of the allocations in (b)(i), what was the (i) duration of the competition, (ii) number of organizations that submitted bids for the required deliverables; and (d) what programs from the organization in (a) received government funding, broken down by year and deliverables expected?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2802—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to funding provided through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, since January 1, 2021: (a) what is the amount provided through the fund to date, in total and broken down by province or territory; and (b) what are the details of all funding recipients, including, for each, the (i) date of the funding, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) location, (v) description of the related disaster event, (vi) purpose of the funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2804—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to Global Affairs Canada's Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) how much funding was provided through the CFLI, in total and broken down by country; and (b) how many projects were funded in each country?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2806—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to the information provided in the government's response to Order Paper question Q-2542 as it relates to the project budget of the Canada Digital Adoption Program: (a) what is the itemized breakdown of all expenditures included under the Indirect Costs category; (b) what is the itemized breakdown of all equipment expenses included under the Direct Equipment category; (c) what is the itemized breakdown of all expenditures included under the Subcontracting costs category; (d) what is the itemized breakdown of expenditures included under the Other Direct Costs category; and (e) what is the breakdown of (a) through (d) by month and fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2807—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to federal funding to non-governmental organizations, broken down by department and agency and fiscal year since January 1, 2006: (a) has (i) Campaign Life Coalition, (ii) LifeCanada, (iii) Alliance for Life Ontario, (iv) Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition, (v) Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, (vi) Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, (vii) National Abortion Federation, (viii) Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, received federal funding; and (b) how much federal funding, if any, was received by each organization listed in (a)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2809—Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) assessment of risks versus benefits for the COVID-19 vaccines: (a) did HC perform a formal analysis showing that the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines outweigh the risks (i) at the time of interim order approval, (ii) at the time of authorization, under the amended Food and Drugs Regulation for September 2021, (iii) before the approval of each subsequent booster; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, who performed the analysis and what were the results of the analysis, specifying the benefits and risks (i) at the time of interim order approval, (ii) at the time of authorization, under the amended Food and Drugs Regulation for September 2021, (iii) before the approval of each subsequent booster; (c) what specific scientific studies, real world data, and Canadian morbidity and mortality data were reviewed by HC to conclude the risks of the COVID-19 vaccines outweighed the risk of COVID-19 illness (i) at the time of interim order approval, (ii) at the time of authorization, under the amended Food and Drugs Regulation for September 2021, (iii) before the approval of each subsequent booster; (d) what were the risks that HC determined for the COVID-19 vaccines compared to the risks of the COVID-19 illness (i) stratified across age groups, (ii) for the immunocompromised, (iii) for seniors with two or more comorbidities, (iv) for pregnant and lactating women, and what were these results; (e) did HC use the Cleveland study entitled "Effectiveness of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Bivalent Vaccine" by N. Shrestha et al to update their risk-benefit analysis of the current COVID-19 vaccine; (f) if the answer to (e) is negative, why not; (g) how were those individuals who received a COVID-19 vaccine classified as being "vaccinated" versus "unvaccinated" for the purposes of statistical analysis of clinical outcomes and vaccine efficacy by the following categories (i) less than two weeks after first dose of the primary series, (ii) between two weeks and three months after first dose of the primary series, (iii) less than two weeks after second dose of the primary series, (iv) more than two weeks after second dose of the primary series, (v) less than two weeks after any booster dose, (vi) more than six months after any booster dose; (h) would the response in (g) be influenced by brand of COVID-19 vaccine, and, if so, how; (i) for Canadian morbidity and mortality data presented to the Canadian public to illustrate the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines, how were the definitions from (g) and (h) used; and (j) what data supported the definitions of the vaccination status as defined in (g)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2810—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to the Canadian Plastics Innovation Challenges: (a) how much funding has the program received in total; (b) how much of the total program funding has been allocated; (c) how much of the allocated funding has been distributed; (d) what projects have been funded by this program; (e) what are the details for each project; (f) what are the targets for each project; (g) what is the timeline for each project's completion; and (h) how much funding did each project receive?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2813—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to the latest round of Canada Child Benefit payments: (a) how many applicants have received Canada Child Benefit payments; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) by income level and tax rate bracket; and (d) how many payments were made to recipients with mailing addresses outside of Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2816—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the government's commitment to a net-zero electricity grid by 2035: (a) who has the government consulted to date on how to reach net-zero, including (i) who was consulted, (ii) how they were consulted, (iii) when they were consulted, (iv) the feedback that each consulted party provided; and (b) has the government conducted any analysis related to how much wind, solar, hydro, nuclear, and other types of electricity capacity is needed to reach net-zero, and, if so, (i) how much of each type of electricity capacity is required, (ii) how does the government plan on increasing the capacity of each type of electricity to reach the required capacity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2818—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC) building at 202 Pitt Street in Cornwall, Ontario: (a) what is the number of SLSMC employees currently working in the building; (b) what amount of space, in square footage, is being leased out to third parties and to whom is it being leased; (c) how

much square footage is each lessee leasing; (d) how much space in the building is currently vacant; (e) what were the yearly costs associated with operating the building, in total, and broken down by type of cost, since 2016; (f) what are the details, including the project descriptions, timelines and costs associated with all completed capital projects related to the building since 2016; and (g) what are the details, including the project descriptions, timelines and costs associated with all capital projects related to the building which are planned or ongoing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2822—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to federal housing investments for Montréal, since January 1, 2014: (a) how much federal funding was provided to the electoral district of (i) Outremont, (ii) Laurier—Sainte-Marie, (iii) Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, (iv) LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, (v) Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, (vi) Papineau, to support the construction of cooperative housing, and how many units were developed in each electoral district; and (b) how much federal funding was provided to the electoral district of (i) Outremont, (ii) Laurier—Sainte-Marie, (iii) Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, (iv) LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, (v) Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, (vi) Papineau, to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing, and how many units were developed in each electoral district?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2823—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to information shared between Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSE) and the House of Commons Administration regarding threats to parliamentarians who are members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China: (a) what information was provided or presented to the House Administration about the (i) threats, (ii) targets of the threats, (iii) source of the threats (i.e., APT31); (b) regarding the information described in (a), broken down by (a)(i) to (a)(iii), (i) on what dates was the information provided or presented, (ii) in what format was the information provided or presented (e.g., memorandum, oral briefing, e-mail, slideshow or other visual display), (iii) who provided or presented the information, (iv) who received the information, (v) what was the classification level of the information provided or presented (e.g., Unclassified, Protected, Confidential, Secret, Top Secret), (vi) was the information provided or presented with caveats or other handling restrictions (e.g., "Canadian Eyes Only", "for official use only", "originator controlled", not for distribution without CSE's express authorization); (c) were House Administration officials explicitly advised by CSE on whether the information described in (a) could or could not, or should or should not, be shared with (i) the parliamentarians targeted by the threats, (ii) any other parliamentarian, (iii) any other person; (d) if the answer to (b)(vi) is affirmative, would House Administration officials have been possibly liable to prosecution for an offence under the Security of Information Act for sharing the information with anyone referred to in (c); and (e) was the Prime Minister, or any other minister of the Crown, briefed by CSE or any other government department or agency on the information in (a), and, if so, what are the details of those briefings, including the (i) dates, (ii) names of the ministers and ministerial exempt staff that were briefed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2824—Mr. Marc Dalton:

With regard to costs incurred in combating wildfires across Canada, from 2010 to present: what is the detailed breakdown of the total accumulated costs incurred in combating each wildfire season, including (i) personnel and equipment expenditures, (ii) property damage assessments, (iii) healthcare costs for affected individuals, (iv) expenses related to environmental remediation and reconstruction efforts, (v) funds dedicated to temporary relocation initiatives?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2825—Mr. Marc Dalton:**

With regard to statistics concerning arson sentences: what are the statistics related to the completion of sentencing for people convicted of committing arson that resulted in (i) wildfires and destruction of green spaces, (ii) damage to places of worship, (iii) property damage exceeding \$10,000, including the total amount of incidents and convictions for people responsible for causing wildfires or burning places of worship, the average length of sentencing, and the time served, broken down by year since 2010?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2826—Mr. Marc Dalton:

With regard to statistics concerning attacks on places of worship: what is the total number of hate crimes in the form of arson, or attempted arson, suffered by (i) churches, (ii) mosques, (iii) synagogues, (iv) temples, broken down by year since 2010 and by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2829—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to the Canadian Transportation Agency's (CTA) resolution process for air travel complaints since the inception of the Air Passenger Protection Regulations in 2019, broken down by year: (a) what is the average time from complaint submission to resolution; (b) how much compensation has been paid to passengers; (c) how many complaints filed with the CTA have been dropped voluntarily by the complainant before resolution, broken down by what stage in the process they were dropped; (d) how many complaints have been refused by a CTA complaint resolution officer; (e) how many complaints have been resolved through each of the resolution methods (i) mediation, (ii) settlement, (iii) adjudication without mediation; (f) what is the backlog of unresolved complaints; and (g) what is the current number of unresolved complaints before the CTA?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2831—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation property at the Iroquois Locks, known as 6020 Carman Road or the lands on Iroquois Island: (a) what were the yearly costs associated with operating the property, in total, and broken down by type, since 2016; (b) what are the details, including the project descriptions, timelines and costs associated with all completed capital projects related to the property or adjacent land since 2016; and (c) what are the details, including the project descriptions, timelines and costs associated with all capital projects related to the property or adjacent land which are planned or ongoing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2834—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the Auditor General of Canada's Report 5 entitled "Professional Services Contracts", paragraph 5.55 which states "In 30 (91%) of the 33 contracts in our sample, we found that the federal organizations did not perform sufficiently detailed cost estimate calculations before receiving proposals.": (a) what are the details of the 30 contracts, including (i) the value of the contract, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the date and duration, (iv) the description of the goods or services provided, (v) the specific goals or objectives related to the contract, (vi) whether the goals or objectives were met, (vii) the contract number, (viii) the Request for Proposal number; and (b) for each contract in (a), what is the government's reason for not performing a detailed cost estimate before receiving proposals?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2835—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the Auditor General of Canada's Report 5 entitled "Professional Services Contracts", in relation to the finding in paragraph 5.31 which states "We found that in 4 out of the 28 contracts awarded through a competitive process, procurement strategies were structured to make it easier for McKinsey & Company to be awarded the contracts": what are the details of each of the four contracts, including, for each, the (i) department or agency which awarded the contract, (ii) contract value, (iii) description of the goods or services provided, (iv) date, (v) deliverable, (vi) date that the deliverable was completed, (vii) summary of the recommendations provided to the government, if applicable, (viii) website location where any reports or recommendations resulting from the contract can be found, (ix) rationale for selecting McKinsey & Company, (x) file number, (xi) Request for Proposal number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2837—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO), since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the average time it takes for the CIPO to process an application for a trademark or copyright for (i) international applicants, (ii) domestic applicants, broken down by the year the application was received; (b) how many and what percentage of total applications have not yet been processed, broken down by the year the application was received; (c) does the CIPO have a timeframe on when (i) all, (ii) most, application processing times will be less than 18 months, and, if so, what is the timeframe; and (d) if the answer to (c) is negative, why does a timeframe not exist?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2839—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to child care spaces available under the \$10-a-day Early Learning and Child Care program: (a) what is the total number of spots currently part of the program; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by full-time spaces versus part-time spaces?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2840—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to the implementation of Bill C-41, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts: (a) what is the status of the required guidance for applicants to the authorization regime established by the bill; (b) which departments, and specifically which directorates, have been involved in drafting guidance for organizations wishing to submit an application; (c) what concerns, including, but not limited to, privacy, have civil society organizations raised with government officials during consultations on guidance documents, and what has been the government's response to these concerns; (d) was Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) International Humanitarian Assistance included in consultations, and, if so, in what capacity; (e) what GAC funds have been allocated under the new system, (i) to which organizations, (ii) for work in which countries; (f) how many authorization applications has the government (i) made for its own activities, (ii) received from outside government, (iii) approved, and for what countries, (iv) rejected; (g) how many authorizations has the government sought for its own work in Afghanistan specifically; (h) since the adoption of the bill, what is the total amount of humanitarian funds for Afghanistan disbursed to (i) multilateral organizations, (ii) Canadian organizations, and what are the details of these disbursements; (i) since the adoption of the bill, what is the total amount of development funds for Afghanistan disbursed to (i) multilateral organizations, (ii) Canadian organizations, and what are the details of these disbursements; and (j) what is the current list of countries or regions for which an authorization is deemed necessary by the Government of Canada, (i) what is the exact criteria for inclusion in this list, (ii) who from the government is involved in developing this list?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2841—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the administration of the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the details of all subject matter experts who assess applications for impact and innovation, including the (i) total number employed by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), (ii) total number of experts on contract with VAC, (iii) number of experts in each area of expertise; (b) how many applications were approved, denied, or passed to program staff for decision without an assessment being done by a subject matter expert; (c) for each application in (b), what was the area in which a subject matter expert was not available; and (d) what is the total number of applications, broken down by subject area, that were not considered due to a subject matter expert not being available to conduct an assessment?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2842—Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to funding programs managed by Veterans Affairs Canada, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the details of each funding program, broken down by the (i) name of the program, service, fund, or initiative, (ii) amount of funding allocated; (b) which of the funding programs in (a) are expected to have their funding reduced by the department as a response to the budget 2023 commitment to refocus government spending; and (c) what is the total amount of funding reduction that each program or grant in (b) will experience?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2844—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to negotiations between First Nations and the federal government, since 2015, broken down by year: how many non-disclosure agreements or confidentiality agreements have been (i) offered by the federal government to First Nations, (ii) signed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2845—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the electoral district of Edmonton Griesbach, between the fiscal year 2015-16 and the current year: (a) what are all the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to municipalities, regional district associations or First Nations, national parks, highways, etc., broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; and (b) what funding is allocated to highways, including, but not limited to, Alberta Highway 16, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2846—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) allocation formulas for First Nations housing to ensure that regions receive funding that reflects the demographic changes in First Nation communities: (a) how frequently is the partnership agreement, which established the national allocation methodology, between CMHC, Indigenous Services Canada, and the Assembly of First Nations reviewed; (b) what are the details of each review in (a), including the (i) periods of review, (ii) stakeholders consulted, (iii) detailed changes of the review; (c) what are the details of all engagements planned in the CMHC's response to recommendation 2.38 of the Auditor General of Canada's report tabled in the House of Commons on March 19, 2024 entitled "Housing in First Nations Communities", including the (i) date of the engagement, (ii) stakeholder consulted; and (d) how many funding programs at (i) the CMHC, (ii) Indigenous Services Canada, use the funding formula established by (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2847—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, broken down by fiscal year since the program's inception: (a) what is the total amount of funding allocated to this program; (b) what is the total amount of lapsed spending through this program; (c) what is the total number of requests for funding received by this program; (d) of the requests in (c), how many (i) were approved, (ii) were denied, (iii) were located in northern or remote areas, (iv) included work for persons with disabilities, (v) included minor adaptations for seniors?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2848—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, broken down by fiscal year, and by province and territory, since the program's inception: (a) what is the total number applications received for (i) major or emergency repairs, (ii) accessibility modifications, (iii) secondary or garden suites, (iv) conversion projects, (v) affordability measures; (b) what is the total amount of funding allocated for each stream type of home in (a); and (c) what is the total amount of funding that was revoked due to (i) approved work not commencing within three months of approval, (ii) the scope of work not being completed within 12 months of the date of approval?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2850—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to funding programs managed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the details of each funding program, broken down by the (i) name of the program,

service, fund, or initiative, (ii) amount of funding allocated; (b) which of the funding programs in (a) are expected to have their funding reduced by CMHC as part of the budget 2023 commitment to refocus government spending; and (c) what is the total amount of funding reduction that each program or grant in (b) will experience?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2852—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to government approval of the mixing and matching of COVID-19 vaccines (heterologous vaccination): (a) what data did the manufacturers of the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines have with respect to mixing their products with other COVID-19 vaccine products; (b) in mid-2021, when Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) were recommending mixing vaccines to Canadians, what did the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine monographs recommend at that same time; (c) what scientific rationale did HC, the PHAC and the NACI have for heterologous vaccination, broken down by (i) Pfizer mRNA vaccine and Moderna mRNA vaccine, (ii) mRNA vaccine and adenovirus vaccine; (d) what advice or instruction did the government receive from the World Health Organization's Chief Scientist, Dr. Soumy Swaminathan, regarding the safety and efficacy of this approach in July 2021; (e) with respect to the advice in (d), did HC follow that advice and, if not, why not; (f) what data regarding the safety and risks of heterologous vaccination in Canadians (i) did the PHAC, the NACI or HC have at the time mixing was recommended, (ii) does the PHAC, the NACI or HC have currently; (g) with respect to the Canadian study related to the mixing and matching of COVID-19 vaccines, when will the results of the MOSAIC trials (CT24) NCT04894435 sponsored by the Canadian Immunization Research Network become available; (h) with respect to the study in (g), what are the interim results; and (i) with respect to the study in (g), what are the final results, if anything?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2855—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to training and employment programs for offenders in federal penitentiaries: (a) does Correctional Service Canada (CSC) currently offer registration and training in any provincial or territorial apprenticeship programs and, if so, which programs and in which institutions; (b) are there provincial or territorial apprenticeship programs in which CSC has previously offered registration and training but which are no longer offered and, if so, which programs and when was registration and training discontinued; (c) if the response to (a) or (b) is negative, has CSC considered offering registration in provincial or territorial apprenticeship programs and, if so, which programs and when; (d) for cases in which registration in a provincial or territorial apprenticeship program was offered and discontinued, or considered but not offered, what was the reason for discontinuing or not offering, as the case may be, in each case; and (e) with regard to offenders taking part in penitentiary farm and agriculture and agri-food operations, what are the vocational certificates that have been issued to these offenders, broken down by institution and year of issuance?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2856—Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) Priority Review of Drug Submissions policy (hereinafter the policy): (a) since December 1996, how many submissions have been made under the policy, broken down by year; (b) since December 1996, how many submissions have been approved under the policy, broken down by year; (c) since March 2006, how many submissions have been made under the policy, broken down by year; (d) since March 2006, how many submissions have been approved under the policy, broken down by year; (e) for submissions granted Priority Review status since March 2006, for what percentage of those submissions has HC met its current reduced target time frame for submission screening, broken down by year; (f) for submissions granted Priority Review status since March 2006, for what percentage of those submissions has HC met its current reduced target time frame for submission review, broken down by year; (g) has consideration been given to reducing the current reduced target time frames for submission screening or submission review and, if so, when and in what way; (h) what has been the cost of administering the policy, broken down by fiscal year, since March 2006; (i) what costs or fees are assessed to or required of the originators of submissions to the policy, broken down by type of cost or fee, and how have those costs or fees changed since March 2006; (j) what costs or fees are assessed to or required of the originators of submissions to HC's non-expedited drug approval process, broken down by type of cost or fee, and how have those costs or fees changed since March 2006; (k) what is the average time, from submission to approval, for submissions made under HC's non-expedited drug approval process, since March 2006, broken down by year of submission; and (l) what is the average time, from submission to approval, for submissions made under the policy, since March 2006, broken down by year of submission?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2857—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to federal housing investments for military housing for Canadian Armed Forces members and their family, since January 1, 2006, broken down by province or territory and by year: (a) how much federal funding has been provided to support the construction of military housing; and (b) how many housing units were built?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2858—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the administration of benefits to veterans: (a) how does Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) distinguish between Wartime service (WS), Special Duty Area service (SDA), and Special Duty Operation service (SDO); (b) in what ways does VAC deliver to disability or pension benefits differently to veterans based on their classification in (a); and (c) what are the details of all consultations undertaken by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Minister of National Defence since January 1, 2023, regarding the reclassification of WS, SDA, or SDO, including the (i) date of consultation, (ii) group or organization consulted, (iii) geographic area of service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2860—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to federal funding and loans to Canada's banking sector since January 1, 2006: how much federal funding has been provided to the (i) Royal Bank of Canada, (ii) Toronto-Dominion Bank, (iii) Bank of Nova Scotia, (iv) Bank of Montreal, (v) Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, broken down by bank, year and type of funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2863—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to funding programs managed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the details of each funding program, broken down by (i) name of the program, service, fund, or initiative, (ii) amount of funding allocated for funding of the program; (b) which of the funding programs in (a) have been identified by the department as part of budget 2023's commitment to refocus government spending; and (c) what is the total amount of funding reduction that each program or grant in (b) will experience?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2864—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Pacheedaht First Nation's request for funding for a community school, since October 23, 2016: (a) what are the details of all actions undertaken by the Department of Indigenous Services concerning the school's completion, in-

cluding the (i) titles of reports or feasibility studies, (ii) date of the report or feasibility study, (iii) recommendations of the reports or feasibility studies; (b) what is the total value of funding provided to the Pacheedaht First Nation regarding the completion of the community school; (c) what funding decisions have been made by (i) the Department of Indigenous Services, (ii) the Office of Infrastructure of Canada; and (d) what are the justifications for each funding decision in (c)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2865—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (IAFSI), broken down by fiscal year since the program's inception: (a) what is the total amount of funding available through the IAFSI; (b) what is the total amount of funding delivered, broken down by province and territory; (c) how much funding has been delivered to (i) Indigenous communities and governments, (ii) Indigenous for-profit corporations, (iii) Indigenous not-for-profit corporations, associations, co-operatives, and institutions, (iv) Indigenous businesses, partnerships and joint ventures; and (c) what is the total amount of lapsed spending?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2866—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Grocery Task Force's mandate, since the task force's inception: (a) in what ways does the Grocery Task Force promote information to consumers so they are aware of their rights and empowered to make informed marketplace choices; and (b) what are the details of all efforts to communicate with consumers in (a), including the (i) type of communication, (ii) budget for the communication, (iii) message being communicated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2867—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the Underused Housing Tax (UHT) that came into effect on January 1, 2022, broken down by year: (a) how many UHT returns have been (i) filed by taxpayers, (ii) filed and then reviewed by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA); (b) how many UHT returns reviewed by the CRA in (a)(ii) had no amounts owing, in total and percentage; (c) what is the total amount of the UHT assessed; (d) what is the amount of the UHT assessed that has been collected or payments submitted and processed by taxpayers; (e) what are the costs to (i) implement, (ii) annually administer, the UHT by government departments or agencies; (f) how many employees or full-time equivalents are or were assigned to work on the UHT by government departments or agencies; and (g) how much has been spent to date by government departments or agencies on (i) public consultations, (ii) advertisements, (iii) promotion, (iv) publications, (v) stakeholder meetings or engagements, (vi) public opinion research, (vii) other communications, public relations and information efforts, related to the UHT, in total and broken down by type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2868—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the recovery of overpayments and fraudulently obtained payments of the various COVID-19 related financial relief programs put in place by the government, broken down by the various COVID-19 related financial relief programs: (a) what are the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) (i) total expenditures to date, (ii) expected expenditures in the future, on recovering the payments; (b) how many CRA employees or full-time equivalents are assigned to files related to the recovery of such payments; (c) how many individuals and business are (i) currently subject to collection or legal activities, (ii) are planned to be subject to collection or legal activities in 2024 or 2025, by the CRA or other organizations on their behalf related to the recovery of such payments; (d) what is the cost of the collection or legal activities outlined in (c); and (e) what is the single lowest and single highest recovery of payment being sought?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2869—Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) which departments, agencies, Crown corporations, or other government entities conducted a review or requested a review by another Government of Canada entity to ensure no possible fraudulent claims for the CERB; (b) if such a review was conducted, how many government employees were found to have made fraudulent claims for the CERB; and (c) if such a review was not conducted, why did the entity not deem it necessary to review possible fraudulent claims for the CERB among their employees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2870—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to overtime pay of all types for Government of Canada employees since January 1, 2016, broken down by year: (a) what is the total cost of overtime, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity; (b) how many employees had annual overtime payments over \$10,000 in each given year, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity; and (c) what was the single highest annual overtime payment for an individual employee in each given year, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2871—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to expenditures related to the Benefits Delivery Modernization programme: (a) how much has been spent on the programme to date; (b) what are the details of all contracts over \$50,000 related to the program, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole sourced or competitive bid), (v) start and end date, (vi) description of goods or services; and (c) has the government signed any contracts related to the program which were either cancelled or for which the goods or services outlined in the contract were not delivered, and, if so, what are the details of each, including (i) the date the contract was signed, (ii) the original amount or value of the contract, (iii) the vendor, (iv) the description of goods or services which were not delivered, (v) the reason for the cancellation or non-delivery of contract terms, (vi) whether the contract was still paid out following the cancellation or non-delivery, and, if so, how much was paid out?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2873—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to transcriptions or transcripts prepared by the government since January 1, 2022, and broken down by department or agency: (a) for each occurrence, what is the (i) date of the proceeding or event, (ii) location of the proceeding or event, (iii) description or summary of the proceeding or event, (iv) main participants speaking at the proceeding or event, (v) subject matter of the proceeding or event; (b) what was the cost of each transcription in (a); (c) who requested each transcription in (a) be prepared; and (d) what was the total amount spent on transcriptions or transcripts, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2874—Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to the Special Report on Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Processes and Institutions of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (hereinafter the committee): (a) on what date was it transmitted to (i) the Privy Council Office, (ii) the Office of the Prime Minister, (iii) the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, (iv) the Office of the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs; (b) was it read by, and, if so, on what date was it read by, (i) the Prime Minister, (ii) the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, (iii) the Minister of National Defence, (iv) the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (on maternity leave), (v) Cindy Termorshuizen, (vi) David Morrison, (vii) Michael Duheme, (viii) Mark Flynn, (ix) Dan Rogers, (x) David Vigneault, (xi) Michelle Tessier, (xii) Cherie Henderson, (xiii) Bo Basler, (xiv) Allen Sutherland, (xv) Lyall King, (xvi) Gallit Dobner, (xvii) Tara Denham, (xviii) Eric Gordon, (xix) Lisa Ducharme, (xx) Nathalie Drouin, (xxi) Marta Morgan, (xxii) Gina Wilson, (xxiii) Greta Bossenmaier, (xxiv) Monik Beauregard, (xxv) Janice Charette, (xxvi) Rob Stewart, (xxvii) François Daigle, (xxviii) Vince Rigby, (xxix) Dominic Rochon, (xxx) Katie Telford, (xxxi) Jeremy Broadhurst, (xxxii) Brian Clow, and (xxxiii) Patrick Travers; (c) if specific reading dates are not available with respect to any of the individuals named in (b), for each such individual, did he or she read the report before publicly giving sworn or solemnly affirmed evidence

to the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions (the Hogue Commission); (d) which ministers and ministers' exempt staff, not listed in (b), have read the report; (e) with respect to each person named in response to (d), on what date did he or she read it; (f) on what date did the Prime Minister provide the committee with his direction under subsection 21(5) of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act to submit a revised report to him; and (g) on what date did the committee provide its revised report in response to the Prime Minister's direction?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2875—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Department of National Defence, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, and the deployment of HMCS Margaret Brooke to Havana, Cuba: (a) who authorized the HMCS Margaret Brooke's deployment; (b) what was the purpose of the deployment in (a); (c) when did the Minister of National Defence become aware that Russian naval vessels would also be in Havana during the deployment; (d) when did the Minister of Foreign Affairs first become aware of this deployment; (e) what is the Government of Canada position on whether Cuba is considered an ally of Canada; (f) what is the Government of Canada's policy with respect to Royal Canadian Navy ports of call to Havana, Cuba, and was this policy amended prior to the visit by HMCS Fredericton in November, 2016; and (g) what support is the Government of Canada aware of that the Government of Cuba provided to the Russian Federation for its ongoing war in Ukraine?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2877—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs program: (a) what is the formula used to calculate the youth unemployment rate for each riding in Canada; (b) from what sources is the data used to calculate the youth unemployment rate obtained; (c) what method is used to apply census data on youth unemployment from the municipal level to arrive at useful youth unemployment data by federal electoral district; (d) what method is used to generate per federal electoral district funding using the applicable youth unemployment data by federal electoral district; (e) what were the youth unemployment rates, applied for the purposes of the Canada Summer Jobs program, for each of the federal electoral districts of Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, Kingston and the Islands, and Mississauga—Erin Mills, for each of the 2019 through 2024 program years; (f) how many applications were received for the federal electoral district of Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston in each of the program years 2019 through 2024, broken down by year; (g) how many of the applications in (f) were rejected and not placed into consideration for funding in each of the program years 2019 through 2024, broken down by year; (h) were organizations whose applications were rejected contacted to provide additional information and, if so, when and by what means, in each case; (i) how many individuals, occupying which levels and positions, must concur with a rejection decision; (j) are the individuals, levels, or positions in (i) different for rejection decisions and approval decisions; (k) are there additional approval or concurrence requirements for rejection decisions and approval decisions; (l) what is the appeal process for organizations whose applications are rejected and how many individuals, occupying which levels and positions, are involved in the appeal process; and (m) are the individuals, levels, or positions in (l) different for appeals than for rejection decisions and approval decisions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2878—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to the Canada Dental Benefit, broken down by benefit period and federal electoral district since the program's inception: (a) what is the total number of approved applications; and (b) how many children have been helped by the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2879—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to the Canada Dental Care Plan, broken down by federal electoral district since the program's inception: (a) what is the total number of applications (i) received, (ii) approved; and (b) how many people have benefitted from the Canada Dental Care Plan, broken down by age group and by Disability Tax Credit Certificate status?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2880—Mr. Matthew Green:**

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of Hamilton Centre, in each fiscal year between 2019-20 and 2023-24, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to any organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality in which the recipient is located, (iii) date the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2881—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to funding for disability management, accommodating people with disabilities in the workplace, and related training and education programs, broken down by fiscal year and department or agency since 2005-06: (a) what funding streams have been made available to help accommodate people with disabilities and for disability management, including related training and education programs; (b) what is the total amount of funding for each stream in (a); and (c) for each funding stream in (a), what is the total amount of (i) spent or committed funding, (ii) lapsed funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2882—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the national inventory of wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels, broken down by fiscal year since 2011-12: (a) what is the total number of vessels added to the inventory located (i) on the Pacific coast, (ii) on the Arctic coast, (iii) on the Atlantic coast, (iv) in the Great Lakes, (v) in the St. Lawrence Seaway; (b) what is the total number of vessels removed from the inventory located (i) on the Pacific coast, (ii) on the Arctic coast, (iii) on the Atlantic coast, (iv) in the Great Lakes, (v) in the St. Lawrence Seaway; (c) what risk categories does the government use to prioritize the removal of vessels; and (d) what is the current number of vessels in the inventory, broken down by risk category?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2883—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the budget 2024 decision to reduce funding by \$625 million for the Labour Market Development Agreement, broken down by province or territory, city, and organization: how much funding will no longer be provided to support community organizations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2884—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to federal housing investments for London and Windsor, since January 1, 2014: (a) how much federal funding was provided to the electoral districts of (i) London Centre, (ii) London—Fanshawe, (iii) London West, (iv) Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, (v) Windsor West, (vi) Essex, to support the construction of cooperative housing, and how many units were developed in each electoral district; and (b) how much federal funding was provided to the electoral districts of (i) London Centre, (ii) London—Fanshawe, (iii) London West, (iv) Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, (v) Windsor West, (vi) Essex, to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing, and how many units were developed in each electoral district?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2885—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the electoral district of London—Fanshawe, between the fiscal year 2015-16 and the current year: (a) what are all the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to municipalities, regional district associations or First Nations, national parks, highways, etc., broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; and (b) what funding is allocated to highways, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2886—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the federal government's refocused spending initiative, broken down by department or agency, program and year: how much funding has been refocused away from funding emergency management-based initiatives, broken down by the phase of (i) mitigation, (ii) preparedness, (iii) response, (iv) recovery?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2891—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to federal investments and the communities which comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, between the 2005-06 and current fiscal year: (a) what are the federal investments in innovation, science, economic development, and forestry, including investments in and direct transfers to the 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 investments in innovation, science, economic development, and forestry invested in and transferred to the regional districts of (i) Comox Valley, (ii) Nanaimo, (iii) Alberni-Clayoquot, (iv) Powell River, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (c) what are the federal investments in innovation, science, economic development, and forestry invested in and transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (d) what are the federal investments in innovation, science, economic development, and forestry invested in and transferred to (i) the 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 are the federal investment funding of the Strategic Innovation Fund, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; (f) what are the funding of the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; and (g) what are the federal investment funding of the Forest Industry Transformation (IFIT) program, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2892—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to the Privy Council Office's response to the question on the Order Paper Q-2571, namely, that "Members of Parliament being considered for Cabinet position undergo a pre-appointment Governor-in-Council background check conducted by the Privy Council Office. Once appointed to Cabinet, the background check, coupled with the oath they take and the Ministerial Security Briefing they receive, permits them access to information classified to Top Secret for the duration of their tenure as Cabinet Minister": (a) when did this become the policy of the government; (b) why was the 2008 policy, reportedly "that security background checks on Ministers, Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries, and their spouses or partners, be renewed every two years while the appointee occupies a position as Minister, Minister of State or Parliamentary Secretary", changed; and (c) was there any other intervening policy, and, if so, (i) what was it, (ii) when was it in effect?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 2893—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the temporary public policy creating permanent resident pathways for Hong Kong residents since 2021, broken down by month and year: (a) how many individuals of Hong Kong origin have immigrated to Canada, broken down by immigration stream; (b) how many individuals of Hong Kong origin have applied for permanent residency on humanitarian and compassionate grounds separate from the temporary public policy permanent residency pathways since 2021; (c) with regard to the figures in (a) and (b), how many have received permanent residency; (d) with regard to figures in (c), what was the average processing time; (e) what is the breakdown of the application numbers since 2021, broken down by Permanent Residency category for (i) Stream A, (ii) Stream B; (f) with regard to the figures in (e), how many applications have been (i) approved, (ii) rejected, (iii) are under review; (g) of the rejections in (f), what are the categorized reasons for rejecting the application, broken down by number; (h) of the cases under review in (f), how many of them are (i) individual applications, (ii) family applications; (i) of the approvals in (f), were any tied to existing departmental quotas for the temporary public policy or allocations made within annual immigration levels targets; (j) of applications for the open work permits for applicants of the Hong Kong permanent resident pathways, how many were made by individuals with “HKPPTK” inputted for the job title since the program was instituted in 2021; (k) of the applications in (j), how many were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected, (iii) under review; (l) of the rejections in (k), what is the breakdown of rejections by IRCC office or processing center; and (m) how many applications were rejected based, at least in part, on a labour market impact assessment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2894—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to federal funding and the communities which comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, between the 2005-06 and current year fiscal year: (a) what are the federal funding and capital investments related to the areas of arts and culture, environment and climate change, and higher education, broken down by these areas, including direct transfers to the 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, type of funding, funding opportunity or program, and project; (b) what are the federal funding and capital investments related to the areas of arts and culture, environment and climate change, and higher education, broken down by these areas, 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, type of funding, funding opportunity or program, and project; (c) what are the federal funding and capital investments related to the areas of arts and culture, environment and climate change, and higher education, broken down by these areas, transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, type of funding, funding opportunity or program, and project; (d) what are the federal funding and capital investments related to the areas of arts and culture, environment and climate change, and higher education, broken down by these areas, transferred to (i) the Ahousaht First Nation, (ii) Hesquiaht First Nation, (iii) Huu-ay-ahst First Nation, (iv) Hupacasath First Nation, (v) Tla-o-qui-ahst 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, type of funding, funding opportunity or program, and project; (e) what are the federal funding and capital investments related to the area of environment and climate change, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, type of funding, funding opportunity or program, and project, including funding under the (i) Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Fund, (ii) Oceans Management Contribution program, (iii) Coastal Restoration Fund, (iv) Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund, (v) Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk, (vi) Ecosystems and Ocean Science Contribution Framework, (vii) Ghost Gear Fund, (viii) Whalesafe Gear Adoption Fund, (ix) any other funding opportunities and programs; (f) what is the funding of higher education, including, but not limited to, (i) funding offered through Indigenous Services Canada, (ii) student aid programs, (iii) grants for students with disabilities, and (iv) funding for educational infrastructure and institutions, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, type of funding, funding opportunity or program, and project; and (g) what is the funding of arts and culture, broken down by (i) fiscal year (ii) total expenditure, (iii) type of funding, (iv) funding opportunity or program, (v) project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2896—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Canada School of Public Service, broken down by department: (a) how many government employees, broken down by unit and percentage of total employees, have completed the Indigenous Learning Series, as of June 10, 2021; (b) is participation in the Indigenous Learning Series mandatory; (c) are new employees expected to complete any part of the Indigenous Learning Series as part of their training; (d) how many employees have access to the available learning products of the Indigenous Learning Series; (e) are employees, both new and experienced, given time to complete training through the Indigenous Learning Series during contracted working hours; and (f) what percentage of content available through the Canada School of Public Service is available in an Indigenous language?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2900—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the replacement vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard: (a) what were procurement cost estimates in 2016, for Canadian Coast Guard vessels scheduled for replacement in 2016 through 2025; (b) what were final procurement costs for vessels replaced from 2016 to date; (c) what are estimated final procurement costs for vessels currently in production; and (d) what is the breakdown of (a) through (c) by each vessel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2902—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to events sponsored by the government since January 1, 2023, where the sponsorship amount was in excess of \$500,000: what are the details of all such events, including, for each, the (i) dates, (ii) location, (iii) title of the event, (iv) event description, (v) amount of the sponsorship, (vi) other costs associated with sponsoring the event (e.g. signage, hospitality, etc.), (vii) reason for the sponsorship?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2904—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to the electoral district of Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, between the fiscal year 2015-16 and the current year: (a) what are all the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to municipalities, regional district associations or First Nations, national parks, highways, etc., broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; and (b) what funding is allocated to highways, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

RECENT DEATHS OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE BY POLICE FORCES

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received notice of a request for an emergency debate.

I invite the hon. member for Nunavut to rise and make a brief intervention.

Government Orders

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I rise today to seek leave for an emergency debate regarding the recent deaths of six first nations people at the hands of police forces in Canada. The lives of indigenous peoples matter. Report after report, recommendation after recommendation, the RCMP is still instilling systemic racism against indigenous peoples in Canada. For decades, indigenous peoples have been injured and, worse yet, have died at the hands of the RCMP.

From August 29 to September 8, in just 11 days, Canadian police killed six people. All six were first nations. I honour the first nations families that are grieving and deserve justice. The injustices experienced by the first nations killed by the RCMP deserve our attention. Two were hit and killed by police vehicles. One was shot in the chest three times during a wellness check. Another was a 15-year-old child who had called police for protection. Two officers shot at him as he ran away. Two others were shot by police responding to service calls. This should never have happened, and we will not accept it.

With the exception of the APTN, not much other national media is exposing these deaths. Why? Because systemic racism and the deaths of indigenous people is normal and expected.

The government must answer this: Why do indigenous people continue to be victims of violence carried out by the government? As parliamentarians, it is on us to hold our institutions accountable. No more: We must show Canadians that their Parliament is addressing the institutional violence perpetrated in their communities, today.

The NDP and I are seeking an emergency debate so parliamentarians can discuss immediate measures to save indigenous lives, today. We must honour indigenous peoples. No more indigenous children must lose their fathers to the barrel of an RCMP gun. No more sisters must be stolen by the RCMP. No more indigenous children must get bullet wounds instead of help.

I call on you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure the country takes seriously the systemic racism that continues to kill indigenous peoples, to do your part to help indigenous lives and to demand accountability for indigenous peoples.

• (1545)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Nunavut for her intervention and for sharing her intention to bring this before the House.

After reviewing the rules, I am prepared to grant an emergency debate concerning the recent deaths of first nations peoples by police forces. This debate will be held later today at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-71, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2024), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to re-enter into debate on Bill C-71.

What is this bill about? It is about a group of Canadians whose constitutional rights were stripped by the Conservatives 15 years ago. Bill C-37 was brought in by the Harper administration. Through that process, the government tried to fix some of the issues of lost Canadians, which Bill C-37 did in part.

However, in that process, the Conservatives also created a brand-new class of lost Canadians. That is, they brought in a provision that took away the rights of first-generation Canadians born abroad to pass on their citizenship to their children who are also born abroad. By doing that, the Conservatives essentially indicated that some Canadians are more equal than others. Second-generation Canadians born abroad did not have the right to become citizens.

This has caused untold harm, pain and suffering to Canadian families. I have met lost Canadian families whose children, as a result of this unconstitutional law, were born stateless. I have family members who have faced deportation as a result of this unconstitutional law. I have met families who were separated, the parent torn away from their children, as a result of this unconstitutional law. This law went on for 15 years.

I joined the House of Commons back in 2015. One of the first things I did was to draft a private member's bill in an attempt to fix this problem. The then minister John McCallum was a minister who, while in opposition, said this needed to be fixed. Successive Liberal ministers have failed to do so until now.

I will grant the minister some recognition for bringing this bill forward. It was not without a fight, because I do not think the government was going to do it. As the NDP critic for immigration, refugees and citizenship, I had to lobby, endlessly, successive Liberal ministers to get us where we are today.

There was an opening to get this dealt with when Senator Yonah Martin brought in a private member's bill, Bill S-245, in the Senate. The bill would fix only a very small portion of the lost Canadians issue, what they call the age 28 rule. I will not go into all of the details around that, because most people already know what it is. That bill, in my view, and I said this to the senator at the time, was deficient because it did not deal with a variety of other lost Canadians resulting from the Harper Conservatives' punitive bill, Bill C-37. I had every intention to move amendments to her private member's bill to fix it.

Government Orders

Most notably, I wanted it to ensure that the new class of lost Canadians the Conservatives created, the second-generation Canadians born abroad, would have the right to citizenship, albeit subject to a substantial connections test. They have the right to be recognized as Canadians and their children have that right. We went through this whole process at committee.

● (1550)

Some 30 hours later, the vast majority of the NDP amendments I negotiated with the government were adopted. Where the government supported my amendments, they were passed. However, the Conservatives filibustered that committee for 30 hours over 12 committee meetings. I have to say that committee meetings are precious because we only get two a week. Sometimes we lose them, depending on the calendar day; it could be a stat holiday or whatever the case may be. It is precious time and an important time to get work done.

The Conservatives filibustered that bill for 30 hours. Even then, we persisted and managed to get it through. The amendments were adopted and the report was tabled in this House with a wrong recommendation. Then what happened? The sponsor of the bill from the House was a Conservative member, because Yonah Martin is a Conservative senator. The member for Calgary Forest Lawn was the sponsor of the private member's bill, Bill S-245, which was supposed to be brought back to the House of Commons for third reading debate more than a year ago.

Then what happened? The Conservatives traded the order of precedence for the bill to be brought back into this House eight times. They traded it over and over again to delay the bill from coming back to the House for third reading debate and a vote. To this day, it has not been debated. When I saw that indication, it was as clear as day that the Conservatives had zero intention of doing what is right, despite the court ruling, by the way, that the provision was unconstitutional. Even then, they would not do the right thing.

Then I approached the current Minister of Immigration to say that the government must bring forward a government bill because Bill S-245 would never come back to the House of Commons, as the Conservatives would continue to use delay tactics. After much discussion, the minister agreed and we worked together to bring Bill C-71 here. That is how we got here.

Just to be clear, what did the courts say? I want to put this on the public record. The court decision by the Ontario Superior Court, in a 55-page ruling, found that the second-generation cut-off rule violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it "treats Canadians who became Canadians at birth because they were born in Canada differently from those Canadians who obtained their citizenship by descent on their birth outside of Canada." The ruling went on to say that "the latter group holds a lesser class of citizenship because, unlike Canadian-born citizens, they are unable to pass on Canadian citizenship by descent to their children born abroad."

The second-generation cut-off rule denies the first generation born abroad the ability to automatically pass on citizenship to their children if they are also born outside of Canada. In her decision, the judge accepted claims that women are particularly impacted because the second-generation cut-off rule discriminates on the basis of gender, forcing women in their reproductive years to choose be-

tween travel, study and career opportunities abroad or passing citizenship to their children.

One family member, who was one of the appellants in the case, was actually told by officials that all she had to do was go back to Canada to give birth. That was during COVID, by the way, when travel was not safe, and she had no family doctor here to follow the pregnancy. She would have had no health insurance and, of course, no family support because her husband was abroad, continuing to work. That means she would have had to give birth by herself here. She would have had to seek an extended leave from work to facilitate that. It makes zero sense to even suggest such a thing, yet there we have it. Her child was born stateless.

● (1555)

That is the reality of what we are talking about. Those are the impacts, real impacts, on the lives of Canadian families. I am so happy the court made this ruling and made things clear. I urged the government at the time not to appeal the ruling, and I am also grateful the government did not.

We heard the Conservatives say earlier they would have appealed the court ruling. Of course they would have. They were the ones who brought in the unconstitutional law to begin with 15 years ago. We also heard from the Conservative member for Calgary Shepard, who said they would apply a criminality test to this issue. Are the Conservatives going to apply a criminality test to Canadians who are born here? It is absolutely absurd to make these suggestions and to hold true to the idea that some Canadians have more rights than others.

This has been struck down by the courts. It is time to do not only what is morally right but also what is legally required by the courts.

The amendments I put through in committee on Bill S-245 essentially call for a substantial connections test for parents who are the first generation born abroad to be in Canada for at least 1,095 days. That would mean the connections test would be extended to the second generation born abroad and subsequent generations.

My amendments also restored those impacted since the second-generation cut-off rule was enacted in 2009, and we would also apply the same amendment to adoptee families. It took some work, a lot of work, to negotiate and get to where we are today with this bill. It took at least 10 years of my time, but that is nothing in comparison with people like Don Chapman, who has dedicated his entire life to this. He was deemed a lost Canadian. He has fought for this and helped so many families regain their citizenship and other families who have suffered, those who have been lost because this law was never fixed.

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We have to do what is right, and I hope Conservative members will not filibuster. They said to the family members that they will support this provision, but actions speak louder than words, and all of the actions to date indicate otherwise. I am going to give them another chance now to do what is right, because we have to get this passed. We have to make this law, according to the courts, and because it is the morally right thing to do.

At this juncture, I ask for unanimous consent for the following motion: That notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, be deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

I am asking for this because it would expedite the bill, get it to committee so we can hear witnesses, make this law and do what is necessary and what is right for the people of Canada.

• (1600)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, it is disappointing that the Conservatives do not see the value of, at the very least, allowing the bill to get to the committee stage.

My question for the member is about passing legislation of this nature and how it would directly impact many people in different regions of the country. They would literally be getting their citizenship, which is something they should have today. I am wondering if she could reflect on the impact today on the individual who would benefit by the legislation passing.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the heart of the question is this. Bill C-71 would effectively make Canada's immigration law, particularly for the class of what we call lost Canadians, charter-compliant. It would mean that family members who have not been able to pass their citizenship to their children because their children were second generation and born abroad would have those rights restored.

These are not new rights. These are citizens who should never have lost those rights, per the Superior Court of Ontario. We are not creating a new class of citizens. We are restoring this class of citizens, who were unjustly and unconstitutionally penalized. It would mean that children would not be born stateless. It would mean that families would not be separated. It would mean that people would not face deportation because of this unconstitutional law.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, desperate NDP members have been supporting the government for the last two years and are making a disaster out of immigration in Canada. How can they sit here and talk about better immigration when they made a mess out of immigration law in Canada? The results are showing for every Canadian.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the very member who said no to my motion has asked this question. This very member was part of the Conservatives who created this unconstitutional law, which said that some Canadians are less Canadian than others.

They are the very same Conservatives who had been told by the courts that their law was unjust.

It is time for the government and all parliamentarians to bring in a law that is charter-compliant. That is where I stand.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, when I read the outline of this bill, I thought that there was no way we would dither and debate this for long, because there is still a pressing need to correct an injustice. I do not see how anyone could justify waiting to correct an injustice.

That is why I was very surprised to see the Conservatives say no just now to the motion that would have allowed us to move quickly to correct these injustices.

What does the member think of this refusal?

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I think it is shameful, because justice delayed is justice denied. It has been 15 years already. Canadian families have suffered from this punitive, unconstitutional law created by the Conservatives, and now they want to delay it even further. We have debated this ad nauseam. I have lost count of how many times I have made speeches on lost Canadians.

It is time to act, and it is shameful that the Conservatives will not do what is necessary and what is right.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, yes, indeed, and I recall attempts by the hon. member for Vancouver East to put this through by unanimous consent before we adjourned for the summer. One would have thought that reflection over the summer might have changed the automatic chorus of nays from across the aisle, because this is a matter of restoring rights to Canadians, not inventing new rights and not expanding a class of people. It is a matter of fairness and justice, and I lament the fact that the quite consistent efforts with real integrity from the member for Vancouver East have been thwarted here this evening.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Greens, Bloc members and the Liberals. We all stood together to say that we have to do this in a non-partisan way. Let us make sure that we restore the rights of Canadians. The only party standing in the way of that right now is the Conservative Party.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Vancouver East, for all of the work she has been doing on this. It is incredibly disappointing to see that the actions of the Conservatives, which began before the summer, are continuing. We know that it is vital work for us to restore the rights of Canadians.

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For the Conservatives, unfortunately this is a trend. They voted against provisions that would have rectified the unconstitutional second-generation cut-off amendments. They then, as my colleague mentioned, filibustered the bill for 30 hours at committee. They punted third reading debate eight times.

As the member said, actions speak so much louder than words. I wonder if the member can share her thoughts on why the Conservatives are saying one thing to families yet doing something very different in the House of Commons.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the simple answer is that the Conservatives want to mislead families. In fact, the leader of the official opposition, in a reply to family members urging them to take action to fix this injustice, said that the Conservatives supported passing Bill S-245. However, what did they do? They did everything they could to delay and obstruct its passage, to the point that they are even refusing to have the bill come before the House for a third reading debate and vote.

They are misleading Canadian families. They are pretending that they stand for justice. They are pretending that they stand for the rights of Canadians and treating all Canadians equally. They do not. It is the very opposite of what they say and who they claim they are.

• (1610)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments the member has shared, and I especially acknowledge the work that Don Chapman has done. I remember working for the former MP for Kitchener—Waterloo, Andrew Telegdi, and they had many conversations. I also take the point that this has been a long time coming and it is important that we get it done.

I would like to ask the member about a private member's bill, Bill S-245, which I understand was sponsored by a Conservative member, and the Conservatives' continuous approach to not see it debated or come to a vote. What I find challenging in regard to that piece of legislation, which the government bill would rectify, is that the majority of members in the House of Commons helped to expand the scope of it and the Conservatives rejected that. The Conservatives tend to believe that there should be two classes of citizens in Canada. They tend to believe that only those who think like them should have the ability to advance.

I would like to hear the member's comments on why the Conservatives did not want to see this bill go to committee so that we could debate and advance it or at least call the question.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge Don Chapman, and, of course, the family members who took the matter to court and the legal team that fought this issue so we can now have this rectified.

The Conservatives, on eight occasions, moved the debate for third reading on Bill S-245. They did it in 2023 on October 16, October 25 and November 6, and then in 2024 on January 29, February 15, March 22, April 10 and May 1. That is their record. They moved it eight times. What does that tell us? It tells us that they do not support ensuring that Canada ends the practice of having two classes of citizens.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I am pleased to rise in this chamber today to give some more context to the proposed legislation to amend Canada's Citizenship Act.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered today on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. I would also like to recognize that indigenous peoples have been here since time immemorial. The contributions they have made in this country in the past, present and future have been and will continue to be significant. It is our responsibility to continue to work toward reconciliation in coordination and collaboration with indigenous people each and every day.

Being Canadian means taking steps to tackle inequality and injustice within our society. We do this not only through our words but, more importantly, through our actions. Bill C-71 proposes amendments to the Citizenship Act in response to issues raised in both Parliament and the courts. These changes would restore citizenship to the remaining lost Canadians, individuals who either could not become citizens or lost their citizenship due to outdated legislative provisions. While previous amendments helped many, a small cohort of lost Canadians remains. The legislative amendments outlined in Bill C-71 would help lost Canadians and their descendants regain or obtain citizenship. They also address the status of descendants impacted by the Harper Conservatives' first-generation limit.

The revised law would establish clear guidelines for acquiring Canadian citizenship by descent. Once this legislation is enacted, the harmful first-generation limit will no longer apply, allowing Canadian citizens born abroad to pass their citizenship to their children, provided they can demonstrate a substantial connection to Canada. A Canadian parent born outside of the country will be able to transfer citizenship to their child if they have lived in Canada for a cumulative total of three years before the child's birth. These changes would result in a more inclusive and fair Citizenship Act and would right the wrongs of the previous Conservative government.

Additionally, the new legislation would continue to reduce the differences between children born abroad and adopted by Canadians and those born abroad to Canadian parents. Any child adopted overseas by a Canadian parent before the law takes effect would be eligible for the current direct citizenship grant for adoptees, even if they were previously excluded by the first-generation limit. Once the law is in place, the same criteria will apply to children adopted by Canadian citizens abroad. If the adoptive parent born outside Canada can show a substantial connection to Canada, the adopted child will be eligible for citizenship.

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Bill C-71 would restore citizenship to those who have been wrongly excluded and would establish consistent rules for citizenship by descent going forward. These updates build on the work done by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on Bill S-245, further refining the proposals and more comprehensively addressing the recent issues raised by the courts.

Being a Canadian citizen is a privilege that we should never take for granted. In fact, we should all advocate as strongly for our right to citizenship as the lost Canadians have done. Canadian citizenship represents more than just legal status. It embodies an ongoing commitment and responsibility.

What does it mean to be Canadian? There is no right answer to this question, and that is one of the great things about our country. Since Confederation, many diverse people have chosen Canada as their home. With the exception of indigenous peoples, every Canadian's history began with the story of a migrant. As Canadians, we have an ongoing commitment to reconciliation with indigenous peoples as we continue to strengthen our relationship with first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across the country.

Another commitment we make as Canadians is to come together to build a stronger country for everyone, which is evident in many ways. Canadians spring into action to help those in need, and it is not limited to family, friends and neighbours. We know that our country's future prosperity hinges on our sense of goodwill and our continued collective efforts.

Canadians are also committed to inclusion. We choose to welcome diverse cultures, languages and beliefs, and that makes us unique. We value the experiences that have made our fellow Canadians who they are, just as we value the experiences others have. We respect the values of others as they respect ours. Celebrating our differences helps us learn from one another and better understand the challenges and opportunities that arise in our communities. In turn, we can identify new solutions to the problems we must overcome together.

● (1615)

Though we are diverse, there are certain ties that bind us. In addition to helping others in times of need, Canadians also work to build opportunities for success and seek to share the benefits of that success with our communities. How we become Canadian can vary greatly. As the minister said, it is important to recognize that, regardless of how one becomes a Canadian citizen, we can all agree that we value each and every Canadian equally.

Some of us are lucky enough to have been born in Canada, so we are Canadians by birth. Others are newcomers who choose Canada, and they join our communities and earn their citizenship. They are referred to as naturalized Canadians. Lastly, we have Canadian citizenship by descent, which is when individuals who are born outside of our country to a Canadian parent have their citizenship proudly passed down to them. We hold and value each of these citizens as equal and part of our diverse country.

While we all define how we are Canadians in our own way, Parliament defines who and how we become Canadian through the Citizenship Act. Our citizenship process and the rules should be fair, equal and transparent. Recently, it became clear that the act must be

amended to address the 2009 legislative amendments that exclude individuals due to the first-generation limit. The Ontario Superior Court has been clear that the Harper Conservative first-generation limit is unconstitutional on both mobility and equality rights.

Bill C-71 introduces inclusive changes that would address the challenges raised by the courts. This applies in particular to those born overseas to a Canadian parent. Today, we have a choice. We can commit to addressing past wrongs, taking care of those among us who have faced injustice and inequality, being more inclusive, and sharing the benefits we enjoy as citizens with others who deserve to call themselves Canadian too.

As proud citizens of this country, we must uphold the commitments that define us as Canadians. Whether we are citizens by birth or by choice, born in Canada or in another country, we are bound by our shared values, our mutual respect for our country and each other, and our enthusiasm to call ourselves Canadians. Canadian citizenship is a fundamental part of who we are. It unites us, opens up opportunities to us, and challenges us to live up to our values of self-knowledge, service to others, democracy, equality and inclusion.

This legislation would lead to a better Citizenship Act, benefiting not only Canadians, but also anyone who is seeking to understand what it truly means to be Canadian. By restoring citizenship to those who have been wrongfully excluded, we all stand to gain. Our country becomes stronger when we embrace diversity and acceptance.

I am thankful for the members' attention to this crucial piece of legislation.

● (1620)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is a level of desperation in the NDP members and the Liberals that is continuing to take place. Why would the hon. member not tell Canadians about the mess that he and the government have made out of the immigration law in Canada? Why would he not tell Canadians the sad stories about how the mismanagement of immigration has caused Canadians a lot of suffering at all levels, including cost of living, housing and everything else? He should tell Canadians that story.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I gave a speech on the subject of immigration, citizenship specifically, and how to better protect the citizenship of people who rightfully deserve it. The member chose to go off topic to talk about what Conservatives always want to talk about, which is basically anything but the content before the House. I will refrain from engaging with him on that because there will be another time for that subject.

I want to highlight that, although I was born in Canada, neither of my parents were. My mother immigrated from Italy; my father immigrated from Holland. When they came to Canada, their parents brought them here because they shared the Canadian dream. They saw an opportunity to raise their children after leaving war-torn countries after World War II. I am a product of that. I am here. I was born in Canada, and I had opportunities because they chose to do that.

We need to make sure we preserve those opportunities for future Canadians, in particular for those who rightfully deserve that citizenship. That is what this piece of legislation would do. It would correct the mistakes, in particular the mistakes of Stephen Harper and that member's government from 2009, so that those people could properly get the citizenship they deserve.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, we recognize that this bill is a step in the right direction.

That being said, I would like my colleague to talk to us about the fact that, like many laws in this federal system, it is often a real headache. Although this is a first step in the right direction, should we not instead overhaul the Citizenship Act, which is so complex and such a headache? I would like my colleague to say a few words about that.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the opportunity for the member to raise other concerns she might have will come up at committee, and a discussion of it can be had there.

When I was giving my speech, I was thinking of a good friend of mine. He was born in Germany on a Canadian military base. Both his parents were Canadian. His father served in the military and was at CFB Kingston when I met him. That military base had closed in Germany. When my friend went to try to prove his identity and that he was actually a Canadian citizen, it was almost impossible for him to do so because the base that had been located in Germany no longer existed and that land was no longer considered to be Canadian soil.

There are people out there who have been impacted by the fact that they have not been able to obtain their citizenship. Legislation like this is aimed at ensuring that people who rightfully should have that citizenship do have it. The member might have other concerns. I encourage her to bring those up at committee. There will be a time and place to discuss it at that point.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will try to be as brief as possible. Something that was shared with me, and I want to ask the member his thoughts on it.

We know that at least 1.48 million Canadians here and abroad are being violated by the current law. Justice Akbarali, in her June decision, talked about the estimated 170,000 women born abroad who are within the age range when people often start families being affected by this law. She talked about the impacts of this, with children becoming “stateless”. It leads “to women having to make choices between their financial health and independence...and their physical health”. It separates families and forces “children to stay

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in places [where they] are unsafe”. Justice Akbarali goes on from there.

What are the member's thoughts on these comments?

• (1625)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, my thoughts are that the Conservatives should not have opposed the unanimous consent motion presented moments ago to push this along instead of addressing the concerns of the individuals that this member mentioned and the injustices that have been done. We should get this through as quickly as possible.

We used to have this supply and confidence agreement that allowed us to do that kind of stuff with the NDP. We do not have that anymore. Perhaps there would have been an opportunity had we had that. Nonetheless, I really hope that we can get this through quickly so that it can become law and that individuals can benefit from it.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed

[Translation]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-71, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2024), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation.

I am honoured to be here to discuss some highly necessary amendments to the Citizenship Act.

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Bill C-71 continues to clean up the messes created during the Harper administration, particularly with respect to immigration and lost Canadians. We need to do the right thing. We need to move this piece of legislation forward. It is the right thing to do. It is great to see it receiving support from the other parties, but unfortunately it is not receiving support from the party that wishes to not work constructively for Canadians.

This proposal would not be possible without the groundwork laid by the immigration committee during its study on Senate public bill, Bill S-245. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Liberal, NDP and Bloc Québécois members for their efforts to help lost Canadians. Citizenship in Canada is precious. It can be attained by birth, by naturalization or by descent. Citizenship by descent in Canada is what we are here to focus on today.

[Translation]

However, no matter how they obtained Canadian citizenship, all Canadians should be treated equally in a country as proud of its diversity as ours is. We need to amend the Citizenship Act to address the fact that specific groups have been excluded from citizenship.

We also need to settle the constitutional matters raised by the courts regarding citizenship by descent, in particular for people born abroad to a Canadian parent. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that the first-generation limit imposed by Mr. Harper was unconstitutional on equality and mobility rights.

[English]

It was a Conservative piece of legislation that was deemed by the courts to be unconstitutional.

[Translation]

As the hon. minister said, to understand the scope of the problem, we need to know the history and evolution of the Citizenship Act and the facts surrounding the group known as the “lost Canadians”.

- (1630)

[English]

We know that cohort is a limited one. The majority of lost Canadian cases were remedied by the legislative amendments that were implemented in 2009 and 2015, with approximately 20,000 people acquiring citizenship or having their citizenship restored through these amendments. There is a specific cohort that met specific criteria. This cohort of lost Canadians was born abroad between 1977 and 1981, in the second or further generations, and had already turned 28. They lost their citizenship prior to the passing of the 2009 legislation and the repeal of this age requirement.

When I was first elected, I had a couple from southern Italy, who now reside here in Canada, come visit my office. This situation applied specifically to them. The mother was a Canadian citizen born in Italy who obtained Canadian citizenship through her father. The wife was born in Italy. The mother could not pass down Canadian citizenship to her daughter because of the legislative changes

brought in by the prior Conservative government. Again, we are still cleaning up Conservative messes nine years later.

The goal of the Senate public bill, Bill S-245, brought forward by Senator Martin from British Columbia, as well as the amendments adopted by the members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, was to restore the citizenship of these lost Canadians affected by the age 28 rule. When Bill S-245 was studied by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration as amended, it aimed not only to restore citizenship to this group, but also to allow some people born in the second or further generations to be deemed Canadian citizens by descent. Their citizenship status hinged on the condition that their Canadian parent could demonstrate a substantial connection to Canada. In other words, if that Canadian parent had been in Canada for three years before the child was born, consecutively or otherwise, their citizenship could be passed on to that child, even beyond the first generation abroad.

Bill S-245, as amended by committee members, also proposed to ensure that children born abroad and adopted by a Canadian beyond the first generation can also access citizenship. In those cases, there is a different process for adopted children, but the end result remains the same. They are Canadian.

The Ontario Superior Court decision that deemed the Harper Conservative first-generation limit on citizenship by descent unconstitutional came down after the committee began its review of Bill S-245. Given that the first-generation limit is a key element of our citizenship by descent framework, Parliament must establish a new framework to manage the issues raised by the court and ensure fairness in the Canadian Citizenship Act, something the opposition party does not really understand.

Bill S-245 has now gone through a number of changes and improvements based on feedback from experts and those directly impacted. Therefore, we have adopted some of the committee's suggested changes in Bill C-71 to ensure the needs of Canadians are accurately reflected. Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act in 2024, would restore citizenship to the remaining lost Canadians and their descendants, doing the right thing for all Canadians. A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

Similar to the proposals in Bill S-245, Bill C-71 would expand access to citizenship by descent with a more broad approach and a focus on inclusivity. These revisions would address the issues raised by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice regarding the previous Harper Conservatives' legislative amendments, including the first-generation limit.

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[*Translation*]

As with previous changes to the Citizenship Act that helped other lost Canadians, this bill will automatically confer citizenship on some individuals born abroad who may not wish to be citizens for a variety of reasons, such as employment opportunities abroad that do not permit dual citizenship. There are also countries where being a citizen of another country can present legal and professional barriers and restrict access to benefits.

To remedy this situation, the proposed legislation will provide access to the same simplified renunciation process as the one established in 2009. Specifically, this simplified process will require that individuals not reside in Canada, that their renunciation of Canadian citizenship not render them stateless, and that they apply for renunciation of their citizenship through our departmental process.

These changes to the Citizenship Act will ensure that any child born abroad to a Canadian parent before the passage of the bill will be a Canadian citizen from birth. The amendments will also ensure that, in the future, children born abroad to a Canadian parent who was also born abroad will also be granted citizenship at birth if their Canadian parent has a substantial connection to Canada.

I invite members to share their thoughts on the proposal before us today. I too hope that, with the support of all parties, this bill will move forward quickly and effectively.

• (1635)

[*English*]

We are talking about Bill C-71, but more importantly we are talking about Canadian citizenship, what it means and how to obtain Canadian citizenship. I know, in speaking to the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge this summer every week and at events, we have our issues and challenges in Canada. We do, but one thing I know is that I live in one of the best cities in Canada, if not the best. I know I live in a beautiful province, Ontario, and I know Canada is the best country in the world. I know it will be. We have a bright future ahead of us with this fact of being able to attain Canadian citizenship.

Much like the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands said, my parents were selected to come to Canada as immigrants in the late 1950s and 1960s. They won the lottery. I often joke around that it would be nice to win the lottery, but I won the lottery, because my parents were chosen to come to this beautiful country where I now reside with my brothers and my family all over Canada. It is where my wife and I are raising our three children, two of them who play competitive soccer and whom I spend a lot of time driving around, and a little one in day care. They won the jackpot that their grandparents on both sides got chosen to come to Canada and are now Canadian citizens.

That is a place we are here for. That is our country. It is the best country in the world. Anybody who says otherwise is just being condescending and trying to do it for political gain, and it is really such a shame.

I look forward to questions and comments. I am really happy to be back here to do the good work that we were elected to do as

members of Parliament, all 338 of us. We are here for one thing, to make the best country in the world even better.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, besides ballooning the size of the immigration department with negative results and making a mess out of the department itself, what would the hon. member propose? How much stress would Bill C-71 put on the department in addition to the stress that it has right now?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, it is good to see the member for Edmonton Manning. I know he and his family were newcomers to Canada. He has two wonderful sons who have bright futures in this country. I know they have had a great education, are working and are doing very well. That is what Canada is about, so let us give it a thumbs-up.

In terms of the immigration department, we know the hard-working people at IRCC are processing millions of visas, millions of applications, because people want to move to this country. People love this country. They know that this country, despite the challenges that we face globally, is the best country in the world to come to and to establish a family. We have gone through some hard times. We have gone through global inflation. We went through COVID. There are wars that we have not seen for 80 years happening in the world.

However, I never bet against Canada. The official opposition may, but I will never do that. Canada is the best country in the world.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to my Conservative colleague's questions for a while now. I get the impression that he wants to use all of our time or impose time for debate to discuss all the problems that exist with the management of immigration, when this is really about one case of injustice that is simple to resolve.

However, he opposes a motion that would speed things up. He is putting on his dog-and-pony show because, according to him, we absolutely must talk about everything that has been done on immigration. We in the Bloc Québécois have also criticized how the immigration file has been handled. We have asked many questions in question period.

Why confuse the debates? Why not focus on the substance of the current bill?

• (1640)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for what he said.

[*English*]

We are here to do the good work of Canadians, wherever they live in this country. This injustice with lost Canadians was caused by a Conservative government under Mr. Harper. He put in measures that were deemed unconstitutional, whether it was for immigration, for justice measures and so forth.

That is what happened. They go to the courts. The Conservatives do not like the courts. They do not like the court system and the judges. I hear some heckling on the other side. Again—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If hon. members have questions and comments, they should wait until the appropriate time.

If the hon. member could wrap it up, we could get to another question.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I just want to say to the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois, who represents one of the ridings in Quebec, that we need to fix this injustice for Canadians across this country. What has happened is wrong. We know it.

Canadians born abroad to Canadian citizens are Canadians. They should have always been treated as such. There are measures here for substantial tests to make it fair and right.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his intervention in the House this afternoon.

I think we could all agree that this very late in coming. I know that my colleague from Vancouver East has done incredible work on this file to push the government to do this and to call out the government for why this has taken so long.

I do have a specific question for the member. The commencement provision of Bill C-71 confers discretion on the Governor in Council, so the cabinet, to determine when the act will come into force. It does not specify the timeline or a deadline for when this needs to happen.

I wonder if the member could talk a little about the intention of the government, and whether we can be certain that the government will bring this forward and will bring this into effect upon royal assent.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, we need to bring this piece of legislation forward. We need to get it passed with all-party support. The Conservatives should know this is the right thing to do to correct an injustice. I agree with the hon. member that we need to get royal assent and move this into force as soon as possible to ensure there are no injustices to Canadians, specifically with regards to their citizenship.

We are very proud to be Canadian. These folks are Canadian, and they would be just as proud to get that citizenship that we are fortunate and blessed to have today.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Like many members of this House and millions of other Canadians, I was born in another country. Canada is very much a nation of immigrants, and I am proud to be one of them. I came to this country as a young man, leaving behind a civil war that had been raging for much of my life. I came here seeking peace, stability and opportunity.

I will admit I did not know that much about Canada before moving here. It did not seem necessary to learn more about what I already knew, that Canada is a cold country with warm people, a place where newcomers are readily accepted regardless of nation of origin, race, colour or creed. What more did I need to know?

I was welcomed here with open arms. It did not take long for me to realize that Canada was a place I would be proud to call home. I found a job, got married, started a family and realized just how much this country means to me. I knew I wanted to be part of it and that my future and my family's future was here. I became a Canadian citizen in 1994. I started a business, got involved in community organizations and, eventually, was asked by the people of Edmonton Manning if I would represent them in this House. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve my country in this way.

One of the delights of being a member of Parliament is that I have been able to hear so many stories from my fellow Canadians, especially those, like myself, who came to this country to make it home. I have heard hundreds of times how people came to this country and why they chose Canada. Pledging allegiance to this nation is a serious business. In becoming a Canadian, you are saying that you want to be part of the greatest family in the world. Like marriage, becoming a citizen is a serious commitment. It is not something that should be entered into lightly for convenience sake.

As Canadians, we are all very aware of our rights. We even have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What we do not talk often about is our responsibilities as citizens. It is not only about what Canada can do for us, it is also about what we will do for Canada. Being a Canadian should mean something more than having a passport accepted everywhere in the world. Being a Canadian is a state of mind, of a joining together of different people for a common cause.

Because I know what it means to be a Canadian, I cannot support Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, 2024. To me, this legislation devalues the idea of citizenship. It is as if the Liberals want to grant citizenship to tourists. I can see the advertising slogan now, "Come spend your summers in Canada, and after 10 years we will throw in citizenship as an added bonus." Why are those who wish to become Canadian citizens no longer expected to live here and become part of our country and society? Where is the commitment on their part to become part of the community? Does being Canadian not matter anymore?

In 2006, the Canadian government spent \$94 million evacuating 15,000 Canadians from a conflict in Lebanon, my home country. Many of those were people who had the benefit of Canadian citizenship with minimal connection to Canada. Once things died down, they went right back to the country that they thought of as their first home. They were "Canadians of convenience". That is why the Harper government amended the Citizenship Act to restrict the transmission of Canadian citizenship to only one generation born outside of Canada. It does not seem right to me or to most Canadians that citizenship should be granted to generations of people with no ties to Canada.

Government Orders

• (1645)

Perhaps it is time to tighten our citizenship rules, not weaken them. We do not need more Canadians of convenience, people who hold Canadian citizenship but live abroad and do not participate in Canadian society.

The legislation is intended to address concerns raised by the Ontario Superior Court, which ruled that the first-generation cut-off rule in the Citizenship Act was unconstitutional. However, Bill C-71 is a hastily written, ill-conceived proposal that needs a lot of work to make it acceptable to Canadians. Instead of fixing the problem, the bill would weaken the rules. Under this act, the bill introduces a substantial connection test; for parents to pass on citizenship to children born abroad, the parents must demonstrate that they were physically present in Canada for 1,095 cumulative days at any point in their lives. This rule applies to those who are Canadian-born, those who are naturalized Canadians and those who were born abroad.

I do not know what members think of as “substantial”, but being present in Canada for a thousand or so cumulative days does not seem to me to be much of a connection. If people live elsewhere but spend summer vacations in Canada, it would not take that long to reach the required number of days. I can see that this could be a part of a new tourist industry. Maybe I am biased, but I think that experiencing a couple of Edmonton winters should be a requirement for anyone wishing to become a Canadian citizen. After all, one of the things that bind us together as Canadians is the shared experience of cold weather. Certainly, without amendment, the bill would increase the stress on the civil service. Somehow, someone will be tasked with checking that the citizenship applicant has really spent 1,095 cumulative days in Canada. What burden of proof would be required?

When I became a Canadian, I did so knowing that I would give my all to this country. I understood that Canadian citizenship was a privilege, not a right, and that it was something offered to those who understood what it meant to be Canadian, who accepted Canadian values and who wanted to work together with other Canadians to make our society even greater. Canada is not my backup plan; it is my only plan. I know how important Canadian citizenship is. However, I do not see that importance reflected in Bill C-71.

Both the Liberal Party and the NDP want to play a game. All of a sudden, after they made such a mess of the immigration rules and laws in Canada, they are starting another chapter to make a bigger mess, adding more stress to a failing department and a failing immigration system. Bill C-71 would not respond to that; it would add to the disaster. I will not vote for it.

• (1650)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that Bill C-71 is the right thing to do. The bill would correct an injustice that was caused by the prior Harper government, when the courts ruled that the law in place at the time was unconstitutional. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled it unconstitutional. This is the right thing to do to correct an injustice. It is about fairness.

I have much respect for the hon. member for Edmonton Manning. Why would he not support a piece of legislation that would correct an injustice?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I already listed many points as to why I do not support Bill C-71. I am not interested in a political game with the Liberals and the NDP.

There are many other Canadians the government needs to speak to. The government should hit the road, talk to people and knock on doors. The first thing that will come out is how disastrous the immigration system has become in Canada and why Canadians need it fixed, rather than having an additional disaster added to it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to come back to the last comment that my Conservative colleague made about how Canada's immigration system is a mess and how it is failing in so many ways. I completely agree with him on that. However, Bill C-71 does not deal with the entire immigration system. That is not what we have here. The bill seeks to correct an injustice, which affects women and people who work abroad for the government in particular. That is what Bill C-71 seeks to correct.

The Conservatives are filibustering. They did the same thing with the Senate bill on this topic. They are filibustering to prevent Bill C-71 from being passed immediately.

Is the fact that the bill targets legislation that was passed under Stephen Harper's Conservative government the real reason the Conservatives are against it?

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I am also surprised by the Bloc Québécois. I am not sure what there is for them in Bill C-71. As I said, the bill is ill-conceived and badly written. There is no evidence to support their argument. Therefore, I am surprised.

I will throw the question back to them: Why will they be supporting the bill?

• (1655)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have to say that my colleague's speech was deeply disappointing. I was in his riding quite a lot this summer. I spoke to a number of his constituents, a number of people who put him in his position. They are absolutely appalled by his failure to speak up for Lebanese Canadians and Palestinian Canadians about the genocide that is happening in Gaza.

More importantly, when he stands in this place and talks about Canadians of convenience, does he feel that he is the one who gets to choose who is a Canadian and who is not?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, for one thing, I deal with my community and I have the backing of my community. I do not need the NDP to go and knock on my doors to tell me what to do. Their time would be better spent elsewhere.

Government Orders

The other thing is that I am not the one who is trying to impose anything on Canadians. If anybody is doing that, it is the Liberal and NDP members; throughout the last two years, they have made a disaster of immigration law in Canada. They should be ashamed. They should know what to ask people before they even make such suggestions.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton Manning says he wants Canadians who believe in Canadian values. Certainly one of those is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; this is why the courts ruled that the cut-off rule for second-generation Canadians was unconstitutional.

How does the hon. member imagine that Canadians of convenience so cleverly plan ahead to choose their parents so that they can claim Canadian citizenship?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, that is a much bigger question. That is a much bigger problem that she has raised right now. Again, there was nothing that I suggested in my speech that reflected on anything other than that allegiance to Canada is the right thing to have.

To be Canadian is to live as Canadians live, to feel what Canadians feel and to be back in this country in every way, not just to have the convenience of having a passport to travel anywhere in the world. That is the argument. It is a valid argument, and many Canadians will respond to that in a positive way, as we suggested and as I am suggesting today.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the bill before us today, Bill C-71, seeks to amend the Citizenship Act to do three things. First, for children not born in Canada but adopted by Canadian parents, it would ensure that they are treated as Canadian-born citizens for the purposes of passing on citizenship if they have children abroad in the future. This is something I support. Second, it would restore citizenship for individuals who lost it due to non-application for retention or rejection under section 8 of the former Citizenship Act. Again, this is something I support. Third, and most important, the bill would abolish the first-generation limit for Canadian citizenship by descent, established in 2009, and replace it with a substantial connection requirement that would allow a foreign-born Canadian citizen to pass down their citizenship to their children and grandchildren born abroad as long as they have spent at least 1,095 days in Canada cumulatively. I have concerns with this portion of the bill that I will outline here today.

The first issue relates to birth tourism, a hot-button issue in British Columbia for many years. Birth tourism has long been an issue in Canada, and the bill would leave the door open to the practice's continuing long into the future. In fact, it would encourage it. For those who do not know, birth tourism is the practice of traveling to another country for the purpose of giving birth there. This is generally done to obtain citizenship for the child, taking advantage of birthright citizenship laws.

In Canada, there are three pathways to citizenship. The first is *jus sanguinis*, or “right of blood”; in other words, it is being born to a Canadian parent. The second is naturalization, which is the process of immigrating and obtaining permanent residency and eventually citizenship, as my colleague alluded to previously. The third is *jus*

solis, or “right of soil”; in other words, it is being born on Canadian soil.

A 2023 article in the National Post discussed *jus soli*, highlighting how a single hospital in Richmond, B.C., had 502 non-resident births in 2019. Across Canada, 4,400 non-resident births took place in 2019, which is more than triple the number from 2010. In 2023, the first baby born in Vancouver was born to a birth tourist. The mother even told local reporters that she had made her first-ever trip to Canada specifically to secure a Canadian passport for her daughter. A 2020 CBC article titled “‘All about the money’: How women travelling to Canada to give birth could strain the health-care system” highlighted that Canada is in a small minority of fewer than three dozen countries that grant citizenship based on a baby's birthplace, regardless of the parents' nationality or status. The article noted that a high concentration of non-resident patients giving birth in Canada “has led to compromised care for local mothers-to-be and struggles for nursing staff”.

Another article from 2023 noted that, while air travel restrictions during the pandemic slowed down the trend, numbers have now started to increase again. It highlighted that, of 102 non-resident women who were surveyed after giving birth in Canada between July 2019 and November 2020, 77% cited birthright citizenship as their primary reason for giving birth in Canada. It is very clear that this pathway to citizenship is being abused; this program will only see the numbers increase as the Liberals reduce security checks for visitor visas as well. Thousands of children each year are born in Canada and leave with the full rights and privileges granted to any other Canadian; should they choose to come back to Canada at any time in the future, they will have access to Canada's health care and generous social security benefits without being required to pay any taxes before they arrive.

Right now, Canadians are paying more taxes while getting less. How is it fair to Canadian taxpayers? Even Liberals have recognized that this is a big issue and called for change. In 2018, the former Liberal MP for Steveston—Richmond East, Joe Peschisolido, presented petition e-1527, which called on the government to address birth tourism, citing its exploitation of Canada's generous public health care and social security system and violation of Canada's sense of fairness.

I would be remiss if I did not note that, in 2019, when the first-generation limit was brought in, Liberals even voted in favour of it at third reading in the House of Commons.

Government Orders

• (1700)

How is it just that a birth tourism baby would be able to pass citizenship on to their grandchildren under the proposed law? That is the big question today. Citizenship would be passed on to the grandchildren of Canadians born here solely for the purposes of obtaining citizenship. For my constituents, that is not just.

The second issue I have to raise respecting the bill is the obvious ramifications of eliminating the first-generation limit, namely the capacity of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to meet its current obligations on top of the additional files the law would inevitably create if it is passed.

Earlier today in the minister's remarks and in response to questions from the member for Calgary Shepard, the minister was not able to say the number of people who would be impacted by the law. That is irresponsible. The proposed legislation could lead to tens of thousands of additional files to process, leading to even more backlogs in our strained immigration department.

In the Ontario superior court ruling that led to the legislation proposed here today, the court cited a 50% error rate even among the samples that were cited during the court proceedings. We already have seen the effects of an overcrowded immigration system. In fact, we are living them today. Checks are being missed, and dangerous people have been allowed into our country due to a lack of due diligence and effectiveness by officials.

Just over a year ago, Hardeep Singh Nijjar was murdered outside a gurdwara in Surrey. It was revealed that his alleged murderers were in Canada on student visas. In just the last months, the RCMP has foiled multiple terror plots by people who had recently come to Canada. In the spring, RCMP officers foiled a plot by a 62-year-old Canadian citizen who had been filmed taking part in a beheading on behalf of ISIS in 2015, which was not found before he was granted citizenship. Then, over the summer, we learned of the arrest of a 20-year-old Pakistani citizen who obtained residency in Canada and who was planning to commit a massive attack in New York around the anniversary of Hamas's barbaric attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. His plan was to kill as many Jews as possible.

With IRCC already failing to ensure that dangerous people are not granted visas, PR or citizenship, how can we trust it will be able to effectively track the three-year significant connection clause for potentially tens of thousands of new applicants on top of our already overburdened system?

Additionally, the bill would not require individuals granted citizenship to undergo criminal background checks, which would pose even more security risks and undermines Canada's standards for who can become a Canadian citizen.

The third issue I would like to raise today relates to the Supreme Court and the lower court in Ontario. When it comes to something as important as the granting of Canadian citizenship, I believe this decision should have gone to the Supreme Court of Canada and not a provincial court judge in Ontario.

If I had more time today, I would also raise points on the financial implications of the bill and the effects it could have on our democracy and voters abroad in future elections. Finally, on the fi-

nancial implications as well, the government has not been able to provide any estimates in respect to the costs the bill would have on Canadians.

As was referenced in the House already multiple times today, the former Conservative government brought forward a first-generation limit in response to the crisis in Lebanon in 2006. It cost Canadian taxpayers over \$94 million. As my colleague from Edmonton outlined, many of those people left Canada after they used our consular services and generous supports that Canada used to protect them.

The question before us today is whether we really want to create a new wave of Canadians of convenience.

In closing, I do not believe it is a good idea to extend citizenship to the second generation, born abroad, for the reasons I have been able to briefly outline.

• (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering whether the member can expand upon his thoughts in regard to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice decision. The Conservatives have taken the approach that they would have appealed that decision. Would the Conservatives have agreed if the higher court had reinforced that particular ruling, or would they have potentially given their opposition to it and used a notwithstanding clause?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is that I believe that our citizenship is sacred. It is something all of us, especially in this room, have a responsibility to uphold and to dignify, and I believe that a question of such importance, namely who is able to be granted Canadian citizenship, should not be determined by an Ontario Superior Court of Justice judge. I believe it would have been in the interest of Canada and the Government of Canada to appeal that decision to higher courts, so ultimately the Supreme Court of Canada could have made a decision on *jus soli* and its implications moving forward.

That said, I will not answer a hypothetical question about what the Supreme Court could or could not have done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, what my colleague said in his speech is exactly what I was talking about. It does a lot, but it does not address the main issue.

Government Orders

Let me give an example. A Quebec couple goes to work abroad for the Quebec government. They have a child. They come back. That child spends his whole life in Quebec and is therefore a Canadian citizen. When that child becomes an adult, he himself goes to work abroad. He has a child, but that child will not automatically have Canadian citizenship.

Does my colleague think that is acceptable?

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, right now the Bloc Québécois members have a serious determination to make: Do they stand with the Liberals in centralizing more power in Ottawa and removing the powers of citizenship under Quebec's rules? I do not believe that the 1,095 cumulative days is a good test for determining citizenship.

• (1710)

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

Something that has come up frequently is talking about this court case. What I understand is that it is a lower court decision. What really interests me is that the Liberals talk about the decision and ask why it should have been appealed. I will remind the Liberals here that there was a decision of a year or two ago from a court of appeal that they did not like because it was about oil and gas. That very day, the Prime Minister marched in here and said they would be appealing, because it fit his narrative.

I wonder what the member has to say, when the Liberals seem to talk out of both sides of their mouth about whether things should be appealed or not appealed, like this.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I will admit I am not an expert on constitutional law like my colleague from Kamloops is, but I do know, like every other Canadian, that intuitively our citizenship is something that is sacred. It is something that needs to be upheld, and a lower court decision should not be the determining factor on a matter of such importance as determining our citizenship. I will note again that the Liberals, on February 15, 2008, voted to eliminate the second-generation provision that is being debated here today, and I think the Liberals back then made a right decision. I call upon the Liberals to listen to their constituents and uphold the citizenship law as it is today with respect to the first-generation limit.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity on a couple of occasions to ask Conservatives what their actual position is with respect to the notwithstanding clause. At the end of the day, Canadians need to be very much aware that the Conservative Party has demonstrated that it really does not have a problem resourcing the notwithstanding clause if the need is there.

If we listen to what the Conservatives are saying about this particular piece of legislation and look at what they have done with regard to a so-called Conservative-friendly Senate bill that was brought in, we begin to believe that they are diametrically opposed to what the legislation would do. We all need to be concerned about that because, at the end of the day, through legislation and the man-

ner in which they vote, they start to show their cards whether they like it or not. People will start to get a sense of what the Conservative Party stands for.

We know that the Conservative Party does not have reservations about using the notwithstanding clause. I asked the question directly to the member. He said it was hypothetical and he was not going to answer the question. That kind of pushed it to the side, maybe a little too quickly, because I do think it is a very important point. When we talk about citizenship and the first generation, the second generation and what was done back then, we have to put it in the perspective of Canadians and what it is that Canadians do abroad.

I had the honour of serving in the Canadian Forces for a few years, and through that process I got to know a lot of people, whether it was veterans or current members at the time. A lot of members of the force spend a great deal of time outside of Canada, and while outside Canada, they often have a child. That child might ultimately come back to Canada for a relatively short period of time, maybe for a posting or education, and then have to leave Canada again, and they find themselves in the situation where the Conservative Party has made the decision that the serving member does not necessarily deserve the right to have his or her children recognized for Canadian citizenship, depending on the situation. The same principles—

• (1715)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is not debate. The citizenship law, as the member is referring to, does not apply to Canadian Forces members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member is trying to elaborate on the hon. member's speech and on policy, and he can do that during debate.

There is another point of order by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate you, but I am very concerned that the member is trying to undermine legitimate questions that are being asked of his rather ridiculous speech.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I again want to remind members that if they want to contribute to the discussion, they should wait until questions and comments. These are not points of order; they are more points of debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my comments are part of the actual debate. I can tell the member who stood up on a point of order, calling into question my statement on the legitimate concerns people have with respect to that second generation limit and beyond, that there are many Canadians who have all sorts of reasons and rationales they can use that might put them into a position where the law that was passed back in 2009 by Stephen Harper ultimately has compromised them. What is being lost in a lot of the discussion, especially coming from the Conservative Party, is that this legislation would have a very profound, positive impact for many people who believe, as they should, that they are Canadian.

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The Conservatives are saying no to that. They will come up with a rationale or an excuse to attempt to justify their attitudes toward it, but I would suggest that there is a fundamental flaw in their thinking, which is that the law passed by Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party back in 2009 has a fundamental flaw. It is called the Constitution. The Constitution of Canada and the Charter of Rights clearly demonstrated, through the Superior Court in the province of Ontario, that the law, as it was passed by Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, was in violation of the Constitution. That decision was made toward the end of 2023.

If we were to rewind a bit, we would find that there was a wonderful opportunity to address the issue in the form of a piece of legislation from the Senate that was brought forward dealing with the issue of citizenship. The Conservative Party at the time saw the merit of the legislation to the degree that it was prepared to bring the legislation through the House of Commons on behalf of the Senate. Things were going relatively well until it got to the committee stage.

I was not at the committee, but I am told there were 29 or 30-plus hours, and I am not 100% sure, where the Conservatives filibustered the debate. The Conservative Party felt that the changes the opposition and government members were making to the legislation made it unacceptable, even though the Superior Court in the province of Ontario said that it was in violation of the Constitution.

The bill passed at committee stage, and because it was a Conservative initiative, it means the Conservative Party has to allow it to come up for debate at report stage and at third reading here in the House of Commons. We all know there is a calendar that is set and that allows for private members' business. I am talking about Bill S-245 in particular. It would ultimately be guaranteed, virtually, because it was high enough in precedence to get that debate. Now, the Conservative Party has made the decision that it does not want that debate because when that debate starts, it is only for two hours, which includes at report stage. The brain thrust from the Conservative Party, the House leadership team that believes in things like using the notwithstanding clause to take away rights, is that it does not want to bring it forward, so it will defer it to another piece of legislation.

I do not know how many times the Conservatives have done that. That now leaves the government in a very difficult position because that superior court decision actually allows us to make the changes. I believe it is until the end of the year, but do not quote me on it. We need to see the legislation get through. If it does not get through, that would cause some other issues.

• (1720)

I am actually encouraged that an NDP member stood in her place and tried, through unanimous support, to get it through the House. That was not the first time. When we had the agreement between the Liberals and the NDP, there was an attempt to get it through virtually all steps, and I thought that was a good idea.

Now we are saying, at the very least, let us get it to the committee. In fact, some Conservatives will say that it just needs some amendments, and maybe they could support it if there were some amendments.

The problem is that the Conservative Party knows, and I know, the only way this legislation is going to get past second reading and get to committee stage, based on the discussions I have witnessed and the history of the Conservative Party playing a destructive force here on the floor of the House of Commons, is if the Bloc or the New Democrats decide to support a government initiative to time allocate the legislation.

If that does not happen, I do not believe for a moment that the Conservatives are going to allow it to go to committee. They have already made the determination that this is bad legislation. The reason I used that example is so that people following the debate would have a better appreciation of why it is so important that the legislation actually pass.

We are talking about real people not being recognized and given their Canadian citizenship. That is a very real issue. When this legislation passes and receives royal assent, people are going to be given their Canadian citizenship. We all know how important that is to Canadians.

It has been pointed out that there are three ways in which one becomes a citizen of Canada. The easiest and most obvious way is via birth. Some families have been here for generations. My roots go back to the province of Quebec and then over to Manitoba. Some went into other prairie provinces. We have been here for generations. I am a citizen because I was born here.

I often meet families, relatively young couples who might have two or three children. One of the children was actually born here in Canada, and some of them are still in the process of being recognized as permanent residents. That is something the Conservatives seem to have issues with. Some are going through the Manitoba nominee program, and will ultimately become citizens of Canada after going through a rigorous procedure. They have a sense of pride when they are able to say, "My child, this one here, was actually born here in Canada."

Whether it is that child who was born here or someone like myself, having been born here, we are all equal. That is the way I perceive it. People might want to try to distort that in different ways for different political purposes, but that is one way to become a citizen.

Another way to become a citizen is through naturalization. Naturalization is through one of the many different streams of immigration. Some provinces, including mine, would have been challenged for many years, in terms of a growing population, if it was not for immigration and those individuals who ultimately become citizens of Canada, and most of them do.

• (1725)

Every one of us is afforded the opportunity to go witness, firsthand, swearing-in ceremonies. If one has not taken that opportunity, I would highly encourage all members to participate in a citizenship court. There is a sense of pride when 50, 60 or 70 people are sitting in a room and have all met the requirements to become a Canadian citizen and then are sworn in as Canadian citizens. I have had the opportunity to speak at many of these over the years. I have had opportunities, as I would trust that most have, to extend personal congratulations and to witness tears in eyes because of that step.

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This is where I tend to differ. There was a Conservative member who talked about being Canadian. For immigrants coming to Canada, becoming permanent residents and then becoming citizens, the expectation is not that one forgets about one's homeland. Canada is the greatest country in the world to live in and to call home, but it does not mean that we have to forget about the home in which we were born. Ultimately, I would suggest that some of Canada's greatest assets are our diversity and our ability to build upon our world community and how we use that as a way to expand our economy and to showcase our diversity to the world, in terms of how people can get along.

I like to think that we are not a giant melting pot, as some Conservatives might like to try to portray, but rather, take a look in terms of the values and the norms and mores of our society. That is the second way.

The third way is by dealing with the whole idea of descendants and, specifically, the legislation recognizing what I made reference to at the beginning, and that was dealing with the first-generation issue established back in 2009.

Some Conservatives will say that Liberals voted for it at that time. I have heard that on a number of occasions. I can assure the member that I personally did not vote for it at that time, but that does not really matter because I understand the context in which that vote took place. It has been explained here before. It was a holistic piece of legislation coming forward, and that was where the mistake was ultimately made. We had the prime minister of the day threatening to take away the legislation unless it ultimately was able to go through in a more timely fashion without, necessarily, amendments. We know that Stephen Harper was not fond of amendments. I know that first-hand, in many different ways.

This legislation deals with that issue along with something the previous speaker recognizes, something he supports, and that is the issue of adoption. In the House, we often have discussions where we talk about adoptions. We try to give the impression, I would like to think, in a very honest and genuine way, that an adoption is just as important as a natural delivery or a biological child. The way we can enhance that through the Citizenship Act is a very strong positive. I would think that all members would support that.

• (1730)

Taking a look at the legislation itself, and even taking a look at the background of the legislation, I would have thought, as some members have already pointed out, that there would not be an issue with it passing the House of Commons. Unfortunately, based on the debates that we are hearing from members of the official opposition today, they are more preoccupied with the Conservative Party of Canada and their leader than with Canadians as a whole. As a direct result, we find ourselves in a position where there are going to be many people in different regions who are not going to be able to get their citizenship.

There is going to be another speaker after I sit down, and I believe it is going to be a Conservative member. I would like to think, at the very least, that the Conservative member could give a very clear indication that the Conservative Party is not going to require other opposition members and the government to bring in time allo-

cation to see this legislation pass and at least allow it to go to committee.

The Conservatives say that they have amendments or changes. When Senate Bill S-245 was at committee, there were changes that were made to it. The minister has been clear in being open-minded to possible changes. If the Conservative Party has changes, then let us get the bill to committee to allow us to see what the Conservative Party has in mind or what its plan actually is.

We know that members of the Bloc and the New Democratic Party are supporting the legislation, and I appreciate that fact. However, we have a couple of days. Let us see what happens with the legislation. Maybe the Conservatives will have a conversion of sorts and see the value in passing this legislation on to committee.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us recall, when we talk about citizenship, that we have a Prime Minister who referred to Canada as a “postnational state”. That is, he does not believe in this concept of there being a particular Canadian identity, describing this as a postnational state. Then we have this member, who is saying that these people believe they are Canadians. First, the Liberals have no definition of what it means to be a Canadian, and then they would like to ensure that citizenship can be afforded to anyone on the basis of, it seems, their seeing themselves as being Canadian.

I would say to the member that there is more to being Canadian than simply wishing to self-identify as a Canadian. Would the member acknowledge that there is a fundamental problem with his invocation of this argument that these are people who believe they are Canadians, therefore they are entitled to citizenship? Does he not acknowledge how flawed and dangerous that way of thinking is?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that there are individuals out there who can better explain to the member opposite than I could. There are individuals such as Don Chapman, who has been cited, and even glorified, by some. However, there are people out there who would be able to explain to the member opposite that, in fact, there are many people who should be considered citizens of Canada. I would like to think that, if that member met with and talked to some of those people, he might have a different opinion than he currently has.

I can appreciate that the member has likely been instructed to come into the House and make an argument as to why Bill C-71 should not pass. I find that unfortunate. What is next? Is the Conservative Party going to say, “Well, we are going to put limits”? Will it say, “We are going to increase the number of days required to become a Canadian citizen from a permanent residency”? Can we anticipate that this would happen?

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back here this fall to take part in the dynamics of the House of Commons. It is going to be a very exciting season.

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Earlier, my colleague from Montcalm asked an excellent question to which he did not get an answer. I would like our colleague from Winnipeg North to tell us more about it. The member for Montcalm gave the example of a Canadian couple whose child moves abroad for work. That child lives in a foreign country and has children of their own. The question my colleague from Montcalm asked was very simple, but the Conservative member did not deign to answer it, perhaps out of ignorance or a lack of interest in the issue. I would like to hear what our colleague from Winnipeg North has to say about it.

Should the child of this Canadian living abroad have to fight to have their Canadian citizenship recognized, or should they be granted citizenship from the start?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure, but from what I heard through translation, the type of child being referred to would be a citizen of Canada. It is as simple as that.

We are talking about that second-generation individual, which is where it becomes somewhat problematic according to the Conservative formula. Someone can be a Canadian or a diplomat or whatever, and people move out of Canada for a wide spectrum of reasons, and when they are outside of Canada, they do have children. It is those children who could potentially be at risk. This is where, in good part, a lot of the concern arises. I would really encourage members of the Conservative Party in particular to become more familiar with the types of individuals we are talking about because hopefully it would change the members' attitudes.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my concern is that, for people listening to this debate, the image that the Conservatives are giving out is that, well, if someone just decides they are Canadian, then they can become a Canadian citizen. That is absolutely ridiculous. There is also the image that people are flying here, giving birth and then getting their grandchildren Canadian citizenship, which is also completely false. It is a dangerous game because we are seeing rising racist hate. We see what Trump is doing in Springfield, and no, people do not come here and eat dogs.

However, it reminds me of when the Conservatives ran an election on a barbaric hotline, where people were supposed to be invited to call in on their neighbours and target them because they were Muslim or they were from other communities. Therefore, when the Conservatives say that it is not that easy and we can decide who is a Canadian, we know what that dog whistle is. It is a dog whistle to the racist base, just like Trump's racist dog whistle. It is just like in 2015 when they were saying to rat out our neighbours because those people do barbaric practices.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that there has to be some form of a significant connection to Canada, and that is something the minister himself highlighted in bringing forward the legislation.

However, when I listen to Conservative after Conservative talking about the issue, I think there is a legitimate issue to raise and that is what the Conservative policy is regarding permanent residents. Will the Conservatives give a guarantee that they would not increase the number of days required for a permanent resident to ul-

timately apply for citizenship? Based on some of the Conservatives' comments on immigration we have heard today while talking now about citizenship, I am very suspicious of Conservative far right MAGA attitudes toward immigrants. We need to push the Conservatives to come out and tell us specifically what their plans are, whether they concern citizenship, permanent residents or any other public policies, such as the environment.

● (1740)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member for Timmins—James Bay that Conservatives are playing games here. I would even go so far as to say they are using dog whistles. The reality is that we are seeing examples of real-life scenarios, and I gave one during my speech.

A good friend of mine was born on a military base in Germany. That military base closed. Both of his parents were Canadian citizens born in Canada. His dad was posted to Germany at this base and later on, when he went to try to prove that he was a Canadian or prove his place of birth when he was getting a passport, he had a very difficult time doing that because this base no longer existed and he was unable to get that.

What we are trying to do in this legislation is to close some of these loopholes that make it very difficult for people who rightfully should have that citizenship while the Conservatives want to suggest that there is something else going on, as though there is some kind of nefarious activity. That is what they do best. They do this all the time. I am curious as to whether the member can expand in his comments on that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I tried to highlight in my comments where the Conservative Party really is with respect to the legislation. It has become abundantly clear that Conservatives do not support the legislation. The moment I sit down and the Conservatives stand up to speak on the legislation, it will be reaffirmed. This means that, in order for the government to ultimately pass it, we are going to have to look to the New Democrats and the Bloc and possibly at bringing in time allocation. I hope I am wrong.

Maybe the next person speaking will reassure me not to worry, that two days of debate is plenty, and that we will see it go to committee, where the Conservatives can look at it, have experts in, maybe get some of those questions answered and listen to real people who are experiencing what my friend just talked about. That is why I say we should get the legislation to committee. It is the very least we can do. Often the Conservatives, including this morning, say that we should get legislation to committee so we can get public input on it. The same principle might apply here.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House among friends of all colours.

Government Orders

Before I speak to the bill before the House, if the House will indulge me, I would like to make a few brief comments about a constituency matter. I would like to recognize the immense contributions of Dr. Ryan Topping during his period of service at Newman Theological College in Edmonton. The college is not in my riding, but Dr. Topping is a constituent and the college is very important to the Edmonton Catholic community. All of us are, therefore, deeply invested in the institution's success, its fidelity to its mission and its decisions around ensuring ongoing, strong Catholic leadership.

Dr. Topping played a central role in significantly developing and building up this institution. He was central in the design and accreditation of a new B.A. program and a significant expansion of the student body in bringing new programs to the college, establishing fruitful partnerships and bringing in significant new funding.

Since Dr. Topping's announced departure, I have heard from many students and community members who are immensely grateful to Dr. Topping for his contributions and are sorry to see him go. I want to add my voice, and will continue to add my voice, to those recognizing Dr. Topping's noble, selfless and effective service.

[*Translation*]

The act to amend the Citizenship Act introduced by the Liberal-NDP government threatens the integrity and security of Canadian citizenship. In December 2023, the Ontario Superior Court ruled that the first-generation cut-off rule was unconstitutional. The court stated that there was a 50% error rate in citizenship-related services managed by the Liberals, along with abnormally long delays.

The Liberal-NDP government responded by introducing Bill C-71, which grants citizenship to children born abroad to a parent with Canadian citizenship who has spent at least 1,095 non-consecutive days in Canada. I should also point out that Bill C-71 does not require a strict criminal background check. Bill C-71 is irresponsible, since it will bring in tens of thousands of new Canadians with no plan to integrate them. If this bill becomes law, the government will have no idea how many people could be automatically granted Canadian citizenship.

Registration, eligibility checks and resolution of legal disputes require considerable resources that could better be spent in other areas. They could be spent on housing, our health care systems or our defence, but, unfortunately, these are not priorities for the Liberal-NDP government. Its priority is creating thousands of new citizens without verifying who they are or how they will contribute to Canadian society.

Apart from its economic costs, Bill C-71 could compromise Canada's national identity. Citizenship represents more than just legal status. It represents a shared acceptance of national values, culture and responsibilities. A sudden increase in citizens with no real connection to Canada could weaken the country's identity and undermine its social cohesion.

Once the Conservatives are back in government, we will stabilize and fix our broken immigration system, which the Liberals and the NDP neglected. We will set a more responsible bar for obtaining Canadian citizenship. We will reduce, if not eliminate, the error rate in citizenship-related services and end the unjust delays in our immigration system.

After nine years, this Prime Minister is not worth the chaos or the incompetence. Only the common-sense Conservatives will stop this government's reckless mismanagement and fix our broken immigration and citizenship system.

● (1745)

[*English*]

We are debating Bill C-71, a bill that would make a number of significant changes with respect to citizenship in Canada. I want to say a few words about citizenship before I delve into the specific components of the legislation.

I think it is important to understand and reaffirm that citizenship is a profound compact between a group of people, a people who take on membership in a shared community, who commit to working to advance a shared common good, who commit themselves to being invested in the common good of a people in a particular place, and to understand the common good in terms of, generally, particular virtues, particular practices and reverence for a particular history.

It is not the process merely of claiming certain rights or entitlements. Of course, there are rights that flow from citizenship, but citizenship is not merely a collection of rights. Citizenship is a moral commitment that we make to each other as part of a common community. I am very glad that in Canada, citizenship is not defined by ethnicity, by religion, by race or by a single language, and that Canadian citizenship is understood in terms that are accessible to anyone, regardless of their background. However, that does not mean that anybody who wants to become a Canadian citizen necessarily can, nor that anyone who asserts that they are or should be a Canadian citizen is a Canadian citizen.

Our citizenship is not constrained or defined by a particular ethnic identity. Our citizenship is defined by certain shared civic values, by a place and by the commitments we make to each other in that place. Citizenship ceremonies, the times at which people who were not Canadian citizens become Canadian citizens, are therefore profound and monumental moments, comparable in many respects to a wedding.

We have seen under the government, I think, a declining appreciation for the power and moral significance of citizenship, expressed in the declining reverence for citizenship ceremonies. Imagine if we or someone in our life were getting married and needed to get a justice of the peace to perform that ceremony. They called and were told that their only option would be a virtual marriage. That is all that would be available now as there are no in-person weddings anymore. People have to go on Zoom calls and take their vows that way. That is all that is available. That would be, obviously, outrageous.

However, the message, for a long time in some cases, for people seeking to go through the process of becoming new citizens was a virtual citizenship ceremony. Still, I think, in many cases, people are pushed or encouraged toward that option. I think that is unacceptable. We should recognize and appreciate the profound significance of citizenship and citizenship ceremonies.

I encountered another problem this summer. I think it is important to bring it to the attention of the House. There are instances where public servants, representing the executive branch of the government, are demanding the right to vet and approve the remarks of members of Parliament being given at citizenship ceremonies. I experienced this. I was invited to participate in a citizenship ceremony that served people in my own constituency. I was excited to be there. A very good personal friend of mine was receiving her citizenship at that time, as were many other new Canadians.

● (1750)

I was told that I had to send my remarks to public servants in advance, who would then review and approve those remarks or not. The parliamentary secretary is shaking her head. I welcome her comments on this, because I think it is a serious matter that should concern all members in all parties. As happens from time to time in this country when there are changes in government, I suspect that Liberal members in opposition would have the same feelings that I do if public servants told them they had to have their remarks reviewed and vetted in advance.

These are the kinds of things we see from the government around citizenship ceremonies: a push to virtual and to more executive control of what is said, and I think that is unacceptable.

Citizenship ceremonies are profound and important moments because they are the moments at which people are entering into the Canadian family. I sent in ChatGPT-generated remarks for review by officials at a citizenship ceremony this summer. I did not deliver those remarks. I delivered different remarks in which I emphasized the importance of freedom: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, indeed freedom as an essential part of the core of Canadian identity, and I was very pleased by some of the feedback I received from new citizens who were welcomed into the Canadian family on that day.

We were talking about citizenship, but now let us talk about rights. A right is something that is due in virtue of justice. Justice obliges that certain things be given to certain people in particular situations. A right is what is due, generally speaking, to a person in virtue of justice. When we talk about human rights, we are talking about rights that are due to all people in virtue of their humanity.

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There is a certain category of rights there, and then there are other rights that are not due to all humans, but that are due in particular contexts. For instance, a worker has a right to wages in virtue of justice, because they have done work and are therefore entitled to receive their wages.

There are certain rights that flow from citizenship, rights that are due in virtue of justice to an individual who has made the commitments associated with being a citizen. The right to vote in a Canadian election is not something due to all human beings because they are human beings; rather, it is a right due to all citizens because they are citizens. A right flows from justice, but justice provides for certain entitlements in certain contexts, which may not exist in other contexts. Therefore citizenship entails certain rights that come from the moral commitment that is citizenship.

This is the sort of philosophical framework I bring to the discussion of the bill, so let us talk about what the provisions of the bill are. There are a number of provisions that Conservatives agree with. I may have a chance to touch on the ones we agree with, but I will not spend a lot of time on those because I think it makes more sense to spend time talking about the areas that are contentious. The point of contention in the bill, and the reason we are concerned about the bill, is that the bill would change the rules for how citizenship is passed on through multiple generations to people who are living outside the country.

Right now the rule is that if my wife and I are abroad at a time when we have another child, let us say in two and a half years we have a seventh child, hypothetically, which is not implausible, that child would be a Canadian citizen. However, if that child is then abroad when they have a child, that next generation, not my child in this hypothetical, but my grandchild, would not be a citizen. The principle behind the present legal reality is that if a family relocates and lives outside of Canada generation after generation, and is engaging with that particular community, then over time there is necessarily a kind of diminishment of connection to Canada.

● (1755)

We are not talking about someone who has gone to work for a couple of years and then come back. We are talking about generation after generation. Again, it is not the children of a Canadian born abroad; it is when the child of a Canadian born abroad then has a child also born abroad. That is the present law.

The Liberals are proposing, with Bill C-71, to change that law to allow, without limit, Canadian citizenship to be passed to generation after generation. It would mean that if one of my children moved out of the country, married someone there and had children, and their children had children, for an unlimited number of generations, provided that they visited Canada at certain points in their life, they could retain that citizenship.

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It seems unreasonable, to me and to us in the Conservative Party, that people should be retaining Canadian citizenship for dozens of generations living away from this place. It does not seem obvious to me that someone who is not living here, whose family has not lived here in generations, should have access to the rights that flow from citizenship, because their lives involve engagement with and moral commitments to communities that are elsewhere.

Obviously there is nothing wrong with a person making that choice, for whatever reasons, to live somewhere, but at some point they recognize the reality that they are not connected to this place in the same way as someone who is living here, working here, paying taxes here and volunteering in a community here.

Many Canadian citizens choose to live abroad for periods of time, of course, but it is reasonable to establish some kind of parameters around how long a series of generations would be abroad before we might say, okay, it seems like there has been an opting out of being Canadian and an opting into being somewhere else.

Conservatives are opposed to this proposal from the government for a dramatic expansion of citizenship, such that citizenship would be passed on by those living outside of Canada for an infinite number of generations.

In defence of this bill, the member for Winnipeg North talked about how these are people who believe that they are Canadians. Of course we understand that the way the law works is that people are not Canadians just because they believe they are Canadians. There are certain criteria that we establish in a democratic way.

What we are proposing on this side of the House is that it is reasonable to establish those parameters in the way they presently are defined and not to further expand them in this unpredictable way. The government cannot answer how many people are affected by this.

I do want to briefly touch on the absurd nonsense from the member for Timmins—James Bay, which is rarely worth dignifying with a response. However, it is important to point out that citizenship is important. It is not something that everybody is entitled to. We should agree that it is legitimate for a people to democratically set parameters around what it means to be a citizen.

The member for Timmins—James Bay would have us believe that even trying to have that conversation about what those parameters are is necessarily bigoted. I would say that that kind of rhetoric is very dangerous. It delegitimizes legitimate and serious conversations about immigration. We can have legitimate, serious, substantive conversations about immigration and citizenship that recognize resource challenges, that recognize the need for reasonable parameters and that also recognize universal human dignity.

We need to have those conversations. If legitimate conversations about immigration are shut down by this constant and malicious, unsubstantiated charge of bigotry, then we are not going to be able to talk about what reasonable, just and fair rules are. That kind of extremism from the NDP really undermines our ability to have substantive, thoughtful conversations that advance the common good.

• (1800)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member, and to be completely honest, it was one of the few times today that I heard a reason for not supporting the legislation. The member did not actually say he is not completely supporting it. He said he had concerns with some parts of it.

My question to him is this: Why not let this go to committee where he can raise those concerns and Conservative members can raise those concerns? We can have a discussion about it and then if it comes back to the House and he still does not like it, he can vote against it.

Instead, what is going to happen, and it is pretty clear and obvious to everybody else in the room, is that Conservatives will just drag this on and on, preventing even that opportunity for him to raise his concerns, which he legitimately laid out on the floor here, in committee. Why not have those discussions in committee where he can try to get his concerns addressed?

Is it the case that perhaps there is more to it than what he is telling us and there are other reasons he would be against this?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I genuinely wish I could repay some of the kind words the member said, but I do not really understand the argument he is making. We are debating this bill on the first day. My understanding is that this is the first day the bill is being debated. I am using my rights as a member, the rights that flow from my status as a member of Parliament, to make arguments about the bill, to highlight that the central change proposed by the bill is not one I agree with and to state the reasons why.

He asks why I do not just vote for it then. No. If I have made arguments that he has acknowledged are substantive and serious arguments about why the bill has significant problems, it would be fairly natural that I would vote against it. In terms of the timing of the debate, I do not know how many members want to speak. I wanted to speak. There may be others.

As he may be hinting at, yes, there are some provisions of this bill that I agree with. I agree with the adoption provisions, for example, which I would be happy to speak about more if there is an opportunity. However, the issue of the unlimited passing of citizenship on from generation to generation for people living outside of Canada is, I think, problematic.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my colleague the opportunity to clarify or even qualify his thoughts.

Earlier, in a question he asked the member for Winnipeg North, he said that, in his opinion, just because someone thinks they are Canadian does not mean they are truly Canadian. Defining oneself as a Canadian does not make one a Canadian.

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People often mistakenly think that sovereignists like me have a restrictive view of citizenship. I do not define myself as a Canadian or identify as such. My leader has often said that all people who live in Quebec and who define themselves as Quebeckers are de facto Quebeckers. I found it strange to hear my colleague say earlier that just because someone lives on the land and identifies as a Canadian, they are not necessarily a Canadian.

I would like him to clarify his thoughts and tell us whether he has an inclusive interpretation of Canadian citizenship.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I was responding to the member for Winnipeg North, who was speaking specifically about the individuals this bill pertains to, individuals who may be the grandchildren of Canadian citizens whose family has lived outside of the country for generations. The member for Winnipeg North said these are people who think of themselves as Canadians.

My point in response to this would be that for a person thinking of themselves as Canadian, if they are not Canadian according to citizenship law, their own self-identification should not be the decisive matter. It should be the laws around citizenship that necessarily prescribe parameters.

I might wish to identify as Swiss, but I am not Swiss. I do not live in Switzerland. I do not, as it happens, even have any Swiss ancestry. It would be unreasonable to try to advance the idea that my self-identification with the nationality was the decisive point, which was what the member for Winnipeg North implied. He said that these are people who think of themselves as Canadians, and I am simply saying that is not the point.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning when the minister rose to speak to this legislation, he did not give a number for how many potential new Canadians would be created through the legislation. When I asked him the question, he did not have a response; he dodged it. This was a question asked to government officials back when Bill S-245 was being debated at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. The question was asked repeatedly and the government could not provide an answer.

Is the member not concerned that there would be an administrative burden imposed upon the government? There could be thousands, tens of thousands or 100,000 new applicants requesting proof of citizenship documents and then passport documents, travel documents to Canada and other such services from the Government of Canada. We already have a backlog of over two million applications in different regular streams of immigration to Canada, but also for temporary visa streams to Canada. The minister was incapable of explaining. His words were that there were “logistical planning” issues.

Does the member believe this would pose a greater burden on government services? There would be a greater cost associated with it. There is no definite number for how many Canadians would be impacted. Therefore, it would be irresponsible and reckless to vote for it.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize our shadow minister for immigration, who does excellent work in this place,

in committee and everywhere else he goes. To his point about this imposing a huge burden, of course it would. Given the huge administrative burden that would be associated with this proposal, given that it is not something we have to do, the question then is why we would do this. Why would a government put forward legislation to allow citizenship to be infinitely passed from generation to generation among those who do not live in Canada?

When we think about all of the other priorities and challenges that Canadian government resources could be invested in, the idea that we would go through this proposed process, that the government would put that forward, does not make a lot of sense to me and I think would not make a lot of sense to many other Canadians.

• (1810)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, Bill S-245, which was the original legislation, led to Bill C-71 partially because of the Ontario Superior Court decision. The Ontario Superior Court decision in Bjorkquist states specifically, in the 260 paragraph series, that one of the reasons the judge found the current legislation non-compliant was because of all the administrative burdens, delays and incompetence of government officials.

In fact, in several cases, it was found that out of the sample that the judge took, 50% of the files had errors in them, including sending the wrong Canadian citizenship documents to the wrong family, errors in permanent residency and errors in when a person became a citizen of Canada. It goes on and on, and because of those errors, the judge considered it non-compliant.

Therefore, one of the things we did at committee is introduce an amendment to the original legislation that is not in Bill C-71, which is to block a person from having their citizenship restored or gaining citizenship by descent if they are facing current criminal charges in another country. The Liberals, at the time, voted down that amendment. I thought it was a very reasonable amendment. It would make sure nobody facing criminal charges or who had been charged and convicted of a criminal offence would be able to get Canadian citizenship through this process.

I wonder if the member could reflect on what has happened over the last six to 12 months with other temporary and permanent visa applications, where we have seen the government fail to do proper security screening.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right that we have seen, just in general, such incompetence from the government when it comes to immigration, or such abuse of process.

I did some advocacy on a case. It was a particularly sad situation of international students who were basically victims of fraud. They were able to come into Canada because both they and the government were deceived by that fraud, and then the government proposed to deport them four or five years after the fact.

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I hope I get another question from the government, in particular from the former parliamentary secretary for immigration, who seemed to be reacting in various ways to my speech but has missed the opportunity to pose a question on this matter.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-71. I would like to sincerely thank those who spoke before me and defended the interests of Canadians who lost their citizenship due to the complexity and shortcomings of previous legislative amendments to the Citizenship Act.

Today, we will take the next step toward fairness and inclusion.

[*English*]

For me, being Canadian means taking steps to tackle inequality and injustice within our society. We do this not only through our words but also, and more importantly, through our actions. Bill C-71 proposes amendments to the Citizenship Act in response to issues raised in both Parliament and the courts.

In 2007, this place was studying the matter of lost Canadians and Canadian war brides. In March 2007, a witness testified at the CIMM committee and shared how it all started when her brother, by then retired from the Canadian navy, went to get a passport in 2004. That is when she and her brother learned that her family had been stripped of their Canadian citizenship. She thought she was alone, but she soon learned that there were many people like her. They had family members who were World War II veterans and war brides and had learned that they were no longer Canadian citizens. She shared how Melynda Jarratt of Fredericton, the founder of the Canadian War Brides website, put her in touch with Don Chapman and the lost Canadians. Don worked closely with a former member of Parliament, the Hon. Andrew Telegdi, which is how I learned so much about this file.

Today I have listened to a mostly fruitful debate. We know where each party in this chamber stands; all agree that the bill needs to go to committee, but for that to happen, it needs to be called to a vote. Canadian citizenship should not be a partisan issue.

I did not choose where I was born or whom I was born to, but I am proud that my grandfather chose to come to Canada and that I was born and raised in the Waterloo region. I could not imagine someone arbitrarily taking my citizenship.

The CIMM committee witness also spoke about numerous people she met; they had in common that they were lost Canadians. She also shared some of the reasons Canadians lost their citizenship, including being born out of wedlock or being born on a Canadian Forces base overseas. We can let that register for a second: When a person serving in our Canadian Armed Forces had a baby born on a Canadian Forces base overseas, that child could be stripped of their Canadian citizenship.

Bill C-71 proposes to restore citizenship to the remaining lost Canadians, the individuals who either could not become citizens or lost their citizenship because of outdated legislated provisions. While previous amendments helped many, a small cohort of lost Canadians remains, so lost Canadians and their families launched a

constitutional challenge in court of the two-generation citizenship cut-off.

In December 2023, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that it is unconstitutional for Canada to deny automatic citizenship to children born abroad because their parents also happened to be born abroad. It gave the federal government six months to repeal the second-generation cut-off rule and amend the Citizenship Act.

Several constituents within the riding of Waterloo questioned what this ruling meant. It means that the Ontario Superior Court of Justice struck down Bill C-37, the old citizenship law of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government, which prevented parents born outside Canada from passing on their citizenship to children also born abroad. The court ruled that the Conservative bill, Bill C-37, violated these people's rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, namely, their mobility rights and women's rights, or equality rights.

Today, I hear Conservative members saying that the government should have appealed this ruling. To me, this is telling, and I hope Canadians are watching and seeing their position. The Conservative Party of Canada may have changed their leader several times, but they have not changed who they are or what they believe. They believe in two tiers of citizenship. They support people who agree with them; everyone else does not belong in their vision of Canada. This is appalling and should be very concerning.

● (1815)

My Canada is an inclusive Canada. I respect and value the diversity of people, of perspectives, of experiences and so forth. However, I digress.

In response to the courts, in May, our government introduced Bill C-71, which proposes changes to Canada's citizenship laws that would address the concerns of the court and the constitutionality of the Conservative bill, Bill C-37.

As I mentioned earlier, a small cohort of lost Canadians remains. These lost Canadians launched a constitutional challenge in court of the two-generation citizenship cut-off, and they won. The legislative amendment outlined in Bill C-71 respects the court's decision; it would help lost Canadians and their descendants regain or obtain citizenship. As the independent courts have ruled, that is their right. It would also address the status of descendants affected by the Harper Conservatives' first-generation limit.

Government Orders

The revised law would establish clear guidelines for acquiring Canadian citizenship by descent. After enactment of the legislation, the harmful Conservative first-generation limit would no longer apply. Canadian citizens born abroad would be allowed to pass their citizenship to their children, provided they could demonstrate a substantial connection to Canada. Within the legislation, a Canadian parent born outside the country would be able to transfer citizenship to their child if they lived in Canada for a cumulative total of three years before the child's birth. These changes would result in a more inclusive and fair Citizenship Act and would right the wrongs of the Harper Conservative government.

What is more concerning is that, under its new leadership, the Conservative Party continues to support two-tier citizenship in Canada. It is appalling that Conservatives in this place refuse to respect the courts. They refuse to accept that the Conservatives do not get to choose who should or should not have Canadian citizenship. However, this mentality has existed before. It existed with the previous Conservative government, which introduced and passed Bill C-37. At that time, the point was raised that we could make the legislation better. However, the Conservatives refused; thus, the lost Canadians had to accept a small step. We know today that what was passed is unconstitutional legislation. Lost Canadians took this matter to court and won, and that is what brings us here today.

The Conservative opposition repeats the same behaviours. Bill S-245 is sponsored by a Conservative member. This Senate public bill passed the Senate, completed first reading and second reading in this place, and completed consideration at committee on June 12, 2023. Although it should have been called for third reading debate, the Conservatives continue to trade it down so it cannot be called to a vote. Some people will ask why.

To pass a bill while elected, especially as a private member, is a massive privilege. However, do members know what happened? The Conservatives did not get their way. At committee, a bill can be studied and scrutinized, witnesses and experts can testify, members can ask questions and amendments can be proposed. The majority of the members of that committee proposed and passed amendments. I believe all did so except for the Conservative members. However, because the Conservatives did not support them, they refused to see Bill S-245 be debated at third reading. To me, that is disgusting, as well as disrespectful of the work we do in this place.

I am not surprised, as I have seen the Conservative Party in action for a long time. I know the Conservatives love to change their leader, but they refuse to change their ways. Let us remember what I mentioned earlier: Conservatives support two-tier citizenship, and they only support those who think as they do. That is not an inclusive Canada.

I would also like to mention that Bill C-71 would continue to reduce the difference between children born abroad and adopted by Canadians and children born abroad to Canadian parents. It should be noted that any child adopted overseas by a Canadian parent before the law takes effect would be eligible for the current direct citizenship grant for adoptees, even if they were previously excluded by the first-generation limit. With the law in place, the same criteria would apply to children adopted by Canadian citizens abroad, meaning that, if the adopted parent born outside Canada could

show a substantial connection to Canada, the adopted child would be eligible for Canadian citizenship. Bill C-71 would restore citizenship to those who have been wrongfully excluded and establish consistent rules for citizenship by descent going forward.

● (1820)

Our citizenship process and rules should be fair, equal and transparent. Recently, it has become clear that the act must be amended to address the 2009 legislative amendments, which excluded individuals because of the first-generation limit. The Ontario Superior Court has been clear: The Harper Conservatives' first-generation limit is unconstitutional in terms of both mobility and equality rights.

Bill C-71 introduces inclusive changes that would address the challenges raised by the courts on citizenship by descent. This applies in particular to those born overseas to a Canadian parent. For example, former senator and lieutenant-general Roméo Dallaire was born in the Netherlands to a Canadian father and a Dutch mother. He grew up in Montreal. When he was 24, he was a Canadian Army officer stationed overseas. Because of the rules in Canada's Citizenship Act, which have since been amended, he found out when he tried to apply for a passport that he was not actually a Canadian citizen. He was, in fact, a lost Canadian.

Today we have a choice. We can commit to addressing past wrongs, take care of those among us who have faced injustice and inequality, be more inclusive and share the benefits we enjoy as citizens with others who deserve to call themselves Canadian too. As proud citizens of this country, we must uphold the commitments that define us as Canadians. Whether we are citizens by birth, by choice or by descent, whether we were born in Canada or in another country, we are bound by our shared values, by our mutual respect for our country and for each other. This matter is very close to my heart. It is something that I have known for a really long time.

We have the ability today to see legislation advance. It is okay for us to disagree. It is okay to propose amendments. This government, more than any government in our history, has accepted amendments at committee, on the floor of the House of Commons and from the Senate. That is important to do. Getting legislation right is important because we are here to serve Canadians. Today, we have the ability to actually see the legislation advance. Perhaps we need another day of debate. That is okay. I wanted to speak to the legislation as well, and it is important for people to discuss and raise points that will actually improve this legislation and raise any concerns.

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However, what is concerning is that the Conservatives today keep talking about how many Canadians will benefit from this. The reality is that these people are Canadian. The court is telling the government and every member here that these people are entitled to their Canadian citizenship. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects them. They should have the ability to be Canadian, and the courts are ruling on that. Therefore, the legislation is really about righting the wrongs of the past. We can move the legislation to committee and debate on amendments, but what will be clear is that something of a consensus is being achieved. I heard from the Bloc and the NDP. I heard from and have spoken with Green members. I have heard the points they are raising. I know where the Liberals stand. The Conservatives are actually not the majority of voices today. Just as they did for Bill S-245, they are making sure that we cannot call it to a vote. They will most likely slow it down in this place. They will read their scripted speeches. They will probably try to move some kind of tactic, or whatever else. Once it goes to committee, I am sure there will be a few tantrums thrown there as well.

However, what is important is that we do this right. As I mentioned in my speech, Canadian citizenship should not be a partisan issue. We have a choice in our country. We can actually ensure that we are not following the lead of other countries. We can do democracy well. We can think about the people who fought in uniform for us to have our rights and freedoms. With rights and freedoms come responsibilities, and I hold those responsibilities very near and dear to my heart. When my grandfather immigrated, he would never have imagined that his granddaughter would put her name on a ballot, let alone be elected.

• (1825)

To represent the good people of the riding of Waterloo is truly an honour and a privilege. To hear their voices and represent the diversity of their perspectives is something I take seriously day in, day out.

I have been here since the day started and have been very impressed with a number of points raised in today's debate. I have really appreciated that even with differing views within our political parties, at the end of the day, we have all been talking about Canadian citizenship and the importance of respecting the independent judicial system.

I believe we should have the question called sooner rather than later. I hope the committee is anticipating this legislation so we can hear from experts and witnesses who can help us ensure this legislation is right. It is the time to do it.

I look forward to receiving some good questions and having the emergency debate that will take place after we adjourn for the day.

EMERGENCY DEBATE

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

RECENT DEATHS OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DURING POLICE INTERVENTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the recent deaths of first nations people during police interventions.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

She said: *Uqaqtittiji*, I will be sharing my time with the member for Timmins—James Bay.

I sincerely thank the Speaker for seeing the urgency of this matter and agreeing that it required an emergency debate this evening. I especially thank my colleagues in the NDP for helping make sure that we raise the profile and importance of justice for indigenous peoples.

Since even before Canada became a country, colonialism and genocidal policies have been very prominent, and they are not a part of history because they are still happening now. Those genocidal policies and the colonial attitudes we see are systemic. We see them throughout Canada. We see them in the education system, the health system and of course the criminal system. They resulted in the call for this emergency debate.

I am very saddened to hear of the loss of six first nations people across Canada, and I would very much like to honour their families, who at this time are grieving and I am sure are very confused about what has happened recently. They are probably asking why their loved ones have been killed at the hands of law enforcement.

It is not just the RCMP. Provincial law enforcement is part of the system helping to continue to oppress indigenous peoples in Canada. Consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have made promises for decades, but those promises are not leading to action.

As I mentioned in my motion seeking this emergency debate, there has been report after report and recommendation after recommendation. Despite all this great work to see law reform and enforcement reform, we are still not seeing an accountable system that ensures indigenous peoples are protected, that indigenous peoples live in safety and that indigenous peoples get to live in comfort.

We are still discriminated against, and we need to do our part as parliamentarians. I very much hope that during this debate, we will not take a partisan approach to representing indigenous peoples in this House. Because Canada was founded and created on indigenous peoples' lands, I know that every one of us MPs in this House has constituents who are first nations, Métis or Inuit, all of whom have been impacted negatively by law enforcement.

I want to mention briefly that what sparked this emergency debate was the killing of six first nations people from August 29 to September 8. In just 11 days, Canadian law enforcement killed six people. They were not just regular Canadian people; they were first nations, and that is why this matter is so important. We need to honour the families because of the way these individuals were killed.

• (1835)

I should mention that there is going to be some graphic detail. I want to make sure that people are prepared to hear the difficult stories from those living in the communities, from loved ones who are left behind. Not only are they forced to grieve the loss of their loved ones, but for the rest of their lives, they will question whether they can feel safe with law enforcement.

We need to do our job to make sure that first nations, Métis and Inuit children, women and other individuals know they will be protected, that they will feel safe when they ask for law enforcement. What we have heard from August 29 to September 8 will only cause more harm and more fear. It is a challenge to want to be Canadian, to want to be part of society. I know as an Inuk and I know from families what that fear can do. It can be paralyzing. It can be confusing. Without proper mental health supports and proper coping skills, isolation can lead to more social issues that will require the need for protection. For people to have to think about being paralyzed because there are gunshots next door or about whether they will be protected is a real fear.

We need to do a better job of calling for accountability. As Canadians, we want to be protected. As Canadians, we want a sense of security and a sense of safety, but how can we have that when six individuals over 11 days were killed by law enforcement?

We need to address the calls to action and the calls for justice. The TRC reports came out years ago, and we have not seen enough implementation of the recommendations shared by the voices of national organizations. They tell us what things need to happen to keep police accountable and to protect indigenous communities, and there is not enough going on to make sure that indigenous peoples are being protected.

I mentioned the TRC. I mentioned MMIWG. I want to thank Senator Kim Pate, who reminded me today that there is also a great report out called “Injustices and Miscarriages of Justice Experienced by 12 Indigenous Women”. This is not just about first nations, Métis and Inuit people. It is specifically about indigenous women, and we need to make sure we are doing a better job of protecting them.

I hope that through this debate, we will see some policy changes so that we can make steps toward addressing systemic racism and can see indigenous peoples celebrating their life while thriving and contributing to this great country that we call Canada.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the member for Nunavut and the member for Timmins—James Bay for bringing this very important debate forward. Let me also express my deepest condolences to those who have been impacted.

We have been struggling with the notion of systemic racism in law enforcement for many years and across different jurisdictions.

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In this particular case, it was in different areas and involved different police services.

What would accountability and truth look like in these cases? I know there cannot be one particular answer because they are all different, but I would like to get a sense from the member of what she feels justice would be.

• (1840)

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, that is an important question. The response is a complex one, but some of what needs to happen is a true implementation of the MMIWG and TRC reports. They have made great recommendations to make sure that we do see changes in systemic racism.

We need to make sure there is indigenous oversight of law enforcement. That is another recommendation that has been made for years. Right now, with the current staffing of the RCMP, most of its members have always been people I can describe as having come from privileged white communities that have not been given the history and experiences of indigenous peoples.

Part of the reason systemic racism still exists is that there is still too much ignorance. There is still too much denialism about residential schools, for example. We need to make sure we are opening the eyes of Canada.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member very sincerely for bringing this forward.

I agree with her wholeheartedly that in any solutions and in any work that the government is doing to support first nations, first nations, Inuit and Métis need to be equal partners at the table and the work needs to be guided by lived experience by first nations, Inuit and Métis people. I very much appreciate the member for putting that on the record and for sharing her story.

I would appreciate her perspective as well on first nations and Inuit policing. We know the Liberal government promised to legislate this as an essential service in 2020, and then again in 2022. To my knowledge, no legislation has been brought forward, despite the former minister of public safety's stating on the record that he was working around the clock. That was in 2022. Clearly there has been a failure to deliver on these promises.

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, that is a great question.

What I think is that when there is proper representation in law enforcement, in the health care system, in the education system and even in Parliament, and I really hope that we have more first nations, Métis and Inuit run for Parliament, there can be major improvements.

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I do agree that Inuit, first nations and Métis law enforcement needs to be better supported. When it does exist, it needs to be given better resources. I remember working with the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, the Deputy Speaker, last year because the federal government was not negotiating with law enforcement in her first nations riding. It was not being given equal treatment.

When it does happen, we need to make sure that it is equal, but that its members are given equal resources to exercise their knowledge and their expertise in their first nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada prides itself on being a nation that does not have the death penalty. Part of our justice is understanding that people have the ability to have their day in court, and yet we have a situation where six people have been murdered in an extrajudicial way.

Could the hon. member comment on what impunity looks like in policing when there is a lack of accountability for what are essentially extrajudicial murders of indigenous people?

The Deputy Speaker: The member is out of time, but I will allow the hon. member for Nunavut to answer.

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, it means that first nations, Métis and Inuit will continue to be beaten up more and will be followed more, and it means that indigenous peoples will not trust law enforcement to protect them.

That is why the motion is so important, so that we can move towards better protections and to make sure that the impunity stops.

• (1845)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nunavut for bringing this important debate, and I want to thank the House of Commons for recognizing its importance. I have been around a long time, and the idea that we would actually have an emergency debate about the needless deaths of indigenous peoples at the hands of police would have been unimaginable just a few short years ago. Therefore we have come down the road, but have just not come to where we need to be.

I would like to begin by apologizing to Shelley Mae Anderson, who died in my hometown, a murdered and missing indigenous woman. I had never even heard her name. I knew nothing. This was in a little town. We all look out for each other. We know everybody. She was taken and killed. Her family was putting up posters and had T-shirts, but she was indigenous. I want to apologize to Shelley Mae Anderson's family, because I think of it being in my hometown and that we did nothing.

My colleague talked about people being safe, and it is a fundamental issue: the right of indigenous communities to be safe. Right now, I think of Ricardo Wesley, 22, and James Goodwin, 20, two young boys in Kashechewan, who got picked up one night for being drunk and put in a police station that looked like a crack house. It was not a proper police station because it was so seriously underfunded. A fire broke out and those boys burned to death. For years, Kashechewan talked about safety in the community and the rights

of people to make sure they had not just proper infrastructure but proper police services, and we are still having those fights today.

I want to be fair to the police officers whom I know who are trying to wrestle with so many issues with the opioid crisis, the gangs coming in and the young gangbangers who are threatening and killing people. These are very complicated times. They do not have the support they need, and they do not have the support in first nation communities. The first nation communities are calling for the ability to be able to use band powers to get predators out of the communities, who are making people sick, causing people to die and causing violence.

We need to be looking at this holistically. I want to thank Mushkegowuk Council, which worked with the City of Timmins, and the Fire Keepers, who walk the streets to keep people safe now, to keep people alive. We need this holistic approach of police and mental health, and working with first nations so we can do this to keep people from getting in situations where violence seems to be the solution.

I have to admit that I grew up in Pierre Berton's Canada. Pierre Berton's Canada was a great place to grow up. We got taught that the RCMP was like bureaucrats. It kept us all safe. Nobody ever taught me in school that it was the light cavalry, the shock troops to enforce the taking of indigenous lands. That history I never learned. Indigenous peoples knew that history from the get-go and still know that history. We have to confront that history if we are going to make a change, because if we do not confront that history, we do not understand the fact that when my colleague talks about people being safe, it is being safe not just in their home communities but also in Toronto, Winnipeg or Montreal.

Are they going to call the police when they have been in a situation where they have faced threat? Absolutely not. There is a term, and I do not know what it is because I don't speak Oji-Cree, but the woman told me what the name for police was: "the ones who take our children". They do not call the police, because there is not that trust. That is the shame of the colonial Canada that still results in six of our young people dying. Therefore in the time I have, I want to name some names so they are on the record.

There is Jethro Anderson from Kasabonika, who was 15 years old when they pulled him out of the McIntyre River in Thunder Bay in 2000. The police told his family that he was just out there partying like a native kid. They did not investigate how this 15-year-old kid, who had to leave his home to get an education because Kasabonika Lake does not bother to provide schools, was pulled out of the McIntyre River.

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There is Curran Strang from Pikangikum, who was found in 2006 in the McIntyre River in Thunder Bay. Police said that it was accidental and just another native kid. On November 11, 2006, Paul Panacheese was pulled out of the McIntyre River in Thunder Bay. He was from Mishkeegogamong First Nation. Each time, Thunder Bay Police said it was just a native kid partying and it was an accident. As Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said, these are kids who grew up on the northern rivers; they know how to swim. Is it possible to believe that all these children died in a river because they did not know how to swim?

• (1850)

The police then pulled out 15-year-old Reggie Bushie's body from the McIntyre River. He was from Poplar Hill First Nation. Thunder Bay Police said it was just a native kid; it was just an accident, and he was partying. All these children had to come to Thunder Bay because the government would not give them schools and safe communities. They had to leave their families to go live in boarding houses when they were 13 years old. Kyle Morriseau was the grandson of the great Norval Morriseau. Kyle was apparently an incredible artist. The police pulled him out of the river and there was no further police investigation.

On February 7, 2011, Jordan Wabasse got off a city bus and was walking back to his boarding house. He was found in the river. There was no further investigation. They said he was just a native kid. He was from Webequie First Nation. Who found him? It was not the police; it was the community members who came down from Webequie and searched the river because they knew that was where they were going to find their boy. The cops said not to go to the river because they would not find him.

I also think of Tammy Keeash, who was found in the river in 2017, and within two weeks, so was Josiah Beggs, who was a 14-year-old who went to Thunder Bay for a medical appointment. In every single case, Thunder Bay Police said it was just a native kid partying; there is nothing to see here. Tammy Keeash, if I remember correctly from meeting her family, was found in the reeds in two or three feet of water. She was a strong swimmer, yet she drowned?

There have been major questions about the racism and the systemic racism, but it was a police force, and nobody was going to take on the police force. What does that say to indigenous communities anywhere? What does that say to indigenous people in my community about whether or not they should trust the police, when they know there were numerous requests for investigations into how those children were allowed to die, and nobody thought there was a serial killer.

I can tell members if there were seven blonde girls found in the McIntyre River, the police would turn the world upside down. I say that while thinking very carefully about what that means. I do not want to pit one group against another, but we need to address the systemic failures. Going forward, we need to address the need to keep communities safe at this time.

I am not trashing the police officers who are out trying to do their best and who are dealing with very complicated situations without the mental health supports they need. They are dealing with the PTSD of first responders. I know people who have seen first re-

sponders commit suicide, because when there is a child suicide or when there is a killing, they are the first ones in, especially in isolated communities. We need to talk about this, and the fact that we have brought this forward tonight is important.

However, I have been in a lot of these emergency debates. We had the emergency debate on the suicide crisis in Attawapiskat. We have had numerous emergency debates. The question is, are we going to do something about it? I want to thank my hon. colleague for raising the issue.

I want to say to victims' families and to everyone, from Colten Boushie's family, which we met, to everyone else who has lost a young one to violence, that, as a nation, we have to set a higher standard. That means making sure we put resources into protecting communities, into training for police, and into mental health supports to treat this holistically, and stop treating it as the colonial shock troops enforcing the treaties on behalf of the white power state.

• (1855)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's bringing forward the personal stories he has brought to light this evening. I suspect, knowing the member, he has probably even raised a few of them not only inside the House but also outside the House.

The question I have for the member is in regard to law enforcement agencies in general. I like to think that over the last number of years in particular, primarily because of the calls to action, reconciliation has been on the agenda of many agencies, not only of governments but also of those at arm's length.

Could the member provide his thoughts in regard to the different stripes of law enforcement agencies, like provincial, municipal and the RCMP, and the importance of reconciliation?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I come from Ontario, where we do not tend to deal with the RCMP; we have the Ontario Provincial Police. I represent Treaty 9, with the Nishnawbe Aski Police, NAPS, who were seriously underfunded. I do not know how many times we had to come to the House when they had no backup, with a single officer representing two or three communities, over 200 kilometres, by himself. Who goes into a dangerous situation without backup? The NAPS had to. They did not have backup radios. Why did we have someone die in Kashechewan, when those two young boys died? It was because we did not have proper funding.

There has been a continual pressure to get adequate funding to make sure that police can do their duties. Now, we are seeing the complexity of gangs coming in and we are seeing the opioid crisis and the mental health crisis. As Timmins police have said to me, this is beyond us.

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What we need are the other options to be able to come to the table, like in Timmins where we have the Firekeepers, who can actually walk on the streets, keeping people safe, keeping people alive, because everyone deserves to know that their communities are going to be safe from gangs and opioids, and that the police who are doing it are not doing it through a racist lens, that they are doing it because they have the support and the clarity to know how to deal with these increasingly complicated situations.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his heartfelt speech. I am deeply sorry that he has experienced and his communities have experienced the trauma that he outlined, and no community should have to go through that. I would like to extend sincere apologies to his community members, that they had to go through that. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and the community that he represents. I appreciate him putting that on the record.

As he outlined and as many others at other times in the House have outlined, their first nations communities and others in the indigenous communities face a number of issues. We know that there are bad people who like to go into marginalized communities and prey upon them and take advantage of them. Notably, just last fall, in fact, Karla Buffalo, CEO of the Athabasca Tribal Council, had said, “We’re seeing a significant rise in violence and illegal activities by people coming from outside our region and preying upon those experiencing crisis who are desperate for some relief.”

Her first nation and others have put in drug bans and roadblocks to stop drug dealers from coming in. Can the member comment on his thoughts on those policy proposals and perhaps how the federal government could support first nations in their pursuit of this policy or policies like them?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I will give my hon. colleague a simple solution for the fly-in communities. When one is flying in out of Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay or Timmins, none of those flights get checked. On Air Canada, one’s bags are checked. If one is flying into a first nation, one does not have to get checked. What the communities have asked for is for the federal government to make sure that Transport Canada gives the first nations the ability to check bags before people get on planes. There are people coming into the communities carrying serious and dangerous levels of fentanyl and opioids and guns that would be stopped before they got on the plane.

Let the communities police it at the airports in the white communities before they come in. Once they are in the communities, the havoc that they are causing is a deadly situation. Communities do not have the tools to keep those gangs and the criminality out.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the subject of our debate today is important. The Bloc Québécois is concerned about it too.

I read a lot about the events that have brought us here tonight and that occurred just about everywhere in Canada except Quebec. That being said, Quebec is not free from this type of violence and injustice. There have been cases like that of Sindy Ruperthouse. Unless I am mistaken, my colleague mentioned her earlier. Sindy Rupert-

house was from the Pikogan community, near Val-d’Or. Her situation gave rise to the Viens commission, which was launched by the Government of Quebec and which made several recommendations. We are therefore rather concerned about this. Not all of those recommendations were implemented, like so many other recommendations in this regard.

I am trying to sort all of this out. From what I can see, and maybe I am wrong, the police officers who are in the best position to deal with these types of situations are indigenous police officers, those who work in the various communities or who are from indigenous communities themselves, because they are more attuned to these situations and have a better knowledge of the community. I would like my colleague to talk about that. I am also wondering whether they may have more credibility with the indigenous population, which would enable them to respond more effectively.

If so, we understand that adding police officers to the various indigenous police forces would require additional funding.

Does my colleague not think that the solution would be to give more responsibilities to police officers from indigenous communities? I thought that was the case, from the other answers he gave.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, before my career in politics, I worked for the first nations communities in Quebec. I remember the investigation into the police violence against the indigenous women in Val-d’Or and in Rouyn-Noranda and the need to deal with the racism in that sector. As far as the solution is concerned, we need to implement an agreement with first nations communities and the police across Canada to ensure that women and vulnerable people are protected.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind folks that we want to have a natural conversation, but we do want to have folks stick to the times assigned to us. I want to make sure that we keep the questions and comments as quick and exact as we possibly can.

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

I would like to thank the member for Nunavut for bringing forward this motion today to convene this emergency debate on the state of policing in our country and what we as parliamentarians can do to combat systemic racism that exists in so many of our institutions, including policing.

Six indigenous people have been killed across Canada in interactions with police since late August. Their names are Jack Charles Piche, Hoss Lightning, Tammy Bateman, Jason West, Danny Knife and Steven “Iggy” Dedam. This loss is unimaginable, and I would like to extend my sincere sympathies to the families, friends and communities that have lost someone they love.

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There is no doubt that indigenous people experience systemic racism and disproportionate outcomes within the criminal justice system, including police. In fact, an indigenous person in Canada is more than 10 times more likely to be shot and killed by a police officer. Indigenous people are 56% more likely to be victims of crime than others, and in 2016, indigenous people represented 25% of the national male, and 35% of the national female, prison population. That has been and continues to be our national shame.

Discrimination on the basis of race or as a result of any other form of bias is unacceptable and abhorrent. In the motion from the member for Nunavut, she calls on all of us as parliamentarians to show leadership and take responsibility to keep our institutions accountable. She rightly points out that people across Canada must know that their parliament is addressing the institutional violence in their communities as a critical and immediate priority.

I agree with her, and tonight I hope to be part of a debate where members from every corner of the country come together with their suggestions on what we can and must do to address the violence that our institutions perpetuate upon our citizens. However, regardless of what ideas or solutions are presented here tonight, the fundamental truth of why we are having this debate will not change: over the course of 11 days, six first nations people have been killed by police. That truth rightfully will make a lot of Canadians angry, and I am angry.

Now, we must ask ourselves what we can do to address immediate measures to save indigenous lives today. The Government of Canada remains committed to working collaboratively with first nations in provinces and territories to ensure that first nations police services are supported with equitable and sustainable funding. The calls for justice from the national inquiry point toward the need for urgent reform to policing for indigenous communities. In budget 2021, we announced \$861 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, and \$145 million ongoing to support culturally responsive policing and community safety services in indigenous communities.

These funds will stabilize and enhance the first nations and Inuit policing program by investing in self-administered policing services and provide an enhanced level of policing to more communities. We are also stabilizing and enhancing the first nations and Inuit policing program by enhancing RCMP policing services funded through this program.

These investments were further strengthened in budget 2024. The Minister of Public Safety was clear at the July 2024 AFN assembly that he is committed to co-developing legislation that ensures that first nations police services have equitable and sustainable federal funding. The minister's mandate to co-develop the legislation includes that provincial policing legislation would continue to apply to first nations police services. This ensures that these police services have clear operational standards while providing the necessary funding.

In addition to our investments in indigenous policing, budget 2021 announced up to \$64.4 million over five years and \$18.1 million ongoing to enhance indigenous-led crime prevention strategies and community safety services, including through the aboriginal community safety planning initiative and expanded funding through the northern and indigenous crime prevention fund.

• (1905)

The ACSPI supports indigenous community healing through a facilitated, community-driven process that works to address multiple safety and wellness issues. The community safety planning process fosters collaboration with government, provincial and territorial partners, local municipal governments and services and industry partners to address issues in the safety plans.

The ACSPI has supported close to 60 communities in defining their safety concerns and finding solutions to respond to root causes and current aggravating factors. In addition to the work that the government has and will continue to do to co-develop legislation, we have also introduced legislation that looks to provide redress for individuals who have been subjected to unfair treatment by either the RCMP or the CBSA.

Bill C-20 is an important and urgent piece of legislation because it would contribute to the government's efforts toward reconciliation with indigenous people. It has the potential to increase the trust and confidence of indigenous people in our law enforcement agencies. We have all heard stories of incidents that some, especially indigenous people, experience at the hands of the RCMP and CBSA, incidents that range from allegations of inappropriate or disrespectful comments to the use of excessive force, even including sexual misconduct. This is especially true for indigenous people, for whom the experiences with these agencies have been historically traumatizing.

While the situation has evolved and improved over the years, there remain significant challenges, but Bill C-20 was an important step forward and must be adopted. It would contribute to rebuilding trust between our law enforcement agencies and the people they serve, especially indigenous people, and increase the ability of Parliament to hold the minister to account for the way the RCMP and CBSA serve those populations.

It would also support the government's commitment to build a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect and partnership. It would do so by ensuring there is a robust, independent review body in place to which members of the public can turn should they have complaints about their experience with the RCMP or the CBSA. It would also ensure that the new commission, the PCRC, is composed of members who represent the diversity of the people they would serve, including indigenous people.

S. O. 52

At the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security we heard from various witnesses during its study of Bill C-20, and there is a lack of data around law enforcement activities, which makes it difficult to identify and respond to systemic issues. In particular, the committee heard from Mr. Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Mr. Obed highlighted the need to not only have a robust review body in place to hold enforcement accountable, but also “to be able to inform this body of how to improve policing and broader outcomes for our communities”. This is exactly what was envisioned in Bill C-20. The information would be particularly useful to help us understand and respond to systemic issues in law enforcement activities. Findings of the commission would also support learning and training for the members of our valued law enforcement agencies.

One more feature included in the bill that might have passed under the radar but which I believe is important to mention in the context of reconciliation with indigenous peoples is the recognition within the bill of an indigenous complaint resolution mechanism. Indeed, the bill would provide for PCRC to respond annually on the number of complaints from individuals detained by the CBSA that have been resolved through the reconciliation process with indigenous peoples.

Bill C-20 would include transformative provisions that would have the ability to improve the way our law enforcement agencies work, especially with indigenous and other vulnerable communities. This is just one example of additional work that we are doing to improve law enforcement agencies' interactions with indigenous people.

Again, I would like to thank the member for Nunavut for her work in convening this important debate here tonight.

• (1910)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am going to honour the families of the victims who were just killed. I ask that we make sure that we honour the memories of Jack Piche, Hoss Lightning-Saddleback, Tammy Bateman, Jason West, Daniel Knife and Steven “Iggy” Dedam.

What will the member advise her party to say to the families of these victims, whose lives were lost, who are in grief? What will this party say to the families of these people?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my remarks, the loss of lives of these members of communities, friends and family is truly tragic. Canada must do better.

We, as a government, are committed to doing better. We want to work with members on all sides of the House to do so, to find meaningful solutions and to move forward to end the systemic racism that we have experienced in this country and that indigenous people continue to experience.

We are deeply committed to moving forward, so that tragedies like this do not continue to happen.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my fellow member from Nunavut for this very important debate. We are con-

stantly hearing about violence in indigenous communities, yet we never act until some tragic event occurs.

Tonight I would like to say that in my riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou in northern Quebec, and even in Lac-Simon and Kitcisakik, there is a lot of violence. People have even been killed in the last few years. Earlier, we mentioned the disappearance of Sindy Ruperhouse in Pikogan, near Val-d'Or, in Abitibi.

The violence against women led the government to launch the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The federal government considered that it had made progress, but CBC/Radio-Canada reported that in 2023, four years after the inquiry was tabled, only two recommendations had been implemented and fewer than half were under way.

I would like to know what the government is waiting for. I know that it is not easy and it requires a huge effort, but they need to show some respect and mutual understanding.

• (1915)

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, this work is incredibly important and, frankly, crucial.

However, as the member opposite has stated, it is complex. It is complex in the sense that it is not for the federal government to implement what it feels is best. This is a nation-to-nation partnership, and we must walk together. It is incredibly important to note that indigenous communities across this country will have different needs and that our government must address each and every one of those needs where communities are at.

We are deeply committed to doing so. We have made significant progress. However, until all of these issues are resolved, it is work that must continue to happen.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her remarks, as well as for her remarks in response to another member's questions.

She mentioned that progress has been made. Unfortunately, we are seeing that in first nations and Inuit communities, the fact is that crime has gone up significantly in the last number of years. Perhaps she could specify where the progress is being made, specifically in the lives of indigenous people in terms of crime, violence against women and others.

S. O. 52

The member did go on at length in her remarks about program funding. While I do appreciate the government announcing that funding, a recent Auditor General report gave a quite scathing analysis of what follows after big announcements of big amounts of money. In fact, the Auditor General found that, in essence, the Liberal government was not following where the money went. It was not following if there were any good outcomes. It could not even provide a list of community agreements with first nations communities that had signed on. In particular, I am talking about the first nations and Inuit policing program. The report is quite extensive.

While I do appreciate that announcing funding is part of the process of governance, also part of the process of governance is ensuring there is follow-through. In this case we are talking about nearly \$1 billion of funding over the last number of years.

I would like to hear where this progress is being made, and why it is that the Liberal government was not really tracking or following through on nearly \$1 billion of program funding in this regard.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly ironic that members of the Conservative Party often criticize the spending and funding of indigenous-led programming, then actually criticize, saying we are not doing enough, and then vote against providing funding that actually goes to help these communities.

It is also interesting to note that Conservatives vote, time and time again, against providing funding and support. Instead of recommending programs that could also help, Conservative members talk about waste in these programs or say that these programs are not being delivered.

I have met with several communities where progress is being made. There is, of course, more to be done. However, let us not forget the fact that the Conservatives did not even want to look into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, which is shameful.

We must all work together to produce better outcomes for indigenous people in this country. It is shameful when Conservatives continually vote against that work.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity to add a few thoughts and concerns on what I know is such an important issue.

I have had the opportunity to address the chamber in regard to issues of a similar nature for a good number of years, and one of the conclusions that I have drawn and I believe most, if not all, members would share is the importance of having indigenous people provide and continue to lead the public discussion and debate on this very important issue.

I reflect on another time there was a minority government, when we saw the Kelowna accord, through Paul Martin. The Kelowna accord was an attempt by first nations with the Government of Canada to really make significant changes in a wide spectrum of ways. I say that only because I recognize how critically important it is, when we talk about indigenous issues, that we recognize the importance of the nation-to-nation dialogue that public policy needs to be led by.

We all have personal opinions, and members know that I have a lot of opinions. I always enjoy sharing my opinions on a wide spectrum of issues, and this is one of them. However, one of the things I have found to be so fruitful for the community that I represent is an organization called the Bear Clan Patrol. I have a deep amount of respect for what the Bear Clan Patrol has been able to accomplish over the years. In good part, it is about reconciliation. It is what the government can do to advance the issue of reconciliation. From my perspective, when I look at law enforcement agencies, non-profit, indigenous law enforcement agencies, RCMP, provincial, municipal, however one wants to put it, paid or unpaid, there has to be some form of reconciliation brought into it.

In fact, if we take a look at the RCMP as a model, one only needs to visit its website to gain a lot of insight in terms of what it is doing in regard to the issue of reconciliation. There are things such as working in partnership with indigenous policing services that are provided, working co-operatively, allowing and respecting the jurisdictions and getting a better appreciation of the culture and the heritage, which is so very important.

When I think in terms of the Bear Clan Patrol, I think about a wonderful group of individuals of all different backgrounds. It is indigenous-driven but opened up to the broader community. I think of how they have influenced and changed the behaviour of the north end of Winnipeg in a very real and tangible way, not only for the residents who live in the immediate community by building a more positive, healthy relationship with law enforcement, but also through advocacy.

I have had a couple of opportunities over the years to walk with the Bear Clan Patrol, but more importantly, I know that other elected officials of different political stripes, from different levels of government, have all been engaged. There is a great deal of advocacy that takes place. In terms of law enforcement officers, it even goes beyond the city of Winnipeg and, in fact, Canada. We get others from outside of Canada, not to mention throughout Canada or from different areas of Canada, coming to see what has made the Bear Clan Patrol as popular as it is.

● (1920)

In good part, it is community relations working with law enforcement agencies and law enforcement agencies working with the Bear Clan Patrol. Members say that they would like to be able to contribute to the debate today in terms of ideas and thoughts. The most important message that I would leave is to look at the importance of reconciliation, in which all of us have a role to play, and start looking at ways in which we can see tangible results. Whether it is the different levels of government, non-profit groups or others, we have seen some significant progress in this area. Is it going fast enough?

S. O. 52

We heard citations of individuals and victims. My heart, prayers and thoughts are with the families and friends and the community because we do need to do better. We need to be challenging and to ensure that there is a higher sense of accountability. Our national law enforcement agency, the RCMP, has acknowledged that there is systemic racism within its ranks, and it is taking action on it in different ways. We know that it exists, that it is real and that it is having a tangible negative impact. The question is this: What do we do?

We look for examples throughout the country with, in particular, not only law enforcement agencies but also others. Look for good practices and, where there is a good practice, see how we might be able to enhance or, more importantly, duplicate it. An example of that would be back in 2019-20, when there was the first ever report from the RCMP on the issue of the RCMP and movement toward reconciliation.

In Saskatchewan, the RCMP is looking at a capital investment where it is fixing up considerably and putting in a museum. There was a presentation that I witnessed, and I can say that what is very much on their minds is the issue of reconciliation and what it is they need to do, as Canada's premier law enforcement agency, to ensure that we are moving forward on the issue. We do need to see those strategies developed and dealt with. We do need to ensure that there are priorities and support. There are areas in which, no doubt, the federal government can contribute more, and I am open to that, as I know the government is.

However, I want to emphasize that we need to see those policy ideas and directives being spearheaded from first nations, Métis people and Inuit communities, which were here well before any of us. They have the ideas, and in certain areas, governments do need to step up to the plate more. We are a government that is prepared to do what we can, where we can, as the Prime Minister himself has clearly indicated, nation to nation. This is something we have strived to do since first taking the reins of power back in 2015. By looking at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the recommendations that came out of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, we will continue to move forward where we can, but we will look for ideas on how we might make sure that others are moving in the same direction.

• (1925)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqittiji*, I would like to thank the member for using words like “tangible” and for talking about things we need to see happening to help address some of the issues. As I mentioned in my speech, I had done an intervention with the UCCM Anishnaabe Police in northern Ontario because the federal government was not meeting its obligations to ensure that this first nations policing agency was getting the core funding it needed or making sure it had the resources to deal with special teams.

Does the member agree that a tangible solution is to make sure that if the RCMP is getting core funding to do its law enforcement, then the core funding should also be available to first nations law enforcement and Inuit law enforcement so that they are able to do it with the same resources they should be able to deliver on, which they have not been able to because the federal government was not

negotiating in good faith with the law enforcement in northern Ontario? As well, does he agree that a tangible solution is to make sure those first nations policing authorities get the same core funding so that they can help protect their first nations and Inuit communities?

• (1930)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I was being somewhat careful about some things I talked about. One thing I did not talk about was the number of budgetary lines I could easily cite going into the hundreds of millions of dollars toward supporting the types of things I have been talking about. However, rather than talking about and expanding on those points, I thought it was more important to recognize that there are some good things taking place in Canada today that are indigenous-led, non-indigenous actions and things that are really making a positive difference. Governments of different levels should be looking at those success stories and ways in which the House of Commons can expand and complement them. Has the federal government given enough federal dollars? I know that we have provided a great deal and that there is a great deal of negotiations and discussions taking place. I do not know the finer details, but I do know that we are probably looking at record amounts of money today in comparison to what it was 10 years ago.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is an important debate we are holding on the day the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women has tabled our report, the fruit of the committee's work, to implement the red dress alert.

The report contains a total of 17 recommendations. Obviously, tonight's debate is not only about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Young men are also disappearing. This is therefore a broader conversation, but it is still related to the report and there are still 17 recommendations. Could we draw inspiration from it? Recommendation 9 talks about improving the relationship between indigenous communities and the police. We are talking about improving police forces' understanding of indigenous realities. One concrete measure presented is to provide support to victims to help them rebuild trust in the justice system and facilitate reporting.

How can we ensure that we use this important report and that it does not just end up on the shelf? Can it be considered in the context of this evening's debate?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Tina Fontaine story is one I would commend all members to become familiar with. I found it to be inspirational, personally. It is the story of very young girl who went missing. She was murdered and was then found in the river. A lot of the issues surrounding the types of things we are talking about today and on many other days are found in this story, and we can learn from that particular story. The reason I brought up the Bear Clan Patrol is that this is a group of individuals who, over the years, has really moved the ball forward by encouraging law enforcement agencies, not just in Winnipeg but all over the place, quite frankly, to be more sensitive and to better understand the issue of reconciliation, among other things.

S. O. 52

• (1935)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to be back in the chamber. I have been on a sort of pseudo-maternity leave, working in my community for the last year, approximately. It is really an honour to be back amongst all the colleagues and to be debating very important issues, as we are this evening.

I would like to thank the member for Nunavut for bringing this important issue forward. I thank her very sincerely for that. On the comment made by one of her NDP colleagues that perhaps, a number of years ago, this would not have been something that a Speaker would have approved for debate, I think that we are making progress.

In the last number of decades, in particular the last number of years, we are seeing progress in debating the issues that matter to all Canadians, and notably First Nations, Inuit and Métis Canadians. Hopefully, we will see more of that important debate in the chamber.

The issue at hand, of course, as already discussed, is that six first nations individuals had their lives cut short in the last number of weeks, in fact, in only 11 days, with interactions with police. It is absolutely devastating to read those kinds of headlines. I cannot imagine what it would be like for the families right now, families in those communities, headline after headline of lives being cut short by these interactions, notably between folks and police in our communities who we want people to trust and to feel safe calling. It is a very serious matter, and I am glad to see that the House is taking it very seriously.

I am not from a first nations community. I am from a rural farming community in Manitoba. I had a two-parent household, a stable income and a safe community. I was quite sheltered and privileged in many ways, growing up in a safe little bubble with a lot of income security, like many Canadians in suburban Canada and in rural Canada. Unfortunately, though, as I grew up and learned a bit more about the world outside of my small little bubble, I learned that not everybody has the opportunities that I had. Not everybody comes from middle-class neighbourhood and not everybody comes from a two-parent household. There are a lot of families that experience parents with addictions or who have been incarcerated, or those who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault at a very young age in many cases. Unfortunately, out of all the crime stats in the country, those who are victimized are massively over-represented in first nations communities, in Inuit communities and in the Métis community as well.

I think that as a legislator, although I do not represent any first nations, I have endeavoured to educate myself and to take opportunities to learn more about what the day-to-day life is like in many of these communities, facing extreme poverty, unemployment, addictions and violence. We have seen the victimization of many people and the serious consequences that women, and especially children, are facing in this regard.

When we read headlines like this, day after day, about first nations people's lives cut short by those whom, as a community and as a country, we are supposed to trust, I can understand the fear, frustration and anger that many in that community are facing right

now. I would like to extend my sincere apologies to them, as a member of Parliament, as a person of privilege. What they are going through must be horrific, and I cannot imagine what that is like. My heart goes out to them.

Frankly, aside from those six cases, there have been dozens and dozens, if not hundreds, over the years, particularly in the last 150 years, of mistreatment by various government officials, policing officials, of people from first nations, Inuit and Métis communities. It was not okay then; it is not okay today.

I think in my lifetime, certainly, we have made a lot of progress. I will give an example from when I was in high school. It was not too long ago, but it is getting up in years of how long ago that was. There was not really a curriculum established at all. Although Manitoba has very large first nations, Métis and Inuit communities, particularly first nations and Métis, as well as Inuit a little more up north, there was not a curriculum really established to my knowledge, or at least to my exposure, of learning about that history, particularly from an indigenous perspective, so it was fairly limited. However, I did have an excellent English teacher who wanted to share what other people outside of our little small-town bubble experienced.

In fact, the very first time I heard that life could be very different and that people might be treated very differently by law enforcement or others based on their background, their race or their culture, it was, in fact, about Helen Betty Osborne. She was a young woman in the 1970s, up in The Pas, Manitoba, who was murdered. Her case, if I can paraphrase it, was not taken seriously at all by police. It was significantly bungled, to say the very least. It was concluded in many ways that it was because she was an indigenous woman. It was not taken seriously. Procedures were not followed. Even just basic procedures in the 1970s, which we have improved at large since then, were not adequately followed, and she was not given the dignity that other people may have been given, who were not indigenous and who may have been found as she was. She had been stripped naked, and she had been stabbed dozens of times with a screwdriver. I believe there was a sexual assault element that was found there.

• (1940)

I just remember, as a 14- or 15-year-old, it really made an impression on me. Following that, I endeavoured to take indigenous studies courses in my undergrad degree, both at McGill and, in particular, at the University of Manitoba, which has the largest native studies program in the country. It was quite enlightening to learn about and to have the opportunity to go to school to have those resources to learn more about this. I am very thankful for that.

I got my start in politics 10 years ago this October. Just as I was getting started, and I think it was honestly within the first week or two, 14-year-old Tina Fontaine, an indigenous child, was found wrapped in, I believe, a blanket or a mattress of some kind and tossed in the Red River, which runs straight through Winnipeg. Unfortunately, she is not the only indigenous woman who has been found in the river. In fact, there are organizations that dredge the river just to see if they can find any of their missing women.

S. O. 52

I had just started in provincial politics. I was a political staffer. That was my introduction to politics in Manitoba, this horrific case of a young woman who had gone through the system and had a lot of challenges presented in her life. Again, she was 14, a complete child, barely having experienced anything in life, and she was just so horrifically treated at the end, with no dignity provided to her. That also had a very strong impression on me at the time, in my introduction to politics, as well as the importance of good public policy and following through when announcements are made and things like that. I did want to mention that as well.

A few months after that, a very lengthy report came out about Phoenix Sinclair, who, in the early 2000s, was killed. She was a five-year-old girl in a first nations community. She was murdered by, unfortunately, her mother and her mother's partner at the time. She was abused, malnourished, mistreated and kept in the basement on a cold floor. The partner had shot her with a BB gun. There was just such a horrific timeline of failures of the institutions, for example, child and family services, that were supposed to follow her case, protect this child and ensure that her case was closely followed, whether she was in a community family, her own family or a foster family.

Social workers were tasked with that, and procedures were not followed. They were neglected. In fact, the family was able to hide that their daughter had died and had been thrown in a landfill for quite some time before child and family services found out. It has been mentioned in the House during this debate already, but would a child of a different race have been treated that way?

Was it just treated in the sense that it was another case? Was it almost neglectful, not respectful, not dignified? She was the most beautiful little girl, if we look at pictures of her. I am a new mom, so talking about children is a bit challenging. Those things had a real impact on me as well.

I am sorry to talk all about myself, but I did want to establish that I cannot possibly understand the challenges that many first nations, children in particular, and women and others, go through, seeing headlines where their family members are not coming home because of interactions with people that we are all supposed to be able to trust. I have had some impactful experiences and exposure to some of these things and have done my best to pursue learning more about them and what can be done about them.

Beyond the stories, we know that the facts are very cold and frightening, particularly for indigenous women and indigenous children, as I mentioned. Indigenous people are disproportionately the victims of violence in this country. For example:

...approximately 4 in 10 Indigenous people...were sexually or physically assaulted by an adult before the age of 15, and nearly two-thirds...experienced at least one sexual or physical assault after the age of 15.... For the period of 2015 to 2020, the rate of homicides involving an Indigenous victim...was six times higher than the rate of homicides involving non-Indigenous victims....

Almost six in 10 indigenous women have experienced physical assault, while almost half, 46%, of indigenous women have experienced sexual assault. Indigenous women make up approximately 16% of all female homicide victims and 11% of missing women, yet indigenous people as a whole only make up 4.3% of the population.

Regardless of which party we are and what time we have been in government, throughout the 150 years, there have obviously been failures of public policy at an extraordinary degree.

● (1945)

Various governments have tried to bring forward policies to help, but I do very much feel that governments still approach any partnership with indigenous people very paternalistically rather than what was originally supposed to be in treaty. Under a number of agreements over the past centuries, it was supposed to be an equal partnership at the table. That has never been borne out.

We still see governments across the country, at all levels, have a paternalistic approach, telling them what they will impose on them to help all of their problems, rather than, as has already been discussed in this debate, an indigenous-led or, at the very least, an equal partnership at the table of how these issues can be solved. I want to see in my lifetime the next generation of indigenous children thrive and grow up safely. I want to see the stats completely change, but I do not have that lived experience, so how am I supposed to know how to design a program to help fix this problem? I need to ensure that there is equal representation at the table and that indigenous leadership is primary.

I appreciate much of the debate so far. I think there has been some quite good ideas put forward, but overall, crime in this country is on the rise. We know that very well. We have talked about that at length as well. We are seeing gun crime up nearly 100%. In Winnipeg alone, gun crime is up 177%. I believe that was the stat I read this morning in question period. When we see any of these crime stats, and they are getting really bad over the last nine years under the current Liberal government, and unfortunately the NDP has supported many of the policies that we believe have contributed to these crime increases, they are horrific. They impact real people in Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary. However, often when we look at those numbers, what we are not extrapolating is that they are even worse in first nations and northern and remote communities where policing is minimal and where first nations policing is very underfunded.

S. O. 52

I would like to talk a bit about first nations policing. I think that there is some good stuff that we could do there. I do not have first-hand experience of indigenous policing, but I have spent time with the Bear Clan, which is, I believe, a matriarch-led, established, grassroots community group in Winnipeg. As soon as I got elected, I was able to go door-knocking with them on a -35°C January evening in Winnipeg. It is indigenous-led and indigenous-established. Its members walk through the community and pick up dangerous drug paraphernalia in parks and other places to help protect the kids, but they also hand out scarves and food. The community trusts them, so they ask them for help, ask them for assistance. It is a trusting, respectful and dignified relationship. I think that is really the answer.

When there is a community that establishes what it is working for, what it is leading it and what it wants to see, that is when government can come in and ask how it can stabilize some of its funding. It is not somebody thousands of miles away, in all respect to our public servants in Ottawa, saying what the government is going to do for what Winnipeg needs with respect to funding, along with the bureaucrats, the checklists and the barriers it is going to have to fulfill, and that it is going to need to hire five people just to do the accounting. Rather, it is organisations such as the Bear Clan, which grew up from the grassroots. That is when I think government needs to come in and fund.

Therefore, from the limited perspective that I have, I believe that, if first nations policing, from what I have seen in Winnipeg, follows that same model where it is indigenous community-led and is implementing culturally respectful practices that would support the community, that should be where government is. That is where government should support, not with an Ottawa-implemented approach from thousands of miles away, where we could not possibly understand the challenges. There are even the challenges of just getting adequate food and water, for example, and it is unbelievable to say in Canada in 2024 that some people cannot just turn on the tap and drink the water. However, I am getting a bit off track.

I want to say as well that, in addition to the benefits of my limited knowledge from what I have heard about indigenous policing, it sounds like it could be really great. I know that there have been efforts over the last 20 years to start putting that in. I will get into some of the failures of the Liberal government in that regard. In fact, I will talk about them now in case I do not get to them. I want to get them on the record.

Here are just a few numbers. The Auditor General report just came out in the last little while, and it found some pretty disappointing, we will call them, at best, results for much of the Liberal funding for first nations and Inuit policing programs. Just to give some ballpark numbers for this one program, from 2018 to 2023, there was \$930 million spent on first nations and Inuit policing. I do not know if that is enough. I do not know if that is too much. I would have to read more of the information. It might not be nearly enough. From what we have heard, it does not sound like it is, or it may be enough, but how it is being implemented, as I mentioned before, is part of the problem.

• (1950)

In the report, the Auditor General was quite scathing of the government's deliverables on this. Again, there is an announcement that sounds great, yet unfortunately, like so many of its programs, it announces big amounts of money, but like this one, cannot get the money out the door. The Liberals just do not know how to spend it, but it sounds like a great number when they announce it, and that it is going to make a real difference. However, the Auditor General "found that Public Safety Canada did not know whether the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program was achieving most of its key expected results." Again, this is almost a billion dollars spent in the last number of years by the current Liberal government. The report also "found that the gathering and analyzing of program data were so limited that Public Safety Canada", under Liberal leadership, "did not have an accurate listing of the signed community...agreements."

The parliamentary secretary for Public Safety was here, but she has since left. My apologies, I cannot mention that, and I retract it. She gave a robust response that mentioned all the funding, but we are seeing in black and white from the Auditor General of Canada, a non-partisan person charged with holding governments accountable for their program spending, that basically the government has not been following the money. It does not know if the program is successful. It cannot get the money out the door, and it does not even know the agreements that it has signed with first nations communities.

While I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's remarks, it is frustrating to hear the Liberals list ad nauseam all of these things, yet in black and white, there seems to be no accountability beyond announcing the funding. As we have established, these are very critical issues in this country. People have died. As I mentioned, in a number of the statistics, women are disproportionately impacted and children are disproportionately impacted. I do believe that it is a failure to announce this money and raise people's hopes and expectations, because voters do care about these issues, yet fail to deliver.

It has been nine years of this government now. Crime is through the roof in almost every single measure, and it is worse in first nations communities, to say nothing of the drug issues under the Liberals' failed drug policies. They are saying, "Well, we are announcing all this money though. We are doing so great." However, when in a debate like this tonight in the chamber, apparently they are not. Apparently there is a lot of work to do. If we are going to have indigenous people lead the way on reserves, then some of this money has to be followed. At least the government has to know who it has agreements with. I was pretty shocked to read that one in particular.

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I feel like I am ranting a bit, but it does get me going a little to hear people in ivory towers talk about everything they are doing, yet on the ground we are not seeing that delivered, and they are promising it over and over again. In fact, in 2020, the Liberal government promised to bring forward legislation to declare first nations and Inuit police services an essential service. Years go by, but nothing happens. In 2022, the former minister of public safety said that he would “work around the clock” to table legislation by the end of 2022. It is 2024, and there is no legislation. I do take issue with the announcements and the patting on the back when there is no follow through, when the Liberals are not even keeping track if their deliverables are being achieved, yet they are claiming success. I do have a real problem with that.

I was hoping to talk a bit more about crime at large and what, in particular, a number of first nations communities in Saskatchewan and others are calling for. I think there is some really good stuff in there, and I hope to get the opportunity in the question and comment portion of this debate to discuss what first nations people would like to see happen.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to start out by welcoming back my colleague who has returned from mat leave. She is a fellow Winnipegger, and I thank her for some really thoughtful remarks.

One of the things that really struck me was her focus on indigenous-led solutions. We need to listen to the indigenous community. I agree with her. If we are going to talk about reconciliation, then we need to actually listen to what justice means to the people who have been affected by oppression and, certainly in Canada, colonization.

In Winnipeg, the indigenous community, along with indigenous organizations and many other organizations, has opened the first safe consumption site in response to the overdose crisis. We have an overdose crisis in Winnipeg. The province of Manitoba, under the leadership of the indigenous community, has now opened a safe consumption site with wraparound mental health supports and other supports.

I would ask my colleague if she will stay true to her statement. She feels that the only path forward is to support the indigenous community. If that is so, is she going to support the indigenous community of Winnipeg that has opened its first safe consumption site in my riding?

• (1955)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the kind opening remarks by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre. There is a lot I could say on this. The member and I have actually had side chats about it, because it is an important issue to solve or, at the bare minimum, make some progress on. It is desperately needed in Winnipeg on drug issues and the drug deaths we are seeing at an increasingly alarming rate, particularly in the last 10 years.

I have told the member that I do have serious concerns about what I do not feel are safe injection sites, the crime that is happening around them and the vile drug dealers who take advantage of the people who feel they need to use these facilities. We are seeing those issues increase as these sites are opening. People go to where the vulnerable are to prey on them.

I have an example that really hit home. This happened just last spring. I am sure many in the House will remember Karolina Huebner-Makurat, who was in her 40s and a young mom of two young children. She was walking down the street in a suburban Toronto area, and she was shot to death during a drug deal gone wrong. The drug dealers had been preying on folks in one of the safe injection sites in that community.

We are seeing this over and over again, and I could not, in good conscience, support something that led to this woman's death.

I wish I could talk more about this. I have a lot to say. However, we on the Conservative side support something like Bruce Oake Recovery Centre, which takes the treatment option and really focuses on a holistic approach to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to leave time for more questions.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on the previous question. The question was not a question of morality. It was a question of health, but it was also a question about listening to indigenous communities and letting them set their agenda and taking the lead from them. It was about “nothing about us without us”.

Is the member willing to state that we need to follow indigenous communities and indigenous leaders to work together in the spirit of what would have been the Kelowna accord, which was smashed by the previous Conservative government?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question, and I will get to the member's specific question, but on the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre, there are primarily indigenous people coming out of the Stony Mountain penitentiary, for example, who are eagerly waiting to get into the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre. There is a list, 300 people long, of primarily indigenous men. They are not eagerly waiting to go to a safe consumption site.

The facility just broke ground on a women's wing that it will be building, but it is for men at this time, and it is primarily indigenous men. In fact, the 16-week program is so good that the men do not want to leave. It has an incredible success rate. That is where we should be investing our tax dollars. There are proven success stories. There are incredible success stories there. That is where we believe the funding needs to be allocated: on recovery and treatment. We are seeing great success in places like Alberta that have been doing this for quite some time.

On indigenous-led solutions, there are a number of first nations that are saying there are no drugs allowed on their first nations. They are banning drugs. They are putting up stops to stop the drug dealers so that these people cannot come in. Imagine what those first nations people would say if folks like the Liberal government and others said they were going to open up a safe consumption site or have a so-called safe supply on those first nation reserves and paternalistically put that solution onto them.

First nations, and I could list a number of them if I had more time, are saying no to drugs.

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we well know, drugs, abuse, violence and disappearances are a reality in indigenous communities. There are a lot of problems at the moment. We need to work with indigenous communities. Clearly, there are many acts that cause trauma.

If the member were in government, would there be special investigations?

I will give an example. Val-d'Or has a joint police force that works with indigenous communities.

If the member were in government, what measures might her government take?

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I do believe that partnership with indigenous people is important, and not all indigenous people agree. We cannot pretend that every first nations person is the same and that every first nations reserve is the same. Some need supports that are different from what others need, and not everyone agrees on all of the solutions.

However, I will say, for example, that the first nations in Saskatchewan under the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, which is 74 first nations reserves in Saskatchewan, just last fall demanded that all members of the Parole Board—which, from my understanding, is primarily appointed by whatever government is in power, in this case the Liberals—should all be fired, because they are doing such a poor job and releasing violent criminals who are going back into these communities and terrorizing them.

I thought that was pretty impactful. It is not something we hear every day. It is not something that was picked up in mainstream news, except for one article in the National Post.

Where is the response from the Liberal government? There are 74 first nations in Saskatchewan demanding that it fire all members of its Liberal-appointed Parole Board for what they feel is endangering their community by being, frankly, soft on crime.

Those are my words; I will not put that on them, but in particular, they were saying that there was a monster-like murderer, and I will not say his name, who was let out on parole.

We can talk at length about this. We have had whole debates about how the government has let people out on parole and let people out on bail who have murdered, stabbed and raped at alarming rates. Every police force in the country is saying that the Liberals'

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approach is failing, yet what are they doing about it? They are just doubling down.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome my hon. colleague back to this chamber as another young mom in this place. It is so wonderful to see people being able to find that space of both having a family and doing this job, and doing it so well.

One of the pieces that the member alluded to in her speech was with regard to first nations communities that are sick and tired of the lack of support they are receiving as drugs come into their communities. We are talking about isolated, remote communities that are pleading with the government that is failing them. The Liberal drug policies have failed over and over again. In fact, just over a year ago, first nations in my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake were part of the call for the government to change and basically calling for this to stop.

I am wondering if the member could comment on her thoughts regarding the drugs coming into some of these communities and how we could do better to support those communities.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, it is great to have some young moms in Parliament. We are a severely under-represented demographic.

I am going to quote the words of a first nations chief. Her name is Karla Buffalo, the CEO of the Athabasca Tribal Council.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: That is in my riding.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Yes, she is a friend of the member, Madam Speaker.

She stated, “We’re seeing a significant rise in violence and illegal activities by people coming from outside our region and preying upon those experiencing crisis who are desperate for some relief.” The article continued, “People are scared because drug dealers are shooting at each other, and they’re doing it right in broad daylight when kids are around.”

Following this story, again last fall, another article stated, “In February, Northern Alberta’s Mikisew Cree First Nation announced an all-out crackdown on drug dealing and production in the community, including authorizing the Wood Buffalo RCMP to conduct searches of any homes carrying ‘reasonable and probable grounds of suspected illegal drug activity.’”

There has also been drug banishment or drug—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are way over time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

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[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are gathered here today to discuss a matter that goes straight to the heart of our collective conscience, a subject that can no longer be ignored: When will there be comprehensive policing reform in Canada?

Over the past 12 days, the following individuals have met with a cruel fate. The tragic events of the past few weeks are a painful reminder of the crisis affecting our indigenous communities. We must remember the names and stories of those who have lost their lives. Jack Charles Piche, a 31-year-old from Clearwater River Dene Nation in Saskatchewan, was struck by an RCMP vehicle on August 29. Hoss Lightning, a 15-year-old teen from Samson Cree Nation in Alberta, was shot and killed by the RCMP during a confrontation on August 30. Tammy Bateman, 39 years old, was hit by a police car in Winnipeg on September 3. Jason West, 57 years old, was shot and killed in a confrontation with police in Windsor, Ontario, on September 6. Danny Knife, a 31-year-old from Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, was shot and killed by Shellbrook RCMP on September 8. Steven “Iggy” Dedam, from Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick, was shot and killed by the RCMP on September 8 during a wellness check.

We understand the importance of today's debate. I thank my colleague from the NDP for her leadership and for bringing this issue before the House. The families of indigenous youth killed by police have expressed tremendous distress over the tragedies experienced by their loved ones, as reported in an APTN News article entitled, “Families of Indigenous killed by Canadian police want answers”. These recent deaths highlight not only the persistence of police violence, but also the glaring gaps in accountability and oversight mechanisms that must absolutely be addressed. There is one incident after another, and outrage is growing across the country.

The recent deaths of these six individuals during interactions with the RCMP have had a profound impact on their families and communities. The tragic incidents have prompted widespread concern and calls for justice. The terrible events we are hearing about illustrate the urgent need for police services to be provided to indigenous communities. The breach of trust between the federal police and these communities will be long lasting. These deaths are not just isolated incidents, but part of a broader pattern of violence and injustice. They underscore the urgent need to reframe our approach to interactions between police and indigenous communities. These events highlight persistent problems in police interactions and the need for improved oversight and accountability.

The families and communities are demanding answers and justice for their loved ones. They are raising not only the ongoing crisis of police violence against indigenous people, but also pressing concerns about the effectiveness and fairness of police accountability mechanisms. What took place during these incidents, namely a police vehicle being used in an inappropriate context, the apparent lack of precautions to protect a vulnerable person and the resulting lack of accountability, suggest a situation that could be described as police brutality. The manner in which police acted in this situation often reflects broader patterns than the unjust treatment of individuals from these groups. We could call it systemic discrimination. These incidents are tragic examples of how police brutality can

manifest itself against the most vulnerable individuals in our society.

We have heard that there is going to be an inquiry into what happened in the provinces where the deaths were found to have occurred. As in many similar cases, the families of the victims and the communities affected often express a deep sense of injustice due to the lack of charges or convictions against the police officers involved. Another aspect of these incidents is the impunity and lack of accountability at times like these, as if the events were swept under the rug. These incidents raise important questions about the justification for this use of force. Were the standards of police conduct breached?

● (2005)

The data consistently show that indigenous people are disproportionately affected by police violence.

Recently, the members of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs questioned the Minister of Public Safety and the deputy ministers of that department, including those responsible for indigenous relations. I was one of those members. The purpose of these questions was obviously to improve the system, but it was also to recognize that creating indigenous police services is essential.

A 2020 analysis showed that between 2017 and 2020, indigenous people were ten times more likely to be beaten or killed by police than their white counterparts. Indigenous people represent only 5.1% of the Canadian population, but they account for 16.2% of the deaths in incidents involving the police. This disparity reflects the broader patterns of discrimination and systemic inequalities.

The Auditor General also expressed numerous reservations about the direction the RCMP is currently taking in its relations with first nations communities. The communities often find themselves at an impasse in their negotiations with the different levels of government and often have to take their case before the courts.

The current system of oversight and accountability for police action is deeply flawed. Reports indicate that only a small fraction of the deaths involving the police lead to charges or convictions. Between 2000 and 2017, less than 4% of those cases led to charges and even fewer of them to convictions. What is more, the oversight organizations themselves are often flawed. Many of them are made up of former police officers, which can lead to conflicts of interest and lack of impartiality. Even when indigenous liaison positions exist, they are often found to be lacking, and critics say that those positions do not fully address the systemic nature of the problems and do not fully represent indigenous communities.

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The outcry in indigenous communities reflects a growing demand for real and substantial change. In order to address these issues, we must not only reform the oversight mechanisms, but also tackle the root causes of systemic injustice. Ensuring that indigenous voices are heard and respected in this process is crucial to move toward a fairer and more just society.

If we focus on these areas, then there is hope that we can begin to resolve the deep-rooted problems of police violence and oversight and work toward a future where all communities are treated with dignity and fairness.

As far as the calls for change are concerned, the families and the communities affected by these tragedies are calling for answers and substantial reforms. These calls for action for the creation of an oversight committee made up of indigenous individuals and for the appointment of indigenous investigators are appropriate responses to the concerns raised. These measures seek to guarantee that investigations into police violence are conducted with cultural sensitivity and a deep understanding of indigenous realities.

What is more, it is imperative to reduce police presence in vulnerable communities and to develop other solutions such as mental health support services, housing, and culturally adapted programs. These options offer solutions that are more humane and more respectful of the rights of individuals than coercive police methods.

I want to underscore the importance of declaring indigenous police services essential. We have repeatedly told the Minister of Public Safety to speed up implementation of these services. We know that if the calls to action in the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls were implemented, they would have a lasting effect and there would be fewer incidents.

Many of the recommendations are still relevant and can still serve to save lives. Call to action 32 states, and I quote, “Initiate negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to agree on a budgetary envelope for upgrading Indigenous police force wages, infrastructure and equipment.”

That was not done, and the socio-cultural gap shows that the approaches taken by indigenous police forces differ from the techniques used by the RCMP. We agree that the RCMP's policing techniques are still seriously flawed and lead to human tragedy.

Call to action 35 states, and I quote, “Undertake negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to ensure recurring and sustainable funding for all Indigenous policing.”

• (2010)

That call for action has not been fulfilled either, and yet everyone agrees that no one is better placed to interact with indigenous communities than indigenous police. Many communities across the country are constantly fighting for predictable long-term funding in many critical areas, such as infrastructure and drinking water. Imagine the situation for police services.

This is definitely a problem in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region. I want to acknowledge the leadership of indigenous communities, particularly Kebaowek, and the leadership shown by Minister Lafrenière, a former police officer, who has reached out and ex-

pressed support for the creation of a regional indigenous police service in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. I see that as part of the solution.

The Long Point community in Winneway lost its police service roughly 20 years ago. We can see that crime has also increased on the reserve. Now the Sûreté du Québec has to serve the area. I do believe that there are times when a peer-led response would facilitate peaceful solutions to difficult situations.

The outcry in indigenous communities is a legitimate and necessary response to a systemic injustice and to police violence. To make society more equitable and just, we must address these problems proactively. Proposed reforms must be implemented with diligence and determination. We must ensure that indigenous voices are heard and respected in a process of justice and reform. We must also recognize traditional indigenous knowledge and consider how restorative justice is traditionally used by indigenous communities. I think this is something that deserves more attention. By focusing on these areas, we can hopefully begin to resolve the deeply rooted problems and work toward a future where all communities are treated with dignity and equity.

Justice for Tammy Bateman, Jack Charles Piche, Hoss Lightning, Jason West, Danny Knife and Steven Dedam is essential not only for their families, but for society as a whole, because everyone deserves to live in a community where justice and respect for human dignity are the foundations of our co-existence.

The time has come to act with courage and compassion to ensure that these tragedies never happen again. We have a collective responsibility to reform our system, to ensure impartial investigations and to build a society where every life is precious and every voice is heard. In my opinion, a nationwide inquiry, modelled on the Viens commission, would have offered a glimpse into how the RCMP and other police forces operate in order to implement changes. These events are no different from the many other incidents reported over the past few years where indigenous chiefs were assaulted.

The time for commissions and reports is over. Now is the time for action. In the interest of dialogue with first nations, action is essential. We have to move on to action. I would also remind my colleagues on all sides of the House that a report issued by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples identified flaws in Canada's justice system almost 30 years ago, back in 1992.

I am therefore calling on the government to move from words to action, based on what was done in Quebec, especially by the Viens commission. The Viens commission's report, published in 2019, shed light on years of systemic discrimination against indigenous groups.

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In addition, the inquiry called for a public apology from the government for all the harm done over time. In October 2019, Premier François Legault officially apologized on behalf of the Government of Quebec for these serious violations. I would expect the same from the Prime Minister of Canada in a similar context. Commissioner Viens' final report included 142 recommendations for improving relations with and services for indigenous communities.

Key recommendations include the public apology that François Legault delivered in 2019 and the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although it did not fully enshrine it into law, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion on October 8, 2019, recognizing the main principles of the declaration. I must say that the House of Commons has also taken a big step in that direction. However, we must also build on changes in organizational culture. Major public service networks must change their culture to better respond to the realities of first nations and Inuit communities.

Improving services is another important aspect. Services for indigenous people need to be improved and enhanced, especially in the areas of health, social services, youth protection and education.

● (2015)

These are basic services for which the federal government has a fundamental responsibility to provide stable, long-term funding.

More funding is also needed. The government needs to increase funding for indigenous services to ensure their quality and sustainability. Too often, “sustainability” is a keyword that is overlooked when it comes to relations with first nations. Budgets are set for just one or two years, and it is very difficult for indigenous communities to have predictability, particularly when it comes to fundamental issues like housing. The government provides funding so that a community can build one or two housing units, when we know these populations are experiencing a high level of growth. The indigenous population is growing much more quickly than that of cities and towns across Quebec and Canada. The government needs to pay attention to that and invest accordingly.

When we talk about crime and the impacts of violence, perhaps we need to first think about the issue of housing. If everyone had access to a place where they could live in dignity and fully relax, if everyone had a place of their own, a basic need that is at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy, then perhaps there would be fewer situations requiring police intervention, and perhaps we would see fewer tragic events like the ones that occurred recently.

The Viens commission also suggested raising public awareness of the realities and issues facing indigenous communities. I want to mention that the Bloc Québécois has always expressed concern about how slowly the recommendations of the two commissions, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, or NIMMIWG, and the Viens commission, are being followed up. Urgent reforms have not been implemented and, as a result, incidents of police brutality are on the rise. As the events of the past two weeks show, this situation has impeded ongoing investigations into these incidents. All the same, we can still speak out against the brutal treatment that has been meted out. That, I think, is one objective of this evening's emergency debate.

Our goal is not to question the work of police officers in general, but I think it is worth giving it some thought. I think the goal is to maintain a higher level of confidence in our police systems, which is essential for any society to live in harmony. One way to do that is to recognize indigenous police forces as essential. I think urgent action is needed on this. It would be great if indigenous communities could develop their own justice systems, education systems and health care systems and if they could build housing with funding for projects “by and for” indigenous communities. It would be great if indigenous expertise, traditional knowledge and community leadership were recognized. If that were the case, I think there would be fewer tragedies.

One major factor this will involve is trust in a people's right to self-determination. This will go a long way towards preventing additional tragedies like the ones that have occurred over the past two weeks.

● (2020)

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, my colleague's intervention was very thoughtful. I agree with much of what he was sharing with us, and I wonder whether he could respond to something that AFN national chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak has suggested, which is that part of the law enforcement problem with RCMP officers is that they are neither being taught de-escalation techniques nor being given enough cultural competency training.

One of the other solutions that we need to discuss in the House is to make sure that RCMP officers are both taught de-escalation techniques and are given cultural competency training so they could better serve the people who need to be protected at the community level.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nunavut for her question and her leadership. I thank her for launching the debate this evening and I also thank her for constantly raising these issues at the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. Her sensitivity is important and that is reflected in the question she is asking us today.

I think we do indeed need to recognize the leadership of Grand Chief Woodhouse on an issue like this. We need to make our police forces more aware of indigenous realities. I would think training is a minimum requirement for preventing tragedies like the ones recently discussed from happening.

As I see it, education and training are also a collective responsibility. As parliamentarians, I think we could also use training to gain a better understanding of indigenous realities in our ridings and elsewhere in Quebec and Canada. I think we have that responsibility, especially through university courses. I want to commend the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue in particular for its leadership as one of the first universities in Canada to offer courses for raising awareness about indigenous realities in the region. All students, whether in nursing, social work or other programs, get access to this indigenous knowledge. This way, people can learn to live together in harmony and better understand each other's reality.

In my opinion, each and every one of us share this responsibility.

● (2025)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe that we should be raising the bar and the expectations that we have as parliamentarians, and as Canadians as a whole, of our Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I believe that the RCMP, as a law enforcement agency, should be a leader in terms of reconciliation and in looking at ways of dealing with the very serious nature of the issue. That is why I was glad a few years ago that they tabled their first-ever reconciliation report. We have a training centre. I say now, because I believe it to be the case, and I would be disappointed if it is not, that there is a great deal of dialogue with the indigenous community on what is taking place in the training of RCMP.

I realize we should never assume, but I would like to think that the bar is high enough that this is a reasonable expectation. Would he not agree?

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his leadership. This morning I read a CBC article about which MPs are less active in the House. I actually found it interesting to see the opposite, or in other words, which MPs are the most active in the House and which ones contribute most to the debate. The article showed that my colleague contributes a lot in terms of quantity, but this evening he has also been contributing in terms of quality. Raising the bar for our police forces and those who ensure that we live together in harmony in our society is a critical solution.

I would like to share some thoughts with the House. At the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, we heard from the Correctional Investigator of Canada. He conducted an investigation that generated statistics that prove that indigenous persons are overrepresented in the prison system. That means that we need to also take a look at our justice system. Why do judges paint the things that happen in indigenous communities with the same brush? The “by one's peers” aspect is being completely overlooked. When we look back in history a little, it is interesting to see that reports have been made every year, practically every decade, and they get shelved when they talk about indigenous issues.

A great friend of the family, Justice Jean-Charles Coutu, who was recently made an Officer of the Order of Canada, it should be

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noted, published the Coutu report in the 1980s and the Coutu proposal. I will name a few elements. The creation of a new indigenous justice would help revitalize Inuit practices, including the circle. We know that, in indigenous communities, being rejected by one's peers is often much more serious than justice itself. Being isolated in prison often leads to problems that make it very hard for people to become functional in the community again. Peers have a very significant impact. We need to reflect on that further. The diversion of certain elements would help communities reappropriate, little by little, some judicial powers, while distributing them among several representatives to achieve balance in the different communities. These elements—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but I have to give other members a chance to ask questions.

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to let my colleague continue answering the question. He is off to a great start. I would just say, after listening to the speeches over the past little while, I think almost all of us would agree that the situation that brings us here this evening is unacceptable and that more needs to be done.

I also note that the report by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released five years ago. In Quebec, the Viens commission, also released its report about five years ago. All the reports agree that we need to do better. All of the members here agree that we need to do better.

Can my colleague explain why, in his opinion, we are still at this point today, still saying that we should let indigenous police officers intervene more, and that we should listen to indigenous people more, despite frequent Gladue reports that do not seem to be enough?

How did we get to this point? Is it because of a lax attitude that obviously can only be attributed to the government in power, which, for nine years, has failed to resolve the situation? Can we expect better from the next government, whether Liberal or Conservative, since it really does not matter to us in Quebec? What can we do to get out of this mess?

● (2030)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I believe that one of the key words is trust. We need to trust the first nations themselves. The Government of Canada has too often shown a paternalistic or colonial attitude toward first nations. Let us not forget that the Indian Act is still in force. As a result, first nations are not allowed to achieve self-determination, and problems often arise because of cultural differences. The lack of respect that white communities may show towards indigenous communities too often can lead to problems.

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I would ask that we look at what is being done in indigenous communities, learn from their traditional knowledge and trust them with self-determination. Doing this also means committing the necessary funds and adopting budgetary policies over five or ten years, particularly in relation to fundamental issues such as housing, education, police and correctional services and so on. Communities must be able to take charge of their own destiny in a sustainable way. If they hire a resource but no longer have the money to pay for it after six months, but the money might arrive in three months, in the next budget, that does not work. Predictability is needed to enable communities to develop their own knowledge, expertise and leadership.

I am convinced that we will see a net improvement, statistically speaking. However, the biggest improvement will be in the heart of communities.

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time tonight with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I would like to begin my remarks by extending my deepest sympathy to the family and friends whose loved ones have been killed. I also want to thank the member for Nunavut for the opportunity to debate this very important issue tonight, and the Speaker.

Several years ago, when I was parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, I met with the family of Colten Boushie and hosted a screening of the documentary, *We Will Stand Up*. Sadly, these six cases that have prompted this emergency debate remind me of the circumstances of too many indigenous people who have been killed. To indigenous people across this country, these killings are not new. The recent killings by both the RCMP and municipal police services are far too common, but they do not get the attention that they deserve. I am glad we have the opportunity tonight to have this emergency debate to highlight the issue and hopefully spark outrage from Canadians that can drive change.

We should acknowledge the work undertaken by all Canadians who have been seeking ways to meaningfully support the calls for justice from the final report of the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people and the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Our government led the implementation of the 2021 federal pathway to address missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people and remains dedicated to advancing the calls for justice in partnership with indigenous peoples and provincial and territorial colleagues. That level of collaboration must be at the core of policing reform for indigenous communities, a key priority for the Government of Canada.

Senator Murray Sinclair said, “Systemic racism is when the system itself is based upon and founded upon racist beliefs and philosophies and thinking and has put in place policies and practices that literally force even the non-racists to act in a racist way.”

I would encourage everyone to sit with these words, particularly the last sentence, when he said that it literally forces even the non-racist to act in a racist way. When we hear these words, we can be-

gin to understand how the very systems we take for granted, trust and rely upon can let us down and how even those who would never have consciously discriminated can actively engage in practices that, while unintentional, can disproportionately harm indigenous and racialized persons. What we are discussing here tonight is rooted in the systemic racism that continues to this day in our country against indigenous people, all too often resulting in devastating and deadly consequences.

I also want to talk about the issues facing indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people and the work I have done with my friend, the member for Winnipeg Centre. In our round tables, we heard repeatedly that police response was woefully inadequate. Families would not be believed and were turned away from the RCMP or police services, and their loved ones would later be found dead. That is unacceptable. We heard from organizations and individuals from coast to coast to coast, and the message was the same. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit persons are being let down by our current systems, and while the solutions offered were not all the same, they were all grounded in the need for them to be regionally based and culturally appropriate, trauma-informed and led by indigenous knowledge.

We have heard loud and clear that we must recognize first nations police services as an essential service. This means that first nations police services are adequately funded to do their important work 24 hours, seven days a week. Through the co-development of legislation recognizing first nations police services as an essential service, we will be responding to call for justice 5.4.

Ensuring first nations can keep their community safe in the way that is best for them is something I worked on when I was at both Indigenous Services Canada and Public Safety Canada. I met with first nations leaders to discuss how they can best develop their own policing and community safety systems.

Not all solutions are police-based. When the public safety committee studied interactions between police and people in crisis, we learned that in at least one jurisdiction in Canada, 80% to 92% of all calls for service were related to social issues, mental health, poverty and homelessness.

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• (2035)

It is no wonder that we also heard emphatic testimony from both police and community advocates to say that police should not be the primary or sole response option for calls such as these. I think of the good work being done at Kwanlin Dün First Nation to provide a community safety model based on supporting the mental health and social needs of the community, not just using policing services. Former chief Doris Bill from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation has spoken of the deep-rooted distrust of police in her community, where people see police as having failed to protect indigenous children from the sixties scoop, enforced residential school programs and responded inadequately to cases of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. Increasing or creating alternative resources, such as the community safety officer program in the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, could alleviate pressure on police services in situations that police may not be equipped or trained to handle.

Let us be clear: We can and should admire the initiative of indigenous communities who are piloting this type of frontline response model. However, we must also recognize the history of colonialism and systemic racism embedded in relations between police and indigenous peoples, which has precipitated this situation. Our government continues to work on co-developing legislation for first nations policing. All parties, including provinces and territories, must provide adequate, stable, predictable, equitable, flexible and responsive funding to meet the needs of first nations police services so that they can meet their requirements under provincial police legislation and respond to first nations policing priorities.

In parallel with our legislative goals, Public Safety Canada is launching a distinctions-based engagement process with Inuit and Métis communities to ensure that their policing priorities are better understood and supported. Based on what we hear through this engagement, the Government of Canada will explore options to advance equity of and access to culturally responsive police services.

Budget 2021 investments of \$540 million over five years will help stabilize and expand the first nations and Inuit program. This responds directly to call for justice 5.5 through the provision of policing services that are professional and dedicated, as well as responsive to the first nations and Inuit communities they serve.

We also recognize that municipal police services must do better. Two of the recent killings were in urban centres. There are models such as the one in Halton region to send a mobile crisis rapid response team to mental health calls and to people in crisis. A team consists of a registered health care professional, either a nurse or a social worker, coupled with a specially trained uniformed police officer. These teams not only respond to calls but also advocate for persons and families in crisis; they ensure mental health assessments are completed, and they are better equipped to provide resources, help and support for all involved.

The RCMP must do more. The RCMP recognizes that the ability to carry out its important mandate depends on having the confidence and trust of partners and the community it serves. The RCMP is continually working toward building trusting relationships and delivering responsive, culturally aware and trauma-informed policing services. This work must be accelerated.

The government has invested in the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, or the CRCC. I commend the leadership of Commissioner Michelaine Lahaie and the work she and her team have been doing to hold the RCMP accountable, to establish clear timelines for the RCMP to respond to their recommendations, and to clear the backlog that existed. The RCMP needs to continue to work with the CRCC to ensure that the CRCC recommendations are implemented by the service.

I will close by saying that there is much more work that needs to be done, not just by the government and the RCMP but also by police services across the country. Systemic changes must take place in how police interact with indigenous people. Too many lives are at stake not to make these changes.

• (2040)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my wonderful colleague across the way, whom I worked with so closely on putting forward and realizing a red dress alert. In fact, we just tabled the study in the House today, which was just so exciting.

We hear a lot of rhetoric from the Conservative Party about tough-on-crime approaches. I know that tough-on-crime approaches do not work. I will be sharing an example of how they do not work this evening in my intervention.

How does my colleague feel about this rhetoric of being tough on crime, getting people off the street, enforcing treatment or violating constitutional rights? Does she feel that this could potentially worsen the situation, particularly for indigenous people, and the justice system right now?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, indigenous women are the fastest-growing population in our prisons right now and have been for a number of years. Those women are in prison because of addictions, trauma, mental health and poverty. Quite frankly, it has been proven that these tough-on-crime policies actually disproportionately impact indigenous and racialized people. They have also been proven to not be effective. His name is escaping me, but the gentleman who was in charge of justice for former prime minister Stephen Harper has written a book about these—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Ben Perrin.

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Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, Ben Perrin has written a book, which I have not read yet, about how these failed policies do not solve the crime issue but actually make it worse. These tough-on-crime policies will not keep Canadians safe; they would actually make it more dangerous for the public safety of Canadians and indigenous people.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for splitting her time with me. Second, I did not want to interrupt. I think it is the first time I have ever yelled anything out in the House, but I remembered the name Benjamin Perrin. He is doing fantastic work in looking at the evidence and realizing things about the policies he used to espouse when he was in Stephen Harper's PMO, such as being tough on drugs and tough on crime. Despite how much he believed they would be helpful at the time, he says they really come down to being dumb on drugs and dumb on crime.

How does the hon. parliamentary secretary feel we can best address what I hope to get to in my speech? She is sharing her time with me. Can we ensure better training of police officers? They do not get a lot of training and experience before they hit the streets. Does she think that is part of the solution?

• (2045)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, former public safety minister Ralph Goodale said to me one time that police officers need as much training in human rights as they do in criminal justice. The RCMP is working with the University of Regina and working to enhance training. We need to make police services safe places for women, for indigenous people and for racialized people to be able to come in and change the culture within the service. There needs to be better training; we also need to do a better job of recruiting a diverse base. Further, we need to look at whether the RCMP is the right service to be responding in indigenous communities and whether the indigenous communities should be designing their own policing model; we need to leave that up to each individual community.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to extend my condolences to the families affected.

When it comes to the safety of indigenous peoples, could there be police forces?

Earlier, I gave the example of a joint police force in Val-d'Or. Could more funding be allocated for that? Is that a solution? Could the government also provide benefits for police forces? What else could it do for indigenous communities and organizations?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, yes, absolutely. Police services could be funded better, but I do not know if that is the answer. It falls largely upon the provinces and territories to fund urban police services. However, it is not necessarily having police responding. We need to be supporting those dealing with addictions, mental health issues and homelessness. That would not be driving people into crime, so we need to be getting to the root cause.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleagues who are here tonight.

First, I would like to sincerely thank the member for Nunavut.

[English]

I want to thank my friend, the member of Parliament for Nunavut, for bringing this forward for an emergency debate. It has been an emergency for some time. That is why I was relieved when the Speaker decided that it met the definition of an emergency for debate. However, as the hon. member put it when she made the argument to the Speaker, it is now almost expected that, when police forces are confronted with a first nations person, an indigenous person in this country, the person in question is killed. This happens even on a wellness check, when they are supposed to be sent to make sure that the person in question is safe. It has become far too common.

There have been a number of studies in Canada. We can talk about them. I know the specific examples that lead us into the debate tonight.

I will start with this APTN headline: “15 days and 6 Indigenous people have died when coming in contact with police across Canada”. The hon. parliamentary secretary quite rightly pointed out that we were told this in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in the report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We were told this in a report that came out in June 2021 from this Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security entitled “Systemic Racism in Policing in Canada”. That report refers to a witness, the Hon. Michel Bastarache, who actually said that the culture within the RCMP is “toxic”.

Let us be clear: This is not one or two incidents that can be explained away by saying an RCMP officer thought something was a threat because they were faced with an indigenous person who they thought was threatening them.

Steven Dedam was shot and killed by the RCMP just earlier this month. After he had been shot three times, he was handcuffed and told he was under arrest as he lay there dying. He had been shot in the chest in Elsipogtog First Nation in the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy territory. That is not the first time.

As we know, in June 2020, there were two people killed in the territory of the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy people. Rodney Levi of another New Brunswick first nation was shot and killed by the RCMP on a wellness check. Chantel Moore, a young woman from the territory of Vancouver Island, was killed by a member of the Edmundston, New Brunswick, police force on June 4, 2020. I am honoured to be a friend of her family, and I know them well. Her killing is one for which there are no answers yet; the reports have been whitewashed. She was killed by a lone Edmundston police officer, who was a tall, burly man. He woke her up at three in the morning because he had been called to do a wellness check. He did not have a second officer with him. He shot her four times. She was five foot nothing. This is an insufficiently investigated murder.

Let us get back to what kinds of solutions we could look to. I have mentioned a number of reports. One that does not come up very much in this context, although it contains many clues for what we need to do for solutions, is the mass casualty report on the RCMP's massive failure to stop a killer on what is sometimes described as a "shooting spree", which makes it sound as though he was shopping. It was a murderous rampage by a known dangerous man. He was known to be dangerous because of multiple reports for over a decade before he started killing people in Portapique, Nova Scotia, two years ago in April. He was known because many reports had been made to the RCMP that he had illegal guns. When we read the report, we find that various racialized people had reported him for beating up on or robbing them over the years. It was known that he was a threat to people around him. The RCMP notes to the report say that the RCMP did not believe the complainant. Why would a wealthy dentist beat up on poor and racialized people? We might insert the word "white". The RCMP never investigated the complaints against him over a 10-year period.

- (2050)

The Globe and Mail, the national newspaper, is certainly not a left-wing or radical press; it is establishment with a capital E. The Globe and Mail editorial, after reading the mass casualty report, said the RCMP as an institution must be torn down to its foundations and then the foundations must be dynamited. Those are strong words. When we read that report, we realize that there is institutionalized systemic racism, as well as sexism and the unwillingness to believe that because someone had a domestic violence situation and was reported constantly to be a threat to the life of his intimate partner but was not reported by the intimate partner, there was an issue of coercive control. We have got to get that bill passed while we are here, by the way.

However, the issue of systemic racism comes screaming out of the report on the mass casualty report out of Nova Scotia for the killings in Portapique. That report pointed out this issue of training. The RCMP do not get as much training as even municipal police forces. I have talked a lot to the chief of police in Victoria, B.C., where I have watched officers in Victoria, B.C. in the municipal police force de-escalate tense situations and get people mental health supports when they need them. They do not shoot first and ask questions later. I am very grateful to Chief Del Manak in Victoria and those in other municipal forces across Canada. The chief of police in Montreal is another fine example. The hon. parliamentary

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secretary mentioned police forces in Thunder Bay and Edmundston. We have seen municipal police officers also exhibit a systemic racist attitude toward racialized and indigenous people where guns are pulled when people have been sent out on wellness checks.

With respect to solutions, we can go through volumes of reports. From the other place, another expert in this area, Senator Kim Pate, has done a lot of work looking at what has already been mentioned here tonight, which is the expanding population of indigenous women in our prisons.

Systemic racism is not confined to the RCMP. Let us be clear: It is a Canada-wide problem. It is manifested in the laws, the expectations, the doctrine of discovery, the Indian Act and we can go on and on. However, it is really critical that we do a couple of things and do them fast. I have said this to the Minister of Public Safety before. We need to take the time to go through the social media of every single person in this country who wears a uniform and carries a gun. That includes the kind of person who actually drove through the gates at Rideau Hall determined to shoot the Prime Minister. We need to go through social profiles of every single person in this country who wears a uniform and carries a gun and look for any evidence of white supremacy, look for people wearing a patch of the thin blue line.

A friend of mine was a Fairy Creek supporter to stop the old-growth logging in British Columbia. Recently the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, just last week, ruled on the police arrest and handcuffing and insistence that somehow my friend from Salt Spring Island was violating the law by refusing to give the RCMP his name. This was the RCMP rogue unit called the Community-Industry Response Group, demanding to search his backpack and then arresting him. In that report, the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission said the RCMP need training in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Their arrest was groundless.

However, regarding the abuse and the mistreatment of people in a number of indigenous land defenders' cases, it is clear that there is greater violence directed toward people defending forests or fighting pipelines if they are indigenous, than if they are arrested with kid gloves the way I was so nicely by the RCMP on Burnaby Mountain.

I urge everyone watching this debate tonight and participating not to turn the page and think this was the debate for September 16 and now it is over. We have got to take this seriously and ensure proper training. It is not a couple of rotten apples. It is systemic. Get them out of our police forces, protect indigenous lives and ensure that there is no place for racists where they are allowed to wear a uniform and carry a gun.

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• (2055)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for her important intervention. This debate is addressing what I feel is like the tip of an iceberg, and I think she agrees.

There are so many examples of other issues with RCMP behaviour. In my riding of Nunavut, I have whole communities that will not call the RCMP because they know that the RCMP will not protect that community from the violence that they are experiencing.

We have seen other issues because of the RCMP's behaviour towards indigenous peoples and towards the Black community. There are stories after stories. As complex as this is, I wonder if the member could talk more deeply about what some of the other challenges are, because I do not think it is just law enforcement.

After this emergency debate was granted by the Speaker, I received a ton of social media, mostly in favour of the debate, but I also received a lot of vitriol, a lot of racism, saying, "Arrest them, arrest the indigenous peoples. They are the ones who are behaving badly."

I wonder if the member has any messages that she can share with Canadians, showing that this is not an indigenous issue. All of Canada must help make sure that it is not just something that we direct at the RCMP.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Nunavut for always being a shining example in this place of how to lead with love.

I want to recognize that it is not one or two examples. As she was speaking, I was thinking of Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, who was attacked by the RCMP in a parking lot.

What we can do is remember the first calls for justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which is that all settler culture Canadians must read this report. It is on us, those of us who are settler culture Canadians, to face the truth. Truth and reconciliation starts with understanding the truth of 167 years of racism and genocide. We must recognize that individuals, settler culture Canadians, are very uncomfortable with the word racism. They say, "Well, gee, I am not a racist." White fragility is also an issue.

Let us work together at understanding the truth, and figuring out how we, together, turn a page on a horrible history and move forward with love, guided by indigenous wisdom, to love our Mother Earth, care for each other and approach everything with the gratitude of heart, mind and spirit connected.

• (2100)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her humanity and compassion, which she is displaying once again on this very sensitive topic.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize a friend of mine who recently stepped down and who was co-leader with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I wanted to pay tribute to him for his contribution to the debates. He is someone who truly believes in social justice. I wish Jonathan the best of luck in his new endeavours.

That being said, let us come back to the issue at hand. A very simple solution that the government could advance rather quickly would be to recognize the indigenous police forces as essential, to have them engage with the communities and to allocate predictable and adequate funding to them.

What does my colleague think of this ready-made solution for the communities?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague, the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue. I am deeply moved by his words about our friend, my old friend Jonathan Pedneault, who has now stepped down as my deputy leader of the Green Party of Canada. As my colleague put it so well, Jonathan always makes decisions with human rights issues front of mind.

I think my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue is right. It is up to indigenous peoples to decide for themselves how best to protect their society. We need to hire indigenous people in law enforcement so that first nations can exercise their sovereignty. This issue affects all peoples in Canada.

As a non-indigenous person, I do not think I will ever trust the RCMP. I lived in small rural village in Cape Breton, and I know too well that the RCMP are not there to protect our lives.

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I rise to speak at this emergency debate, I would like to take a moment to recognize the six indigenous people who lost their lives on whom this debate centres, specifically Steven Dedam, Danny Knife, Hoss Lightning, Jack Piche, Tammy Bateman and Jason West, and to acknowledge the trauma and loss that their families, friends and communities are suffering at this time.

Indigenous communities have faced some systemic injustices within the realm of law enforcement. The history of indigenous policing in Canada is fraught with challenges marked by a legacy of colonialism, discrimination and mistrust. Indigenous peoples have a unique cultural, social and historical context that must be recognized and respected in the realm of policing.

As we have witnessed time and time again, traditional methods of law enforcement often fail to adequately address the needs and values of indigenous communities. As a result, there is a pressing need for a paradigm shift in policing practices. I would like to focus a lot of my intervention tonight on the lack of commitment this government has toward community policing in northern, rural and remote areas, and its failure to support the first nations and Inuit policing program in the country.

For the information of those at home, and perhaps for some of my colleagues here in this House, Public Safety Canada manages and oversees the first nations and Inuit policing program, which was established in 1991. Under this program, policing services are provided either by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, through community tripartite agreements negotiated by the federal government, provinces and/or territories and indigenous communities, or by communities' own police services under self-administered agreements.

Efforts toward indigenous policing must be guided by principles of reconciliation, cultural sensitivity and community empowerment. Part of the problem has been an Ottawa-knows-best paternalistic approach to the safety needs of indigenous people and indigenous communities. It is essential to engage indigenous communities in the design and implementation of policing strategies, ensuring that their voices are indeed heard and their perspectives valued, meaning a true partnership.

For too long, indigenous communities have borne the brunt of systemic injustices, including disproportionately high rates of crime and victimization. One of the most pressing types of criminality facing indigenous people on reserves is violence: domestic violence, sexual assault and homicide. Indigenous women are disproportionately affected by that violence, with rates of homicide and missing persons cases far exceeding national averages. These alarming statistics underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions, police and support services to address the underlying factors contributing to violence within indigenous communities.

Substance abuse and addiction are also significant challenges facing first nations people on reserve, contributing to a range of criminal behaviours including drug trafficking, poverty and crime. Intergenerational trauma and socio-economic disparities have contributed to high rates of substance abuse among indigenous populations. Addressing these underlying factors requires holistic, culturally sensitive approaches that prioritize healing, rehabilitation and community supports.

Overall, the Liberal government's drug policies have been catastrophic, with over 42,000 Canadians dying from drug overdoses. In British Columbia, where this Prime Minister carried out his hard drugs experiment, there has been a nearly 400% increase in overdose deaths. The Liberal Minister of Mental Health still refuses to acknowledge that the Liberals' dangerous policy was indeed a failure.

We must not only get tough on crime, especially when it comes to repeat violent offenders, but we must address the socio-economic disparities between non-indigenous and indigenous people.

● (2105)

Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment and inadequate housing contribute to the vulnerability of indigenous people to involvement in criminal activity. Limited economic opportunities coupled with social isolation and a lack of access to essential services exacerbate the risk factors for criminal behaviour. Investing in education, economic development and infrastructure on reserves is crucial to addressing these systemic inequalities and creating opportunities for positive change within indigenous communities. These are all factors that a future Conservative government, with

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guidance from indigenous stakeholders, must tackle if we are to end the tragedies like the ones we continue to experience and to improve community safety and quality of life for indigenous men, women and children.

The challenges facing indigenous policing in Canada are multifaceted and deeply rooted, from inadequate resources to entrenched biases, and these challenges continue to undermine safety, trust and the well-being of indigenous communities. Indigenous police services often face jurisdictional and legal complexities that impede their ability to fulfill their mandate effectively. The overlapping jurisdiction between federal, provincial and indigenous communities often creates confusion and delays in responding to issues on indigenous territories. One of the common complaints I hear is that provincial and federal police services will not enforce community bylaws. Clear protocols and agreements must be established to ensure seamless coordination and co-operation among all stakeholders in the justice system.

One of the foremost challenges is the chronic underfunding of indigenous police services. Many indigenous police services operate with limited resources, hindering their ability to adequately respond to emergencies, investigate crimes and provide essential services to their communities. This funding gap not only compromises public safety but also perpetuates inequalities in access to justice for indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples deserve to feel safe in their communities. It is crucial that indigenous police services have the same powers as non-indigenous police services and have the proper and adequate resources to do the job they are expected to do, especially when it comes to the funding model, often done on a year-to-year basis. This makes it almost impossible for these police services to continue to plan, recruit and continue with officers who have experience.

Indigenous policing resources are stretched thin and face discrimination in Ottawa. In meetings with indigenous police services across the country, I have heard harsh criticism for the current model. Public Safety Canada would not fund specialized units like domestic assault, major crime, homicide or canine units, and it took a court case in June 2023 to declare that it was discriminatory and to throw those conditions out of the PSC agreements.

Thirty-eight per cent of indigenous police officers do not have backup while patrolling their communities. There are too few officers to keep up with the growing gang problems on reserves. Outside of Ontario, first nations' police officers do not have pensions, benefits and access to professional development. Indigenous officers make 25% less in salary than their non-indigenous colleagues.

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In 2023, the Treaty Three Police Service, the Anishinabek Police Services, and the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin Anishnaabe Police had to take the government to court over discriminatory terms and conditions in their service agreements. Together, these first nations police organizations serve 45 first nations communities and around 30,000 people across northern Ontario, and they had to operate on a line of credit while the government dithered, putting the communities and people at risk.

In 2022, after the mass killing at James Smith Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, the Prime Minister promised to work toward making indigenous policing an essential service in Canada. However, here we are now, nearly three years later, with, sadly, no changes. In 2020, the Liberals promised to bring forward legislation to declare first nations and Inuit police services an essential service, and yet, still nothing. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls calls for justice, section 5.4, called for immediate and dramatic transformation of indigenous policing, including civilian oversight bodies to audit and investigate claims of police misconduct. That was almost six years ago and still counting.

• (2110)

In 2024, the Auditor General's office released a damning report on the status of first nations and Inuit policing in Canada. The first nations and Inuit policing program is a cost-sharing program. About 52% of its funding comes from the federal government and 48% comes from the provinces or territories.

The Office of the Auditor General found several glaring issues with Public Safety Canada's management of the program. Despite funding increased to this program, the Office of the Auditor General found that \$13 million of the funds earmarked for the 2022-23 fiscal year went unspent. As of October 2023, Public Safety Canada expected that over \$45 million in program funding would be left undistributed for that fiscal year.

The OAG also found that Public Safety Canada had poorly managed the program. Specifically, it found that Public Safety Canada had poor fiscal management oversight, had limited expansion of the program despite additional funding, lacked an approach to support equitable funding decisions, lacked consistent engagement and partnership with communities, and lacked the information to measure the program's effectiveness.

Furthermore, the RCMP did not consistently deliver on its responsibilities under that program. Specifically, the RCMP had an insufficient number of officers in dedicated communities, no requirement for culturally specific training to understand the culture of the community being served, inconsistent implementation and monitoring of whether policing services promote partnership with communities, and no information on program effectiveness.

I should note that the RCMP is not party to community tripartite agreements. Public Safety Canada signs these agreements with the provinces and territories, and between first nations or Inuit communities, without bothering to confirm that the RCMP actually has the ability to meet the terms of the agreement. If that does not define a failed Ottawa-knows-best approach, I am not sure what does.

In fact, this past April, at an indigenous and northern affairs committee hearing, Public Safety Canada indicated that it is currently in the process of co-developing federal legislation intended to recognize first nations policing as an essential service. During her testimony before the committee, one of the directors of the Office of the Auditor General noted that the new legislation is intended to apply only to self-administered agreements and not to community tripartite agreements.

This means that the communities, under tripartite agreements, that are policed by the RCMP and municipal police forces would not be regarded as essential, which is the key to this whole issue. For context, there are only 36 self-administered police agreements in Canada. That would leave the vast majority of first nations and Inuit communities without the essential designation for police services.

Historical trauma and intergenerational mistrust continue to cast a shadow over indigenous communities and the RCMP, including, where applicable, municipal police relations. The legacy of colonialism, forced assimilation and residential schools has left deep scars on indigenous communities, contributing to a profound mistrust of authority figures, including the police. Rebuilding trust and repairing these relationships will require genuine efforts at reconciliation, acknowledgement of past wrongs and meaningful engagement with indigenous communities in the development of policing policies and practices.

In addition, a future government plan on indigenous policing must prioritize the recruitment, training and retention of indigenous officers. Representation matters. It matters deeply in law enforcement. Indigenous peoples deserve to see themselves reflected in the institutions that serve and protect their communities.

Additionally, indigenous policing initiatives should prioritize restorative justice approaches, with an emphasis on healing, rehabilitation and community cohesion over punitive measures. Traditional indigenous justice practices offer valuable insights into resolving conflicts and restoring harmony within communities. This does not mean there are not consequences for crime, but those consequences reflect historical and traditional indigenous community responses to those crimes. Where appropriate, these alternative justice incentives could have real and lasting positive outcomes for indigenous communities.

• (2115)

One of the key strengths of restorative justice lies in its emphasis on dialogue and relationship building. By bringing together victims, offenders and community members in a safe and supportive environment, restorative justice fosters empathy, understanding and mutual respect. Through open and honest communication, individuals can confront the harm done by those actions, take responsibility for their behaviour and work toward repairing the harm done.

Moreover, restorative justice practices have been shown to be effective in reducing crime rates and promoting long-term community safety, and we do that by addressing the root causes of crime and the needs of all affected parties. Restorative justice helps to break the cycle of violence and create a more just and comprehensive society.

As I conclude, I would like to leave us all with this, which I have said a few times in my speech. Many indigenous communities have a fraught history with external law enforcement agencies. It is marked with experiences of discrimination, violence and systemic racism. Indigenous-led policing helps to address these historical grievances by involving community members directly in the process of maintaining safety and order. This approach helps to rebuild trust, making it more likely that community members will engage positively with law enforcement and co-operate in matters of public safety.

Traditional law enforcement methods can sometimes fail to address the root causes within indigenous communities. Indigenous-led initiatives, on the other hand, can incorporate culturally relevant practices and community wisdom. This approach can lead to a more sustainable solution to crime and conflict, tailored to the specific needs and values of a community. When indigenous people can serve as police officers within their own communities, it empowers them to take that active role in shaping their own futures. This representation, as I said before, is absolutely crucial because it ensures that the policies and practices of law enforcement reflect the values and needs of indigenous peoples.

It also provides a role model for younger generations, inspiring them to envision and work toward leadership roles in their own communities. Their cultural competence allows them to navigate complex social dynamics with a sensitivity that external officers might lack. For example, indigenous officers are more likely to understand and honour traditional practices and customs, which can be crucial in resolving conflicts and engaging with community members in a respectful manner. This cultural insight prevents misunderstandings and fosters a policing approach that is both empathetic and effective.

In conclusion, acknowledging the historic injustices faced by indigenous peoples is essential for building a more equitable society. In investing in these indigenous-led police services, we would take concrete steps to address these injustices and contribute to the reconciliation process. This support demonstrates a commitment to repairing relationships and fostering understanding between indigenous communities and the broader societies. Indigenous policing in Canada is not merely a matter of policy; it is a moral imperative. It is a testament to our commitment to justice, equality and reconcilia-

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tion. Together, let us work toward a future where indigenous policing reflects the values and aspirations of all.

• (2120)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am actually quite confused by the member's intervention because what he spoke about goes against a lot of what the Conservatives' messaging is, including always talking about being tough on crime and all those kinds of things.

I wonder if the member can describe for us how he will try to influence his party to commit to ensuring that what he said is something all of his caucus will work hard on from now on, because part of what has led to this emergency debate today is not just broken promises but cutting funding to important programs when the Conservatives were in government, specifically national crime prevention centres in Canada, as well as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. That was so hurtful, especially because a Nunavut Conservative MP was the minister and it was the Conservatives who cut that important program.

How can we reconcile what you are saying, and what will you do to make sure your full caucus would implement what you are envisioning as better policing for indigenous peoples?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I understand the hon. member's emotions, but I did not intervene or say anything.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I will try to answer as much of the member's question as I can. I wrote down notes. Hopefully I have it all.

As the critic for Crown-indigenous relations and indigenous services for the opposition, it is part of my job, my mandate, to develop policy that will be put into our next election platform. I note that some of the things I mentioned today were from previous policy documents that we had released in previous elections. They talk about giving more power to indigenous police services and essential services, about funding them correctly and about restorative justice practices. Something our party, myself and others on this side of the House are talking about today is the direction our party is moving in regarding indigenous justice and indigenous policing.

I mentioned funding, as well as essential services and ensuring that the "Ottawa knows best" approach is not the one we continue to lead by. It has to be grassroots-led and about listening to the voices that are telling us what their issues are. That goes to the justice piece of my speech when I was talking about how each individual community might have different visions of how they wish to run a justice system, whether it is through restorative justice, through their law enforcement and policing side or through indigenous police services. Perhaps they want other aspects of the law enforcement angle.

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Giving power back to these individual communities is key, but to the member's point, as I talked about, it is about ensuring proper funding so that we do not have an unlevel playing field between indigenous and non-indigenous police services or even in the justice system in general.

• (2125)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, there was much in the hon. member's speech that I agreed with. When it comes to funding first nations policing, I would remind the hon. member that when the Harper government Conservatives were in power, first nations policing was grossly underfunded. One of the first things the public safety minister did was engage on that.

In 2018, \$291 million was put into first nations policing, and in 2021, there was another \$540 million. The hon. member talked about how not all of that money was spent, but he also talked about the importance of engaging with communities. I hope he would agree that these programs for first nations policing need to be led by indigenous peoples, as does the co-development of legislation. These are hard things to do that require hard work, and sometimes they require time.

I am wondering if the hon. member will commit that his party will support these additional funding investments and will ensure that first nations policing is co-developed with indigenous peoples and the Assembly of First Nations, not just dictated to them by the federal government.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, the crux of my speech was about how we need to level the playing field between indigenous police services and non-indigenous police services. During my speech, I mentioned the disparities in wages, benefits and training. Those are all pretty important things when talking about policing, and not only with recruitment but with retention. I mentioned the funding model and that many of these police services, like the ones in northern Ontario, were on year-to-year contracts. The deadline for their funding lapsed and they had to run police services on a line of credit. That was pretty troubling to the chief of police and members themselves. They were trying to police 30,000 people as indigenous police services, and they did not even know if their funding was going to continue. As for making it an essential service, I mentioned that a few times in my speech. My answer to the NDP talked about that as well.

I agree with the member that these things do take time, absolutely. In 2022, the Prime Minister promised to work toward making indigenous police services an essential service, but it is three years later and still nothing has happened. The Liberals have been in power for nine years. The Auditor General came out with a report that said some pretty important things needed to be addressed in addition to policing, and here we are talking about them because some tragedies have happened. We need to accelerate this conversation.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are taking part in a very important emergency debate this evening at a time when six people have died and violence is on the rise.

I would therefore like to know what solutions a Conservative government would propose. I would also like to know if such a government could build good relations with indigenous communities and implement the recommendations of the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls that have not yet been implemented.

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, the work we in the opposition have been doing with indigenous communities and leaders shows our commitment to listening to voices on the ground level and reducing and hopefully eliminating this “Ottawa knows best” approach.

We have already announced a number of policies that will take control of communities away from Ottawa through a resource charge, which will allow communities to keep the tax revenue generated on their land rather than sending it to Ottawa. We will announce many more. However, the crux of my speech was about getting rid of the “Ottawa knows best” approach because it has not worked for 155-plus years. If we continue on this path, it will not work for another 155 years, and we will continue to have these conversations.

We need to provide optional legislation, if needed, for those who want to do different and unique things, and strip down the “Ottawa knows best” bureaucracy that continues to fail indigenous people. One part of this is listening to the voices that want to empower indigenous people to become police officers through indigenous police services, but we need to ensure that they are on a level playing field and not handcuffed when they need to do their jobs appropriately.

• (2130)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the speech that my colleague from Ontario gave, and I thank him for the significant amount of work he has done with indigenous leaders and communities across this country.

I am wondering if he could share with this House some examples, even sometimes born out of the ashes of tragedy, where spaces or opportunities for reconciliation have come about and indigenous communities have seen relationships restored. Are there instances with indigenous police where productive relationships are built and where high-quality policing is able to support victims? I know that my colleague has had many conversations, both tough ones and a number of encouraging ones, on that.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I will give a good, positive example from what the province of Alberta is doing, because it often leads the way when dealing with indigenous communities. We can look at what the Siksika are doing. They are working to build their own justice system. In fact, I believe construction on a new courthouse has already started where they will be able to implement their own restorative justice practices.

We can look at what Alberta has done with police service contracts. We were talking about those doing one-year contracts, but Alberta in many cases is moving toward three-year funding models, which give some predictability to indigenous police services.

Alberta is moving in that direction, and I think other provinces and the federal government need to do the same, because the conversation has been going on too long. We need to see action. Listening to the voices on the ground is exactly what we need to be doing more of.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

In less than one month, Canada has become witness to the tragic deaths of no fewer than six people from first nations communities across our country. Although the circumstances in each incident varied as greatly as their age ranges, with the youngest among them just 15 years old and the eldest 57, common to all of them was their involvement in police-related incidents in the final moments of their lives. Tragically, these are not the only examples of these incidents. We do not have to look far in the media, in cities and in towns from coast to coast to find other examples of people from first nations communities who have died in similar incidents. Make no mistake that each is a tragedy and each speaks to deeper and more widespread problems that exist here in Canada.

Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada are not policing agencies. The mandate and authority related to the administration of the justice system in Canada are not within their purview. These departments, on the other hand, do have an important role to play in building a new relationship with indigenous peoples and in promoting their well-being and safety. This is a priority for these departments and for the Government of Canada.

The primary objective of these departments is supporting indigenous peoples in their efforts toward self-determination and empowering them in shaping the future of their communities. That mandate includes ensuring that indigenous peoples and communities have access to the services they require, including health, education and social services. Our vision is one in which indigenous peoples independently deliver services and address the socio-economic conditions in their communities.

The administration of justice, which includes policing and enforcement, is a topic of discussion at a number of tables across the country, led by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, that are looking at ways of recognizing rights and self-determination. We support a way forward on a rights-based approach while being mindful that policing is one element of the broader justice system. Given this, there are immediate needs and longer-term goals, as well as opportunities to proactively address some of the gaps identified through reports, recent engagements, consultations and even litigation.

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I am happy to hear my colleagues on both sides of the House speak about emergency measures that will save lives in situations similar to those we have been discussing this evening. I hope that such proposals, if they can be feasibly deployed, will make a meaningful difference, a difference of life and death, it is fair to say, in future encounters between people from first nations communities and law enforcement professionals.

I would like to touch upon some of the programs that Indigenous Services Canada has co-developed with the support of leaders from indigenous communities across the country. The first is the pathways to safe indigenous communities initiative. Community services are an important part of supporting community safety and well-being. Indigenous Services Canada helps first nations, Inuit and Métis communities and partners, both on and off reserve, to implement indigenous-designed projects that improve community safety and well-being. I stress that these projects are not designed and led by officials from the Government of Canada. Rather, they are developed by indigenous partners to create a broad spectrum of community support.

The pathways to safe indigenous communities initiative is providing \$120 million over five years between 2021 and 2026 to assist first nations, Inuit and Métis communities and partners, both on and off reserve, to implement indigenous-designed projects to improve community safety and well-being. This initiative supports projects that recognize the importance of traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to greater community safety and well-being, recognize holistic models of community safety and well-being and address existing and emerging needs related to the safety and well-being of indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

Most of the initiatives we have heard about today are led by Public Safety Canada and administered through the department's first nations and Inuit policing program, or FNIPP. I will, however, say that Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada play a supportive role in the matter of indigenous policing by giving advice to Public Safety on the engagement with indigenous communities on policing legislation.

The FNIPP was created in 1991 with the aim of enhancing community policing services, supporting culturally responsive policing in first nations and Inuit communities and recognizing input from indigenous communities of policing services received. Indigenous peoples, like all people in Canada, have a right to receive culturally appropriate and respectful police services, and contributing to safer and healthier indigenous communities is a priority for the Government of Canada.

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● (2135)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan commits Canada to leveraging the FNIPP and engaging and working with indigenous communities and with provinces and territories on approaches to enhance policing services that are professional, dedicated, and responsive to first nation and Inuit communities. The costs to run the program are shared between the federal government and the province or territory, while provinces and territories have jurisdiction over operational policing requirements and priorities, and the federal government acts as a funding partner. I am pleased to say that the FNIPP has resulted in dedicated, culturally responsive policing services being established in many first nations communities that would not otherwise have a dedicated on-site policing presence.

The federal government is committed to building on the success of this program. Budget 2021 announced up to \$540 million over five years beginning in 2021-22 and \$126.8 million ongoing to support Indigenous communities that are currently served under the FNIPP and to expand the program into new communities. With this funding, the Government of Canada has been working with first nations and Inuit communities and with provinces and territories to address priority needs.

Work is already under way on several other key related initiatives, such as to co-develop legislation that would recognize first nations police services as essential services, to work with provinces and territories to identify improvements to program governance with a view to delivering funding faster, and to revisit the program management relationship with the RCMP to ensure that officer availability is more readily considered and integrated in program management decisions. In addition, the Government of Canada has committed to supporting improved community police relations by working with first nations communities, provinces and territories to support community safety officer projects and community police discussions.

At the status of women committee, we heard from countless indigenous women and girls during our study on the red dress alert. Most of them do not trust the police, and there is a lot of work that still needs to be done, regardless of what has already been done. There are several communities that are examples to follow, in which the community is quite close and has built a relationship with the police, and where the police have made an effort. However, there are very few examples, and across Canada a lot more work needs to be done.

I mentioned at the outset of these remarks that Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada are not policing agencies. They are not mandated or authorized to provide the types of community services that are performed by law enforcement officials. What we can do, on the other hand, is to provide supports for those professionals and to remember the first nations communities from coast to coast to ensure that people are safe in their homes and in their neighbourhoods.

The Government of Canada takes the issue of indigenous safety and well-being very seriously. We are committed to walking the shared path of reconciliation with indigenous people and will con-

tinue to work in partnership with first nations and Inuit people and organizations, as well as our external partners, to develop effective solutions. Our end goal is to make sure indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast are safe and adequately housed. It is also about building capacity, developing skills and providing supports on the ground so indigenous communities can reach their full potential.

Meegwetch.

● (2140)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I do appreciate some of the things the member shared regarding some of the work that is going on, but there are a lot of gaps still that are happening. Some of it, I think, is very much policy-driven, because I cannot see it being legislated as part of a rule of law. I would like to ask, for example, about criminalizing land defenders. The RCMP is famous for enforcing policies that criminalize land defenders, like the Wet'suwet'en chiefs in B.C.

I wonder whether she can share with us what the Liberal government envisions about ensuring that we are doing less to criminalize indigenous peoples, while making sure that we are doing a better job of protecting indigenous peoples' rights and their inherent right to protect the environment.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is no one better in the House to provide input. I think that the government should listen, and that is the whole point. The thing is that communities, indigenous communities, need to be the ones at the forefront, letting the government know what exactly is needed in order to create a safe space and environment for them.

I know that the government has already opened up consultations. It has made that relationship stronger, and I hope that the government continues to do that. I know that is the intention of the government.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member has done a lot of work on the status of women committee, and one of the studies we did there was on indigenous women in the criminal justice system. That was quite a few years ago. I just wonder whether the hon. member could talk about the impact of colonial policies on indigenous women and girls, and the impact they are having on their interactions with the police. I believe that the member for Winnipeg Centre was saying that today the red dress alert study was tabled in the House, and perhaps the hon. member could talk a bit about that as well.

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• (2145)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Mr. Speaker, yes, that is the case. On the committee, we have done a lot of work to better the relationship between the government and these women and girls who suffer more than anybody else in the country and who are victimized more often than anybody else in the country. This is something we need to take extremely seriously.

The fact is that the current laws we have in our country are not necessarily the ones that are protecting these women and girls the most, and I think we need to do a lot more work in order to listen to what they need. One of the things we heard coming out of the study was that this needs to be indigenous-led. It cannot be led by the Government of Canada; it really needs to have the input of indigenous leaders and indigenous women and girls who know what they need in order to be safe and who can really give input. Without that input, we will not make the positive changes, and we have been making positive changes because we have been listening. I hope that continues.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have been encouraged by is a local group, a club that I made reference to earlier, the Bear Clan Patrol, which is very well established. For many years they have had different levels of government and different political parties participate in some of the patrols that are taking place

One of the single best things I see that it has accomplished is bringing community members and improving relationships with community members along with elected officials and law enforcement agencies. In fact, it is more than just one law enforcement agency. It has attracted a great deal of attention in North America, and I am wondering whether the member can just provide her thoughts in regard to how community initiatives can help advance reconciliation by bringing the different stakeholders together.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Mr. Speaker, I believe that any initiatives that bring the communities to the elected officials to let them know what exactly their communities need are going to be beneficial, and that is the key. It is really about communication. Indigenous-led initiatives are the ones that are going to make a difference within their communities.

Here in Ottawa, we do not necessarily know what people in their communities back home are needing, and obviously we are not necessarily responding to all of their needs right here in Ottawa. We need to hear from them. We need to make those channels more readily available, so any initiatives that make that communication easier are going to be beneficial.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my good colleague, the member for Nunavut, for requesting this emergency debate. I also want to give a shout-out to my good friend and colleague Kim Pate, on the Senate side, who has done tremendous work in this area as well.

This is a topic, as we know, that is often neglected by politicians, and quite frankly the media normalizes systemic violence against indigenous people. Police brutality against people of colour, particularly indigenous people and Black people, BIPOC people, is nothing new in this country. However, recently the extent of police vio-

lence against indigenous people has grown to such a shocking level that it cannot be ignored by our leaders.

Given that it is our duty to promote reconciliation, the federal government must end the ongoing legacy of settler violence that is being perpetrated through police brutality, and I want to give some examples of that. Between 2017 and 2020, an indigenous person in Canada was 10 times more likely to have been shot and killed by a police officer than a white person was. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association recently reported that while indigenous people make up 5.1% of people living in Canada, they represent 16.2% of people killed in police-involved deaths.

There is no centralized, updated data set that exists that tracks deaths and provides information about the person, location, implicated police service, type of force used and many other contextual details. Much of what we rely on to understand these cases are “official documents” like police oversight body and media releases that contain limited details and tell only a one-sided police narrative, which is something that has often been cited and complained about by the public in Winnipeg with its current independent investigation unit.

Researchers have also found that the use of lethal force by police was on the rise, especially since the start of the pandemic, between 2011 and 2022. Lethal force was 66.5% higher than in the previous decade, with indigenous and Black people being disproportionately impacted.

I share this because it is nothing new. In fact in the last two weeks, we witnessed six cases of police brutality resulting in the deaths of indigenous people. This included cases of unnecessary force in response to people undergoing things like mental health crises; negligence resulting in the death of an unhoused person, like what I witnessed in Winnipeg; a photo of an unsheltered woman being removed by six patrol officers for sleeping on a bench in Winnipeg; and the lethal force used against a 15 year old. To me, it is unconscionable that our society is treating people made most vulnerable by systems with violence rather than uplifting them and treating them as human beings.

I want to give my sympathies to the latest victims' families, and I want to say the victims' names. We must say their names, because they were human beings who were deserving of respect, dignity and human rights, something that was robbed from them and in turn hurt families and those who are left behind. They are Jack Piche, age 31; Hoss Lightning-Saddleback, age 15; Tammy Bateman, a woman in her 30s; Jason West, age 57; and Steven Dedam, age 33.

However, as I said, this is not anything new. In fact, in April 2020, in the city of Winnipeg, three indigenous people were killed in a span of 10 days: Eishia Hudson, age 16; Stewart Kevin Andrews, age 22; and Jason Collins, age 36.

• (2150)

In these cases, the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba laid no criminal charges. It is a unit that has been criticized by the hon. former senator Murray Sinclair.

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Today, just before coming to the debate, I spoke to the family of William Walter Ahmo, who was incarcerated in a provincial jail. The violence against indigenous people does not just happen on the streets with police; it also happens within our penitentiaries. On February 7, William Walter Ahmo had an emotional breakdown after a guard made a racist comment toward him.

Racism is so normalized in our justice system that indigenous people such as the Wet'suwet'en have to listen to racist comments from the RCMP. The Winnipeg city police said it was up to indigenous people to search for their loved ones in a landfill. It was up to us.

It could come from a current city councillor or the officer on guard in the prison making a racist comment to William, a young man struggling with mental health and dealing with intergenerational trauma, and he responded. Fourteen guards brought him down to get him under control, and as a result of excessive force, he lost his life.

This evening I asked his mother, "Can I share your words?" She said, "Do you know how it felt having to watch my son lose his life? It was like having an out-of-body experience, watching my son yell over and over and over again, 'I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe.'"

The chief medical examiner ruled it a homicide. The Court of King's Bench let the guards off.

This is a system that is broken, and the result of these persistent cuts and underfunding of vital social services fall the hardest on indigenous people. For example, Iggy Dedam was the third indigenous person in recent years to be shot and killed by police during a wellness check in New Brunswick. Had he been provided with the health care supports he needed, he probably would be alive today.

In the city of Winnipeg, Tammy Bateman was hit by a police cruiser driving through an encampment at Fort Rouge Park. Putting aside the gross negligence of the officer driving the cruiser, we again see the impacts that the housing crisis has had on indigenous people, many of whom lack a home they can find safety in.

During question period, I asked the Liberal government why the Liberal government is failing to honour its legal obligation to fund health services to first nations youth through Jordan's principle. According to Cindy Blackstock, there are between 40,000 and 80,000 Jordan's principle requests that Indigenous Services Canada has not processed or opened. When first nations children and youth are denied health services they desperately need, they are more likely to encounter police rather than health care professionals when undergoing a mental health crisis, and this is costing lives.

This is not another tragedy: This is elected officials willfully turning a blind eye on a system filled with systemic racism in policing and at all levels of the justice system.

● (2155)

As the late Cathy Merrick said when speaking about William Ahmo's case, "This justice system was not meant for us." I want to honour the late Grand Chief Cathy Merrick this evening.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to

thank my friend and colleague for her moving words, for recognizing the individuals who have been killed and for bringing their voice to Parliament.

At the beginning of her speech, she mentioned the role that the media plays in normalizing violence. I wonder if she could speak a little more about how that impacts what is happening. Also, does she see any role for government to play in the role the media has in normalizing that violence?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of levels to that. One is that it is so normalized, it does not even get covered. The fact is that six indigenous people, within a span of a couple of weeks, lost their lives at the hands of our so-called justice system and it barely made the news.

What is making it worse is the extremist, misinformation, alt-right media outlets that perpetuate racism against indigenous people, including with things like residential school denialism. How we get our media and where our media comes from are just as important as what is covered, and the government needs to do a lot more to deal with the growing misinformation and to become a champion of justice. These are constitutional issues that we are talking about. The violation of human rights is so normalized in this country that it does not even make the news.

● (2200)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I always admire my friend and colleague, the member for Winnipeg Centre, for her vision and great advocacy in ensuring that indigenous peoples' human rights are being upheld, something we do not get to see very often, which we all know is part of the reason we are having this emergency debate.

One of the things that I keep wondering about is what accountability looks like for these people, for the families of these souls we have lost. What will accountability look like for the families of the people the member named in her statement?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot answer what justice will look like for the families and how they will get the justice and closure they need. What I can say is that we have had several major reports, including the aboriginal justice inquiry, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the final report of the TRC.

I do not think we lack responses. We have the responses. I hear the government and the opposition say that we need indigenous people to lead the way. We have led the way. We need governments to respond to calls to action and calls for justice. We need a response if we want to move forward to deal with systemic racism in this country.

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Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to follow up on what my hon. colleague said, it is very clear what MMIWG call for justice 5.4 says. It does not say to maybe at some point look at indigenous policing. It says, “immediately and dramatically transform Indigenous policing”.

I am wondering whether, in her opinion, she thinks that in the nine years the Liberal government has been in power it has done enough to do that.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, my answer to that is certainly no, but if we look at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, there are not just calls to government; there are also calls to police.

There was a study at the status of women committee, and I asked a chief of police if he could name the calls for justice related to policing and he could not. The onus is on everybody. The Prime Minister has called what is going on with murdered and missing indigenous women and girls an ongoing genocide, yet we get incremental responses to deal with that ongoing genocide. That is how normalized systemic violence is to indigenous people.

We can make all these grand statements, but when we want people to ask, we are supposed to be happy with twopence. Meanwhile, our relatives are being killed by police almost on a weekly basis in this country, at least. That is unacceptable.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter into the discussion on such an important issue.

I would just note two things before I begin my remarks.

I appreciate that there is a somberness about the chamber, a seriousness in which this issue has been taken here this evening, and I appreciate the importance of taking these things very seriously. I would suggest, and certainly I know this with myself as well, that there are many issues on which we will show passion, partisanship and that sort of thing, but I believe this is one of those instances in which we see genuine care and concern. Albeit there would be differences with respect to the application of some policies, and we have heard a few of those differences here this evening, I think some of the discussions we have been able to have this evening show the strength of our democratic institutions in being able to respond to this sort of thing and to then reflect on the words.

Of course, the blues do not come out in real time, but when my previous colleague from Manitoba spoke, he shared that although a lot of work has been done, it is about making sure that we, and I am paraphrasing, do not just talk about it: The work actually needs to get done. I could not agree more on ensuring that it does happen.

I would like to start my speech by recognizing those who have lost their lives so tragically in the last number of weeks. I would like to put their names into the record here this evening, as I know a number of my colleagues have done: Steven Dedam, Danny Knife, Hoss Lightning, Jack Piche, Tammy Bateman and Jason West. I acknowledge the trauma and loss to their families, friends and communities, who are all suffering at this time. The youngest was 15 years old.

My kids are not quite there yet, but as a parent, I certainly could not imagine the loss of a child. My heart goes out to those who are hurting. I am certainly praying for them and standing with them as they grieve, and I hope action can be taken to ensure that unnecessary violence like this does not take more lives.

Further, I will not go into details, but to acknowledge that in my home community, and these are very different circumstances, a couple of young men were killed in a car accident the other day. I know it has devastated the community. My wife stopped by the school in the small town in which I live today. These are very different circumstances, so I am not drawing a parallel on that, but rather the fact that loss impacts entire communities, and I know that is in fact the case.

When it comes to the circumstances we are addressing here tonight, they are not new. In fact, I have had the opportunity, not only my time in elected office but also as someone involved in politics who cares deeply for the community and communities in which I have lived, and as a political staffer, to engage with so many across western Canada specifically. I think of my time when I worked for the Government of Saskatchewan, when Brad Wall was the premier of Saskatchewan, and having many conversations.

I will not go into the specifics; I was a staffer sitting in a room with MLAs at the time. After learning about this debate, I took some time to think back to some of those conversations, including hearing from indigenous people and indigenous leaders who shared their challenges and their history very openly, honestly and profoundly, and how impactful that was. I won't get into the specifics, but in a few instances, communities had faced profound loss. I remember specifically a particular instance when three types of groups were meeting with this group of MLAs over the course of a number of days, and one of them was with indigenous leaders, chiefs, band councils and some folks and elders in the community who were very respected.

• (2205)

They shared their perspectives on the loss that these communities had faced. We heard from police, both the leadership and some of the officers, very frank conversations, about what had happened and was happening. There was a particular instance with one individual. As a staffer, trying to facilitate things and take notes, and for those in this place who have been staffers and for those staffers watching, it is sometimes a little chaotic for a political staffer, as I know my colleague was at one time. It was one of those moments where the interaction spoke.

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They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Although it was not a picture that was taken, watching the interactions spoke as much as the words shared during the course of that meeting. It was the sharing of how there had been broken trust with authority figures, which were not limited to but included police. I think back to the look on the face of the individual. It took guts and courage that I could not imagine for this individual to come and speak to this group of elected officials and to share her story. I think back to, again, just watching that. I heard those words, and I will not share any of those specifics, but it took profound courage. The call was to listen, to engage and to ensure that, in particular, her voice and the voices of so many were given the opportunity to be heard and that there would be change brought about as a result.

That interaction will continue to leave a deep impact. As I have reflected over the last number of hours, there is the need to ensure that indigenous people are empowered and are given the opportunity to be a part of that change. I have the honour and the privilege to serve the people of Battle River—Crowfoot. I have mentioned this before. Battle River is named after the Battle River, which is a small, spring-fed river, interestingly enough, that has deep indigenous history.

Crowfoot is named after the famous Chief Crowfoot. While there are lots of places in Calgary named Crowfoot, much of the area where he and his people spent their time were the plains that are now part of the area that I have the honour of representing. I have reflected on this and the rich history and the lessons that can be taught.

This will not be a surprise, and I know many members and others have heard me talk about farming, but I am proud to be part of a multi-generational family farm. It is a little too wet to be combining today, but my dad is hoping that he can get into the field tomorrow. We have a number of fields adjacent to some native prairie land, grassland that is thousands of years old. For time immemorial it has been grassland. In fact, the roots of that grass go down, in some cases, 20 to 30 feet into the earth, and it is absolutely incredible nutritional value alone for livestock, for cattle, and, of course, for the buffalo that preceded settlers heading west.

What is interesting and the reason I share this, is the profound impact when we look at the sky in a rural area when we are farming, in particular when we are near an area where we knew that it was not that many years ago, in the context of time. We have the opportunity to see the same stars that would have provided guidance to people who traversed these lands not that long ago.

In fact, I was sharing this with my children because there are a number of historic cairns in the area that the Spencer Historical Sites Society erected. In particular, there were two cairns dedicated to the North West Mounted Police, which is now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I would note that we have a history in this country, and while there is a lot of bad, there are things that set us apart from, and compared to, the Americans. I would note one thing that set us apart was the fact that we did not go in with the military, when that was the story of many of the relationships with indigenous people south of the 49th parallel.

• (2210)

Now, I am not saying there is not bad there. I am not saying that at all, but what I am suggesting is that we have seen how we can work together. We look at the history; in particular, one of these cairns is where there was the coming into force of Treaty 6 at Sounding Lake, which is a dry lake bed. It is filled on wet years and dry on dry years. There is known to be lots of grassland in that area. It is quite a large lake, at least for rural Alberta, where our lakes are quite different from some of the lakes we would find around here or in the mountains. Reading this cairn, it talks about how there were up to 10,000 people, the vast majority of whom were indigenous peoples, at the coming into force of Treaty 6, in particular. About a mile from that location there is a cairn that marks some former barracks of the North-West Mounted Police. There is an opportunity to see that as working together. That was seen at the time as a hopeful moment, and certainly there have been many broken promises since the late 1800s when those agreements were signed.

We can look back in history. I anticipate truth and reconciliation day, of course, coming at the end of this month. I am looking forward to being in the constituency on that day, although there is not a huge number of flights. It will probably have to be a red-eye coming back that night. However, it is profound, because I took my kids to share some of the rich indigenous history across east central Alberta, and there were two things in particular that stood out. One was Dry Island Buffalo Jump and its history. For 3,000 years, they think, up until just a few hundred years ago, a time that is hard to imagine, that area was a sacred space. There are the Ribstones and the Manitou Stone, which ongoing work is being done on. That stone comes from my area.

The reason I share those things is that we see tragedy and we see families that are broken as a result of institutions that are not working properly. We need to show care and compassion, and we need to figure out how to empower those individuals, who have an absolutely incredible history, with an ability to see justice that may look a bit different from what some in this place think it should, in terms of what that looks like, and I had that opportunity just last week. With Police Chief LaGrange in Camrose, along with my provincial counterparts, the provincial ministers of justice and of public safety, I had the opportunity to attend the Alberta Community Justice Awards hosted in the beautiful city of Camrose, which I have the honour of representing.

It was interesting, and this was not planned, that when I was asked to speak about this very important issue, I started reading through the biographies of the award recipients, and a number of them are showing how we can incorporate restorative justice and indigenous history, ensuring that there are community-led solutions so we can reduce the number of these tragedies and make sure that victims are supported.

One of the tragedies that exists is the number of victims who are not getting the support they need. We look at some of the other major issues that we are facing. My colleague the shadow minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations, from the Conservative side, talked earlier about the need for indigenous-led solutions for policing. The need for that is absolute. In the meantime, there are contracts, and he dove into some of the details about the tripartite agreements that exist and how there need to be some changes to those sorts of things, to ensure they are reflective of the modern reality.

● (2215)

In the midst of all that, the key is to ensure that we are listening to the community leaders, who are truly able to inform us of what is happening on the ground. As mentioned by a number of my colleagues, an Ottawa-knows-best solution is not needed. What is needed is to ensure that indigenous people are empowered.

I have spoken to indigenous leaders over the last couple of years, and I know the leader of the official opposition, the member for Carleton, has talked a lot about ensuring that indigenous communities across Canada are empowered. In particular, he has talked a lot about the policy platform in relation to resource development and making sure that indigenous people have the opportunity to benefit, to be the architects of their future, to not be held up by gatekeepers or by a bloated bureaucracy that does not understand the reality on the ground or the customs and demands of local communities and to make sure that people are ultimately empowered.

A massive issue has been ensuring that we are able to address some of the challenges in relation to addiction. I am sure my colleague, the shadow minister for Addictions, will have an opportunity to speak more about this, but we need give the opportunity in an indigenous-specific way. Each community will probably look at that differently, and that is okay. We should not be afraid of that. The worst thing that could happen is an Ottawa-knows-best approach that does not reflect the reality of what communities need. We need to ensure there is an opportunity, as the leader of the official opposition talks about, to ensure that we can bring our loved ones home. That is a need for every segment of those who call Canada home. That is very needed. I have talked to folks in indigenous communities who want to see that.

I know there were examples shared like banning drugs and needing searches. In fact, I made a note that it was mentioned earlier about a particular airport in this country for some of the fly-in communities in northern Ontario. It is a practical solution, which I hope will be acted on. It is something that seems too simple not to act on, although sometimes the “too simple” stuff in Ottawa seems to be the stuff that is unnecessarily complicated.

A suggestion was made earlier by a colleague from another party that when we fly with Air Canada in and out of a particular airport, which happened to be Thunder Bay that he was referring to, we have to go through security, like we all do when we fly to the nation's capital to go to work. It was the first time I had heard this, so I will share this with a few different people in the room now. It turns out that there are no searches on planes that go into these fly-in communities when they are not through that particular terminal. It seems to me, and the suggestion was made, that those searches should take place. There should be a basic level of security, and that

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is something that Transport Canada could simply get on, and that would help stop the flow of drugs, these toxic poisons, from a centre into those fly-in communities.

In the couple of minutes I have left, I would just note that the miscarriage of justice is an important issue, to ensure that we have action taken for those who have not been served well by a justice system. We need to have a system across the board, whether that is the police or not, including in those in indigenous communities. We need to have a court system. We need to have treatment for those who are facing addiction. We need to have a whole cross-section of what the system is in our country. It needs to reflect the realities that Canadians are facing because increasingly, there are tragedies like this that remind us there are those who are falling through the cracks.

I believe that colleagues from all parties this evening have reminded us that it is time for us not only to talk about the solutions, but also to make sure we act on them. I would suggest that the simple solution to that is for us to empower these communities because they are the ones with the answers that can truly make transformative change so that we do not need to have these sorts of debates again.

● (2220)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the debate this evening, one of the things that crosses my mind is that we have the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. As with all other standing committees, there is always an agenda set. There are individuals such as the national chief of the AFN, Cindy Woodhouse, who has always been a very strong advocate for indigenous policing. As well, I know the member for Sydney—Victoria moved a motion at that standing committee saying that we should be conducting a study on the issue.

The member opposite knows having an emergency debate is not that common on the floor of the House of Commons, especially on this issue. Given that we are having this debate tonight, would he not agree that the standing committee should look at what has been suggested by the member for Sydney—Victoria so we can actually have that committee deal with what is being talked about this evening?

It seems all members, all parties, want to see something happen on the issue. Would the member not agree this is something that should be bumped onto the study agenda? I understand there is a pecking order among the different political parties, but all political parties seem to see this as a very important issue, to the degree that we are having an emergency debate on it. Would he not agree that this should be a priority for the committee given there is a motion before it to deal with the issue?

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• (2225)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I am not a regular member of that committee. I have had the opportunity to be a part of a number of those meetings. It has been interesting because a number of the government members have stood up this evening to talk about all the great things they have done, yet I have an Auditor General's report in front of me that talks about how, while they are great at making announcements, they are certainly not great at following through on ensuring the things they have announced actually result in deliverables. This is not limited to indigenous peoples, but it has devastating effects, as we are seeing here.

I hope that member would go to his members of that committee and encourage them to take an approach that would allow for this to take place, and not just to the parliamentary secretary he referenced. When it comes to the circumstances we are talking about here, these tragic deaths, or violent crime in general across the country, which I know first nations are disproportionately affected by, there is a need to take action. Unfortunately, the government talks about action, but when it comes to following through, even the Auditor General says it just simply does not have that follow-through. It is not just Conservatives who say this.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, as a member of the indigenous and northern affairs committee, I would like to confirm that we have studied policing of indigenous peoples in Canada. There have been multiple reports already. We have great reports such as the MMIWG calls for justice as well as the TRC's calls to action. I agree with the member completely that it is time for action, not more reports or more recommendations. There are enough of those.

One of the tangible solutions, which we need to remind the House was offered, is for core funding to be given to indigenous policing. It is really quite unfortunate how, for example, it has become a part of a systemic racism that the RCMP is core funded. It does not need to negotiate to the same level as indigenous policing organizations, whereas it is that much more of a struggle for indigenous policing.

Does the member agree that that is part of the systemic racism that needs to be addressed so we see core funding being provided to indigenous peoples to police themselves?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I use a reference quite often about action being where the rubber hits the road. It is about actually getting stuff done. It is interesting that my colleague, as a member of the indigenous and northern affairs committee, answered the parliamentary secretary's question. It is not time for more reports. I know there are the 94 calls to action from the TRC. I believe there are 231 calls for justice from the murdered and missing indigenous women inquiry. It is time to make sure that action happens when it comes to policing.

I will be the first to admit that I am not an expert on the models and whatnot that need to happen, but that is where indigenous communities need to be the ones that lead the conversation to ensure that they have what they need, whether it is funding, institutions or justice supports, to ensure that they are set up for success. I can also share that I have spoken to some indigenous leaders who have said this stuff has to be done right, and it has to be done right in partner-

ship with those indigenous communities because there would be nothing worse than for a system to be brought in that is dictated from an office tower in a capital city that then ends up failing. Imagine the pain and the hurt of not only facing the challenges they face from historical institutions, but also not doing it right with an attempt to fix an institution. Members can imagine the trauma that would be associated with that.

To the member's exact point, we need to make sure that this is addressed in a way that actually gets the job done so that indigenous communities are able to be empowered in a way that makes sure that not only do these sorts of tragedies do not happen, but also that indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast are well served.

• (2230)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for sharing some of the history of the land he represents, as well as the history of the name of his riding. It was actually quite interesting.

One of the things I have found very shocking and frustrating, as I have listened to countless speeches from the Liberal government on this, is the way that the government brags about all the money that it has committed. As my colleague highlighted in his speech, the Auditor General's report is pretty clear that the government has spent money, but with no results. My colleague mentioned the Auditor General's report, and he does tend to go through those pretty thoroughly.

I am just wondering if he has any further insights that he could share with us about how this is just another case of the Liberals promising while patting themselves on the back, giving an Ottawa-knows-best answer, yet when push comes to shove, there are no real results. We still have first nations communities across the country that do not have clean drinking water after nine years.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, after reading this report from the Auditor General, I see how it is damning that, while money is being allocated and, in many cases, spent, it is not ending up where it needs to be.

I would simply share, related directly to this, but on the justice file specifically, how the FSIN in Saskatchewan has talked about an example of this would be in relation to the parole board. I have had the opportunity to meet with various leaders over the course of my time. Although the Liberals talk about all the great things they do, including in relation to the justice system, the real consequences of what they have delivered is death and destruction in communities. This is not something that I am simply making up or embellishing. It is absolutely astonishing to read the words of the FSIN. It is taking on the dollar question and how that affects the lives of indigenous peoples. It has resulted in absolute tragedy.

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We have to do better as a Parliament and as a government to ensure that dollars are spent, whether it is for core administration, respecting indigenous communities or making sure that communities are empowered. We have got to do better. We owe it to indigenous communities across the country to make sure it happens.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I would like to begin tonight by thanking my colleague, the member for Nunavut, for calling for this debate.

Being one of only a handful of first nations MPs who have had the honour of serving in the House of Commons while living on a first nations reserve is something that I am proud of, but I often feel like I have to give context to the lived experience that it comes with, when we are talking about important issues like we are talking about tonight. I do not want to generalize the experience of all first nations across Canada. I can only share what I have grown up understanding and knowing: Far too often, the essential services provided to many Canadians are not the same services provided to first nations communities.

I want to share the moment when I realized this, which was at a young age. I woke up at the crack of dawn, like many other Canadians across this country on a Saturday, to go play hockey. On the way, outside the reserve, someone holding a knife covered in blood stopped me and my father and said, “I need you to take me to the police station. I have just stabbed someone in a fight, and I need to go to the police station and tell my side of the story.”

Shockingly enough, at my young age, I watched my father ask the man to get in the truck, which did not have a back seat. I was there in that truck, going to the police station. I watched as the man went in to give his report, and then the police talked to my father afterwards. Getting to the rink, I told my friends why I was late for the game, and I heard the shock from them when I told them the story of what had happened.

As tragic as this story is, one of the things I always think about is that I am one of the lucky ones. I am from one of the lucky first nations communities in Canada. I could go to the community and see a police station there and have a police presence in the community. Far too many first nations across this country do not have that service.

I think we can all agree that everyone in Canada deserves a well-funded, culturally sensitive and respectful policing service. While first nations and Inuit policing programs fund about 65% of all indigenous communities, there are still far too many that go without it, yet our federal budgets have included more than \$1.5 billion in terms of money going towards indigenous policing and justice strategies since I have had the honour of being an MP here.

However, I really want to talk about tangible solutions. We need to have this debate tonight, but we need to wake up tomorrow with solutions so we can better the lives of first nations communities and indigenous communities across Canada. So far tonight, we have heard a lot of really nice words from a lot of very smart people, but those who have had deaths in their communities do not want words during this difficult time; they want action.

Often when these events have happened in the Atlantic, I have had to pick up the phone and call chiefs, many of whom were my friends growing up, such as Chief Ward and Chief Arren Sock, whom I recently talked to last week and who shared the story of what had happened in his community. I heard the frustration in his voice at what had transpired. It is because of conversations like this and conversations I have had with National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, who has told me over and over again, that indigenous policing should be essential for every community. I said that I agreed.

With the support of my colleagues, I tabled a motion in April 2024 that called on the indigenous and northern affairs committee to do a study on essential services of public safety. The study should examine how federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions can work collaboratively with indigenous governments to advance the safety of their community members. Let us not pretend that this is only a federal issue; the provincial governments have a part to play here, and we need them to be partners at the table. However, the study should also look at what obstacles and systemic racism within the justice system are there, and what barriers exist that prevent indigenous people from becoming law enforcement officers.

• (2235)

It has been there since April, and I know that there is a pecking order. However, I think that with the events that have happened, we need to start looking at speeding up the study and hearing directly from community members. I believe that the best type of indigenous policing legislation we could get to would involve indigenous voices. I believe that it should be done in collaboration with indigenous people, that we should hear from them.

I believe and hope that all parties would give consideration to a unanimous consent motion tonight, or a motion at our committee that would make this the next study on the agenda after the legislation that we need to get through on first nations clean water and the Haida legislation as well. These are important pieces of legislation, but in terms of study, I cannot think of a more important one to our first nations leaders, our indigenous leaders across Canada, to get to than this report on indigenous policing, considering what has been going on over the summer.

I know from conversations I have had that we do not need a study to tell us what first nations leaders have been telling me for the past year, that we need more indigenous police officers. Tonight I talked to Chief Norman Bernard from Wagmatcook, who stated that far too many first nations police hopefuls are being turned away. They pass all the physical tests and all the intellectual tests, and then they are screened out in interview processes that provide barriers to their inclusion.

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I know many Mi'kmaw individuals, leaders in their community, young leaders who were fit enough and who were smart enough, but for some reason, they were turned away when it came time for interviews with the RCMP. I talked to current RCMP officers like Jason Bernard from my community of Eskasoni, who said one of the reasons he was able to become an RCMP officer was that the people who were interviewing him were Mi'kmaw people as well, and that when he went to the depot in Regina, he had a large number of Mi'kmaq who went with him. They supported each other, making sure that they got through this process. Hearing those things, I am asking, why can we not do that today? Why can we not do that now at the RCMP depot? Why can we not do this?

I also spoke to Chief Leroy Denny, from Eskasoni tonight, who at one point worked for the Unama'ki tribal police as a jail guard. He remembers a time when every Mi'kmaw police officer in that community spoke the Mi'kmaw language, but that was 20 years ago.

Today, in his community, he refuses to sign any further deals with the RCMP, because of the lack of Mi'kmaw-speaking officers and support for his community. He said to me that when someone is under duress, when someone is in a time of crisis, the difference between someone who speaks to their language coming to their door and someone who is a stranger can be the difference between life and death. I support what Chief Leroy has said.

I think that we require urgency and initiatives to ensure that indigenous language speakers are given priority in terms of what we are doing moving forward with indigenous policing and training, an entire platoon or squad of fluent indigenous language speakers given the opportunity and the appropriate training to ensure that tragedies like what have happened over the past few weeks would never happen again.

We also have the ability to hear from indigenous leaders across Canada in the study I proposed in INAN in the spring. Once important legislation has gone through, we should be getting to that study. I ask all members and all parties that are part of INAN to support that. It is too important; it is too urgent, and we need to move forward.

I look to all my colleagues for a non-partisan approach. Let us work together and ensure that we get this indigenous policing study under way and we take immediate steps to ensure that indigenous language speakers are given priority in our recruiting efforts. Let us not let this debate be in vain. Let us look for tangible solutions we can all agree with.

• (2240)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I appreciate the work the member does at the indigenous and northern affairs committee. We have something in common, in that we are both indigenous, from indigenous communities, and I think we have had very similar experiences with colonialism and the impacts of genocidal policies on indigenous peoples. As politicians, we also get to listen to all the politicking that goes on, not just in Ottawa, and how that impacts our constituents in our communities. We have already had enough studies and reports. Part of the wording that I used when I called for the emergency debate is that there has been report after

report and recommendation after recommendation. It is time for action.

Can the member commit to ensuring with the current Liberal government that we will finally see tangible results because of the actual implementation of the MMIWG calls for justice, as well as the TRC calls to action?

• (2245)

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member ensured that we had this debate tonight, and I appreciate her work at INAN.

One thing I agree with 100% is that we need action, and I have given tangible solutions on what kind of action we could go with today, moving forward and talking to our ministers. I would also state that every single time we go forward on legislation or something else, there will always be communities that will say, "I was not consulted. I was not given the opportunity. I want to be able to share my experience."

We can have a dual approach to putting forward tangible action, which \$1.5 billion has gone into, and hearing from those first nations leaders with the tangible results going at the same time. This ensures not only that we are moving forward but also that we are hearing from the people we need to hear from. It is not a colonial approach; rather, it is one that comes from the grassroots communities. We are hearing from chiefs who are struggling with this issue every single day in their communities and are looking to us for help.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague stressed the need for action, and we are aligned on this. There are countless reports and studies and calls for justice and calls to action. I am going to cite call for justice 5.4 from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It is very clear in its language. It states:

...to immediately and dramatically transform Indigenous policing from its current state as a mere delegation to an exercise in self-governance and self-determination over policing. To do this, the federal government's First Nations Policing Program must be replaced with a new legislative and funding framework...

It goes on. Here we are in 2024, after nine years of the current government. When will we actually see action on this call to justice?

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Mr. Speaker, when we quote studies, it is an important thing to talk about the overall general principle of what they want to do. We heard in what the member opposite said that they want to have legislation. Well, the best way to get to legislation is sitting down with first nations and indigenous leaders across this country, talking to them about that and saying what we are doing moving forward.

However, I do not believe it is the case that we have had enough studies, that we have had enough ideas and that we have heard enough. This is especially the case because, as federal members of Parliament, we can do what we need to do, but we also need the provinces to come to the table. We need the provinces to say they are going to meet us there, where federal, provincial and first nations leaders are moving forward with ideas. We need to make sure that the province has buy-in.

I have been talking to the Minister of Public Safety, and this is one of the challenges that we have run into. Therefore, I appreciate the member's question, but I also understand that, every single time we go into committee studies or committee legislation, there will always be those who feel they have not been heard. Before I say that we are going to move forward with an approach, I want to make sure that we have heard from those voices. That is the biggest part of making sure that these processes are not colonial and that they are done in collaboration and co-development with our first nations partners. I know we have a national chief who is willing to move forward on that.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Nunavut for raising this topic this evening. After reading the letter that the member for Nunavut put forward in asking for this emergency debate under Standing Order 52(2), the first thing I would like to say is that I want to express my condolences, and the condolences of everyone in my riding and in the city that I live in, for these individuals who are no longer with us. We all know, as parliamentarians, that life is so precious. Life is very special. As a person of deep faith, if I can use the term, in the context of modern times, every single life is precious. Every single life is to be lived to its fullest. These individuals have perished. In 11 days, six first nations people were killed. That is a tragedy. I even want to add that not seeing the coverage in the media that it perhaps should have received much more thoroughly is obviously disappointing. To the member of Nunavut, I thank her again.

I am a member of Parliament from a very urban riding in Ontario that borders the city of Toronto but my roots are in small-town British Columbia, on the north coast of B.C. and Prince Rupert. As the member for New Westminster—Burnaby knows, up in northern British Columbia there is a very rich history, dating back millennia, of first nations people.

Growing up, in terms of my interaction with and learning about first nations people and what they have gone through, we did not comprehend the colonialism, the systemic barriers, the racism, the residential schools, that many of these individuals were put through and that the communities were put through. It is absolutely horrendous. Over the last eight or nine years our government, as well as governments prior to ours, has done a lot to work with and build a nation-to-nation relationship with first nations and indigenous peoples. I am very proud of that, but there is obviously much work to be done still.

I want to begin my remarks this evening by thanking the member for Nunavut again for the opportunity to discuss this important issue. I acknowledge her advocacy in seeking ways that we can work together to meaningfully address the challenges facing the first nations and Inuit policing program. I recognize, and I do not need this

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written for me, that the current state is completely and utterly unacceptable.

The government has offered additional funding for uniformed officers and equipment, including 17 additional officers for the Treaty Three Police Service, the UCCM Anishnaabe Police Service, and eight additional officers for Anishinabek Police Services. However, we know that we need to continue to work with these police services to ensure our full understanding of their concerns, including where improvements can be made to the program, and collaborate on a true path forward. We must recognize that the funding issues highlighted by specific police services are indicative of our larger program challenges, which is why the Prime Minister has mandated the Minister of Public Safety to continue to co-develop legislation that recognizes first nations policing as an essential service.

Important work in this area is under way, and the Government of Canada continues to work with first nations partners. We heard, through the Government of Canada's engagement, the many challenges faced by first nations police services, including access to stable, sustainable and equitable funding. The co-development of this legislation is our opportunity to change the status quo to better meet the needs of communities and to transform first nations policing to a more sustainable model, one that is well-funded and respectful of the communities it serves. While the co-development of a legislative framework for indigenous policing is a key responsibility of our government, it must also be done in partnership with provinces and territories, given their role as regulators and funders in this area. First nations communities, like all communities in Canada, should be places where people and families feel safe and secure. That is a fundamental duty of any government.

• (2250)

Every first nations individual, wherever they live here in Canada, in whatever community, needs to feel safe and secure. I tell my residents all the time that we live in a great city. We are safe. We have the York Regional Police department. Whatever challenges we have, we can face them together. We are a great city, a great province and a great country. If we have this nation-to-nation relationship, the first nations need to feel safe and secure in their communities.

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A properly funded, culturally sensitive and respectful police service is essential for community safety and well-being. In addition, in order to support safer indigenous communities, budget 2021 provided the mandate to stabilize the FNIPP by adding new officers to existing self-administered police services, expand the FNIPP by creating new first nations police services, transition some community tripartite agreements to self-administered agreements, provide dedicated funding for community safety officers and provide dedicated funding for community consultative groups.

Budget 2021 provided new funding in the amount of \$540 million over five years and \$120 million ongoing. Most of that funding is being dedicated to self-administered police services; it will allow the services to add new officers and sustain investments in training and equipment. For the first time, it includes an escalator of 2.75% to help mitigate the cost of inflation.

The FNIPP aims to provide culturally responsive policing services, which are being established in many first nations communities that would not otherwise have a dedicated on-site policing presence. However, the issues raised earlier by my colleague are valued. They serve as a reminder that we have a long way to go when it comes to reconciliation. That is why our government remains committed to continuing this important work in partnership and in collaboration together with indigenous communities, based on respect for community needs.

While change does not occur overnight, meaningful actions have been taken to date, and our government remains committed to supporting community safety improvements and advancing reconciliation with indigenous people. I can read a few simple stats with regard to the FNIPP: There is \$181 million under the first nations and Inuit policing program to support 1,410 officers in over 426 indigenous communities in Canada; \$43.7 million for first nations policing to recognize first nations policing as an essential service; \$540.3 million and \$126.8 million ongoing to support indigenous communities currently served under the first nations and Inuit policing; and finally, \$108.6 million over five years to repair, renovate and replace policing facilities in first nations and Inuit communities.

We tend to rise in the House and speak about programs, our opinions, the economy and what is happening in our communities. Earlier today, I had the opportunity to ask a question of the Deputy Prime Minister and finance minister, which is always an honour for me to do. It is a privilege to be in the House, and earlier this afternoon, I had the opportunity to speak on Bill C-71 with reference to a piece of immigration policy for lost Canadians. There was a bit of debate. There is unanimity among us, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois, the three parties there, and the official opposition is on another side, pursuing another path, and that is fine. That is what our parliamentary process involves. That is what debate is about, bringing forth our ideas and sharing opinions.

This evening, with regard to this debate, to be honest, I rather wish we were not here tonight and that this debate was not taking place. All of these individuals' circumstances are unique, and I hope there is a full investigation, obviously, into what has gone on. We ask in some terms from economic business if this is a cluster of this. How could such things happen in an 11-day period? I hope that, in the days to come, we do not read about these stories. I un-

derstand that these stories do not happen and these events do not happen. I understand there is a desire to bring this to committee and to have it studied. Obviously, for those individuals who sit on the indigenous services committee, or INAN, I encourage them to do the work that a committee does. Committees are destinies of their own domain, as we always indicate from all parties, because more work needs to be done.

Indigenous communities and indigenous people deserve better all the time.

With that, I thank the Speaker for his attention. It is great to see him. I hope he and his family are doing well. To my hon. colleagues tonight, good evening.

• (2255)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, this being my first opportunity to intervene in the debate this evening, I want to start by thanking the member for Nunavut for bringing forward this emergency debate.

In her interventions, I heard her differentiate between more studies and action. Specifically, I heard her call out the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. The government has actually been so slow at moving forward on those calls to action that the Yellowhead Institute has even stopped reporting back on them.

If we are going to be serious about this being an emergency debate, we should be listening to what the member for Nunavut is putting forward, which is to push for action that indigenous leaders have already made clear they want to see. Those are the calls to action of the TRC. It should be imperative for all of us to work together to make progress on them more quickly.

My question for the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge is this: What is he willing to do, alongside MPs from all parties, to make progress on the TRC's calls to action more quickly, as the member for Nunavut has called for?

• (2300)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to see the member for Kitchener Centre this evening. Through you, I hope he is doing well.

With respect to how fast the government is moving on the calls to action of the TRC and other reports, obviously we are working diligently with indigenous communities across the country. A number of agreements have been signed, such as the agreement on, I think, Jordan's principle. If I am misspeaking, I excuse myself. A number of settlements have been reached with indigenous communities.

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We need to continue to work together. It is a nation-to-nation relationship. We need to collaborate and work together. At the same time, we need to ensure that this type of debate does not happen again anytime soon, or ever, and that these individuals are safe and secure in their communities when they call the police or the police respond, especially in a circumstance when there may be mental health issues or other issues at play there.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is also my first opportunity to make an intervention.

I heard the member's speech. The reality is this: He can rattle off some dollars and then say that the government is doing something. The truth is that it is not doing enough. The truth is that the action is not yielding the results. In fact, there has been very little action. We already know that the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls for action is a failure. We also know that this is the case with the calls for justice for the missing, murdered and indigenous women and girls, to the point where people are now asking, "What is the point?" The government is not taking the necessary actions, and we see death, such as what we are seeing right now, in just two weeks, the last 15 days. This is the reality that indigenous people are faced with.

My question for the member is this: Instead of saying that we should send this for study at a committee, can he tell us what the government is doing to implement all of the TRC's recommendations, and what timeline will it give for that implementation?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Vancouver East, and if I misspoke the name of the riding, please excuse me, used some very strong language with respect to "failure" and so forth. I want to say that I fundamentally disagree with the hon. member's viewpoint on that.

Our government has been diligent. Our government's first and most important priority is the relationship with first nations, which is a nation-to-nation relationship. To say that there have been failures and shortcomings, I will be as polite as I can be on that. Our government and the ministers have worked very diligently with first nations people in building this nation-to-nation relationship. It does not happen overnight. This is a system that is in place.

What is going on is obviously something long-standing. The issues faced by first nations people did not happen overnight, but over many decades, if not centuries. To make sure we get this right requires diligence, co-operation, collaboration, looking at things in a positive manner and taking action, which our government has been doing over the past number of years.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to signal that I am going to be sharing my time with the member for, and my colleague from, Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

As I rise today to speak to the sad topic of this emergency debate, I would like to recognize the six indigenous individuals who unfortunately lost their lives. Specifically, Steven "Iggy" Dedam, Danny Knife, Hoss Lightning-Saddleback, Jack Piche, Tammy Bateman and Jason West. I want to acknowledge the challenge, the trauma and the difficulty for the communities as a whole and for the families of those individuals.

When someone dies, it is not just that the person is no longer there. There are ripples felt through the community as a whole. As I was preparing for this, I took it upon myself to read through some of the obituaries of the people who passed away because I find that is a piece that brings me solace. It is sad. There are kids who are going to grow up without their parents. There are parents who will not get to raise their children. It just bothers me.

One of the chiefs I have had the immense pleasure of getting to know is a very well-known elder. The most impactful thing this person, Chief Dr. Willie Littlechild, has taught me is that it is not just reconciliation, it is "reconciliation". It is about action, and without action, words are effectively meaningless. He is an individual whom I have immense respect for.

This is one of the pieces that really drives me crazy, as we sit here in these emergency debates, after nine years of a government that says this is its number one priority, yet it cannot show concrete action. It can show dollars spent, but it cannot show results achieved. I am going to give them some pointers of some places I think its members could go to if they were interested in taking steps toward this. One very clear step they could take is to explore the concepts around indigenous policing. It has existed since, I think, 1993.

In my home province of Alberta, there are three indigenous policing services. There is the Blood Tribe Police Service on the Kainai First Nation. There is Lakeshore Regional Police Service, which actually services five first nations in northwestern Alberta: the Sawridge First Nation, Swan River First Nation, Driftpile Cree Nation, Sucker Creek First Nation and Kapawe'no First Nation. There is also the Tsuut'ina Nation Police Service, which is on the the Tsuut'ina reserve, and it borders on Calgary.

One of the interesting challenges with these contracts from the federal side, which are tripartite agreements between the province, the nation and the federal government, is that in my home province of Alberta, they have moved to longer-term, three-year funding contracts that provide more stability for those policing services to make long-term decisions, to hire and to operate, but they have to come, cap in hand, every single year to the federal government with their contracts to get their funding. This has to be done every single year. There are no long-term funding agreements put in place like we see with other policing services. This is a place where we could start.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the signing of Treaty No. 8. It started to be signed on June 21, just south of Grouard, Alberta, and ended on August 14, 1899, in Wabasca. It is 840,000 square kilometres through northern British Columbia, northern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan and even parts of southern Northwest Territories. I share this because I grew up in the territory of Treaty No. 8. This summer, I had the immense opportunity to travel across communities in Treaty No. 8, to meet with individuals, to hear their stories, to really engage and to learn what the treaty meant and what it means to them today.

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• (2305)

This is one of the pieces where the rubber has not hit the road. After nine years of the Liberal government, we are seeing increasing crime and an increasing severity of crime. We are seeing failure upon failure because of catch-and-release policies that are letting violent offenders back into the community. We are seeing failures as a direct result of the absolutely wacko drug policies that have been put forward by the NDP-Liberal government, which have effectively legalized drugs such as crack, cocaine, meth and heroin in the province of British Columbia.

It is pure insanity and it has real consequences. It bothers me because the government sits there and pats itself on the back, showing time after time that it is so proud of the money it has spent. However, the Auditor General has been very clear that the money spent has not resulted in actual outcomes.

I will quote some of the AG's report on first nations policing in Canada; it says, "Public Safety Canada did not know the full demand of the program. The department has no application process for First Nations and Inuit communities that wanted to join the program". There is no application program. The government has no way of knowing who wants to join. That is a failure.

Next, "The RCMP did not consistently deliver on its responsibilities under the program". Furthermore, "First Nations and Inuit communities are signing agreements with the expectation of having dedicated and tailored policing services, but the RCMP may not be able to meet those terms of the agreement."

Then, there is the real kicker: "No information on program effectiveness".

The government has this program. It spends all kinds of money on it. It creates an expectation that it will deliver a service. In the end, it has no metrics to say whether it is a success. We know it is not a success. Crime is up across this country. That is a direct result of the failure of the NDP-Liberal government to protect Canadians and keep us safe over the last nine years. People are scared in their communities, and it is a direct result of failed policy after failed policy.

This is a space where we are at yet another emergency debate to discuss people who have tragically lost their lives. We do not hear about any actual concrete action from the Liberal government or difference as to what it is going to do. We do not have a minister coming in here, presenting some big policy plank. The Liberals make promises, pat themselves on the back for all the money they have spent, but money is not going to get them out of this problem. They need to make sure that it is being spent properly.

Ottawa does not know best. This is something I am going to repeat. Ottawa shows up and screws it up more often than it fixes things. When I am in my riding and talking to people, they are very clear with me that Ottawa makes more wrong decisions than right ones. We need indigenous-led, nation-to-nation conversations about actual spaces where we could see true reform and reconciliation.

I have had enough of these emergency debates, where we sit here and hear the government patting itself on the back when we are clearly here because there has been an emergency. With that, I real-

ly hope we can see some action from the Liberals, but I am not hopeful.

• (2310)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I tend to say it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, but today is no such day. We are not here debating legislation. We are here because an emergency debate was called. I certainly did not envision myself speaking here at a quarter after 11 when I walked in here at 10:45 this morning, but obviously this is a very serious matter.

Before I begin, I want to recognize another sombre issue, and that is the passing of a constituent by the name of Jim Babcock. Jim was the father to one of my elementary and high school friends Jason and to Eric, and was husband to Mona. He passed away over the summer. I still have fond memories of him supervising me on my grade 6 trip to McQueen Lake. I send my deepest condolences to his family. May perpetual light shine upon him.

I want to express my condolences to the family members who lost a loved one after six people were taken. It is obviously very difficult. They were somebody's children. They had brothers and sisters. In this House, I often reflect on people who have passed because I believe that these things should be recognized, as we are doing with this debate, and anytime a life is lost, I think about how I would feel if it was one of my children or one of my siblings. In my wife's family, she has two indigenous siblings, so these types of issues hit home for me more than they did before I met my wife.

I can reflect back on my time as a parole officer. That was my first career, when I was only 22 years old. Interestingly enough, I was speaking with a man who is now the Minister of Agriculture. He was actually the Solicitor General at the time, and he was kind enough to come and say hello. I do not think he remembers that he was my boss when I was only 22, but he is still here gracing us with his presence.

That was probably the first time I ever learned about residential schools. I still remember that the first person to really tell me about them was a person by the name of Russell Casimir, who I just ran into at the signing of a sacred covenant between the Archdiocese of Vancouver, the Diocese of Kamloops and the people of Tkemlúps te Secwépemc. I think it is the first covenant of its kind in Canada. It is about moving forward documents and history.

Russell talked to me about residential schools, and that was when I first started to learn about different culture, indigenous culture, particularly about the Secwépemc people, understanding things about sweat lodges and smudging. I realized that when one lives in a small community, like so many small indigenous communities, the loss experienced is so much more profound when there is a loss, particularly a loss that is unexpected. It is obviously that these losses are going to be very difficult.

When we have these emergency debates, we have to ask where our leadership is going to come from. I know where I have seen leadership in indigenous communities. One of the people who taught me a number of lessons was my indigenous law professor Paul Chartrand. He taught me at the University of Saskatchewan. There was a lesson he instilled in me, probably in 2006. I looked him up and he is still practising law by the looks of it. He said that if we want to know if something is working, we should ask the people on the ground.

That is why in my prior critic roles, for instance, I have gone to a number of jails. I do not need to speak to an executive to hear about how things are going. I want to hear from the people who are actually on the ground, the people who are impacted. Often, we will resort to listening to people in ivory towers, like a minister, a deputy minister or high-level bureaucrat, and we forget that the people on the ground are the ones impacted.

● (2315)

A good friend of mine, Renzo Caron, has shown me an example as a lawyer. His mom went to residential school. In fact, I think his sister was the first indigenous surgeon in Canada. People like Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir show so much leadership to me. The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake talked about reconciliation; these are people who, in my view, are putting reconciliation into effect.

A lot has been talked about when it comes to first nations or indigenous policing today. I have had a lot of experience with that. We have what is called the Tk'emlúps rural detachment, which is on the territory of the Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc. Most of the officers are indigenous. Members may say, "Okay, well, how does that impact you?" Well, I sat down with one of the officers. I had asked him whether could we have a meeting. I wanted to talk with him about leadership within his community and talk about politics. How did these things impact him and how could that officer be influential within his own community? I was also fortunate to have another officer, Corporal Jim Toye, come to my class when I taught sociology to talk about what it was like to be an indigenous police officer.

Most people here know that I was previously a prosecutor. However, two cases that I worked on are, I think, opposite of the debate that we are having. One was a young girl; she was 12 years old, and her mother was murdered when she was 18 months old, I believe. As a result of that, she went to live with her grandmother and her grandmother's husband, not her paternal grandfather, and she was abused.

I will never forget the thank you I got from her after the trial. She testified bravely and told her story. Not only did she tell her story, but she told the truth. I saw the resilience in that young woman, who had the deck stacked against her, to stand up. However, I worry about her; I worry about the psychological life prison that she may be dealing with. That is the reality that so many indigenous people in Canada face. Her mother was murdered, and then she was abused before even becoming a teenager. Obviously this needs to be addressed.

The prosecution for the last homicide I prosecuted was, I believe, funded through a program. I am not sure, but the person was be-

lieved to be a missing and murdered indigenous woman. She was taken while she was pregnant, while she was at her most vulnerable. It was an undercover police operation, and I think it is important to recognize her. Her name was Angel Fehr. Her family history was difficult to piece together from what I can gather. I still remember the derogatory terms that were used to describe her years after she had passed away.

Clearly there is work to do. Angel was someone's daughter, like the six people we are discussing today were someone's children. She was someone's mother. Clearly we have so much more that we need to accomplish. However, I am grateful that I was able to do that. We see so many people, so many young people, indigenous young people, who are victims. With my work in Internet luring, I worry about young people. I will wrap up by giving my deepest condolences to the families of the young people.

When I was at the signing of that sacred covenant I described, the theme of the speech I gave that night was about coming full circle, about starting and eventually ending my journey. I pledged to do my best on that journey. I know that I have been able to touch on only a part of my journey here today in this debate, but I reiterate my pledge to do my best.

● (2320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the issue of our Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, which has before it a proposal to do a study on indigenous policing and to look at studying other issues. The chamber is actually recognizing how important the issue is with what has taken place. National Chief Cindy Woodhouse, who has been a very strong advocate for indigenous policing, wants to see more movement in that area.

Would the member not agree that this is a study that is in fact important to see take place, even if there have been other studies before it, recognizing now that we have a higher sense of urgency due to the fact that we are having this emergency debate and that there have been changes within the community itself?

● (2325)

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the urgency that brings us to this debate, the reason we are here, is not simply because we should do one study or we should do this. We should be acting with urgency in all facets of this debate, not just with respect to one study.

People have talked about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations and the recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Obviously, six people have passed away and we are here to discuss it. However, we are not only here to discuss it; we are here to make it a priority.

To my colleague saying that we need to make this one thing a priority, I would respectfully disagree, because we have to make all aspects of it a priority.

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Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I have been listening to the debate and the questioning by the Liberals and I find it interesting that they are wanting to delay more action by asking questions about whether the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs should study indigenous policing. That, to me, is a very strong indication that this is just part of the systemic racism that indigenous peoples will continue to experience, because that system, that institution, is refusing to act.

I wonder if the member can respond to the Liberals trying to delay action by proposing more studies. What do we really need to do to make sure that we are saving indigenous peoples' lives?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this issue. I have been here for much of the debate, but I have not been here for all of it, so I do not know all of the questions that have been asked.

What I hear in my colleague's question is, essentially, what we should be doing and that the Liberals want to delay things. What we should be doing is listening to the people on the ground. Whether it be people experiencing life in one way or another, clearly there is a problem. We have talked at length tonight about overrepresentation in federal penitentiaries, something that I saw firsthand. We have also talked about the disproportionate number of victims that indigenous groups in Canada make up.

If I had to recommend one thing to do, it would be to humble ourselves and resolve to solve this issue along non-partisan lines. I get that committees sometimes meet behind closed doors in order to prioritize, but sometimes we do have to put the good of the nation ahead of the good of the party.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo spoke about moving to action, about young people and listening to folks on the ground. That is what the TRC was all about. It is what the member for Nunavut has called for us to focus on.

Call to action 66 specifically calls on the federal government “to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation”. Is the member supportive of call to action 66 and what is he doing to make it happen?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, where I come from, there was, I would say, a turning point when it comes to reconciliation, and that was the finding of the 215, known as Le Estcewicwéy. In other words, “the missing” was the term, and the missing does not just define the 215. What it defines, and how it was used through oral history, is to say there were children who went to residential schools and never came back.

In response to the member's question, I am supporting Tkemlúps te Secwépemc and all of the other bands, and there are seven or eight in my riding, to the best of my ability. They might be bands like High Bar that have a very small group of people. I try to make myself as accessible as possible to listen and advocate in any way I can, because that is what I can do as a member of Parliament responsive to their needs, and it is for them to tell me what their needs are.

• (2330)

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley today.

First, I would like to also thank my northern colleague, the member for Nunavut, for raising this tragic and pressing issue, where indigenous people in Canada continue to experience disproportionate levels of violence and loss. Since late August, six indigenous people have tragically lost their lives in encounters with police across Canada. I want to send my condolences to the families of those who died. Unfortunately, this is not new. In fact, an indigenous person in Canada is 10 times more likely than a non-indigenous person to be killed by police.

Indigenous people face systemic racism and inequitable outcomes in the criminal justice system, particularly with law enforcement. In Canada, the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples is undergoing a significant transition, which requires us all to recognize the past and address the harm done in order to work towards a fairer future. Achieving reconciliation calls for a thorough reassessment of various elements of Canada's connection with indigenous communities, such as governance, human rights, culture and law enforcement. We know that colonialism and failed policies are what got us to this place, and we will continue to work with first nations, Inuit, and Métis partners towards a fairer, more just future for everyone in this country.

A fair and effective criminal justice system is critical to ensuring that Canadians feel safe in their communities and have confidence in their justice system. I know that the introduction of federal legislation recognizing first nations police services as essential services is an important step toward reconciliation. Over the last couple of years, we have collaborated extensively toward future legislation with first nations partners, as well as provinces and territories. Our objective is to ensure these services are well positioned to continue meeting policing standards and to respond to community priorities. Three federal budgets, of 2018, 2021 and 2024, outline major investments in first nations and Inuit policing, but we know there is more to do, both in terms of funding and also in terms of the way the program functions.

The RCMP recognizes its historical role in colonization. As the RCMP moves toward reconciliation, this work must be done in partnership with first nation and Inuit communities, including under the first nation and Inuit policing program. The RCMP is engaging with national, regional, and local first nation, Inuit, and Métis leaders to formalize working relationships that will strengthen how they collaborate with indigenous partners and organizations. The RCMP has a first nation, Inuit, and Métis recruiting strategy, with the goal of increasing the number of indigenous applicants and cadets entering the cadet training program. As well, the RCMP is establishing a first nation, Inuit, and Métis recruitment unit and working on the launch of indigenous-language application materials.

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Beyond our work on policing, we have introduced legislation to provide redress for those who faced unfair treatment by the RCMP or CBSA. Bill C-20 is an urgent step towards reconciliation with indigenous peoples with the potential to rebuild trust between indigenous communities and law enforcement. Many have experienced trauma at the hands of the RCMP or CBSA from inappropriate comments to excessive force and misconduct. While progress has been made, significant challenges remain. Bill C-20 will help bridge that gap by holding law enforcement accountable through an independent review body, giving indigenous peoples and others a platform to address systemic issues. This bill, if adopted, would help rebuild much-needed trust between law enforcement and indigenous communities, and contribute to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship built on rights, respect and partnership.

These are some of the steps that are perhaps more specific to public safety and the RCMP, but I believe personally there is more that we can do. What are some of the solutions that we consider over and above what we are already doing? One example already mentioned in this debate is worth explaining in more detail. Chief Doris Bill was chief of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Doris Bill is a person that many in this chamber know well, and she was chief between 2014 and 2023. I am pleased that my colleague, the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, already mentioned her during this debate, but this community safety officer program started as a pilot program under the leadership of Chief Doris Bill. It was really to try to bring a community-based, first nation-led solution to many of the problems of crime and disorder that the first nation was experiencing. A short name for this program might be called social policing, a program designed to address in a very pragmatic way the root causes of the crime, public disorder, neglect and domestic violence that was occurring at levels that were becoming intolerable for the Kwanlin Dun community.

• (2335)

Community safety officer programs will vary according to the community needs, based on an extensive community survey and assessment, and this was designed and developed by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen and former police officer, Gina Nagano, founder of the House of Wolf & Associates. Community safety officers are people from the community, trained over several weeks in the appropriate skills to be able to intervene in potentially risky situations and conflicts. They may be visiting elders or households at risk. They are generally available and approachable to support the day-to-day safety of community citizens.

As they actively patrol communities, they provide simple support and intervention as needed, perhaps with citizens experiencing crisis and supporting investigations or enforcement, but they can also help link to other partners and agencies as appropriate. It could be a youth in crisis, someone feeling threatened, a lonely elder or a host of other situations that, when unaddressed, could lead to violence, disorder or tragedy.

The CS officers are able to contact and liaise with RCMP, bylaw, conservation officers and others, and they have helped the RCMP in the Yukon, who provide policing services, to build closer and more constructive relationships themselves with Yukon communities. Community safety officers, in short, help to build and maintain trust and a positive relationship with citizens and external partners.

Although it started with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the CSO program has now been adopted in several communities in the Yukon, communities such as Teslin in southern Yukon, where the so-called “deadly aunties” help to bring peace and cohesion to the community. The CSO program is an example to be emulated and further supported by all levels of government. All of Canada can learn from them and bring similar programs, particularly to indigenous communities, and I invite any interested members or citizens to reach out to me if they would like to learn more.

I could go on. I think there are other examples of accomplishments in the Yukon that have helped to prevent or address violence and harms experienced by indigenous peoples. Modern treaties and self-government is one area that cannot be ignored. Of the 14 Yukon first nations, 11 are self-governing, meaning that these governments have the ability and mechanisms to determine their own needs and priorities and to negotiate in good faith with both territorial and federal governments.

With self-government comes the ability to negotiate elements such as administration of justice agreements, a process that seems all too slow to build but at least enables indigenous-led, culturally safe and trauma-informed justice supports for indigenous persons. I think it is also worth noting the Yukon's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls strategy, developed in 2020 with a full implementation plan released last year. I believe it is incumbent on each jurisdiction to follow the Yukon's lead on developing and implementing similar strategies that, in the words of the Yukon strategy, are “committed to a decolonized approach”, “grounded in culture and community”, “to taking action to end violence and upholding dignity and justice for Yukon's MMIWG2S+”.

I would like to end there, but there are solutions already in play in the country that deserve attention and support and that deserve to be shared widely. Perhaps it is small consolation for the families of those who have so tragically died, but let these conversations help us to work together with indigenous citizens and partners in the pursuit of further solutions.

Finally, I would like again to thank the member for Nunavut for her work and for convening this debate tonight.

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Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I always appreciate what the member has to share as a fellow northerner. I think we have common experiences representing people who mostly live in rural and remote communities.

As I have been saying tonight, this issue to me is not just about investing more in first nations. There needs to be more than that. I think part of the problem with each successive government that we have seen is that they have made a lot of promises. Both Conservatives and Liberals have made so many promises to indigenous peoples, and so many promises have been broken. I wonder if the member can share with us a Liberal promise that was made in 2020 by the Prime Minister to introduce a first nations policing law. We have not seen it yet. We are now in 2024.

I wonder if the member can share with us when this party plans to finally introduce a first nations policing law so that indigenous peoples can do their own job to protect themselves.

• (2340)

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, I know this is an area to which the Prime Minister and our government are fully committed. Clearly, it is a process that takes a long time to accomplish. Perhaps, when we see the need, it is too long in the implementation. I know it is something that our minister and our parliamentary secretary, who spoke earlier, are very committed to. Supporting community-based programs that play an intermediate role of liaison and what I call social policing is also critical as we look for the full cadre of needs in community safety and indigenous policing.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on that question, recognizing that the member for Yukon has such a track record here of working with others in the best interest of his community and those he is looking to serve. To follow up on the question from the member for Nunavut from earlier, could he talk about what other MPs can do to support efforts to move more quickly toward the implementation of indigenous policing, in the way that the member for Nunavut referred to?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the collegiality shown by my colleague from Kitchener Centre. I would just, without repeating my previous answer, stress that it is important for us all to reflect on the need for progress in this area, including sharing best practices and innovations that come from first nation, Inuit and Métis communities and nations themselves.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only because it has come up on a few occasions, I think it is important to recognize that, when we talk about the legislation the member has just been asked about, the government is actually working in collaboration with indigenous communities to develop it. This often means that it requires additional time. I would suggest that it is time well spent because it is a genuine attempt, in working in collaboration with indigenous people, to make sure that we have it right.

Could he talk about just how important it is, whether it is legislation in progress or other initiatives, that we look at and support indigenous policy ideas and leadership coming from that?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, I think the parliamentary secretary has laid out the need for an ongoing commitment that in-

volves exactly that. It is more than just a collaboration; it is truly a partnership, and that takes time. I think that we recognize the urgency, but we also recognize the need to do things right. As long as the conversation keeps going, as long as the commitment is there and we can retain the trust and the partnership, we will get to those goals that we so sorely need to reach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the hour is late. It is almost midnight here in Ottawa, but I cannot think of a more important conversation for us to be having as a country than this one right now. I want to start by thanking my colleagues, the member for Nunavut, the member for Winnipeg Centre and the member for Timmins—James Bay, whose interventions tonight have really done justice to a difficult and important topic.

This is an issue that touches many in northern B.C., the region that I am so honoured to represent. Because of the topic of tonight's debate, I want to start, as others have, by expressing my deep condolences to the families of the six indigenous people, five men and one woman, who lost their lives at the hands of police in just 11 days this month. I also want to use my time tonight to give voice to the anger, pain, dismay and frustration felt by the family members of Dale Culver. Dale was a 35-year-old Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en man who lived in Prince George but had family roots throughout the northwest.

On the evening of July 18, 2017, the police in Prince George received a call from someone about a suspect, a Caucasian male wearing dark clothes, who was looking into parked vehicles. They said that he might have a weapon and that he might have a partner working with him. The police attended the scene and saw Dale Carver, a clearly indigenous man, on a riding his BMX bike. They called at him to stop, and when he did not, they chased after him, grabbed him by his backpack and pulled him off his bike onto the ground. What happened after that can be read in the B.C. Prosecution Service's report, but the details are horrifying given the violence that was inflicted upon this young man. The report talks about the officer kicking and punching him and spraying him in the face with pepper spray. The officer called for reinforcements, and when those reinforcements showed up, they did the same. They punched him in the head. They kicked him many times. They pepper sprayed their gloves and then put them over his mouth.

Twenty-nine minutes after the altercation, Dale was dead. There were bystanders filming the incident on their cellphones. One of the officers demanded that the bystanders delete the videos from their phones and tried to grab one of the phones out of a bystander's hands. Those bystanders did so because they were threatened by this officer, so there was very little evidence when this case went to court. At one point when he was on the ground, I will add, Dale cried out, "I can't breathe. I can't breathe."

Two of the officers were charged with manslaughter, something very rare, and it did go to court. The first autopsy and pathology report found that blunt trauma to the head was a likely contributing factor in Dale's death, and through a series of events after that, the prosecutors ended up commissioning a second opinion on the pathology report, which came back with a different conclusion. In the end, the charges against the two officers were stayed. The third officer, the one who grabbed at a cellphone and demanded that bystanders delete the videos, was just recently convicted of obstruction of justice.

We have heard a huge outcry from the families, from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and from the regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Terry Teegee, about the process, about the struggle that indigenous people have in obtaining justice and about the shortcomings of the independent oversight bodies that exist. They are calling for change, and their calls for change relate directly to what is being discussed tonight.

● (2345)

Dale's death, of course, is part of a pattern. It is part of a larger picture. It is a picture that this place, the House, has talked about before, has debated before and has held hearings on before. It makes me think of other stories I have heard from northwest B.C. It makes me think of a remote detachment in our region that saw fit to hang a flag with the thin blue line symbol on it in the detachment. This was brought to my attention out of concern for what it represented; it is a symbol that people in the House will know, and as the Calgary Police Commission has described, as having a "contentious history with roots in division, colonialism and racism".

It makes me think of another story from the same community, where a young constable was posted. Community members found on his Facebook page a photo of him wearing an Afro wig, with a raised fist and the caption "Black and proud". He is a Caucasian officer. Another post showed him in colonial dress in front of a Union Jack, with the caption "Now, what's to be done with these pesky natives stirring up trouble in the colonies?" It makes me think of my colleague's comment earlier about the importance of better screening in the recruitment and hiring of RCMP officers.

Of course, these stories make me think of a recent audio recording played in a Smithers courtroom. The recording was made after arrests on November 19, 2021. This of course involved land defenders on a road in a remote part of northern B.C. The recording is of several RCMP officers heard laughing about police violence, mocking arrestees and making derogatory comments about symbols worn by two indigenous women to honour and remember murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. They said, "Do they have [effing] face paint on too? They're not orcs?" Orcs, of course, are fictional monsters from *The Lord of the Rings*. These are peace officers who were recorded saying this about indigenous people.

Perhaps most disturbing was a clip that caught an officer describing an indigenous arrestee as "that big [effing] ogre-looking dude, he's actually...autistic." Then he goes on to describe one of the officers grabbing this individual by the testicles and twisting. These are the stories that are part of this picture.

I could get into the parliamentary report on systemic racism in policing in Canada. It has been mentioned already this evening. I

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think everyone in the House is aware that this is a problem. I heard my Conservative colleagues calling it something else, but with the same effect: that these are systemic biases. They are entrenched biases that affect society and the ability of people to obtain the justice they so rightly deserve. We know these systems of discrimination affect not only indigenous people but also others, and we cannot act urgently enough to see the changes that are needed. That is what I want to say.

I will add this final point, which is that the media built up today, the first day back in Parliament, as a day of division, rancour and expected conflict in the House. What I have heard tonight is quite the opposite. I think there is the basis here for something that could be very important, and I call urgently on my colleagues for us to take this opportunity to ensure that the steps are taken. We need to do better. We need to do better by indigenous people and we need to do better by police officers. Systemic biases do not help the police do their jobs better. They do not help women in the police forces do their jobs better.

● (2350)

With that, I will end by again thanking you, Mr. Speaker, for agreeing to this debate and thanking members for their contributions tonight. Let us not let this go without action.

● (2355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to reinforce something that was indicated earlier today in regards to the RCMP and a number of actions, one of those actions was the first-ever report on how the RCMP needs to work on reconciliation and take specific actions to make a difference in building a healthier, stronger relationship.

It is important, as legislators, that we set a very high bar for our national law enforcement agency, and the expectations that they are moving forward on the issue, and working with and supporting, in particular, indigenous police services.

Would the member not agree that the expectations and the bar do need to be very high for our national policing agency? Part of that is making sure that there is a higher sense of accountability at that level.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for the question, and of course I do.

What I was trying to articulate at the end of my speech was the fact that not only does the current scenario and culture not serve indigenous people in this country, as the statistics clearly show, but it actually does not serve the police. For new police officers coming into the RCMP or coming into a municipal police service, those cultural elements do not help them do their job better. We need to see reforms to policing in Canada.

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The thing that is so frustrating is that those reforms have been articulated in detail, in report after report, and we have not seen action from the government. I am going to read one recommendation:

That the Royal Canadian Mounted Police be transitioned away from a para-military force into a police service model with civilian oversight through a national oversight board with a legislated mandate to make this transition

This has not happened. In fact, reading through the report, which is from 2020, so few of these changes are under way. I share the dismay of others that the progress under the government has been so painfully slow.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, although today is not a day which we celebrate, given the sensitive topic that we are dealing with.

I have two questions, and my colleague can answer both, or perhaps just one. He was just speaking about policing and moving away from the paramilitary style of the RCMP and its long history. There are a number of indigenous police officers. Is that something that he believes, that we should be consulting with those officers, or should that review come from outside?

Second, the member spoke in a lot of broad strokes with some specific examples, as did I in my speech. If he could do one thing moving forward tomorrow, what would it be?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, the member's question was whether current indigenous police officers be consulted in the transformation of the national police force. I see no reason why that would not take place.

That would be a rational aspect of such a transition. However, there is ample evidence, and we only have to read the report from the standing committee to see all of the evidence lined up for transitioning to a civilian police force and ensuring that officers are getting the training and being given the tools to deal with the situations they are being asked to deal with.

We are actually doing them no favours by putting them into situations where they have no training in dealing with critical mental health crises, where they are put into situations that they are ill-equipped to deal with.

This idea of transitioning the model of the force towards a civilian model with a national oversight board would create much needed accountability. Maybe we will start to see some changes.

Now to the member's question about what one thing would I do tomorrow if I had the ability to enact any of these changes. That is tough because the most important single thing could be to read through all these recommendations as the government, pick one and implement it as quickly as possible.

• (2400)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being midnight, I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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