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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is going to lead us in the national anthem today.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

THE HEALING OF THE SEVEN GENERATIONS

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, while indigenous people account for just 5% of the population, around half of those incarcerated in federal women's prisons are indigenous.

My community is no exception. At Grand Valley Institution, the percentage of indigenous incarcerated folks has even increased by 10% since 2020. It is what makes the work of incredible organizations centring reconciliation in their justice system all the more vital. The Healing of the Seven Generations' bail release supervision program helps folks break generational trauma and prevent recidivism as well as community justice initiatives. Its stride program helps incarcerated folks heal and build the community connections that help them to be successful after release.

My deep thanks to Donna, Kate and their entire teams for the impact they are having.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two weeks back, I could safely participate in a Hindu event in Edmonton only with the protection of RCMP officers as a group of Khalistani protesters staged a disruptive demonstration against me.

In Canada, we have long recognized and experienced the serious problem of Khalistani extremism. However, let me be clear, the sanctity of Canadian sovereignty is sacrosanct and any interference by foreign state actors within Canada, in any form, is unacceptable.

Khalistani violent extremism is a Canadian problem, and the RCMP has said that the national task force is focused on investigating it. We know that extremism and terrorism do not recognize, and are not limited to, national borders. I call on our law enforcement agencies to take this issue with all the seriousness it demands.

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[*Translation*]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is Small Business Week in Canada.

I myself have been a small business owner for over 30 years, and I am very proud of that. I am very proud because, for all those years, I have dedicated my life to doing what I love most, and that is giving back. Small business owners tend to be generous with their time and money. They share their innovative ideas and create wealth for all our communities. Small business owners are creators above all. They create wealth, jobs, attractive living environments, investments and community infrastructure by giving back. Their ultimate goal is to make their community a better place.

I salute the hard work of all these small business owners, who fight day in, day out to succeed, grow and thrive in a constantly changing world. Small businesses like mine, with fewer than 50 employees, are the backbone of this country. They never run short of challenges, but that is a good thing, because challenges breed innovation and excellence.

I wish all small businesses across Canada a happy Small Business Week.

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[*English*]

MARIO NUNES

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was heartbroken to hear that a dear friend and community member, Mario Nunes, had passed away.

Statements by Members

For over 20 years, Mario was not just a friend, but a radiant example of joy, hard work and steadfast dedication to his family, friends and our community. Mario was a devoted husband to Lisa, a loving father to Melissa and a cherished grandfather to Daniel.

Mario left behind a remarkable legacy in the masonry industry. When it came to getting a job done right, everyone turned to Mario for his unmatched professionalism.

Mario's passion and commitment were a source of inspiration to all of us. He was always ready to lend a hand and share a kind word, whether it was capturing moments at Luso charity events or discussing ways to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Mario's spirit will forever remain in the hearts that he touched, and he will be profoundly missed.

Rest in peace, my dear friend.

* * *

[Translation]

MARIO THÉBERGE

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, October 23, a major figure in regional agriculture is stepping down from his post.

After eight years serving as president of the Union des producteurs agricoles, or UPA, for the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, Mario Théberge, a dairy and grain farmer from Normandin who is well known at home and respected by his peers, will hand the reins over to the next generation, who are more than ready to follow in his footsteps.

Mario Théberge has been involved in the agricultural trade union movement for over 30 years and was elected UPA regional president in 2016. The time has come for him to turn the page and pass on the torch. One thing is certain: Mario will be remembered as a team player, an inspiration, a passionate advocate and a farmer who was active in his community and was always ready to take on challenges. As president, he has given us confidence in the agricultural future of our beautiful region.

I am certain that it is with great pride and a sense of accomplishment that he will greet his peers today and hand over the keys to the tractor. I wish Mario the best of luck in his new endeavours. I look forward to running into him again soon, but, above all, I thank him for everything.

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ESPACE VOIR GRAND

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of attending the historic inauguration of Amazon Web Services' brand new Espace Voir Grand at the Centre Lasallien in Saint-Michel.

This educational space is the first AWS Think Big Space in Canada and the first one in the world to be designed for francophones. It will give students, teachers and members of our community unprecedented access to educational resources in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

[English]

Thanks to the common vision of both Amazon Web Services and le centre Lasallien, new opportunities through this space will act as incubators of innovation and will help create researchers and inventors of tomorrow.

[Translation]

I am extremely proud to welcome Canada's very first Espace Voir Grand to my riding, Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, and I look forward to seeing all the things that will be accomplished there.

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• (1410)

[English]

CANADIAN PARALYMPIAN

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary achievement of Canadian paralympian, Jolan Wong, who proudly brought home a bronze medal from the 2024 Paris Paralympics. As a dedicated and resilient athlete, Jolan has become a symbol of strength and perseverance, both on and off the court. Jolan has inspired countless Canadians with her determination and dedication to sitting volleyball. Last Sunday, she was awarded the key to the city of Pembroke. Her remarkable achievement is not just a testament to her personal drive, but also a shining example of the power of sportsmanship.

Jolan's victory in Paris is a victory for all Canadians who believe in pushing boundaries and celebrating excellence. We congratulate her for representing our country with such distinction and thank her for inspiring a new generation of athletes. Please join me in celebrating Jolan Wong and her teammates' accomplishments.

My thanks to Jolan.

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[Translation]

ETHEL CÔTÉ

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with great sadness to honour to Ethel Côté, who passed away after a battle with cancer.

Her family paid tribute to her memory, saying that her unwavering commitment to educating, listening to, supporting and, above all, inspiring everyone she met has left an indelible mark on the lives she touched.

A pioneer of the social economy, she founded several organizations, including MécènESS, and contributed to the creation and development of nearly 1,000 community organizations.

As founding president of La Nouvelle Scène and an associate professor at the Université de l'Ontario français, she was known for her collaborative approach and innovative beliefs. She was committed to building a more just, equitable and caring society.

She was selected as a 2015 champion of women's economic empowerment by the UN. She was also appointed to the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario and the Ordre de la Pléiade and was awarded a Prix Saphir.

The loss of this beloved mother and grandmother will leave a huge void in the Franco-Ontarian community and the wider world. I offer my sincere condolences to her family and her loved ones.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of this morning, the Bank of Canada cut interest rates by 50 basis points, bringing interest rates down to just 3.75%. That is good news for hard-working Canadians. It is going to help families who need to renew their mortgage. It is going to help young people wanting to go out and buy their first home. It is going to give some breathing room to folks who have debts and loans to repay, making things just a bit easier for them.

Lower interest rates are good news for Canadian entrepreneurs, for businesses of all sizes, whether they have loans or not. I must say, during Small Business Week, no less, it is great news for our small businesses.

Now I am not saying that everything is perfect here. I know there are Canadians struggling with affordability. I know that there are global economic instability forces at play, but I also know that there is no better place to be than Canada right now. Today, things were made just a little bit easier and a little bit better for the good folks living here.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Prime Minister, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Just this week, Barrie Police arrested a repeat offender in possession of stolen goods only hours after being released on bail. In the past two weeks alone, this one offender has been charged with theft six times. M. Gow, a Barrie resident, recently wrote into BarrieToday to state that they have lived in Barrie since 1967 and no longer feel safe in our community. They do not feel safe going downtown by themselves anymore, especially after dark.

The Prime Minister's catch-and-release bail policies have unleashed a wave of violent crime across the country. The Prime Minister boasts about banning the hunting rifles of law-abiding Canadians instead of targeting the gangsters and gun smugglers who are terrorizing our streets. The Toronto Police Association recently fact-checked the Prime Minister and pointed out that shootings are up 45% and gun-related homicides are up 62% in Toronto.

Canadians deserve a common-sense, Conservative government that will stop the crime and bring home safe streets.

Statements by Members

• (1415)

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I stand before you with a profound sense of urgency and concern regarding the alarming revelations about foreign interference in our country. The RCMP's statement regarding the investigation into violent criminal activities linked to the Government of India has brought to light a harsh reality that Sikh Canadians have long feared.

As a member of Parliament representing a vibrant community of people from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds, I recognize the deep ties that bind Canada and India, yet the chilling evidence presented by the RCMP reveals a betrayal of our shared values. It is unacceptable that foreign agents would operate with impunity on our soil, terrorizing communities and threatening our safety. We have seen extortion, arson, threats and even loss of life instilling fear in the South Asian community, with the particular targeting of Sikh Canadians. This is unacceptable.

Every Canadian deserves to live with safety, free from intimidation and violence, regardless of their beliefs or heritage. Our government has taken significant steps to confront these threats, but we must also stand united as a community, Sikhs and Hindus alike. We cannot allow fear to divide us. We must support one another and advocate for justice, accountability and the protection of our rights.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal coalition, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Speaker has ruled that the government violated a House order to turn evidence on its latest scandal, a \$400-million green slush fund, over to the RCMP. The NDP-Liberal government's refusal to respect the ruling has paralyzed Parliament, pushing aside all other work to address the doubling of housing costs, food inflation and the crime and chaos that we see in our streets because of government policies.

While Liberal appointees at SDTC were enriching themselves and their companies with nearly \$400 million of Canadians' hard-earned tax money, one in seven people in my community of Niagara Falls was visiting our food bank, Project SHARE, simply to get by.

Will the NDP-Liberals end their cover-up and provide the ordered documents to the police so that Canadians can have the accountability they so rightly deserve?

*Statements by Members***CARBON TAX**

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government. Carbon taxes are driving up the cost of all essentials, including gas, groceries and home heating.

Now, according to an article from the Salvation Army, the food bank in Kenora is challenged just to keep stock on its shelves. Rising demand and food costs are making it difficult for people to be able to afford to make donations. In fact, the food bank has been forced to reduce the number of visits per month for each guest, and this will only get worse if the costly coalition quadruples the carbon tax, which will cost Ontario families \$1,400 per year in carbon tax alone. In addition, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has once again confirmed that Canadians pay more in the tax than they get back in rebates.

We know that the government and this carbon tax are not worth the cost. Canadians want to know when they will have a chance to vote in a carbon tax election so that they can vote to axe the tax and bring home lower prices.

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FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recent announcement by the RCMP that agents of the Indian government are involved in serious criminal activity in Canada is deeply troubling. Such actions represent a clear violation of Canada's sovereignty and an attack on the safety of all Canadians, particularly those in the Sikh and South Asian communities.

We must stand united in condemning these actions in the strongest possible terms. Canada's sovereignty is non-negotiable, and we will not tolerate foreign interference or intimidation.

I would like to thank the RCMP and all law enforcement agencies for their tireless efforts in uncovering these serious threats and taking decisive action to protect our communities. The safety of all Canadians, regardless of their heritage or political beliefs, must always be protected.

* * *

● (1420)

HOUSING

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, women, girls and gender-diverse people who are unhoused are invisible in our country. Being without a home or being precariously housed can look different for women. Many find temporary shelter in their car or on a friend's couch.

To make matters worse, as the cost of living increases, more people are left out in the cold. To help, we need vital, person-centred wraparound services and housing. In Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Island Crisis Care Society provides these vital supports. I am so grateful for the incredible work it does, but it cannot do this work alone. Life-saving supports are needed. Instead, we have seen federal cuts. The Reaching Home program was slashed a devastating 60% in Nanaimo this year.

Many in our communities are doing all they can, but they need support. It is time to see the necessary federal investment and leadership now.

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[Translation]

MARWAH RIZQY

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois stands in full solidarity with Marwah Rizqy, the Quebec MNA for Saint-Laurent. Ms. Rizqy has had to seek police protection for her family. She has been receiving threats ever since she called out the Islamist abuse and the mistreatment of children at Bedford elementary school.

One of the people targeting her is Adil Charkaoui, an imam who would already be facing charges for his past hate speech if it were not for the religious exemption that still exists in the Criminal Code. The House needs to understand that there are consequences to allowing people like him to continue to spread hate freely. We strongly condemn any attempt to intimidate Ms. Rizqy or any other elected official.

I thank Ms. Rizqy for her unwavering commitment to children. I thank her for standing up for secularism and for equality between men and women, between our sons and daughters. She deserves to see out her term in a safe and respectful environment, before she finally gets to devote all her attention to her family.

* * *

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gun crime is up 116%. The carbon tax will be up to 61¢ a litre. Groceries are up 45% since 2015. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, even Liberal MPs agree that taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for the unpopular Liberal Prime Minister.

Apparently, Liberal MPs confronted the Prime Minister this morning, but there was one small hitch: They had to get written approval to speak to him. We can talk about freedom of speech.

While the Liberals are busy fighting among themselves, Conservatives are focused on what is important to Canadians: axing the tax, building the homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime. As Conservatives, we do not agree with virtually anything the Liberals have done. They are destroying Canada.

However, what has become increasingly clear is that a whole bunch of Liberal MPs agree with us. The Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost or the corruption. It is time for him to go.

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, four out of the five leaders represented in this very chamber have either received their security clearance or are in the process of doing so. There is only one party leader in this chamber who chooses to close his eyes and remain oblivious to foreign interference, refusing to get a security clearance, and that is the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada.

The Conservative leader across the way is hiding something. What is he hiding, and what exactly is stopping him from getting his security clearance at a time when we are facing serious foreign interference in communities across Canada?

Yesterday a motion was presented in the House that calls for all party leaders to take necessary actions to protect Canadians from foreign interference. It calls for all federal party leaders to get their appropriate security clearance in the next 30 days. Can we guess what? Conservative members said no to this.

When will the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada wake up, get his clearance and start standing with Canadians against foreign interference?

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, costs are up, crime is up, corruption is up and now chaos reigns, because 24 Liberal MPs want the Prime Minister to resign, even though the Bloc Québécois wants to keep this Prime Minister in power.

Considering that even Liberal MPs have no confidence in this Prime Minister, will he call an election so that we can fix what he broke?

• (1425)

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say, the Liberal Party, as is the Liberal government, is totally united on holding the Conservative Party to account for the fact that they want to cut programs, cut services, cut initiatives that will help Canadians grow the economy, keep inflation down and make sure there is a strong, prosperous future for all Canadians. That is what we are focused on. While Conservatives focus on petty politics, we will stay focused on delivering for Canadians.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to note that I asked my question in French.

Twenty-four Liberal MPs acknowledge that this Prime Minister is not worth the cost, the crime, the corruption and now the chaos. Today, in fact, the Prime Minister had to silence half his caucus, forcing some MPs to go to the bathroom so that they could text reporters to let them know what was going on in the caucus meeting.

Oral Questions

Liberal MPs know what Canadians knew already: The Prime Minister is not worth the cost, the crime or the corruption.

When will there be an election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while Conservatives focus on division and personal attacks, we will remain focused on the fact that we have to deliver results for Canadians, provide dental care for seniors, provide more child care spaces, and make investments in a greener economy that will create good jobs for the future.

The Conservatives are offering austerity and cuts. That is not what Canadians need. They need a government that is there to invest in their future. That is exactly what we are doing, because confident countries invest in their workers, in their citizens. That is precisely why the economy is getting so much better.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, costs are up. The cost of housing has doubled. The national debt has doubled. The cost of housing is out of control. Parliament is paralyzed by the corruption that the Prime Minister is trying to hide from Canadians. Now, there are at least 24 Liberal members who are saying that the Prime Minister must resign. Immigration is also out of control. He cannot fix what he broke while dealing with a revolt.

Will he call an election now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear to all Canadians that all the Conservative leader is offering is budget cuts, austerity and empty slogans. Canadians need solutions. That is why we are moving forward with solutions, such as dental care, investments in a green economy, and investments that will attract high-tech companies from all over the world, whether in the electric vehicle, AI or quantum technologies sectors.

We are here to invest in the future of this country. We are looking toward the future, while the Conservatives want to take us back to the Stone Age.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, costs are up, taxes are up, crime is up, and, according to 24 Liberal MPs, time is up. The Prime Minister has doubled housing costs, doubled the national debt and given us the worst economy in the G7. He has paralyzed Parliament with a cover-up of corruption, and two million people are lined up at food banks. However, he cannot fix what he broke because his caucus is revolting.

Will he call a carbon tax election today?

Oral Questions

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition is focused on politics, we are focused on delivering for Canadians the things that matter most, whether it is more money in their pockets with the Canada carbon rebate, more places for \$10-a-day child care right across the country or dental care for seniors and more and more Canadians of all ages. We will move forward to deliver things that are easing pressures on pocketbooks and building a strong economy for everyone.

This is the work that we are doing and that we will continue to do. While the Leader of the Opposition tosses around empty slogans and plays politics, we will stay focused on the things that matter to Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 24 Liberal MPs went to his caucus meeting today to tell him that he is not worth the crime, cost or corruption. They wanted to tell him that he has doubled housing costs, doubled the national debt and sent two million people to food banks, but he would not let them; he silenced half of the dissidents. In fact, some were intimidated so much that even Rosemary Barton, the Prime Minister's favourite journalist, said, "People don't have their phones in...the room. Some people going to the bathroom are texting us."

Will the Prime Minister text the dissident Liberal MPs, tell them to come out of the bathroom and tell the whole world that he is not worth the cost?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our caucus, people have always been free to speak their mind and have different perspectives.

What is interesting is that nobody in the Conservative caucus seemed to have spoken out when one member got an all-expenses-paid trip to an extreme anti-abortion church in Florida. Nobody spoke out. One of the members on the Conservatives' front bench dined with white nationalists, far-right German nationalists, and nobody spoke up. They also continue to not speak up when their leader refuses to get a security clearance so he can deal with foreign interference.

* * *

[Translation]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think it is more honourable to leave Liberal turpitude to the Liberals. I want to talk about another phenomenon: intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, contempt for science, and corporal punishment.

Is the Prime Minister concerned about the situation at Bedford school, in Montreal's Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, as it relates to religious intransigence? What does he think is behind this situation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Québécois knows full well that, on this side of the House, we respect provincial jurisdiction over education. We will always be there to defend freedom of expression and the fundamental freedoms afforded to all Canadians.

These freedoms are what allow us to live in a free, democratic and open country, where our values are always at the forefront.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Prime Minister has other things on his mind.

Is he saying that forced teaching of a religion at a school and corporal punishment fall under teachers' freedom of expression?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, that is not at all what I said. I pointed out that school administration is a provincial jurisdiction. We expect the province to handle its own jurisdictions.

That being said, we will always defend the fundamental freedoms of all Canadians. That includes children, who have the right to be educated in a way that is consistent with our values as Quebecers and Canadians.

* * *

• (1435)

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Prime Minister is distracted, but a recent survey that came out shows that over half of Canadians are having a hard time with the cost of groceries. Too many in this chamber are more worried about themselves than kids going to sleep hungry in our country.

Why has the Prime Minister refused to take action on painful food prices?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken action and we will take more action. We have moved forward on increasing competition rules so the Competition Bureau can go after people and companies that are gouging Canadians.

At the same time, we are delivering more supports, whether with the national school food program, which is putting more money in the pockets of families by giving them breaks on their groceries so kids can eat healthy foods at schools, or by delivering a Canada carbon rebate. Unfortunately, with the Canada carbon rebate, which puts more money in families' pockets, the NDP just pulled its support, even though it is helping Canadians with affordability.

We will continue to be there to fight climate change—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Have you actually ever been to a grocery store?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

Oral Questions

I invite the hon. member for Burnaby South to start from the top, and I encourage all hon. members to make sure their questions and comments are directed through the Chair.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, has the Prime Minister actually ever been to a grocery store?

[*Translation*]

People are losing hope. An Angus Reid study shows that over 40% of renters have given up on the dream of home ownership. The Conservatives cut housing construction in Canada and lost 800,000 affordable housing units.

The Liberals have had nine years. Why has the Prime Minister not cleaned up that mess?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can start by answering both questions the leader of the NDP had. I have actually been to a grocery store, with you, Mr. Speaker, in your riding a few years ago, Hull—Aylmer, and I have been to many grocery stores since.

[*Translation*]

When it comes to housing, we implemented a program to invest in affordable housing across the country, which includes \$900 million for Quebec. We are continuing to invest in affordable housing.

While the Conservative Party is offering cuts to housing programs, we will continue to invest to help Canadians with affordable housing.

The Speaker: I would like to assure all members that Marché Laflamme is a mainstay in my riding.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to know that you and the Prime Minister like to go grocery shopping together. Since you do, you would know that, of course, food prices have risen 36% faster in Canada than they did in the United States in the last four years, and that this gap grew in line with the carbon tax. The leader of the NDP apparently likes to shop at Metro, for which his brother's company is the chief lobbyist.

Maybe the leader of the NDP can tell us this. Twenty-four Liberal MPs have lost confidence in the Prime Minister. Will the leader of the NDP finally vote for a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was not a question for the government, but let me reiterate that multiple analysts and economists and the Parliamentary Budget Officer have indicated that lowering inflation has made it easier on Canadians, and the price on pollution, which delivers the Canada carbon rebate to Canadians right across the country and puts more money in their pockets, is helping Canadians with affordability.

If the Leader of the Opposition really wanted to help with affordability, he would not have voted against dental care. He would not have voted against the national school food program, which is saving parents hundreds of dollars a year right across the country.

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even Liberal MPs now know, because their constituents keep telling them, that the carbon tax is driving up the cost of food. The Liberals wanted to go to caucus today and tell the Prime Minister that Canadians are literally starving, some eating out of dumpsters, because of the carbon tax. However, the Prime Minister sent out the immigration minister to attack them, saying that they are “garbage”. What is garbage is the Prime Minister's record of doubling housing costs, driving up food prices and forcing people to eat out of dumpsters.

Will the Prime Minister stop treating his own MPs and Canadians like garbage?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party should not be bragging that none of his MPs have asked him to get a security clearance so that he can protect his party from foreign interference, that none of his MPs have spoken out, that having one of his members go down to Florida on an all-expenses-paid trip by an extreme anti-abortion church is just fine for all of his MPs, and that, quite frankly, none of them have any issue with a member on their front bench dining with a neo-Nazi. I would hope some of the members in his caucus would speak up about some of the—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills to please not speak out of turn repeatedly during questions. He is an honourable and very well-respected member.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, who has a lifelong record of racist outbursts, is now coming unglued on the floor of the House of Commons. The question was about the 24 Liberal MPs in his caucus who are trying to speak out against his quadrupling of the carbon tax, not because they care about the cost of living for their constituents, but because they are worried they are going to lose the election.

If the Prime Minister is so confident in quadrupling the carbon tax, why will he not call a carbon tax election now?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our price on pollution not only decreases emissions and helps fight climate change, but grows the economy and investments and puts more money in the pockets of middle-class Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Indeed, what we have seen from the Parliamentary Budget Officer is that the Canada carbon rebate puts more money in the pockets of Canadian families than it costs them in the federal price on pollution. That is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition wants to cut. He wants to cut affordability for Canadians. He wants to cut the fight against climate change. That is not how we build a strong future.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to cut taxes and housing costs.

On that subject, the Prime Minister created a \$4-billion so-called housing accelerator that gave hundreds of millions of dollars to big city politicians across the country. Toronto got the money and construction went down 20%. Winnipeg got the money and construction went down 15%. Vancouver got the money and construction went down 19%. Ottawa got the money and construction went down 10%.

When I was the housing minister, we built 194,000 homes. Why will he not follow my common-sense example?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite was Stephen Harper's failed housing minister, he built six affordable housing units across the country, so we will take no lessons from the Conservatives on housing. They would rather pick fights than invest in the kinds of changes that are improving density and zoning, using public lands and accelerating red tape so that people can get more affordable housing built quicker right across the country.

It takes actions and investments to build up this country. That is exactly what we are doing in responsible ways. All he is offering are fights with the provinces and municipalities and cuts to services Canadians rely on.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just accidentally told the truth. He said he is "accelerating red tape". He sure is doing that, but he is not accelerating his math lessons. He has always admitted that he is bad with numbers.

I have documents from Stats Canada's website, which is part of his government, that show that in 2015, there were 194,461 housing completions and the average rent was only \$973 for a one-bedroom, half of what it is today. Given that I delivered so many affordable homes, why will the Prime Minister not follow my common-sense plan to build the homes and not the bureaucracy?

● (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it says something about the level of confidence the previous prime minister had in the member when Stephen Harper used to say that the federal government had no responsibility on housing and then asked him to be the housing minister. That is perhaps why he

delivered only six affordable homes over the course of their years in government.

The reality is that we have stepped up to invest in densification, in cutting red tape and in creating more housing starts right across the country, working with municipalities and provinces to solve this housing crisis, while all he offers is cuts and breaks for wealthy landlords.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberal Prime Minister who said a year ago that the federal government has no responsibility for housing. Of course, he said that after he had completed the doubling of housing costs. Then, speaking of housing ministers, he went on to appoint the guy who had lost track of a million people coming into the country, who had allowed a 300% increase in population growth against the warnings about housing from his own department. Tomorrow, the Prime Minister plans to reverse and swallow himself whole on immigration. Will he complete the job by firing his housing minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have continued to step up and invest in housing by working with provinces and municipalities right across the country because, of course, we know that previous governments, of Conservative and Liberal stripes, underinvested for many years in housing, which is why we are in the situation we are in, a situation not dissimilar to many advanced democracies around the world. That is exactly why we have stepped up to put money on the table for municipalities as they change their densification rules and zoning laws to accelerate the process of building housing, and continue to solve this housing crisis that Canadians are facing from coast to coast to coast.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in light of the facts that were just presented, does the Prime Minister acknowledge that Ottawa is fuelling and stoking division as it attempts to demolish Quebec's efforts to uphold its own values, secularism first and foremost?

What is happening in these schools is serious. Does he realize that his will to fund the challenge against Bill 21 on secularism and take it all the way to the Supreme Court is a serious intrusion that is sowing division?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always defend the fundamental rights of all Canadians. It is a principle that drives us as a party, but also drives us as a country.

We are very concerned about the children who are going through unacceptable and painful experiences at school. That is why we expect the Government of Quebec to address this. In the meantime, we will always defend the fundamental freedoms of all Canadians.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that vagueness is troubling. The Prime Minister should be making it very clear that the government condemns the oppressive and violent indoctrination of children in schools, no matter what cause may seem to justify such behaviour.

This government's attitude, its obsession with multiculturalism, its willingness to challenge the secularism law, and other institutions, including people who are paid to promote division, are very dangerous.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be even more clear. What has been reported about the children at that school is completely unacceptable. However, it is also unacceptable to use extreme cases, exceptions like this one, to attack Quebec's diversity and to attack the different backgrounds that tie our country together.

We will always stand up for cultural diversity and coexistence at home, and we will defend the rights, freedoms and protection of children every step of the way.

* * *

• (1450)

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is admitting that his immigration policies have been totally incompetent. In fact, the ratio of new people to new homes reached its highest level in recorded history last year after his then immigration minister, now housing minister, ignored the warnings of his own department. According to a new Concordia University report, rent is expected to rise to \$7,500 in Vancouver and \$5,500 in Toronto if the trajectory continues. Will he reverse course now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the great advantages of Canada in the world, of Canadians in the world, is that we continue to be a country that understands immigration is a source of opportunity and growth and richness for this country. One of the other great advantages we have is an immigration system that is able to adjust to different realities. In the years after the pandemic, there was a need for more temporary workers and a desire for more international students, and we let more in, working with the provinces and with businesses across the country. As we see the situation shift as the labour market shifts, we are making changes to the immigration system so we can keep its support.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing compassionate about inviting people with-

out a place for them to live or health care for them to have or jobs that provide them with paycheques.

The Prime Minister has destroyed our immigration system through his own personal incompetence and destroyed a 150-year common-sense consensus between Liberals and Conservatives on that subject. He cannot fix what he broke on immigration, housing or anything else, because he is busy fighting his own caucus. Why will he not call a carbon tax election so we can restore Canada's promise that anyone who comes here and works hard can have a good life, a safe street and a warm home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the work we are focused on is on the middle class and people working hard to join it, and we have delivered over these past years. In these times of global strife and pressures, that is exactly what we are doubling down on: investing in building homes, investing in strengthening our immigration system so it can match the challenges we are in right now, and moving forward on putting more money in people's pockets even as we create strong jobs and growth for the future.

The Bank of Canada just reduced interest rates, because inflation is now down to low inflation once again. We are managing this country responsibly. We are continuing to invest in its future.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada makes every single one of us a promise: If we work hard, we get a good life. That promise, like everything else after nine years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, is broken. Now, he has broken countless promises, but this one is different. This was not his promise to break; it belonged to all of us. Now that he has destroyed immigration, the housing market and the cost of living, will he call a carbon tax election so we can bring home Canada's promise?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Once again, Mr. Speaker, we see the Leader of the Opposition pushing a brokenist vision of Canada that is simply not aligned with the reality.

Yes, Canadians are struggling, like people are all around the world. Years of high inflation, disrupted supply chains and global conflicts have weighed heavily on everyone around the world. However, Canadians continue to see opportunities. Canadians continue to see investments by a government that believes in them, whether it is investing in green jobs of the future or investing in programs and supports like dental and child care that make a difference, which the Conservatives continue to vote against.

• (1455)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "brokenist" is not even a word. He is even breaking the English language. Oh my goodness.

Oral Questions

So, the Prime Minister broke the housing market by doubling the costs. He broke the cost of food by jacking up the carbon tax and increasing prices 36% faster than in the United States. He has broken our immigration system. He is breaking the bank with his doubling of the debt. Even his own caucus members think everything is broken. Why do we not have a carbon tax election to decide?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition is focused on exploiting the struggles of Canadians, which are very real, he is not offering a single solution to support them.

He is offering to take away the Canada carbon rebate, which is putting more money in their pockets and fighting climate change successfully while it grows the economy. He is offering to cancel the dental care program, which has helped close to a million Canadians access dental care already. He is planning on cancelling the child care, which has brought child care costs down to \$10 a day in so many parts of the country and created spaces everywhere. He stands against the programs and supports for Canadians, while at the same time, he says Canada is broken.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the global community is shocked. This week, Israeli Minister Ben-Gvir called for Gaza to be emptied of Palestinians. He also called for expanding illegal settlements in Gaza. In fact, his colleague Minister Smotrich said that starving civilians is justified. It is shameful.

Enough is enough. What will it take for the Prime Minister to impose severe sanctions on Netanyahu and his extremist ministers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the violence in the Middle East needs to end. It cannot continue to see civilians killed, innocents wiped out and communities destroyed. We need to make sure there is a ceasefire in Gaza and in Lebanon. We need to see the path once again toward a two-state solution where a peaceful Israel lives alongside a peaceful Palestinian state. That is Canada's position.

That continues to be what we fight for every single day to bring a global consensus together to protect lives, to get humanitarian aid in, to release hostages and to end this conflict once and for all.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask all members, including the member for Hamilton Centre, to not speak out when they do not have the floor.

The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was an appalling answer. The Prime Minister needs to sanction Ben-Gvir and Netanyahu.

There are 650,000 Albertans who do not have a family doctor. In Edmonton, hospital wards are 155% overshot, but instead of ad-

ressing this crisis, Danielle Smith and the Alberta Conservatives are going to uberize the problem. Enough is enough.

Can the Prime Minister tell us when Albertans will deserve health care? When will the government finally stand up for public health care in this country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely that Conservative governments across this country have weakened our public health care system, and that is why we are continuing to demand investments in public health care, investments that will create more family doctors and reduce wait times. We have put money on the table for provinces willing to step up and actually deliver clear data and results to Canadians.

We are going to continue to defend Canada's public health care system from those Conservative ideologues, premiers and politicians who want to weaken our health care system and not deliver for Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my constituents have been working hard to pay their bills as global inflation has driven up the cost of living. The Conservative Party hates it when Canada is actually succeeding, and they continue to gaslight Canadians into thinking our country is broken even though the government has been providing relief to Canadians through dental care, \$10-a-day child care, free diabetes medication and much more.

Can the Prime Minister update all Canadians about today's good news and set the record straight?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for London West for her hard work.

Today, the Bank of Canada announced a big cut to interest rates by half a point, bringing interest rates down to 3.75%. Canada was the first G7 country to cut rates and is now the first to do so for a fourth time. All the Conservative leader has is his little performances because he knows our responsible economic plan is working.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, the cost of housing in Quebec has exploded. In Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, house prices have risen by \$130,000, an increase of 76%. In Trois-Rivières, prices have risen by \$190,000, an increase of 122%. In Drummondville, prices have risen by \$204,000, an increase of 124%.

What is the Prime Minister doing? He has broken our immigration system and printed \$700 billion, and he is funding the red tape that is getting in the way of construction.

Will he reverse these policies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader is using this information as well as the challenges facing Quebecers and all Canadians to fuel his political aspirations, but he is not offering any solutions to address this problem.

That is why we have invested \$900 million, alongside the Quebec government, to accelerate housing construction. That is why we continue to work with municipalities across Quebec and the provincial government to deliver more homes, more residences and more affordable housing.

We are going to continue to be there to invest, while he is busy bickering with the mayors of Quebec City and Montreal. We are going to work—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have already put forward my common-sense plan. It involves incentivizing municipalities to fast-track building permits, reduce red tape, free up land for construction and lower taxes for people who build housing in Canada, while at the same time controlling population growth to keep it from outpacing the growth of our housing supply. That is what a common-sense plan looks like.

Will the Prime Minister give Quebecers the freedom to choose that plan by calling an election soon?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know full well that the Conservative leader does not like to rely on experts. We can see why, because all the housing experts and all the economic experts have looked at his plan, and they say it is baloney. There is absolutely nothing in that plan that addresses the housing crisis. It is pure political posturing, which, once again, boils down to mere slogans. Slogans are not solutions.

Quebeckers and all Canadians deserve a government that will continue investing in housing and their future, instead of offering them cuts and austerity, which is all that the Conservative leader is offering.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the real experts are the people who build housing. The Quebec home builders' association, the APCHQ, has said that my plan is the best plan for building housing by encouraging construction and incentivizing municipalities to eliminate red tape.

In contrast, we are seeing the results of nine years under this Prime Minister. The cost of housing has risen faster here than in any other G7 country. Canada ranks second-last among the 36 OECD countries. Will the Prime Minister finally follow a common-sense plan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Conservative leader's approach has been to launch personal attacks on the mayors of Montreal and Quebec City and to insult the intelligence of Quebecers who choose progressive municipal

Oral Questions

governments that are investing in affordable housing and a better future for all their residents.

The Conservative leader thinks that insulting people will score him political points, whereas we are working in partnership with municipalities and provinces every day to deliver concrete solutions for housing and economic growth for everyone.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Bank of Canada had to issue an emergency rate cut to salvage a collapsing economy, an economy that has fallen more in the last five years than that of any other G7 country. Our GDP per capita is smaller today than it was a decade ago, while the American has grown by 18%. The gap between the Canada per person GDP and the U.S. per person GDP is now at its worst in a century, leading to homelessness, helplessness and hunger on the streets.

Why will the Prime Minister not call a carbon tax election so we can fix the economy he broke?

● (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every now and then, despite all his efforts, we see a little edge of the tinfoil hat peeking out once again from the Leader of the Opposition as he continues his attacks on the Bank of Canada and the independence of our financial institutions.

The reality is that we have worked hard as a government to bring down inflation so that the Bank of Canada can bring down interest rates faster than just about any other country among our peer countries around the world. We know that bringing down interest rates is what is going to help Canadians, even as we continue to invest in programs like dental, pharmacare and child care, which the Conservatives are voting against, and deliver for Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is saying that the Bedford case is a one-off, an isolated event. However, it has been going on for seven years. It is well documented. There have been incidents of violence, harassment, intimidation and religious indoctrination.

Is the Prime Minister aware that three other schools may be involved? Is he aware that parents are taking their kids out of certain schools for fear of religious indoctrination because he is encouraging people not to comply with Quebec's laws?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former teacher, I can say how essential it is to protect our children, as well as the values of openness and freedom that we uphold. This is our responsibility as a country.

I am very concerned about the reports that the leader of the Bloc Québécois is talking about. I would stress that we all expect the appropriate authorities, namely the provincial authorities, to quickly address this issue to protect the children in their care.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when Adil Charkaoui gets mixed up in a situation, it is time for someone responsible to step in.

The Prime Minister has just found some respect for Quebec's jurisdictions. Good for him. However, his willingness to launch a court challenge of Quebec's secularism law, Bill 21, and to fund the challenge all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary amounts to federal intervention in a Quebec jurisdiction.

Furthermore, why does he not bring forward the Bloc Québécois's bill that would make religiously motivated hate propaganda illegal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to education, we know that the Government of Quebec has to step up and protect children where it has a responsibility to do so. Protecting the fundamental freedoms of all citizens is something that Quebecers and all Canadians expect from their federal government as well.

That is why we are pursuing legal steps to protect fundamental freedoms and, at the same time, expecting Quebec to do its job when it comes to protecting children in Quebec's schools.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the human misery that Canadians are suffering. There are now 1,400 homeless encampments in Ontario alone. The City of Toronto admits that it has run out of homeless shelter space and will have to turn people out into the snow throughout the forthcoming winter. There is a Facebook group called the "Dumpster Diving Network", and people are lined up in the rain for hours for rotten potatoes.

Is this the Great Depression?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the cozy relationship that the Leader of the Opposition has with a number of Conservative premiers across the country. I would ask him to use his significant influence over those Conservative premiers to ask them to accept the money that the federal government is putting on the table to help with homeless encampments.

A month ago, we asked each province and territory to partner with us to help find shelter for people living in encampments. Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan have not yet formally responded to us to end encampments in their respective jurisdictions.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition, if he cares about this indeed, to stop playing politics and start—

● (1510)

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

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem with that blame game is that in fact the worst homeless encampments are in NDP-governed British Columbia. In fact what the Prime Minister has done is take the radical socialist policies that led to those encampments and those massive overdose crises nationwide.

Take, for example, the drug dens. The Prime Minister continues to push taxpayer-funded opioids on the population, which has led to 47,000 overdose deaths, more than the deaths of Canadians in the Second World War. Will he reverse these policies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just have to pause for a moment on the incredible irony of listening to the Leader of the Opposition in the House accuse anyone of playing the blame game. He has made his entire career as leader and 20 years as a parliamentarian about playing the blame game.

It is about time he started taking responsibility for the members of his caucus and taking responsibility for putting forward solutions that will actually help Canadians, instead of offering cuts, finger pointing and empty slogans.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government is acting like "a drug lord." Those are the words of Masha Krupp, a mother who lost her daughter to an overdose. That daughter, Larisa, was given taxpayer-funded opioids. Now her son is addicted to the same government-provided drugs.

This radical policy, which the Prime Minister pioneered and expanded with the help of the NDP, has taken thousands of lives. Will he stop acting like a drug lord and put the money into treatment and recovery?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are using all the tools at our disposal to save lives and keep communities safe for everyone. Meanwhile, Conservatives are choosing to use struggling people as political props to promote fear and spread misinformation.

From the very beginning, we have been there to work on an evidence-based, compassionate and public safety approach. We have been and always will be there to work with provinces and territories on approaches focused on saving lives and ending the crisis.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fight against foreign interference is a priority for our government and for Canadians. Canadians deserve leaders who will take the necessary measures to protect them. However, the Conservative leader is choosing to make excuses to avoid his responsibilities and refusing to get his top secret security clearance.

Can the Prime Minister explain why it is important for the Conservative leader to step up and get his—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Laval—Les Îles for his important question. That is a question being asked by many Canadians and even many Conservative MPs.

The Conservative leader is trying to score political points on the issue of national security, but he is refusing to get his security clearance at a time when it is more vital than ever for every party leader to be taking these threats seriously. That is not serious leadership. Canadians deserve better.

What does the Conservative leader have to hide? Why is he not getting his security clearance? Why are the Conservatives so agitated?

• (1515)

[English]

The Speaker: I would ask all members not to take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker. I ask the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who is a very respected member of the House, to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: That goes both ways.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost, crime or corruption. We now know that his deficit this year will be \$7 billion, 20% bigger than his finance minister claimed in the budget only six months ago. Where is the money going?

We know that \$400 million was directed by Liberal appointees to their own companies in what involved 186 conflicts of interest. Now the Prime Minister has paralyzed Parliament for two weeks to cover it up and deny police the evidence.

Will he hand it over to the cops so we can put the bad guys in jail and get our money back?

The Speaker: Before I invite the right hon. Prime Minister to respond, I am going to ask the hon member for Timmins—James Bay to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just heard very impassioned and understandable outbursts from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who is concerned about foreign interference and its impact. Something that worries me is that he cannot have confidence that his leader, the leader of the Conservative Party, is actually going to do the work to take foreign interference seriously and get the security clearance necessary to be able to protect the members of his caucus from foreign interference.

Why is the leader of the Conservative Party not getting his security clearance?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): It is because the Prime Minister will not gag me the way he is gagging his 24 Liberal MPs.

He has turned our country into a playground for foreign interference. He has unleashed crime and chaos on our streets and corruption inside our government.

My question, which he is erratically trying to avoid, is this: Why does he keep covering up the criminal evidence in a \$400-million green slush fund scandal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is about to get up one more time in the House to say some words. I recommend, at this point, that he choose to apply those words to explaining to Canadians why he will not get the necessary security clearance from our national intelligence agencies to be able to protect not just his party, its institutions and its members but all Canadians.

Any leader who wants to take national security seriously should be able to listen to the information that CSIS wants to share with them, instead of covering their ears and going, “la la la la la”.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will tell members the briefing the Leader of the Opposition would take.

He would take the same kind of briefing the Washington Post got on classified information given by the national security and intelligence adviser and the deputy minister of foreign affairs. He would take the same briefing that I got under section 12.1 of the CSIS Act, “Measures to reduce threats to the security of Canada”. He would take the same classified briefing that the Prime Minister has been all too willing to give to the House when it suits him, such as when he revealed classified information about Mr. Nijjar’s killing a year ago and other classified information about India in the last several weeks.

That is the kind of briefing the Leader of the Opposition would take.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

● (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we just saw an excellent example of the partisan lengths to which Conservatives will go to try to cover up for the fact that their leader refuses to take national security questions seriously.

He has repeatedly refused offers by our national security agencies to give him the necessary clearances to be able to see the scope and breadth of threats to Canadians through foreign interference. He pretends to take issues of national security seriously, but that is only for partisan purposes, not for protecting Canadians. Shame on him.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public inquiry into foreign interference has made clear that every member of the House has a responsibility to fight against foreign interference in Canada. This is especially true of party leaders. It is imperative that all leaders be equipped with the necessary security clearances and information so that they can make responsible decisions to protect our precious democracy. The Conservative leader refuses to do so.

Would the Prime Minister shed light on why it is important to get such clearance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be alarmed by the Conservative leader's choosing to ignore risks to his own party and to our country, and his excuses have all been dismissed by non-partisan national security experts. If he has nothing to hide, what is he afraid of? Why will he not get his security clearances?

Let me put this in terms that I think the Leader of the Opposition might actually understand. He needs to get the clearance, take the briefing and protect the country.

* * *

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. government has fined TD Bank over \$3 billion after it plead guilty to money laundering charges. This case raises serious questions about federal oversight of Canadian banks and undermines our global reputation. Working Canadians have to play by the rules, but when banking executives put profits above the law, the government looks the other way.

What have the Liberals done to address the repeated criminal actions of TD Bank?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are, of course, very concerned by the actions of TD Bank in the United States. We make sure, every single day, that banks in Canada behave by following all the rules. We have continued to strengthen financial oversight, and we are making sure that there is full accountability for those responsible for this wrongdoing in the United States.

● (1525)

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, here is a simple problem that will only take a little political will to fix. When someone goes to Tim Hortons and buys six doughnuts, they do not pay any tax. However, if they decide to buy six sugar-free health bars, they must pay tax.

Because of an unfair tax rule, people pay more for healthy products, and that hurts our local businesses that are unfairly pitted against multinationals. Despite over two years of meetings and questions in the House, nothing has changed.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he intends to ask his Minister of Finance to fix this inconsistency, for goodness' sake?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond—Arthabaska for raising this issue. I know we have discussed it within the government. We will continue to look at whether his proposal, which seems to make a lot of sense, has any merit. I am sure we will all move forward together.

CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORTS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**FINANCE**

The House resumed from October 10 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:26 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

Call in the members.

● (1535)

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

*(Division No. 870)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas

Concurrence in Committee Reports

Blaney	Blois	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Schiefke	Serré
Bradford	Brière	Sgro	Shanahan
Brunelle-Duceppe	Carr	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Casey	Chabot	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Chagger	Chahal	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Champagne	Champoux	Sorbara	Sousa
Chatel	Chen	Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Sudds	Tassi
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Coteau	Dabrusin	Therrien	Thompson
Damoff	Dance	Trudeau	Trudel
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Turnbull	Valdez
Desbiens	Desilets	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Dhillon	Diab	Vignola	Villemure
Dong	Drouin	Virani	Weiler
Dubourg	Duclos	Wilkinson	Yip
Duguid	Dzerowicz	Zahid	Zarrillo
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Zuberi— 211	
Erskine-Smith	Fisher		
Fonseca	Fortier		
Fortin	Fragiskatos		
Fraser	Fry		
Gaheer	Gainey	Aboultaif	Aitchison
Garon	Garrison	Albas	Arnold
Gaudreau	Gazan	Baldinelli	Barlow
Gerretsen	Gill	Barrett	Berthold
Gould	Green	Bezan	Block
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Bragdon	Brassard
Hanley	Hardie	Brock	Calkins
Hepfner	Holland	Caputo	Carrie
Housefather	Hughes	Chambers	Chong
Hussen	Hutchings	Cooper	Dalton
Iacono	Idlout	Dancho	Davidson
Ien	Jaczek	Deltell	d'Entremont
Johns	Joly	Doherty	Dowdall
Jones	Jowhari	Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Julian	Kayabaga	Ellis	Epp
Kelloway	Khalid	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Khera	Koutrakis	Fast	Ferreri
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Gallant	Généreux
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Genuis	Gladu
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Godin	Goodridge
Larouche	Lattanzio	Gourde	Gray
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Hallan	Hoback
Lebouthillier	Lemire	Jeneroux	Jivani
Lightbound	Long	Kelly	Khanna
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kitchen	Kmiec
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kurek	Kusie
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Lake	Lantsman
Masse	Mathyssen	Lawrence	Lehoux
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Lloyd	Lobb
McLeod	McPherson	Maguire	Majumdar
Mendès	Mendicino	Martel	Mazier
Miao	Michaud	McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McLean
Miller	Morrice	Melillo	Moore
Morrissey	Murray	Morantz	Morrison
Naqvi	Ng	Motz	Muys
Noormohamed	Normandin	Nater	Patzer
O'Connell	Oliphant	Paul-Hus	Perkins
O'Regan	Pauzé	Poilievre	Redekopp
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Reid	Rempel Garner
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Richards	Roberts
Rayes	Robillard	Rood	Ruff
Rodriguez	Rogers	Scheer	Schmale
Romanado	Rota	Seeback	Shields
Sahota	Sajjan	Shiple	Small
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Steinley
Sarai	Sauvé	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)	Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
Arnold
Barlow
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Jivani
Khanna
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Majumdar
Mazier
McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Patzer
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)

Routine Proceedings

Strahl	Stubbs
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 117	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1540)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during question period, while the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition was posing a question to the Prime Minister, the member for Edmonton Griesbach used decidedly unparliamentary language. It was a phrase that you have, in the past, ruled as unacceptable and called on members to apologize for and withdraw, or they would not be recognized.

I appreciate it is difficult for you to be able to hear that from your vantage point in the chamber, Mr. Speaker, but I did observe the proceedings verification officer turn and then repeat the phrase, word for word, that was used by the member for Edmonton Griesbach.

I just ask for you to consult with Hansard and, should you find that they did capture this phrase that is unparliamentary and it is attributed to the member, that the appropriate remedy be taken.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge my hon. colleague's comments. If I said something that was offensive to this chamber, I withdraw it and apologize.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for withdrawing that comment and apologizing.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

HUNGARIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-416, An Act to designate the month of October as Hungarian Heritage Month.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce legislation to designate October as Hungarian heritage month. By introducing this bill on October 23, we honour those Hungarian patri-

ots who fought for freedom, democracy and human rights in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. I am proud that my honorary godfather, Andras Pincus, was one of those brave people.

This bill recognizes the impressive contributions of Hungarian Canadians to our nation's social, economic, academic and cultural fabric. From the first Hungarian immigrants in the late 19th century to the tens of thousands who arrived after the 1956 uprising, their resilience and achievements have enriched Canada. From business leaders like Peter Munk to Nobel Prize winner John Polanyi, to global music star Alanis Morissette, Hungarian Canadians have made their mark in Canada and on the world stage.

By designating October as Hungarian heritage month, we acknowledge the invaluable role Hungarian Canadians play in shaping our country. I would like to thank Her Excellency Maria Vass-Salazar, Hungary's ambassador to Canada, for her assistance with this initiative.

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

* * *

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP) moved that Bill S-235, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, be read the first time.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce Bill S-235, an act that would amend the Citizenship Act and Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Edmonton Griesbach, a determined champion for the rights of the child, for seconding this bill. As well, retired senator Mobina Jaffer and Senator Kim Pate for drafting and guiding it through the Senate at all its stages.

On any day, there are an estimated 61,000 children in out-of-home care. Each of these children, like all children, deserve the best care and to have the rights of the child respected, yet we know there are times when the system fails them and they fall through the cracks.

It is the responsibility of the government to apply for citizenship for children in care who came to Canada as minors, yet the government routinely fails to do so. As the children age out at 18, and if they come in conflict with the law, they could face deportation, even though they may not have any connection to the country they left.

Bill S-235 would ensure children who come to Canada and are in the care system obtain their Canadian citizenship. Children aging out of care already face far too many extraordinary systemic barriers.

I call on all parties in the House to support this bill to protect the rights of some of the most vulnerable children in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present petition e-5014, which was signed by a large number of people.

These petitioners are calling on the government to ask United States representatives, through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to lift the blockade against Cuba as well as to remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism; reaffirm the importance of denouncing the blockade against Cuba as one of the key barriers to the Cuban people's full enjoyment of their human rights; act immediately to preserve the sovereignty of Quebec and Canada, ensuring that Quebec and Canadian corporations and other entities, particularly governmental ones, do not participate in the American economic sanctions against Cuba; and ensure that Quebec and Canadian relations with Cuba continue to be based on equality and respect for sovereignty, independence and the right to self-determination.

I commend these petitioners, and I am honoured to present this petition.

[*English*]

OPIOIDS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually today in the House to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands. It is petition 130-25233.

The petitioners wish to draw the awareness of the House to the public health emergency that is the opioid crisis, and otherwise referred to as an “overdose crisis.” The British Columbia public health officer has already recognized that this is a public health emergency, as have many municipalities across Canada.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to recognize this is a national public health emergency, to reframe what sometimes is called an overdose crisis as a health issue and not one involving criminal law and criminal sanctions, and to do whatever is possible, through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach, to provide life-saving help and policies that support people dealing with mental health and addictions. It is a crisis.

On behalf of these petitioners, I submit this petition to our government and look forward to its response.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is real and a vital concern for many of my constituents. It is why I rise today to table petition number 44-1, calling on the Government of Canada to enact the principal concepts of the proposed climate-aligned finance act.

I would like to thank James Murphy and Janet Ledwell from Citizens' Climate Lobby for their tireless advocacy on climate action in Canada.

[*Translation*]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition signed by several hundred people, which reminds us that the House recognized Quebec as a nation and that the family reunification thresholds imposed by Quebec are causing unfair delays for Quebec sponsors.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to rule on the constitutionality of the thresholds for family reunification in Quebec and on the constitutionality of all statutes or administrative measures causing delays of up to 38 months for the sponsorship of a spouse or partner in Quebec.

The petitioners are also calling on Parliament to declare that obtaining a Certificat de sélection du Québec, or CSQ, is a discriminatory measure based on Quebec nationality and to establish a comparable and equal procedure for processing applications in relation to other Canadian provinces, given the nature of the sponsorship and the Canadian citizenship of the sponsors.

• (1550)

[*English*]

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition submitted by Canadian firefighters; it addresses an urgent issue that has an impact on their health and safety. I am grateful that this petition was sponsored by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby; it calls for immediate action to ban PFAS in firefighter gear and firefighting foam. Often, PFAS are man-made chemicals. They are resistant to heat, water and oil, but that durability comes at a cost to firefighters' health. The PFAS can accumulate in their bodies, and they face higher cancer risks than the general population.

Several countries have restricted the use of PFAS, and Canada must follow suit. That is what the petitioners are demanding.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also rising to present a petition from firefighters. It was submitted by firefighters from Vancouver IAFF Local 18, but this is an issue that affects firefighters from coast to coast to coast, including in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

S. O. 52

This petition addresses an urgent issue impacting the health and safety of firefighters across Canada. It was sponsored by my colleague for New Westminster—Burnaby, and it calls for immediate action to ban PFAS in firefighting gear and firefighting foam. These substances are man-made chemicals that are resistant to heat, water and oil, but their durability comes at a significant cost. Scientific evidence links these substances to severe health risks, including cancer, putting our firefighters at greater risk. They already face hazardous conditions.

Research shows that PFAS can accumulate in the body, leading to serious health issues. Alarmingly, firefighters face a higher cancer risk than the general population. We must mitigate these risks by regulating what we can control in their working conditions. Several countries have restricted PFAS use. Canada must follow suit. Our firefighters deserve gear that is free from toxic chemicals.

This is what the petitioners are asking for, and I hope the government respects their wishes.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, especially before the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. I suppose it is age before beauty in this case.

I rise to present a petition from 102 people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. They are requesting an increase to OAS payments. They are of the view that a livable pension must be above the poverty line of \$25,252 per year. They request assistance in passing legislation as soon as possible.

This petition is directed to the hon. Minister of Finance.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned with the limitations in accessing emergency services, such as 911. People in crisis and their family members should be able to access help, regardless of their location or means of communication. Presently, only the province of Nova Scotia and the cities of Ottawa, Waterloo and Calgary have the capabilities to transfer 911 calls elsewhere in Canada. Next-generation 911 technologies will allow people to send text message and will enable operators to transfer 911 calls between jurisdictions.

The petitioners call on the government to work with CRTC, as well as provincial, territorial and municipal governments, to implement NG911 technology rapidly and with a set timeline.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents. I rise for the 52nd time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime.

The community of Swan River is alarmed by extreme levels of crime caused by the Liberal government's soft-on-crime laws, such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. Bill C-75 allows violent repeat offenders to be in jail in the morning and back out in their communities in the

evening, and Bill C-5 allows criminals to serve their sentences from home. It is no surprise that, after nine years of the Liberal government, Statistics Canada reports that violent crime has risen by 50%.

The people of Swan River see crime in the streets every day, and that is why they are calling for jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

• (1555)

The Speaker: I thank all members for their petitions.

I would like to remind members that it is important to summarize the contents of the petition. However, it is common practice in the House not to indicate whether one favours or disfavors the petition; one should merely present 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, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

WINDSOR-DETROIT CORRIDOR

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request an emergency debate in this chamber, consistent with other emergency debates that have taken place, with regard to the subject matter of the trade route on the Windsor-Detroit corridor.

S. O. 52

In less than one week, on October 29, the Government of Canada, unless there is intervention, will permit class 3 and class 8 hazardous waste materials to cross the American-owned Ambassador Bridge. This would be detrimental to our economy; basically, 24% of the national trade between Canada and the United States takes place on this bridge. It has the drinking water for millions of people, the largest fresh water supply in the world and an ecosystem that is right on our doorstep. The material, which includes battery components, battery fluid, hydraulic acid and other things, will cross an over 90-year-old bridge, which is going to cost us with respect to traffic management and ecosystem difficulty.

It was cleared by the Michigan Department of Transportation after it did a thorough investigation on its side about the routing, but that has never been done on the Canadian side. In fact, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario did not even make a submission on this with respect to the negligence. The City of Windsor and the Windsor Fire and Rescue Services have opposed it. Many different individuals on the U.S. side have also opposed this. None of them have done any of this work, and there is currently no plan in place to deal with a spill or the materials that could get into our drinking water. It could also cause a backup and a delay in traffic.

This chamber was seized with the blockade of this route in 2022 because it cost the Canadian economy billions of dollars. In fact, in Sarnia, just a month ago, a small leakage that could have been cleaned up properly, as facilitated through a process, shut down that bridge for several hours. That is hundreds of millions of dollars that would take place in the Canadian economy. Not only that, but we do not even have the fire and rescue services plan yet to deal with those issues, so we cannot even use some of the proper techniques necessary.

Further to that, the CBSA union and the CIU, which has been doing the oversight on this, have not even been trained or notified by the government with regard to the issue. Therefore, there is no protocol in place, and the City of Windsor is scrambling to deal with this.

There have been no public hearings. There have been no consultations with the indigenous communities that I am aware of.

The potential danger of explosions and accidents is expanded because the small bridge capacity on the plazas is something that will create further problems that will not be able to be addressed.

The Windsor-Detroit ferry service operation has been opposed to this. It closed just recently. For over 30 years, it brought the materials across in a safe way, with a perfect record. Only recently, through lobbying in the United States, did this change take place at the Michigan Department of Transportation. This is what is odd: We have ceded our sovereignty to the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada have not even made representations on this. In fact, they have stood down on it.

A number of different issues have arisen on this bridge in the past. In fact, we had to bring in a law in this country, called the International Bridges and Tunnels Act, because the private property before that was something that we could not even deal with. We

had no laws in this country to deal with it. However, because of the behaviour and the management of the Ambassador Bridge, a new law was crafted and created in Canada.

In summary, I want to make sure that we have a chance to discuss this issue in Parliament. If we do not act right now, the routes of those vehicles will change. They are going to go into densely urban areas on the Detroit and Windsor sides. In addition, we do not have any plan in place to date to deal with this issue and, if there is a problem, the consequence to the economy will be significant.

This is an over 90-year-old structure that will have corrosive materials expanded to its system; they could even cause permanent damage. Basic questions relating to firefighter training have not even been provided for right now. There is no plan or support for that. There has been no containment or environmental concern plan developed by the federal or provincial government.

There is a fuel-specific risk that could expand the complications of it, and we do not even know if the Ambassador Bridge authority has provided the proper economic impact assessment for its insurance.

I conclude by asking for this to be looked at tonight, because the Government of Canada has to act. If we do not act right now, a private American billionaire and the Michigan Department of Transportation are going to determine the fate of the international crossing that crosses not only Detroit, Michigan, but from Montreal all the way to Florida. This is with respect to the trade and traffic of 25% of the Canadian economy, as well as the drinking water of millions of people and an ecosystem that is very fragile.

This has been denied on this 90-year-old bridge to date. A process is in place wherein, in a matter of months, within the year or just soon after, the Gordie Howe International Bridge will open up with the best standards for containment, capture and design for that, similar to Sarnia, which has this in place.

● (1600)

It is very suspicious that after all these decades of denying access to these types of capabilities on the bridge, this is being provided when the solution is right in front of us. There is a looming deadline and we have no plans whatsoever in place. Not even union workers or the fire department in the city of Windsor have been trained on this issue.

Why would we change things right now? We have safe crossing solutions in Sarnia at the moment. We will have the Gordie Howe International Bridge open very soon. The chamber needs to discuss this because so much of our economy and ecosystems are at risk. They are very unique and could be permanently damaged. The risk factors are so significant that the history of our crossing, with the freedom of the Underground Railroad, will be disgraced, because if an accident happens, it will pollute one of the most magnificent pieces of fresh water in the world and one of the strongest economic links to our number one trading partner.

Privilege

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Windsor West for his genuine intervention. However, I am not satisfied that this request for an emergency debate meets the requirements of the Standing Orders.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for weeks now, the regular business of this chamber has been put on hold because of the Liberal government's refusal to produce the documents ordered by the House. Parliament is, in fact, seized by this issue.

We are unable to get back to the regular business of this place. Whether it is the doubling of housing costs, Liberal food inflation or the crime and chaos in our streets, there are many pressing issues that deserve the attention of the House. However, this privilege motion must be dealt with. We must ensure that Parliament has the powers necessary to hold the government to account.

To be clear, the Liberal government has the power to bring this debate to an end. The Liberals could choose today to comply with the production order that was adopted by this House and affirm the collective parliamentary privileges of this chamber. Instead, they continue to dig their heels into the sand. The Liberal government is more preoccupied with the protection of those involved in the Sustainable Development Technology Canada green slush fund than they are with ensuring the integrity of this institution and the health of our democracy.

Parliamentary privileges are vital to the proper functioning of Parliament. These privileges ensure that the House and its members are protected from undue interference so that we can hold the government to account. This includes the collective privilege of the House of Commons to order and compel the production of documents that it deems necessary to carry out its duties.

The Conservative motion adopted this past spring ordering the production of documents relating to the green slush fund does exactly that. The motion requests documents that are necessary to hold the government to account for its abuse and misuse of tax dollars through the green slush fund. The receipt of these documents will allow Parliament to provide proper scrutiny of the government's program and the government's spending.

The Liberal government's refusal to provide the documents obstructs our collective ability to hold it to full account. The Chair's finding in this question of privilege is clear. The motion ordering the production of documents was adopted by the House and the request itself was clear, but the government has not complied with it. The redaction of certain documents and, in other cases, the outright

refusal to provide documents are unacceptable. Withholding this evidence is a breach of the House's parliamentary privilege, and the impact of this failure to comply with the production order is not to be underestimated. The impact goes beyond just this particular issue.

The Liberal government's actions are once again eroding the public's confidence in this institution. The corruption that has been exposed in the SDTC green slush fund is shocking and chips away at public trust in the government. If there is no real accountability for those involved in the corruption, it would be a massive hit to the confidence of Canadians in the checks and balances of this public institution.

Trust in our public institutions is a fundamental pillar in a healthy democracy. The erosion of trust in the Canadian Parliament should not be taken lightly by any member of the House. Distrust in this institution breeds division, feeds cynicism and apathy and is ultimately a threat to our democracy.

● (1605)

While the Liberal government continues to stand in this place telling us to simply just move on, we cannot move on. We have a duty to Canadians to safeguard this institution, to ensure that the privileges of this House are not violated by a government with something to hide and to ensure those who brazenly misuse and abuse Canadian taxpayer dollars are held to account. We as members of Parliament have a duty to fight back against the erosion of trust that is being fuelled by the Liberal government's obstructive tactics. Accountability and transparency are the remedies to the distrust that has been sown by the government.

That is why common-sense Conservatives continue to stand firm with our demands. We have a responsibility to Canadians and to the constituents who elected us to this place. The corruption that ran rampant in SDTC cannot go unchecked. The evidence related to the green slush fund must be handed in so that a criminal investigation can be conducted. Those who knowingly and intentionally stole or misused public funds must be held to account.

The Auditor General's report on SDTC is incredibly damning. In fact, when we read the Auditor General's report, we see there is no question that SDTC became a slush fund for Liberal insiders. SDTC awarded money to ineligible projects, and these projects clearly did not meet the goals or objectives of the program. However, they were still handed taxpayer funds. In total, at least \$59 million went to projects that were not even allowed to receive money. According to the Auditor General, no steps were taken to recover funds used for ineligible projects.

It is clear that ultimately, it is a failure of the Liberal Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, who did not sufficiently monitor these contracts. The minister failed Canadian taxpayers by not ensuring that public dollars were being used appropriately.

Privilege

The ineligible projects are just the tip of the iceberg in this scandal. In addition to identifying the funding of ineligible projects, the Auditor General identified 186 cases of the SDTC board of directors violating the Conflict of Interest Act, and that in 90 cases they directly violated their own conflict of interest policies, conflicts of interest that were identified using SDTC's own records. Those are public funds awarded to Liberal insiders, with case after case of connected Liberals getting ahead using taxpayer dollars. In some of these cases, projects received funding despite being both ineligible for funding and tied to a conflict of interest. That means Liberal insiders were awarding themselves or their friends taxpayer funds for projects that, by all accounts, they should have known were ineligible for funding.

Let us not forget that the chair of the SDTC green slush fund, who was hand-picked by the Prime Minister and the Liberal government, awarded \$217,000 to her own company. The chair of the fund awarded her company these funds even though the Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology Act clearly states:

no director shall profit or gain any income or acquire any property from the Foundation or its activities.

Conflict of interest policies and directives are necessary to protect the interests of Canadian taxpayers, but the SDTC green slush fund did not follow the Conflict of Interest Act or even SDTC's own conflict of interest policies.

● (1610)

The complete disregard for established conflict of interest practices calls into question all of the decisions that were made by SDTC, yet the Liberal government allowed the continued misuse of taxpayers' dollars to go on. The Auditor General was very clear in her findings that the blame for this scandal lies at the feet of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. The minister failed to ensure that this billion-dollar fund had the oversight necessary to ensure the good stewardship of public funds. While the minister seems comfortable to allow this corruption to go on with no accountability, common-sense Conservatives are not.

The corruption at the Liberal's SDTC green slush fund is evident and cannot be swept under the rug. That is why the House adopted the Conservative motion on June 10, ordering the production of documents in relation to the Liberal's SDTC green slush fund. Those documents contain evidence of the corruption at the fund and should be handed over so that there can be a criminal investigation. Those documents were supposed to be received within 14 days of the passage of that motion. It has now been more than four months since the adoption of that motion, and the evidence has not been turned in. This is a violation of a house order.

It is a breach of parliamentary privilege, yet still, after weeks of the House being seized with this issue, the Liberal government does not want to hand it over. It would rather grind Parliament to a halt than hand over the evidence. We already know that 400 million taxpayer dollars were misused on projects that were ineligible or tied to conflicts of interest. The question then becomes this: What more are the Liberals hiding? What is buried in that evidence that they are so desperate to hide? What is more damning than what has already been revealed? There is another question: Who on those

benches are they trying to protect? If the government has nothing to hide, then it would only make sense to bring everything to light to ensure that those who were responsible are held accountable. By not ensuring the production of documents requested, the Liberal government is actively covering up the evidence.

What is truly shameful is that this is not the Liberal government's first breach of parliamentary privilege in an attempt to cover up its failed governance. The Winnipeg lab cover-up is yet another example. The Prime Minister was so desperate to keep the Winnipeg lab documents hidden, he fought tooth and nail to cover up the details surrounding the ability of the People's Republic of China to penetrate our nation's maximum security lab. He was so desperate to keep hidden the evidence that scientists secretly collaborated with the PRC's top military scientists. This breach posed a threat to Canada and our allies, but the Prime Minister's primary preoccupation was keeping hidden the details of this massive national security failure. The Liberal government went so far as to defy four parliamentary orders and take the former House of Commons Speaker to court. Then, of course, we all know that the Prime Minister ultimately called a snap election to wipe the decks clean.

Parliamentary privileges exist to ensure that members of Parliament can carry out their duty to hold the government to account. The Prime Minister is once again trying to cover things up, and we cannot allow this latest breach of parliamentary privilege to go unchecked. Quite frankly, Canadians cannot afford for the Prime Minister and his corruption to go unchecked.

It is absolutely disgusting that, while Canadians across the country are struggling to feed, heat and house themselves, the Prime Minister and his government allowed 400 million of taxpayers' dollars to be wasted or stolen by well-connected Liberals. This corruption is a slap in the face to every hard-working Canadian who is bringing a paycheque home and still struggling to put food on the table. After nine years in office, that is the record of the NDP-Liberal government: over nine million Canadians experiencing food insecurity.

● (1615)

Food insecurity has increased 111% under the government's watch. That means that nine million Canadians do not know where their next meal is coming from. Food Banks Canada has reported that almost 50% of Canadians feel financially worse off than they did last year; 25% of Canadians are experiencing food insecurity; and, across the country, food banks have seen a 50% increase in visits since 2021. That is the result of the NDP-Liberal government's failed policies, such as the costly and punishing carbon tax, which it continues to double down on.

Privilege

The carbon tax is adding to the input costs of groceries at every single point in the supply chain. It is taxing the farmers, the processors, the shippers and the grocers. At the end of the day, those costs are passed on to Canadians at the grocery stores, but of course, it affects more than just groceries. The punishing carbon tax is increasing the cost of everything. It is adding to the cost of basic necessities, such as fuel, food and home heating.

In the midst of this affordability crisis and record inflation, the Prime Minister and his NDP coalition partners have repeatedly voted to hike the carbon tax, and they remain hell-bent on quadrupling it. Canadians are facing financial hardship because of the Prime Minister's taxes and his inflationary deficits. The Prime Minister's reckless deficits have pushed inflation to its highest level in 40 years and have driven up interest and mortgage rates. The Prime Minister's inflation has eroded the paycheques of Canadians, but not all Canadians are impacted in the same way.

The PBO has confirmed that lower-income Canadians are disproportionately impacted. The paycheques of Canadians cannot even afford the lifestyle they had just a few years ago. That is because paycheques cannot keep up with the skyrocketing costs of food, shelter and transportation, but while low-income Canadians struggle to stretch their paycheques, the wealthiest Canadians have seen their wealth grow. That means that the Prime Minister's inflationary deficits and taxes have resulted in a wealth transfer to the wealthiest Canadians.

The Prime Minister is causing financial misery for those Canadians who can afford it the least, and at the same time, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are allowing public funds to be spent unchecked. That is unacceptable. It is ethically and morally objectionable. The Liberal government's deficits year over year are fuelling inflation, and there is \$400 million in misused funds that are adding fuel to the fire, fuel that is making it harder for Canadians to make ends meet, not to mention the countless better uses there could be for those dollars.

This cover-up must come to an end. Canadians must get the accountability and transparency that they deserve. The Liberal government's repeated breaches of parliamentary privilege, ethics violations and corruption scandals have broken the trust and confidence of Canadians in this institution. This is further weakened when Canadians continue to see their financial situations deteriorate while well-connected Liberal insiders are getting rewarded. Trust in our public institution is built on transparency and accountability. Ending the cover-up would help us to take steps toward restoring that trust and strengthening the resilience of our democracy.

The amended motion that we are considering today lays out clear instructions for the committee on procedure and House affairs. It is already clear that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry failed to protect the misuse of taxpayer dollars, and if the Liberal government is going to continue to impede the release of evidence, then it is vital that this issue be given the fulsome and careful consideration that it requires. The stakes are high, and the Liberal government's dismissive attitude is to not treat this issue with the seriousness that it deserves.

The government's continued fight against transparency and avoidance of accountability threatens the health of our democracy. The Liberal government must hand over the unredacted evidence, and the Prime Minister must end the cover-up so that Parliament can get back to regular business.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Ethics; the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, Finance; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Foreign Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member started off by talking about trust in Parliament. However, all she needs to do is to look at her own leader, the leader of the Conservative Party today, when he was the parliamentary secretary to then prime minister Stephen Harper. He is the only prime minister in the history of Canada, not to mention the Commonwealth, who was held in contempt of Parliament. Then we will see that the games continue with the leader of the Conservative Party.

We have a serious issue of foreign interference, and he is the only leader in the House of Commons who is continually refusing to get the security clearance that is necessary. It begs this question: Why? Is there something that Canadians should know about the leader of the Conservative Party, which he is not telling them, that would disqualify him?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That is a legitimate question.

Madam Speaker, why does the member across the way believe that the leader of the Conservative Party does not have the courage to go out and get that security clearance? Is it because of his past?

• (1625)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind hon. members that, unless they have been recognized, they are not to contribute to the conversation.

The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, when I was preparing my remarks today, it got me reflecting on my time in this place. When I asked my very first question, which is a privilege for each and every one of us when we are first elected here, it was regarding an illegal trip that the Prime Minister had received. There is this trend with the Prime Minister, the leader of the Liberal Party, in which he thinks he is above the law.

At the end of the day, would the member encourage his leadership to hand over the documents?

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the current question of privilege has been before the House for about a month now. The government stubbornly refuses to hand over the documents that the House is asking it to produce. At the same time, it does not seem like the government is in a hurry to return to the usual order of business, to introduce bills, to move them forward. It would rather do nothing and let the debate go on like this.

My intuition is that it almost suits the government that the House is not studying its legislation because it no longer really has any. This is a tired government that is out of ideas. There is no sense of urgency to have a House working to pass legislation.

What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, the government is absolutely tired and out of ideas, which is why it even prorogued Parliament not that long ago.

We could say that the government is stubborn. I might say the government could be corrupt. However, there is no willingness to just hand over the documents that have been asked for. Yes, the NDP-Liberal government is tired, out of ideas and corrupt. It just needs to hand over the documents.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, speaking of prorogation, I was here when Stephen Harper prorogued Parliament.

Interestingly enough, when we are talking about trade with China, it was Stephen Harper who tried to get subsidized Canadian oil into China to knock out our manufacturing companies in Ontario and other places across the country. Subsidizing oil would have given China a leg-up on Canadian companies, but that is another story.

However, there have been Conservative ministers over the years, with their own controversies, who were also involved with SDTC and the appointment of the board and its officials, including Annette Verschuren and so forth. A good example is Maxime Bernier. Should we call him? He was the one who had the girlfriend who was linked to organized crime. He left classified documents in her apartment. Then there was Tony Clement and the \$50 million for the G8 summit. Members might remember the fake lake, the gazebos and so forth that were built in his riding. There was also some online stuff, which I will not get into. Then there was James Moore, who is really interesting because the member talked about child poverty and food banks. James Moore said, “is it my job to feed my neighbour's child? I don't think so.”

Those are the Conservative members and ministers who served when SDTC was operating. Maybe we should bring them here too.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am just wondering how long you were going to let the member give his speech for, when he should have been asking a question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is questions and comments. I am sure that the hon. member has been here long enough to understand that.

The hon. member had about a minute, and he was within his time frame.

The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster has the floor.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, we do know that the Auditor General gave SDTC a clean bill of health in 2017, and it was only after the Prime Minister handpicked the Liberal board that the board members who were appointed started giving themselves, and companies that they owned, money.

Whose side is the NDP on? Is the NDP not telling the Liberals to just release the documents so this could be put to an end?

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, the current Parliament has been here for three years now. We have, hopefully, just another year to put up with the government. Hopefully it ends sooner than that, quite frankly, because there has been a litany of what we deem to be corruption. We are trying to get it to the police.

Can my colleague from Saskatchewan please give us some relative terms as far as any other government in Canadian history that has transgressed the notions of democracy we have in the House of Commons more than the current government has?

● (1630)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, we do know that the current Prime Minister is the only one to have committed ethics violations over and over again. With respect to the corruption and the withholding of documents, I spoke about this in my remarks about the Winnipeg lab. He went so far as to call a snap election in the middle of a pandemic, when he was telling everybody to stay home. It is baffling.

The government just needs to hand over the documents so we can move on to the regular business of this place.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe I could have given a better answer to the question that was just asked. All one needed to do is take a look at Stephen Harper and page 1 of one document: “PMO Tied to Senate Hush Money Scandal”, “Harper Found in Contempt of Parliament”, “Against Court Order, Refusal to Share Budget [Information]”, “Conservative Cabinet Staffers Granted Immunity from Testimony” and “Conservatives Falsify Reports and Documents”. This is a huge document of abuse of a power—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member is not to point to a document that he might be holding, because it is considered a prop. He can reference information in a document but not point to the document.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is a list of a litany of things in which there was abuse of power and corruption. Name it; it is all there, and it is a long list. That was just Stephen Harper.

Privilege

The problem is that when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, the current leader of the Conservative Party was his parliamentary secretary and sat around cabinet. I would suggest that what we witness today when he says he does not want to get the security clearance, unlike every other leader in the House of Commons, is a false argument and that he is hiding something.

Canadians have a right to know why the leader of the Conservative Party refuses to get the national security clearance. Canadians have a right to know that. Why will the Conservatives not come clean? What are they hiding?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, we are definitely not hiding anything.

I can tell the House that the member gets up an awful lot to defend the corruption of the Prime Minister and his cabinet. How come the member is not encouraging his leadership to release the names? What is he hiding? What are they hiding on that side?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I like to see parliamentarians speaking out against corruption and calling for transparency. I would remind my colleague that when her party, the Conservative Party, was in power, there was corruption. Members will recall the \$50 million that Tony Clement, a former Conservative minister, took from the public purse to send to his riding.

Quebec's motto is "Je me souviens" or "I remember". I would like my colleague to explain to me why Quebecers should trust the Conservative Party today, considering its disastrous record on corruption.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, there was a motion passed in June that stated that the documents were supposed to be brought forward within 14 days. It has been four months, and there has been no movement. Not everything has been brought forward. Things have been redacted. Some departments have said they do not need to bring forward documents as they are not even part of the government.

Why are the Liberals not just encouraging their leadership to bring forward the documents unredacted?

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an absolute honour to rise in the chamber. My colleague from Saskatchewan's intervention was a great one. I think the topic is very important to all of us.

When I was elected over a year and a half ago, I made a promise to my constituents, the people who put their trust in me, that every single day we will fight for their best interests. We will fight for their rights because, at the end of the day, we are public servants who work for the people who put us in the seat we sit in. We are just trustees holding that seat for over 100,000 constituents.

Constituents put their faith in us. They put their trust in us. They know that we will always have their best interests at heart. When we take the oath, whether here in the chamber or in different departments in the government, wherever we go, it is our job to fight for our constituents.

Sadly, over the last nine years, there has been a pattern of entitlement, a pattern of corruption and a pattern of the Liberals' just not caring. We have seen their reckless path. The corruption scandal we are discussing today is just one example of the Liberals' long history of corruption. They think they know better than everyone else. They think they can get away with corruption, but enough is enough.

When I was knocking on doors this past weekend in my riding, Canadians were concerned. They were asking about this issue. They were asking why the government keeps lining the pockets of its own insiders. Canadians have heard this story over and over again. The list is a very long one. I do want to share a little bit of history of the government.

We all remember, in 2016, the cash-for-access fundraisers that the Prime Minister was hosting. He wanted to get donations for his party so certain Liberal insiders, certain lobbyists, could have access to the government. Only a select few, his friends and people who supported the Liberal Party's agenda, get access to him. The last I remember, "prime minister" means "first servant". The Prime Minister is for everyone, for all Canadians equally.

There was the 2017 Aga Khan scandal, when the Prime Minister accepted a family vacation. For the first time in history, the prime minister violated conflict of interest guidelines. He was found in violation of four sections of the act. However, he just brushed it off. He said that the Aga Khan was a personal friend. He was a personal friend who was a billionaire. Canadians do not have that option; they do not have friends with private islands giving them free vacations.

In 2019, there was the SNC-Lavalin scandal, with bribery and pressure from the Prime Minister, who even pushed senior cabinet ministers out because they would not listen to him. Jody Wilson-Raybould was one victim, one casualty, whom the Prime Minister did not even hesitate to kick out of caucus. Why? It was because of his own personal gain. The Prime Minister wants it his way.

Again, this comes back to the point I mentioned earlier: It is about entitlement. The Liberals think they know better. They think that they deserve better. It is always about them.

• (1635)

We cannot forget the 2020 WE Charity scandal in 2020. It was all over the news and in the media. It was talked about in our communities. The government handed out a single-source contract, not open to other tendering, for \$912 million to a charity that we all know has strong ties to the Prime Minister's family.

Privilege

The charity paid all expenses for different ministers who took trips and spoke at its events. They broke ethics law. We remember that the former finance minister, whom the Liberals now call a “random Liberal”, was forced to resign because of that scandal. It all comes back to the core trust that Canadians put in us: We will not act in our own best interests but in the interests of Canadians.

One of the latest scandals was the arrive scam app. I have spoken about it in Parliament before as well. The app should have cost only \$80,000. How much did it end up costing Canadians? It cost at least \$60 million, and every single day we hear more about the scandal.

The app did not work. It wrongfully sent 10,000 Canadians into quarantine, away from their jobs, away from their families and sometimes paying the out-of-pocket expense to live in a hotel. All this was for an app that did not work, yet the Liberals gave a contract to their insiders. There were allegations of identity theft with the scandal, including fraudulent and forged resumes.

There were no checks and balances when it came to handing the contracts out. Even a small business owner knows, when hiring someone, to do some due diligence themselves. The contract was for millions and millions of dollars. There was contractual theft. There was price-fixing and collusion in the scandal. Can people imagine if this were happening at a private sector corporation? What would be done to the CEO or to the executives? They would be fired and be criminally charged for this kind of behaviour.

Again, the Prime Minister does not care. He continues to enable the behaviour. His senior bureaucrats were part of the scandals. The list is so long; I could be here all day. My whole 20 minutes could be spent on just listing all the scandals. I actually had to shorten them to try to fit in as many as I could today.

In 2023 there were the McKinsey contracts. How much money was involved? It was \$209 million. Contracts were given to McKinsey & Company without proper and adequate oversight. Many of the contracts were not competitive. They were given to the Liberals' insider friends.

The point I am trying to make is that it is a pattern; it is not the first time. If the Liberals stay in power, it will not be the last time. Past behaviour predicts future behaviour.

The Liberals try to appoint people in their departments and in their independent bodies who are supposed to oversee some of this stuff. In 2023, the Liberal government appointed Martine Richard as the Ethics Commissioner. Guess who she was. She was the public safety minister's sister-in-law. What a way to stop corruption: put one's own family in to investigate the corruption within our Parliament and to oversee the problem and the crisis. What do people think is going to come out of that? Nothing. Thankfully, she did not end up staying in the position, because that would have been another conflict of interest.

• (1640)

How many times is this going to keep happening, where the Liberals continue to break the trust of Canadians? It is a very sacred relationship. We are public servants. We come to this chamber to work for our communities, with integrity. Service over self is some-

thing I speak about quite a lot in my community. However, for Liberals, it seems like it is about insiders over service, which is why we are here today.

Now we have a new scandal unfolding. Make no mistake; if it was not for the Conservatives pushing in committees and holding the Liberals accountable in question period, they would love to have this brushed under the rug as well. We are not going to let that happen. Conservatives will always be a strong opposition. We will hold the Liberal government to account every step of the way.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, they can heckle me all they want; it is fine. We are not going to be quiet on this side of the House, because we want the truth to come out. Government members can try to heckle and try to delay. They can do whatever they want. We will always fight for the taxpayer.

In the new scandal we are talking about today, 400 million of Canadian taxpayers' hard-earned dollars have been misappropriated. The Auditor General, who is the independent body who oversees and demands accountability for these contracts, found 186 conflicts of interest.

There were people making decisions on contracts for their own benefit. One person would go out of the room, the vote would happen, the board would vote in favour and that person would come back and sit back down. The next person would get up and leave the room, the vote would happen and that person would get the contract and sit back down. That is not how we do business. That is corruption.

A lot of whistle-blowers came forward and shared their concerns. There was violation after violation and they still keep rolling out.

We have asked for these documents to be presented, unredacted, so we can get to the bottom of this scandal. The Speaker ruled on this. We all want the truth, but again, Liberals are not releasing the documents. It begs the question: What are they trying to hide? Who are they trying to protect? This \$400 million is not a small amount of change.

We have seen Liberals paralyze Parliament because of the corruption and their cover-up. It is sometimes said that the crime is bad but the cover-up is even worse. We are seeing attempts every single day to cover this up. The money the Liberals have wasted on this scandal and every other scandal I listed earlier today is taxpayer money, which was not given to us easily.

Privilege

When I am in my riding, I hear from that single mother who is working double shifts and feels she is being taxed to death, but who sometimes believes the money that goes to the government might help her one day. She makes the sacrifice of being away from her family. I hear from that senior on a fixed income, on a fixed pension, who is getting clocked taxes.

I also hear from that owner of the mom-and-pop shop who has taken a massive line of credit, who took the risk of starting a business. The people who put all their life savings into these businesses are paying more taxes. When the Liberal government is taxing Canadians to death, each dollar means something. People are paying their taxes with their blood, sweat and tears. That money comes to the government. All people ask is that the money that gets spent helps make their lives better, is not wasted and is not given to the government's friends.

• (1645)

We know how tough life is right now. Two million Canadians are lining up at food banks and one in four are skipping meals. There are seniors who cannot afford medicine anymore. We have seen businesses shutting down, and 60% of Canadians are only \$200 away from bankruptcy.

We saw what happened in B.C., where 15,000 people lined up just to get a bag of rotten potatoes, or potatoes not fit for sale. People are struggling. Every dollar that goes out of their pockets makes it tougher for them to live and raise their families.

Canada had a promise that the Conservative leader spoke about today: If people worked hard in this country, they were able to save some money, buy that dream house and go on a vacation once in a while. However, when the government is taxing people to death and then recklessly spending hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' hard-earned money on itself, that is a problem. While Canadians line up at food banks, the government is lining the pockets of Liberal insiders. That is something quite concerning to all of us.

Conservatives take this very seriously because we hear this story every single day. When my colleagues and I are door knocking, when we are at events or meet-and-greets, this is a number one concern. Constituents say the government keeps taking more and more, and it keeps spending it recklessly.

Tax dollars come to the government, and what do the Liberals do? Line their own pockets. We have to keep reminding them this is not something that will go away; it is something we will keep fighting for. It is a scandal we are not going to let go away until the government brings these documents to the committee, has the RCMP investigate this and has some transparency and openness.

On this side of the House, we take this job very seriously. Seeing the Liberals not comply with the Speaker's ruling sends a very strong message that they are hiding something and that the problem is a lot bigger than what we may even know. On the Conservative side, we are going to keep fighting the good fight. We are going to get to the bottom of this scandal and we are not going to stop; we are relentless.

We are not going to stop fighting for Canadian taxpayers. We are going to make sure the documents come out, and we want this to

stop paralyzing Parliament. We want to go back to our core values and our core message to fight for Canadians: We will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

We are not going to let the government continue to steal money from Canadians. It is not going to happen, at least not under our watch. Our ask to the Liberals, again and again, is to please release the documents, unredacted. This could all stop if they give us the documents. This will stop when they pay back the money that Canadians are owed. It is not their money; it is the Canadian taxpayers' money.

• (1650)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we actually have released the documents. This motion is about the issue going to the procedure and House affairs committee. The bottom line is that the Conservative Party wants to continue to play games. That is what it is all about.

To quote the member, "Past behaviour predicts future behaviour." I started to list off some scandals, but I have a very long list: "Repeated Duplicity in Afghan Detainees Controversy"; "Repeated Duplicity on Costing of F-35 Fighter Jets"; "Harper Minister Lies, Blames Statistics Canada for Killing Long Form Census"; "Conservative MP Admits He Lied to Parliament"; "Conservative House Leader Admits to Mockery of Question Period"; "Harper Maligns the Supreme Court Chief Justice". I will continue on as the day goes on.

Nothing has changed. The Leader of the Opposition's behaviour is still the same as when he was the parliamentary secretary to the prime minister. Why will he not get the security clearance? Canadians have a right to know. What is the argument that the Conservative Party is advancing to justify its leader not getting the security clearance?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

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

If others want to participate in the debate, they need to wait until the appropriate time. I am sure their colleague who has the floor and has the ability to answer that question will do so.

The hon. member for Oxford.

• (1655)

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, that is the same entitled behaviour I was talking about in my speech. They just do not care. They have not released all the unredacted documents. They are not providing clarity to the committees. They are not even complying with the ruling from the Speaker.

Something I want to highlight is that the government is also now under investigation by the RCMP. It is being investigated because it received documents from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. It is going to be looked at by the RCMP, so I do not buy the member's argument here. The Liberals have been part of the problem, and they can hide all they want, but we are going to get to the bottom of this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the House has been paralyzed and we have been unable to work for nearly a month now, as my colleague from Joliette said. In the meantime, we agree with the Conservative Party that to end this paralysis, the government needs to hand over the documents.

In his speech, my colleague said that we serve our constituents, that we represent them and they expect us to do our work. That spoke to me, and my question will be simple. I would like to know what the next move is for the Conservative Party.

If, tomorrow morning, the Liberal Party hands over the documents and ends this paralysis of the House, what is the Conservative Party's next step? Will it be to paralyze the House again through a new question of privilege or to get to work on passing bills that are important to Quebeckers and Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, I think all of us in this House share that we have to continue to fight for the taxpayer, because that money is given to us on trust, and the government has broken that trust. Once the documents are given to us, we are going to keep on fighting for Canadians just like we have for the last number of years. We are going to keep fighting to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member for Oxford regularly visits businesses in his constituency and talks to farmers and small business owners, people who are trying to build the homes we talk about. What is he hearing from them? He alluded in his speech to their hard-earned tax dollars that are being stolen to line the pockets of Liberal insiders. Can he please elaborate?

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, I was just at one of the farms in my riding. It is harvest season right now, and some of the families have been making immense sacrifices to get food on our tables. They do not get days off or time off. They are up early in the mornings; they are working late, until about midnight some days, harvesting. Then, when they bring home the harvest, they are getting to keep less money.

The input costs have gone up. The taxes the government has brought in, the carbon tax, the capital gains tax, this tax and that tax, keep on destroying their powerful paycheques, which were once something we fought for in this country. We used to work hard and earn a decent living, but we are not seeing that anymore, because all the money the government takes goes into Liberal insiders' pockets.

Canadians are disappointed. They want an election and they want to send the Liberal government a message.

Privilege

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have listened to a lot of Conservative speeches over the last number of weeks. I certainly understand Parliament's role in this, and I support it. I think that role of Parliament, to send for papers, is a very clearly outlined power in our Constitution, and I know it is separate and apart from the RCMP.

What does my hon. colleague want to do if Parliament comes into possession of these documents? I ask because the RCMP has said it does have some concerns with this process. Does my colleague not want to get to a part where, potentially, the procedure and House affairs committee could have the RCMP come to the committee so Conservative members could ask the RCMP about the next steps it wants to take with these documents?

We cannot get to that critical step until the Conservatives stop filibustering their own motion and we get to the action stage. I support getting these documents, but at some point we want to get to a part where Parliament is acting instead of talking.

• (1700)

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, I strongly believe that we have to get to a point where we see all the documents before we move forward with our business. This could all end today if the government acted. It does not want to act. We can get back to our work if it stops hiding its documents.

What we want is to make sure that we hold those who are responsible accountable and for the money that was wasted and given to the Liberals' insiders to be given back to Canadians, because at the end of the day it is Canadians' money, not theirs.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this can end today if the Conservatives stop playing games. What the Conservative Party is asking the federal government to do is ignore what the RCMP is saying, what the Auditor General is saying and what the former law clerk is saying, all independent institutions.

The game the Conservatives are playing is very destructive. It is consistent with what I have challenged members opposite to tell Canadians, and it is a continuation of the Conservative leader's refusal to get the security clearance to become informed about foreign interference. Not one Conservative has stood in their place and justified to Canadians why he should be the only leader in the House of Commons who does not need clearance. I believe it is because of his past. What is in the leader of the Conservative Party's past that is preventing him from getting that clearance?

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, the Auditor General has said that \$400 million was misappropriated by the government and that 186 conflicts of interest occurred under the Liberals' watch. That was the Auditor General. They talk about independence and that was her ruling. The Speaker has also ruled. Is the member saying that the Speaker is not independent? Are the Liberals questioning the ruling of the Speaker? It looks like it.

We are going to keep fighting. The Liberals can play all the games they want. They can distract as much as they want from this file. However, Canadians know what they want to see. They want to see the money the government stole from them.

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague from Oxford that the Liberal Party is corrupt to the core. We need only think back to the infamous sponsorship scandal.

However, I do not agree with my colleague from Oxford about corruption in the Conservative Party. He says that his party is beyond reproach. Let me remind him of a few historical facts. Consider the “in and out” scandal of 2006, when the Conservative Party transferred funds between its local and national campaigns and in the process exceeded the spending limits set out in election laws. As a result, it was found guilty and fined \$50,000 for breaking election laws. Then there was the robocalls scandal, pertaining to calls that were made to give voters misleading information. It resulted in a nine-month prison sentence. The Conservative Party was guilty.

I would like my colleague to explain how Quebecers can be expected to trust this party, given its disastrous record.

[*English*]

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, when we take the oath of office, our job is to make sure we fight for the rights and interests of our constituents. That is the oath I have taken. It is what I try to live by every single day when I am in this chamber. That is what I try to believe, and my Conservative colleagues, and I hope all colleagues, believe in that. At the end of the day, that is what this is all about. It is about fighting for our constituents. That has been our job since day one and that is why we are not going to let this scandal go by.

As my hon. colleague mentioned, it is in the Liberals' DNA. It is not their first time doing this. Every month almost it is a new scandal. If it were not for the Conservatives prosecuting them every step of the way, fighting battles in committee and raising these issues, we would not be here today.

I want to congratulate our great team, which is fighting hard for Canadians. We are not going to stop doing that until we get our money back.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to this privilege motion regarding the failure of the government to produce documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada. I look forward to offering my insights and to speak up for and on behalf of the hard-working people of York—Simcoe. This is their House, just as it is the House of all Canadians. It is not the Liberal government's House, no matter how much it wishes that were true.

Peace, order and good government are the defining principles of our nation and have been since Confederation. For 157 years, these principles have underpinned the very promise of Canada, a promise that if people work hard, they can have a great life in a safe community. However, after nine years of the Prime Minister, that promise is broken because the Liberal government has disregarded these fundamental principles and its obligations to Canadians.

There is no peace as Canadians suffer from skyrocketing crime and chaos in every community across the country because of the Liberals' insane catch-and-release policies, policies that are putting

dangerous repeat violent offenders, as well as hard drugs, back onto our streets.

There is no order as Canadians suffer from the economic vandalism the government has wrought on this country, as our people face rising costs, fewer jobs and smaller paycheques. At the same time, more taxpayer dollars are now being spent on servicing Liberal debt than on meaningful health care and infrastructure investments.

There is no good government, as the Liberals have shown time and time again that they are not concerned about what is best for our citizens. They are only preoccupied with improving their own political fortunes and lining the pockets of their friends.

A case in point is the matter before us now, a matter that has seized Parliament for weeks. The Liberal government has failed to turn over documents to the RCMP regarding a \$400-million scandal that saw Liberal-appointed executives funnel money to their own companies, implicating them in 186 conflicts of interest. The Auditor General issued a damning report on this matter. She called out the former Sustainable Development Technology Canada agency for “significant lapses” in its oversight and management of taxpayer dollars. Once again, we are seeing the Liberals disrespect taxpayers to benefit other Liberals. The Liberals are blocking the legally ordered production of documents and dismissing the supremacy, will and authority of Parliament.

The government was given a choice, but instead of being accountable, respecting the work of Parliament and respecting the interests of Canadians, the Liberals have chosen to cover up the evidence involved in this scandal. The greed, corruption and conflicts of interest by Liberal appointees in this scandal are absolutely staggering, as are the lengths the Liberal government will go to cover it up.

This is truly shameful, but it is not a surprise. After all, we have seen this many times before. There was the Aga Khan scandal, the cash for access affair, the SNC-Lavalin affair, the WE Charity controversy, clam scam, ArriveCAN and now the green slush fund.

Time and time again, the Liberals have been found guilty for unacceptable ethical failings that have led to the inappropriate waste of significant amounts of public funds. Where does the blame lie for these failings? Certainly, every single Liberal across the way needs to take a good long look at themselves and what their “sunny ways” government has become.

• (1705)

As I think all members in the House know, I like to spend my time on Lake Simcoe in an ice hut, and I can tell them, from plenty of experience in being out there, that a fish rots from the head down. In this case, the head is the head of the government, the Liberal Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister who is ultimately responsible for his office, his staff, his ministers, his departments and the direction and policies of his government. It is the Prime Minister who has had to apologize on multiple occasions for breaking the law and for ethical violations. Members will remember when he said “it sucks” when he got caught, but his government does it time and time again. In doing so, the Prime Minister and his Liberal government have made a mockery of our conflict of interest laws by repeatedly flaunting them, with no consequences. By refusing to respect the will of the House and turn over documents related to the green slush fund, the Liberals are only further compromising the trust that Canadians have in our institutions and the entrenched processes we have here.

It is no wonder the Prime Minister's record-low popularity has coincided with a historic distrust in our institutions among Canadians. According to a Leger poll released yesterday, the record-low trust in our institutions tracks with similar reports from the Edelman Trust Barometer, which has tracked low and declining trust in government for some time.

It is no wonder Canadians have such little faith in government and other institutions. Canadians are hurting, and they are disillusioned with the state of our country, a country where a healthy meal, a decent home, a safe community and a good quality of life are now out of reach for so many. When we see the lengths this government will go to entrench its Liberal insiders and friends and cover up wasteful spending, all while families can barely afford to make ends meet, they are absolutely incensed.

This reminds me of my by-election in February 2019. The Prime Minister and his Liberal strategists thought they could flip York—Simcoe, and he made two well-publicized appearances at a chicken restaurant in Keswick. However, at that time, folks in York—Simcoe were very upset with the Prime Minister for his direct involvement in pressuring Jody Wilson-Raybould in the ongoing SNC-Lavalin affair. I had heard that at just about every door.

I remember a little story from after my win. When I was being sworn in, it was the first time I had ever met the Prime Minister. I was outside these very doors here and was very excited to represent the people of York—Simcoe. My colleague from Abbotsford was excited. My colleague from Huron—Bruce was excited and high-fiving me. When I was standing outside the doors, our leader at the time, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, was there. He said I would probably meet the Prime Minister and could shake his hand or not. I remember the leader of the NDP pacing back and forth; he wanted to go first, and I said I was just happy to be there.

Lo and behold, there came the Prime Minister, who walked up to me and said, “Scot, you have a lot of good people in York—Simcoe.” I said, “Mr. Prime Minister, we have some beauties.” He then said, “I was at a chicken restaurant twice in your riding”, and I said, “Mr. Prime Minister, I was trying to get you back a third time.” He asked why that was, and I said, “Because every time you came, I

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got 500 lawn sign requests.” Then he looked at me and I said, “Just kidding, Mr. Prime Minister.” Anyway, we had a laugh. However, all joking aside, five years on, the sentiment we felt in York—Simcoe then has now spilled out and is shared by folks on every street and town from coast to coast to coast.

• (1710)

Canadians want accountability. They want transparency. They want their government to act in the interest of Canadians. I truly believe that, right now, they are disappointed in the Liberals' conduct, their involvement in the green slush fund and other scandals, and their blatant efforts to cover it up.

The unpopularity of the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party as a whole can be traced right back to their contempt for Parliament and disinterest in the needs of Canadians, as well as the lengths they will go to look after their own and cover it all up. The green slush fund epitomizes all these things. The claim by the Liberals that the order to provide relevant documents to the RCMP would somehow compromise the investigation is absolutely bogus. If someone came to a police officer with information related to a crime, the police would not turn away and say, “No thanks, we are going to have to come about that on our own.”

RCMP officials, once in possession of the full, unredacted, unabridged documentation with regard to this matter, can assess for themselves its admissibility and relevance to their investigation. They can do this just as they have done with documents already received as part of this order.

Surprise, this is Parliament doing its job. This is our national police force doing its job. Unfortunately, wedged in the middle, we have the corrupt Liberal government intent on covering the whole thing up. The degree to which members opposite have sought to gaslight and mislead Canadians on the green slush fund is disheartening, to say the least.

The Liberal government has attempted to invoke the charter when defending its indefensible position not to produce these documents. That is a joke. The Liberals were actually found in violation of the charter when they invoked the Emergencies Act in the winter of 2022. They were positively gleeful when trampling over the rights of Canadians back then, and now they want to suggest that enabling the RCMP to do its job through the production of documents somehow encroaches on the rights of individual citizens.

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I spoke earlier about a fish rotting from the head down. This is one of the biggest fish stories I have ever heard, if I ever heard one. Speaking of fish stories, by the way, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, whose department was responsible for the scandal-ridden Sustainable Development Technology Canada, claimed to Conservatives that they just need to move on from the scandal. He called it a political drama that was putting the clean tech sector at a disadvantage.

We know who wants to move on. The green slush fund happened right under his nose, and they have been found out for their role in this very concerning matter. The fact that legitimate businesses involved in reducing environmental impacts are being affected by this shows the real consequences of Liberal corruption and mismanagement in this country, never mind the amount of taxpayer money that has just been misspent and wasted by the Liberals. This has had a catastrophic impact on the environment far beyond just this one industry.

I will remind members here tonight that the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund was cancelled by the Liberals in 2017, and they promised to bring it back. The Deputy Prime Minister stood on the shores of Lake Simcoe for this big announcement in 2019 and committed and promised \$40 million. We all know it never happened. We all know the same old line: promises, promises, promises.

• (1715)

Instead, I have had to spend the last five years telling people involved in the grassroots efforts to clean up and restore the lake the sad truth. The Liberal government will not support their efforts like the previous Conservative government did, because the government would rather ensure the money only flows to its Liberal friends. That has not stopped the grassroots community members from continuing the work as best they can for the lake.

I am also proud of the residents of York—Simcoe who have planted over 1,000 trees, which I have given out over the past five years at my Canada Day barbecue celebrations. The ordinary people of York—Simcoe are truly extraordinary. What a contrast to Liberal insiders who have been making good money through the grifting and self-dealing enabling by the government.

All of this shows just how much contempt the Liberals have for Parliament and the role of the House of Commons in our democracy. The Liberals think the House, the people's House, is an inconvenience to be bypassed and ignored. They do this all the time. Ministers frequently refuse to appear before committees. When they do, questions are deflected to bureaucrats instead of the minister responsible.

The Liberals tried to give themselves unlimited spending and taxation powers during the pandemic. They took the Speaker to court over the release of the Winnipeg lab documents. They routinely use their appointed flunkies in the Senate as a workaround to defeat and gut bills duly passed in this place, such as my current bill, Bill C-280, a financial protection for fresh fruit and vegetable growers from coast to coast to coast.

There is an overall disregard for our institutions. The reluctance on the part of the government to produce documents related to the green slush fund is very concerning to say the least, especially since

Parliament and its officers are examining multiple other scandals and ethics violations in addition to this one. There is an ongoing affair with the employment minister's continued involvement with a company dealing with government grants and contracts, which is a violation. We all know about the arrive scam app, an absolutely insane boondoggle.

What excuse will the Liberals conjure up to try and get out of being accountable on these matters? They voted against allowing the Auditor General to investigate GC Strategies. They refused to provide the documents on this occasion. What lengths will they go to, to cover up these scandals when Parliament tries to shine a light on them? Canadians see this and the determination by the Liberals to block investigations into corruption within the government.

As the official opposition, Conservatives have been focused on improving the lives of Canadians. However, by paralyzing Parliament, the government has made it impossible for anyone here to address issues like the doubling of housing costs, Liberal food inflation, and crime and chaos. I have been prevented from speaking on local issues as well, such as the illegitimate Georgina aerodrome, the unfair rural carbon tax rebate, the no-show Lake Simcoe cleanup fund and many more.

People in York—Simcoe are truly on the outside looking in. I am calling on the Liberals to finally submit the documents as ordered. If they have nothing to hide, they should give the files to the RCMP. If there was no criminality or wrongdoing, they should just allow justice to take its course and hold those individuals responsible. Enough is enough.

• (1720)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the closing remarks, the member said to let justice take its course. The proper course of justice is not for Parliament to produce evidence to hand over to the RCMP; it is for the RCMP to obtain its own evidence. There are ways that RCMP members can get this information. If they get a warrant, for example, they can get the information. They do not need Parliament to force anybody to do anything; they have the tools.

However, it is not just me saying this; it is the RCMP that said this. The RCMP has said that it does not need Parliament to help and that it has the tools it needs to do a proper investigation. Why will the member not just let justice take its course, as he said?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1725)

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

Members on both sides of the House are speaking out of turn. They have not been recognized, and I hope they will respect the ruling and, if they have any questions or comments, will wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for York—Simcoe has the floor.

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Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, they started heckling me right away. What are they hiding when they heckle me right away?

The order has been given and we need the documents. If the Liberals produce the documents, this will all be over.

I think the member for Kingston and the Islands listened to my speech very intently because I know he enjoys listening to me so much. I talked about transparency and accountability. Accountability is one of the most important things that Canadians are looking for. Have the Liberals started recovering the \$400 million? I want to see that money back for Canadians. I would say the same thing for arrive scam and the \$60 million.

There is never any follow-up. Did the government get the money back for the taxpayers of Canada?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am going to digress a bit from what we have been hearing for the past two weeks, which has been a bit of mud-slinging. I would invite my colleagues to regain the dignity we must show as we perform our duties.

I appreciated the speech by my colleague, with whom I have had the opportunity to speak on several occasions. It is always pleasant, and we all know how much he loves his lake.

My question is this. We know that money was used, let us say, by the fund to support a company whose owner was the chair of the board that decided whether or not to grant money. We know that. We also know that, to turn over evidence to the RCMP, for example, or the police, a search warrant is not required. If I find evidence somewhere and it could be related to a crime, I do not need to wait for the RCMP to get a search warrant.

Let us get back to the fundamental issue. Aside from the fact that the government refuses to comply with our question of privilege and assure us that the rest of the money was used properly, is the real problem here that public funds must no longer be managed by bodies that are not accountable to the House of Commons?

[English]

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, my colleague brought up the lake, and I am always happy to talk about Lake Simcoe. In my speech, I talked about the constituents of York—Simcoe being on the outside looking in. We were promised funds, \$40 million, for Lake Simcoe, and it is so frustrating for the people in this great riding to see the waste from the government. We saw no money for the lake.

We can look at arrive scam, with \$80 million absolutely wasted on an app. It could have been spent on Lake Simcoe or health care, for example. Were those funds recovered? This is the question I am facing at the doors in York—Simcoe.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am glad the member for York—Simcoe mentioned his bill, Bill C-280. It is a great piece of legislation. If any senators are listening to the House proceedings today, I would like to add my voice in urging them to pass that important bill because it would be very important for the Canadian Produce Marketing Association.

On the issue at hand, let me be very clear that I absolutely am in support of Parliament's right to obtain documents. That is a very clear rule that is solidly laid out in the Constitution. At the same time, we are being presented with an impasse right now. Every hour of House of Commons proceedings costs tens of thousands of dollars, and there are many bills that are not being looked at at this time. I think Canadians, at some point, are going to be looking at the House and wondering what the heck we are doing here.

The RCMP has raised some concerns, and we cannot ignore those. Would it not make sense for the Conservatives to stop putting up speaker after speaker so we could arrive at a decision to send this to the procedure and House affairs committee? Maybe then the Conservative members on that committee would have the opportunity to question the RCMP as a witness and we could come to some kind of an arrangement. Maybe the RCMP could explain what the procedure is and what kind of an investigation it is going through. I am just trying to throw out some ideas to get through the impasse here.

• (1730)

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, I am going to quickly answer that they need to hand over the documents and let us get the \$400 million back. That is for sure.

I want to thank the member for his support for my bill, Bill C-280. This is what is so concerning about the government. We had every member of Parliament in the House, except for one, vote for Bill C-280. I know how important the bill is to the member for Winnipeg North's riding. To see the government now ask senators to actually squash the bill over in the Senate is extremely concerning. If that is its plan, I can tell members right now that, seeing what is happening over in the Senate, I now know that that side of the House is with the big banks, but on this side of the House, we are with farmers.

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.

I am always, how should I say it, pleasantly surprised by the heckles we get from the Liberals. They ask why we will not do this or not do that. Why will they not just hand over the documents? They say that the RCMP has a mechanism to do it. If somebody commits fraud at a bank, the bank does not generally tell the police to get a production order. It hands over the documents unredacted. I do not know if the government would hand over unredacted documents no matter what.

Parliament is authorized through the laws that govern, so this would be authorized by law. Therefore, why would we not simply hand over the documents to the police?

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My hon. colleague gave a great and impassioned speech, but what are the Liberals hiding? They complain about the cost. What could be so damning in those documents that they are fighting so hard to keep them out of the public view?

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, that is why we are here tonight and why we have been here for the last two weeks. I thank my colleague for that question about ensuring transparency and accountability. This is a large amount of money.

I spoke about Lake Simcoe. Because this is about money and about people who are struggling right now, I have to talk about the rural top-up in my riding, which is the soup and salad bowl of Canada. Lake Simcoe is the ice fishing capital of Canada.

The Liberal government put it in the budget. It promised to look at the rural top-up. It has classified my riding as Toronto. One cannot even see the CN Tower from my riding. We have been denied the rural top-up. That money is for the people of York—Simcoe. I am concerned for the government. When it gets an invoice from the people of York—Simcoe since 2016, when the rural top-up should have started, the bill is going to be absolutely staggering.

• (1735)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, as usual, I am very proud to rise this evening on behalf of the constituents of Oshawa to hold the government accountable for its Liberal corruption. I must say, though, that I am not rising with any pleasure this evening. I have been going back to my riding, trying to explain how the government has corrupted our institutions and corrupted how the government works. It really is a sad example of governance.

We all know that the Liberal Prime Minister could end this. He could end it by releasing the documents uncensored, so that Canadians could learn the truth about the \$400-million Liberal green slush fund cover-up. We could be finished with this. However, the Prime Minister has continued the ongoing theme of corruption in his government by refusing to do so. More than 10,000 pages have been censored to cover up the most important information about the Prime Minister's hand-picked Liberal appointees to the green slush fund.

This theme of corruption has also been demonstrated by the Prime Minister's Liberal government through shutting down the rights of parliamentarians to receive certain information through Order Paper questions or through ATIPs. Our parliamentary privileges need to be protected. Our privileges are continually being breached by the corrupt Liberal government.

Today, I would like to address the importance of Parliament and parliamentarians receiving information that Canadians are demanding. The Liberals' scandals are too many to list. Liberal obstruction has become a rule instead of an exception. This past weekend, when I was in Oshawa, people were asking me how much longer they would have to put up with these continued scandals and misappropriation of their tax dollars. Their frustration is at a level that I have never, ever seen before. Oshawa wants to know where their tax dollars are going. Is the money being spent prudently? Are we getting the results that Canadians want and need right now? All we are asking for are the documents to show where the money went. We have all heard that if we want to understand what really happened, we have to follow the money.

Parliamentarians and Canadians have tools to hold our governments to account. One tool, as I mentioned, is access to information, or what people call ATIPs. This is where Canadians can ask for specific emails and follow the trail of money and how we spend their tax dollars. Sadly, the government routinely returns ATIPs sometimes fully redacted, covering up the information that Canadians have a right to know. A second tool that parliamentarians have is something called Order Paper questions, or OPQs. I have submitted several of these OPQs that were returned with incomplete answers and word salads that did not even make any sense. Third, as in this case, Parliament has rights and privileges. The House enjoys the absolute and unfettered power to order the production of documents that is not limited by statute. These powers are rooted in the Constitution Act of 1867 and the Parliament of Canada Act.

That brings us to our debate today. What brought us here? On June 10, the House adopted a motion calling for the production of various documents related to SDTC to be turned over to the RCMP for review. That is in the record. In response to the motion adopted, departments either outright refused the House order or redacted documents before turning them over, citing provisions in the Privacy Act or the Access to Information Act. Nothing in the House order contemplated these redactions.

In response to the failure to produce documents, the Conservative House leader raised a question of privilege, arguing that the House privilege had been breached, due to the failure to comply with the House order. On September 26, the Speaker issued a ruling on the question of privilege raised and found that the privileges of the House had, in fact, been breached.

• (1740)

Let us take a look at this. If this were a private affair and criminal activity were suspected, documents would be turned over and an investigation would be started. In this case, the Auditor General looked at a five-year period, and he found that an incredible 82% of the funding transactions approved by the board of directors were conflicted. This was only over part of the mandate; there could be more. Public office holders are entrusted to oversee taxpayer dollars and not to personally prosper from their work in government. Sadly, however, that is what happened, and the directors of the slush fund were unapologetic.

The minister had replaced the original chair because that chair was criticizing the program, and he put in his hand-picked director. One director was incredibly aggressive with the actions she took. This woman was appointed in 2016 by the Prime Minister, and her name is Andrée-Lise Méthot. She runs a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital in green technologies. Andrée-Lise Méthot's companies, before and during her time on the board, received \$250 million in grants from SDTC. Some of that was before, and I will talk about that in a minute, but when she was on the board, \$114 million went to green companies that she had invested in. During her time on the board, the value of her company, Cycle Capital, tripled because of getting an SDTC grant. This is a stamp of the Government of Canada's approval that allows for these companies to raise other funds. The House will never guess who her lobbyist was. Her in-house, paid lobbyist for 10 years was the current radical Minister of Environment, before he was elected. While he was lobbying for Cycle Capital, the minister got \$111 million. That is incredible, but it is just the example of one director. According to the Auditor General, nine directors accounted for 186 conflicts.

I will speak about another board member who was hand-picked by the Prime Minister, Guy Ouimet. He admitted in committee that \$17 million of green slush fund money went to companies that he had a financial interest in. He said it was a small amount of money. In Oshawa, we have people losing their jobs. We have people standing in lines at food banks, and the food banks run out of food before noon. We have seniors living four to a room. However, this hand-picked Liberal says \$17 million is just a small amount of money. Our community finds that insulting. It may be a small amount of money to a Liberal elite, but it is not for most Canadians, and that amount of money went up 1,000% in value since the investment was made in 2019. It certainly pays to be a Liberal insider; unfortunately, Canadians, people in my community, are suffering now, and \$17 million is not a small amount of money.

It is our job here in the House of Commons to expose the corruption and things we have authorized money for in Parliament. It is our job, and it is time the Liberals started caring about it. The challenge and the concern I have is that this corruption routine seems to have become ordinary business for the Liberal Party. It is why I feel that this is really a sad moment in Canadian history.

● (1745)

I would like to review a few things that Canadians may have forgotten about, some important things that have happened with the government that made Canadians start realizing that it was not business as usual.

We all remember the SNC-Lavalin affair. Unfortunately, the allegations of political interference led to criminal prosecution, and the Prime Minister's response and handling of the situation really impacted judicial independence and the rule of law. We will remember that when the Prime Minister's justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, was asked to do something improper, she stood up to the Prime Minister and as a result was basically pushed out of cabinet and government. Ultimately, this resulted in a situation where three prominent female Liberals left. We are talking about Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jane Philpott, one of the more competent ministers of health, and my neighbour and friend Celina Caesar-Chavannes. She even wrote a book about it.

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The way the Prime Minister interfered in this affair forced Canadians to look at their institutions and judge how they were functioning. The Prime Minister does not have a problem going on vacations, but what he wanted to do is cut a deal with SNC-Lavalin, granting a contract to a company that gave money to his family members and handing out billions of dollars to Liberal insiders and consultants. This is just one of a long list of instances of the Prime Minister using government funds to benefit himself and his friends.

We all remember the WE Charity scandal too, in which the Liberal government awarded a contract to WE Charity. This charity had huge ties to his family. There were huge ethical conflicts of interest, and there were parliamentary investigations and findings. One of the reasons I am saddened tonight is that it impacted the public's trust in the government. Despite the Prime Minister admitting he did something wrong and despite the Ethics Commissioner finding that he directed his staff to explore options for providing the money to WE, he was not found guilty. However, we know that his then finance minister, Mr. Morneau, had an entirely different experience with the WE Charity scandal.

I want to talk for a few moments about the COVID-19 response and the spending during that response, because many businesses in Oshawa went bankrupt. People lost their businesses and homes. There was huge criticism over the amount of money, how it was spent and how things were managed, but we still have not evaluated the government's support for these programs and how effective they were. There seems to be a lack of transparency in spending and accountability measures, and we have not looked at the public health implications and long-term effects. However, we do know that the actions taken were extraordinary and the amount of coercion and force the government utilized was unprecedented.

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I am hearing over and over from Canadians that they should have the right to make personal medical decisions. However, as we saw, sadly, the government and the Prime Minister made deliberate decisions to go beyond guiding and protecting Canadians, to a point of punishing people who chose not to get COVID-19 vaccines, not because there was evidence that punishing them would make Canadians safer, but because he thought that scapegoating a small and unpopular minority of Canadians would make him more popular. The sad thing about that approach, as we remember from the election, is that the Prime Minister politicized a health issue. I want to give kudos to a Liberal member of Parliament, the member for Louis-Hébert, who stood up to the Prime Minister and stated on the record how disappointed and sad he was that the Prime Minister had decided to politicize Canadians' personal health decisions.

● (1750)

I want to bring to the attention of the House yet another example of the government obstructing parliamentarians and disrespecting our parliamentary privileges. Even today, we are trying to get information in regard to the pandemic response.

My colleague from Provencher asked an Order Paper question, Question No. 2745, in regard to Pfizer contracts and what Health Canada did not answer. All he wanted to know was when the former minister of public service and procurement, the former minister of health, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada received the contract. He also asked when Health Canada, the Public Health Agency, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Transport were briefed on the contents. Unfortunately, he received no answer.

In the United States, there is a different system. Quite often, they go to the courts. Here in Canada, we do not have the same type of system. Canadians expect us, as parliamentarians, to use our privileges to get answers for them. Sadly, the government gives word salads or returns redacted documents.

I would like to take a moment to talk about the ArriveCAN scandal. ArriveCAN is something that was also implemented during the pandemic. I remember talking with the Privacy Commissioner in committee; he had extreme concerns about implementing something along the lines of the ArriveCAN app because of privacy issues.

We talk about the situation and the amount of money that was wasted on ArriveCAN; this is just part of it. There are huge controversies surrounding the effectiveness of this app, including privacy concerns and, of course, the costs associated with it. I remember that the Privacy Commissioner basically said, "Well, this is something that could be utilized for a very short-term period." However, the government continued on and on, even though the evidence showed that the vaccine and the government's approach was not actually stopping the transmission of COVID-19. The Privacy Commissioner recommended that the data collected should be destroyed, but the Public Health Agency continues to utilize it.

Canadians are worried about their privacy, and here we have an app that not only cost way more than it should have but also affected Canadians' ability to travel. We have to look at this in case there is another pandemic or emergency. In that situation, the Prime Minister had no problem continuing with his family vacations. This

demonstrates the perception of elitism and privilege toward the public health message, and his own adherence to the rules. In other words, it was something that he wanted Canadians to follow, but he did not want to follow it himself.

Another really important incident, where there was a similar situation to that we have today, was the Winnipeg lab scandal. I still do not think we have gotten to the bottom of this.

We have to say, "When does it stop?" The Conservative leader is calling for a carbon tax election because it is not going to stop. The Liberals are at a point now where they do not even realize any ethical breaches. It has become the regular way of doing business. The response is basically saying, "Gee, I am sorry", and then going on and doing it again and again.

In the Winnipeg lab scandal, we saw officials from the Communist Party of China having access to some of our most vital biosecurity materials. We see that how the government handled it affected our relationship with China. Canadians are now very aware of Chinese interference, which, I guess, will be another speech that we have to manage.

It is a sad but appropriate day. Parliament needs to do its job because that is what is expected.

● (1755)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be blunt, that speech was absolutely all over the map. I mean, it covered everything but the failure to produce sustainable documents, so I am not quite sure what the member opposite was trying to get at in his speech.

To be perfectly honest, I come to Ottawa each and every week to try to get work done on behalf of my constituents. I want to talk about housing. I want to talk about the fact that the Bank of Canada rate dropped again. I want to talk about how inflation is dropping and all the great things that are happening. However, we cannot do that because we are stuck in this circle, which is a complete waste of time.

I do have a question for the member opposite, but first I will read from a letter from the commissioner of the RCMP. He wrote:

...the RCMP's ability to receive and use information obtained through this production order and under the compulsory powers afforded by the Auditor General Act in the course of a criminal investigation could give rise to concerns under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is therefore highly unlikely that any information obtained by the RCMP under the Motion where privacy interests exists could be used to support a criminal prosecution or further a criminal investigation....

There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections.

Could the member opposite comment on the RCMP commissioner's comments?

Privilege

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that question. This is very simple. If the member wants this to end, they just need to provide those documents.

To respond to the member, my speech was about the record number of scandals of any government we have ever had in Canada, and it was too hard to list them all. However, I will answer his question with what Andrew Coyne said in an article in *The Globe and Mail*. It reads:

Liberals have always been prone to being corrupted by power, but the current crop of Liberals are unique for being corrupted by their own virtue.

The preening moral vanity that is a signature of the...Liberals - the gratitude, as in the Pharisee's prayer, that they are "not like other men" - is not, alas, an act. They truly believe it, to the point that they are literally incapable of conceiving of themselves doing wrong.

It isn't only that they are surrounded by people like themselves, in other words: They are surrounded by people who think like them, and whose first thought at all times is that whatever it is they are thinking must be for the good.

The Liberals do not even recognize ethical breaches anymore. That question was evidence that the member did not listen to my speech.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech, but I do wonder about the Conservatives' true intentions. We have been grappling with this question of privilege for several weeks now.

Let us say that, tomorrow morning, the government decides to finally table the documents in the House. What strategy would the Conservative Party use next?

Would it be willing to take another look at the agenda and work on the various bills that are before the House, or would it come back with another question of privilege on a different subject?

What are the Conservative Party's intentions? Does it want to paralyze the House as much as possible to show that the government is not capable of governing? Is that the real intention here?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is missing the entire point. If the government produces the documents, then we can move ahead.

However, the member seems to misinterpret what the strategy is. I enjoy my colleagues' speeches, but this is not a strategy. These are the rights of parliamentarians. We voted to have these documents brought to us, and that is a right of Parliament. Each and every one of our rights seems to be challenged by the government. We have to say, "When is it going to stop?"

I realize that the Bloc has voted for the government to keep them in power, but enough is enough. In my riding, people are sick and tired. I would welcome the Bloc members to take a stance because I think one of the best strategies for Canada and Quebec would be to change and get rid of this corrupt Liberal government.

• (1800)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague touched on a number of fairly important issues that are

also impacted by what the government is trying to do in withholding documents from the House of Commons. This is a matter, as he and the government know, of parliamentary supremacy in what we get to see. I will remind the government again that Parliament has the right to demand documents and that the Speaker has ruled that those documents are due.

Does my colleague still believe that Parliament has relevance, or does he agree with the Liberals that at the end of the day, this is just a little hurdle to get past so they can do what they want and shovel money out of their pockets to their friends?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague brings an extremely important point forward. He says that it is our right, but I would argue with him, and I hate to argue with him because he is a great debater, that it is not just a right; it is an obligation.

I am from a community in Oshawa that is suffering right now. My community is wondering where the money is going. This green slush fund, remember, was supposed to be for greening Canada and making improvements to our environment. However, what we are seeing is literally millions of dollars going to Liberal-friendly elites. I could go on and on, and that is why I am not happy to be here tonight debating this. I have been here for 20 years, and our rights and privileges have to be protected.

The government has no respect for Parliament. The Prime Minister has no respect for the rules and no respect for the ethics that are supposed to be upheld in this sacred House. I am afraid that Canadians are losing confidence in our institutions, whether that is our government, our judicial system or our bureaucracies, and that is the danger we are in if we continue to support this corruption.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with a whole lot of what the member is saying. When I think of corruptness, all I needs to do is take a look at the most corrupt prime minister, Stephen Harper. The parliamentary secretary to Stephen Harper is the Conservatives' current leader. The pattern of behaviour we have seen since Stephen Harper continues to live on in the current leader. That is the reason he refuses to get a security clearance. I think Canadians have a right to know why that is. Is there something in his past that will not allow him to get a security clearance? The leaders of the New Democrats, the Bloc and the Green Party, all of us, have it but not the leader of the Conservative Party.

How does the member opposite or any Conservative defend a leader who refuses to consider the national interests of Canada and does not get a security clearance?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I am really glad the member asked me that because it shows how out of touch these Liberal elites are.

Privilege

The Prime Minister put in a process where he is giving briefings to friends who have supported his corrupt government over the years. Our leader has taken a principled approach.

This member, who is heckling me, believes that only the elites of the Liberal Party or government leaders need to know which MPs are conflicted and being accused of foreign government interference. Our leader believes that all Canadians have that right. We are going to an election. Would they not like to know if the person they are voting for had a problem with government interference? Would they not like to know before they cast a vote?

The government and the member have been protecting members who may be compromised. Our leader wants to say no and to end the elitism. We want to allow all Canadians to know who those MPs are. If the Liberals just release the names, Canadians will know who to vote for in the next election. I think it is going to be pretty clear.

● (1805)

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his letter to Canadians in 2015, the Prime Minister, famously promised the following: “It is time for leadership that never seeks to divide Canadians, but takes every single opportunity to bring us together”. That is a mistruth. He said, “we committed to a responsible, transparent fiscal plan for challenging economic times.” That is another mistruth. He said, “Canadians need to have faith in their government’s honesty and willingness to listen.” That is another mistruth.

The Prime Minister said:

Government and its information must be open by default. Simply put, it is time to shine more light on government....

But in order for you to trust your government, you need a government that will trust you. When we make a mistake—as all governments do—it is important that we acknowledge that mistake and learn from it.

He said, “To close, I am committed to leading an open, honest government that is accountable to Canadians, lives up to the highest ethical standards, brings our country together, and applies the utmost care and prudence in the handling of public funds.” The final phrase of that letter to Canadians is “We will not let you down.”

The Prime Minister has reneged on all of those promises. He is a failed leader. He has abused the trust put in him. The failed, corrupt government has literally been embroiled in scandal after scandal for the last nine years, and here we go again talking about another scandal, this time the green slush fund.

As a result, the House of Commons has been at a standstill for 13 days now due to the government's refusal to hand over documents. Over the past weeks, we have engaged in countless debates regarding the privilege motion. I can only assume that Canadians have been bombarded with a barrage of differing views and misleading narratives surrounding the government's green slush fund. Given that the parliamentary press gallery often shies away from highlighting Liberal corruption, I want to lay out the facts clearly and simply for the people who are watching.

It all began with SDTC in 2017. SDTC was supposed to provide funding to companies with innovative and legitimate ideas aimed at

improving Canada's environmental record. The government funnelled a staggering one billion tax dollars into SDTC.

However, the Liberals appointed their friends to the board of SDTC, including the chair. The board was responsible for deciding who received funds. What did the board members do when they convened? They chose to redirect the money back to their own companies. There was a shocking \$400 million spent not on enhancing environmental outcomes but rather on enriching Liberal insiders.

In addition, a further \$58 million was granted to 10 projects that were entirely ineligible and could not even demonstrate any environmental benefits or the utilization of green technology. The Ethics Commissioner determined that the chair of the board broke the law twice by funnelling money to her own company.

How do we know all of this? A brave whistle-blower stepped forward and testified at committee, exposing this damning and explosive scandal. They said, “What should have been a straightforward process turned into a bureaucratic nightmare that allowed SDTC to continue wasting millions of dollars and abusing countless employees over the last year.” Further, they also expressed that they believed that “the...government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare.”

Instead of the Prime Minister's upholding his mandate of running an open, honest and transparent government, he and his Liberal colleagues are paralyzing Parliament by refusing to release all unredacted documents and evidence related to the green slush fund. This is not just a matter of ethics; it is also about the integrity of our democratic institutions. Canadians deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent and who is benefiting from the decisions.

● (1810)

This refusal to hand over documents can only mean that what they are hiding is far worse than we can imagine. Which particular cabinet minister are they trying to protect from criminal liability? Just how damning are these documents, that they would stall Parliament for 13 days and defy the order of the Speaker just to conceal the \$400 million they handed to their friends? Clearly, what they are trying to conceal is prioritized above the very productivity of Parliament itself.

The government House leader and several other Liberal champions of corruption like to defend and deflect their failure to comply with the Speaker's order to release documents by saying Conservatives are somehow trampling upon charter rights. This is a blatant attempt to shift focus away from the Liberals' reckless spending and corruption, a far too common tactic for this government.

One would think the Liberals would know what it means to attack charter rights, as their unprecedented use of the Emergencies Act allowed them to freeze bank accounts without court orders, authorize broad police powers and restrict peaceful assembly. Even civil liberties organizations and former judges at that time raised alarm bells, saying there was no justification for such extreme measures. Then we had Justice Mosley in the Federal Court of Appeal, who pronounced that the government had essentially breached a number of charter rights.

Why should Conservatives heed the Liberals' advice on respecting the charter? They only uphold it when it aligns with their political agenda. Their track record reveals a blatant disregard for the very rights they now claim to champion, all to deflect responsibility for their misuse of taxpayer funds.

When it comes to protecting individual freedoms, Conservatives lead with principles, while Liberals pick and choose when it benefits their agenda. The invocation of the Emergencies Act was not about protecting Canadians; it was about silencing criticism and crushing opposition. The same applies now as we demand accountability for the green slush fund.

The Liberals are raising concerns that the Speaker's House order could infringe on charter rights, especially regarding police investigations and privacy, but let us be clear: It is the Liberals who are abusing their power by refusing to comply with an order of this House.

They claim we are violating, specifically, section 8 of the charter, which protects privacy from unreasonable search and seizure. However, the truth is there is little to no expectation of privacy in these documents. They were created by public servants spending taxpayer money. They belong to the public. Furthermore, the House order does not force the RCMP to take any specific action on the documents. Law enforcement can choose to disregard them if it sees fit. However, if the RCMP finds evidence of potential criminality, it must pause its review and obtain judicial authorization to continue. This process protects against any claims of a charter breach.

The charter is there to protect people from the government, not to protect the government from accountability. What we are witnessing is a clear attempt by the Liberals to dodge accountability for their actions concerning SDTC and taxpayer funds.

As Conservatives, we are committed to transparency. Canadians deserve to know how their money is being spent. We will always stand against overreach and demand accountability from the government. Pursuing transparency is not an infringement of rights; it is essential to our democracy.

I have had the opportunity to sit on many committees regarding SDTC and the Liberals' green slush fund. I have been watching this unravel for quite some time now. Considering all the testimony we have heard, the ministers we have spoken to and the numerous reports from the Auditor General, it is completely mind-boggling that the government and its members are still trying to cover this up.

• (1815)

Despite the overwhelming evidence revealing the depths of this corruption scandal, the Liberals continue to evade accountability.

Privilege

They are avoiding it so fiercely that they are willing to stall the work of Parliament, diverting our attention from the critical issues that matter most to Canadians, like soaring housing costs, food insecurity, rising crime rates, increasing drug use and the growing homelessness crisis. This is nothing short of shameful.

The Liberals continue to tell the press that they are eager to move past this debate, claiming it is the Conservatives who are wasting time and resources. Let me remind the Liberals that they are the only members of this House who voted against this motion; that they alone possess the power to resume parliamentary proceedings. They could refocus on the issues that matter to Canadians by simply handing over all unredacted documents. It is as simple as that. Instead, they choose to hide behind procedural delays, prioritizing their own political survival over the urgent needs of everyday Canadians. It is a government that is completely tired and has lost touch with reality, more concerned with covering its tracks than addressing the struggles of the citizens it was elected to serve.

Perhaps this can serve as a wake-up call to the government. Recent polling from Abacus Data paints a stark picture of the growing discontent among Canadians. A staggering 57% of those living in Liberal-held ridings want their member of Parliament to call on the Prime Minister to resign and not seek re-election. Let that sink in to the Liberal members who are listening to this speech. This is not just a minor concern. It is a clear signal from the electorate that it is fed up with the Liberals. Time is up.

Moreover, only one in five Canadians believe the Prime Minister should run again. Almost half of Canadians want him to resign immediately. This not just the rejection of his leadership; it is an entire rejection of the approach the current government has taken. Among those who voted Liberal in 2021 but have since lost faith in the party, the numbers are even more alarming: A staggering 40% want the Prime Minister to resign immediately.

This is not just about political preferences; it is about accountability and trust, accountability in the face of corruption. The evidence of mismanagement and unethical practices surrounding SDTC and the Liberal government's green slush fund is undeniable. Canadians are tired of seeing their hard-earned tax dollars misused while the government tries to cover its tracks. The Prime Minister's unwillingness to address these issues head-on and hand over the documents has clearly eroded trust and made it clear that accountability was never a priority for him and the government. It is shameful.

Privilege

The question we must now ask is this: How much longer will the government ignore the voices of the very people it was elected to serve? The Liberals can no longer afford to dismiss the mounting discontent as mere political noise. We know that at least 20, if not 30, members really wanted the Prime Minister to resign as of today. They must recognize that their actions have consequences and the people and Liberal members are demanding change.

These data reflect a fundamental shift in the political landscape. Canadians are seeking true leadership that prioritizes their needs and not a government more focused on self-preservation and evading accountability. The public is rightly outraged at the corruption that has been allowed to fester under this Prime Minister, and it is time for the Liberals to face the reality of their situation or to step aside and give Canadians the carbon tax election they want and deserve.

It is time for our country to be led by Canada's next great Prime Minister, the member for Carleton. As Conservatives, we stand ready to offer a vision that restores trust and accountability in government.

• (1820)

It is time for the Prime Minister to listen to the people and step aside for new leadership that puts Canadians first. The call for change is loud and clear, and Conservatives are more than ready to form government, end the corruption, end the scandals and ensure that the voices of Canadians are heard. More importantly, we are ready to respect always the source of the funds that drive this country: taxpayer money.

In conclusion, it is clear that the rights of Parliament and Canadian taxpayers have been violated by the government's refusal to comply. The Speaker has ruled that the House must pause its work until the government fulfills its legal obligation to provide these documents. The Auditor General has exposed the shocking reality that the Prime Minister has clearly turned the SDTC into a green slush fund for Liberal insiders, with \$390 million paid out in 180 cases of conflicts of interest. It is unacceptable that the Prime Minister and his ministers were aware of this corruption and did nothing to stop it. The same whistle-blower I quoted earlier called out the minister for innovation not once, not twice, but three times. In fact, they did not stop short of saying that he deliberately misled Canadians, that he misled Parliament and that he knew about the abuse and did absolutely nothing about it until he, the Prime Minister and the corrupt government were outed by the press. The Auditor General has also clearly laid the blame on the industry minister for his failure to monitor these contracts properly.

When did we lose the whole concept of ministerial accountability? At the very beginning, I read the words of the Prime Minister about how they would make mistakes, and when they did, they would own up to them and learn from them. In my three years as a parliamentarian, I have yet to hear one apology from any member of the corrupt government. Those were false words and false promises. Canadians are clearly coming to the same conclusion that I certainly have: We were basically sold a false bill of goods in 2015, 2019 and 2021.

Only common-sense Conservatives are committed to ending this corruption and getting real answers for Canadians. We will hold the

government accountable. It is our constitutional obligation to do exactly what we are doing right now, and we will continue to do this as ferociously as possible, each and every day, until the government releases all the unredacted documents.

We will restore integrity to our political system. It is time for transparency and change. It is time for the truth.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about the production of documents in relation to an RCMP investigation. I know that this member is a former prosecutor. He never misses an opportunity to remind us of that.

Quite simply, in the 15-plus years that he was a prosecutor, how many times did he, or a police organization he was working with, obtain evidence through an order of Parliament? Could he tell the House that?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, what the member fails to realize is that the government is actually the complainant in this particular matter. There is clear evidence of criminality. There is clear evidence of fraud in the awarding of taxpayer money.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Larry Brock: If you would let me finish the response before interrupting, you might get a response that you would be satisfied with.

Mr. Speaker, they love to interrupt.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, what the new member for Kingston and the Islands fails to appreciate is that any order of Parliament is supreme. It is the law. The member and his government are actually the complainants.

If there were really an interest in holding these individuals, who forfeited the ability to receive funds lawfully but did so through criminal means, then he would actually understand that there is an obligation to work with the RCMP and hand over the documents. Government members are not doing so, because they are clearly trying to protect someone on or behind that front bench. That is the only logical conclusion. They have the ability.

Just because it has never been done before, it does not mean that there is no lawful way to release the documents.

Privilege

• (1825)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, prior to the current Liberal government, which has been in power for nine years, the Conservatives were in power for nine years. I happened to be in the House for most of that time, and under the Conservative government, the Phoenix pay scandal cost taxpayers \$2 billion, a \$50-million slush fund was administered by Tony Clement and there were a number of Senate scandals. Also, the Harper government was found in contempt not once but twice for, guess what, refusing to hand over documents ordered by Parliament detailing how it was spending money on crime bills and dealing with the Afghan detainee matter. There was also election fraud galore, for which we watched Dean Del Mastro, a Conservative MP, be led off in handcuffs to jail. If we were to try to find out whose list of corruption and scandals was longer between the Liberals and the Conservatives, we would be here all day.

The Speaker has ruled, in agreement with the Conservatives, to produce documents to PROC. There is no order to produce all of the documents to the police. If my hon. colleague wants such an order, why do the Conservatives not raise a question of privilege and ask the Speaker to order that all documents be produced to the police? Is it because they know the Speaker will not do that?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, it is so good to know the coalition is alive and well. The member just confirmed that.

From my observations at a number of committees and from listening to NDP members, who always talk about the failed, tired, ethically challenged government, the New Democrats will always continue to support their phony leader, who, in a stunt in front of Canadians, ripped up a piece of paper that he claimed was the agreement. Clearly, it was just a stunt within a few days of a by-election.

If the member actually cared about taxpayer money and the at least \$400 million from one scandal, he would stand behind the Conservative position and demand that we end this privilege motion by getting the government to release all the documents unredacted.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to hear my colleague speak. I worked with him on the almighty Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, so it is a pleasure to hear him speak today.

At the beginning of the debate on this question of privilege, we heard the government say that this would be an intrusion into the separation of powers. However, it has been shown that submitting evidence is not the same as ordering an investigation. Therefore, there is no intrusion.

The second reason for not handing over the documents was that there is no warrant. My question is this: Is a warrant really necessary to have the right to submit potential evidence?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the first thoughtful question I have been presented with.

Obtaining search warrants is one particular tool that law enforcement members can use, but they will only rely on search warrants when there is no co-operation in an investigation, particularly from a complainant. As I indicated in my speech and in my responses to a couple of questions, the Liberal government is the complainant. It has a duty to release documents to assist the RCMP in its investigation. Search warrants are a tool but are not required to obtain each and every piece of evidence.

As I also indicated in my speech, if the RCMP receives all the documents unredacted and there is a concern that there was no judicial authorization, there is something called the discoverability rule. As the RCMP is reviewing material, if it has a suspicion of some level of criminality, it is legally bound to stop the review, write to a justice for judicial authorization to continue that review and then potentially lay charges.

• (1830)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the experience my colleague from Brantford—Brant brings to this place regarding criminal matters.

One of the biggest concerns I see is the continual erosion of the constitutional principle of the supremacy of Parliament. It is essential that this place is able to fulfill its obligation as the supreme adjudicator and law-making body of this land.

I am wondering if my colleague from Ontario has further comments about the concerning trend we see from the Liberals, especially when it comes to the lengths they seem willing to go to erode constitutional principles to cover up their scandals and corruption.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, this is not a one-off. It demonstrates a pattern of unaccountability in the government.

As I have indicated, and I did not even list them all, although I know some of my colleagues have listed scandal after scandal and identified the misuse of taxpayer funds, we are talking about the misuse of billions of dollars of taxpayer funds. There is no question that the way the government has conducted itself over the last nine years has created a deep level of mistrust, which Canadians have, in the ability of the government to always act in their best interests.

To my colleague's question, what it shows is a complete disrespect for this particular institution. Our hallmark of democracy is literally being mocked on a daily basis, for the last 13 sitting days, by the government defying the will of the majority of parliamentarians and, in its face, defying the will of the Speaker of the House.

Privilege

It is not the first time it has happened. Let us take a look at the Winnipeg lab scandal. The government literally took the House of Commons and the Speaker to court in refusing to release documents, again hiding a scandal and embarrassment. I would really love to know which minister, which member, it is trying to protect.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to enter into debate on the important matters that are before the House. We are soon coming to the close of what I believe is the 13th day of debate on a question of privilege.

The many Canadians who I know are watching, and watching with great concern, may ask, “What is ‘privilege’ and why does it matter?” It is a word that is used in many different contexts across society, but when it comes to the idea of privilege within Parliament and within our parliamentary tradition, the Westminster system of governance that goes back more than eight centuries to the mother Parliament in the United Kingdom, there are constitutional principles that speak to the idea that members of Parliament have a thing called “privilege”.

To unpack that just briefly, it has to do with Parliament and its members, of which a Parliament is made up. That is why, after an election, there is a Parliament. We are in the 44th Parliament, which is made up of 338 MPs. A government is not the Parliament, but rather a Parliament empowers and gives authority to a government to be able to make decisions. The Prime Minister and the government have survived only because a majority, which includes the NDP and often the Bloc Québécois, has given the authority for the government to continue to survive.

It speaks to the idea of privilege and the foundational principle that in our democratic system, it is elected members of Parliament who make up a Parliament. This place and the institutions; the traditions; and the constitutional conventions, both written and unwritten, an important aspect that sets our parliamentary democracy apart from, for example, that of our American counterparts, speak about what our parliamentary system is.

Part of what that is, and a key part of why we are having the debate and discussion here today, is that the government finds itself in conflict with the very constitutional foundation of what our democracy is. When I first spoke to the motion 13 days ago, I outlined some of the specifics surrounding that. I now have the opportunity to once again enter into the discussion and to highlight again how important it is that this place be allowed, be empowered in, and above all be respected in its ability to call for, in this case, documents.

In the aftermath of the privilege motion's having coming forward, I wrote a news column to share with my constituents what was happening and what is so important about documents. As with the idea of privilege, it is about more than just a stack of documents that would highlight something about the issue at hand. It is about the ability for Parliament to ensure that it has access to something that it, only by its power, is able to inform. In fact I remember that there was some controversy a number of years back when a reporter, I believe, said that Parliaments come and go but the government stays.

The only reason the government stays is that Parliament, the supreme law-making authority of the land, allows it to. The only reason a prime minister can be in office is that Parliament allows that prime minister to be, in what we call “confidence”. I do not think that my constituents have ever had confidence in the current government, the Prime Minister and the coalition, but certainly from coast to coast to coast we are hearing increasingly that Canadians do not have confidence.

There is the idea that a Parliament has the ability to have unfettered access to documents to ensure that, in this case, there is significant alleged criminality. A whistle-blower has made the statement that it was a sponsorship-level type of scandal.

We will look back to the Chrétien and Martin era and the Gomery inquiry. I remember in fact that when I was a young politico, my then MP, Kevin Sorenson, sent me the abridged copy of the Gomery inquiry, which it outlined some of the incredible corruption perpetrated by then prime minister Jean Chrétien and followed by former prime minister Paul Martin. That brought in some of the most significant accountability reforms in our nation's history when former prime minister Stephen Harper was elected.

• (1835)

With that push to ensure mechanisms, we brought in the Ethics Commissioner and ethics rules for parliamentarians to ensure that there were conflict of interest rules, which the Prime Minister has been found guilty of breaking, like many other cabinet ministers.

However, it comes back to the very idea that Parliament is the supreme law-making authority of the land, and Parliament represents democracy. Before us we have an almost \$400-million scandal with conflicts of interest and hand-picked Liberal appointments. Quite frankly, it just stinks. Whistle-blowers have come forward, putting their careers on the line, to say that this is wrong. They could not in good conscience continue to operate within the context of not letting people know the level of corruption.

That is why over the last 13 or so days, it has been bewildering that, despite Parliament and the constitutional conventions that have established this place and its more than eight centuries of history, those Liberals are so quick to dismiss the whistle-blowers to cover up their corruption.

It would be very straightforward. That government could release these documents. It could do it today and then this Parliament could get on with its business, but the Liberals refuse, and one has to ask “why?” It seems like each and every day there is a different excuse as to why they will not do it. They say one thing one day and one cabinet minister stands up and peacocks about something, and then another will stand up and say something else. It seems like their message is always changing, but Canadians are asking the simple question “why?”

Why are they unwilling to allow full transparency on the \$400 million? It would not be for MPs to simply peruse these documents, but to give the RCMP unfettered access to ensure that we can get answers to the very foundational questions about this scandal and the alleged corruption that were brought forward, not by Conservatives, but by whistle-blowers, in some cases within the Liberals' own department.

I look forward to being able to pick up on a series of further points tomorrow. I would simply conclude my speech today by saying this: The government has created a circumstance where it has normalized constitutional crises, and that is where we are today. We have seen it before when the Liberals tried to have unfettered taxation ability, and because of Conservatives pushing back, that was rejected.

We see on a regular basis that the Liberals are willing to throw the Constitution under the bus for their narrow political interests, and it is time for that to end. It is time for accountability. It is time for Parliament, and the supremacy that it should enjoy in our democracy, to be restored, and when Conservatives are elected, that is what we will do.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1840)

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members in this place have been extremely frustrated and embarrassed by the lack of accountability of the Liberal government to comply with basic orders of Parliament over the last year. Then the Liberals go out into the public and say, “Oh, you know, Parliament has been ground to a halt because of...,” and we can insert any reason other than the government's complete unwillingness to adhere to the laws of this place.

I stand here tonight deeply frustrated. Colleagues in this place have voted to release documents related to a variety of different scandals this government is involved in. One is related to 400 million dollars' worth of potential misappropriations related to this green slush fund.

Earlier this year, I asked a question about a sitting minister of the Crown being involved in a company that was involved in misappropriations and malfeasance. Even if we dispose of this privilege motion related to the green slush fund that we have been seized with for weeks, because the government refuses to turn documents over, we are going to be seized with another privilege motion afterwards related to a sitting minister of the Crown.

His business associate said things like, “Oh, it was autocorrect; it wasn't Randy, it was Shpandy.” It is so ridiculous. We are at the point of preposterousness.

I cannot believe I have to rise in this place to ask for clarification when the government should just be handing over documents so

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that the members of the opposition, and frankly, even members of the governing party who have a fiduciary obligation to hold the government to account, can actually just get on with that business.

I have been doing this a hot minute. I have been very blessed to be the voice of the residents of Calgary Nose Hill in this place. Now I have to stand here and argue the question of a sitting minister of the Crown handing over documents related to his business with his partner saying that, no, it was not him, the other Randy; it was somebody with autocorrect, who was Shpandy. I know how ridiculous that sounds, because it is ridiculous. It is preposterous. It is a mockery of Canadian democracy.

To anybody who stands up from the government who tries to defend this ridiculousness: it is embarrassing and it is preposterous. It is a mockery of every Canadian who pays taxes, who votes and who thinks this place functions.

I cannot believe I am here having to say, “Please, government, comply with the privilege motion where you hand over documents or comply with the order of the Auditor General or any other basic function of democracy.” Yet, here we are on multiple different occasions. Literally, we had a business associate of a sitting minister of the Crown, who benefited from tax dollars, effectively say, “Oh, no, it wasn't this minister of the Crown. It was an autocorrect and it was Shpandy.”

Can the government just give it a rest and hand over the documents so we can get on with the business of making this place work?

• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not on one or two occasions, but on three occasions, the Ethics Commissioner has cleared the minister the member is referring to.

Let me go to the bigger picture she is talking about with what we have been seeing over the last 12 or 13 sitting days. We have an opposition party that is so outside of reality that it is only focused on its leader and what is in the best interests of the Conservative Party, not what is in the best interests of Canadians. That is what we have witnessed over the last 13 days.

The member says we should just provide the documents. What she is really saying is that we should believe the Conservative-Reform party, not listen to what the RCMP is saying and do what Conservatives say. The leader of the Conservative Party continues to put his thumb up to the RCMP, the Auditor General, the former law clerk and others in a total lack of respect to what we are supposed to be doing in the House. It is an abuse of power that we are seeing from the Conservative leader. I say that without reservation because that is the truth, whether the member wants to hear it or not.

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When the member talks about what is taking place now, in essence she is saying what the Liberal Party should not be listening to. I have a letter from the chief commissioner of the RCMP, which says, "There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections." The letter is indicating that he does not support the tactic the Conservative Party of Canada is using.

That is not the only thing that the Conservatives are putting their thumbs up to. I have an article from iPolitics. This is a reflection on the so-called leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada today. The article reads:

Wesley Wark, who has advised both Liberal and Conservative governments on national security issues, said the Tory leader is knowingly misleading the public by claiming he doesn't need the clearance because his chief of staff has received briefings.

"[The leader]'s idea that it's sufficient for his chief of staff to be briefed for him and for his chief of staff to share that information with him is complete nonsense," Wark told iPolitics.

The leader of the Conservative Party has absolutely no respect for this institution, let alone other institutions, whether it is the RCMP or the Office of the Auditor General. He has not only demonstrated that in the last number of months, but also demonstrated that when he was the parliamentary secretary to former prime minister Stephen Harper, who was held in contempt of the House of Commons, the first and only prime minister who has been held in contempt of Parliament.

The Conservative Party has a lot to learn about the actions it has taken. Its sole focus has been on the Conservative Party and its leader as opposed to what is in the best interests of Canadians. Instead of debating substantive legislation or talking about serious issues in Canada, Conservatives want to filibuster their own motion and prevent it from ultimately passing. It is something that we want to see go to PROC.

● (1850)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the member's attention to a name that is going to be seared upon his heart over the next year. The name is Rachel Punzalan. She is a strong, feisty Filipino woman who is committed to bringing truth and speaking truth to power.

I have sat in this place with the member for years, and I will just tell him this: Every moment that he continues to carry the water of the Prime Minister, with his lies, his deceit and his scandal, is a moment that Rachel is knocking on a door in his riding, or going to a Filipino event, and saying time is up for this stuff.

Is the member willing to sacrifice all of his principles and the principles of the people of his riding to continue to support these lies? If he is, I know for a fact that Rachel will continue to speak truth to power and take his seat.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I never ever do is take my constituents for granted. I feel very fortunate that on 10 occasions, the people, particularly in the Inkster area, have been very supportive of me. I appreciate that.

Having said that, I am not going to be intimidated or blackmailed in any fashion by any Conservative from speaking the truth. Contrary to the lies that we hear from the leader of the Conservative

Party on a daily basis coming out of the leader's office. I would suggest that there is a way around this, which is to recognize that we need to see the Conservative Party's emphasis shift to what is in the best interest of Canadians and start allowing the House of Commons, once again, to deal with legislation and other important issues that Canadians want to see take place. I encourage them all to do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Before going to the next speaker, we used the word "lies" twice there. I just want to make sure we back away from starting a rig on that one.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

FINANCE

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when will Mark Carney disclose his conflicts of interest?

That is the question I asked the government about three weeks ago. The answer? Well, none. They refused to answer that question and instead accused me of engaging in personal attacks. When the adviser to the Liberal Party happens to be the chair of one of the largest asset management and private capital firms in the world, is it really a personal attack to ask when he will disclose his conflicts?

We do not know what all of his business interests are or what his remuneration is and how much he benefits when the share price of, perhaps, one of the companies that Brookfield owns rises in reaction to government news. These are important pieces of information.

Is the government shielding the adviser to its party's leader from transparency laws when it allows Carney to function as an adviser to the Prime Minister? After all, that is really what he is. This whole business of "adviser to the Liberal leader" is as if the Liberals would not have us believe that the member for Papineau, who, at least today, is the Liberal Party leader, and the Prime Minister, are the same person.

Mark Carney is advising the Prime Minister without having to have his conflicts of interest declared. This is not an academic question.

Just a few weeks ago we saw the Liberals make an announcement about mortgage insurance ceilings. This benefits one of Brookfield's companies: Sagen is one of the mortgage insurance providers in Canada. The ceiling going from \$1 million to \$1.5 million is an enormous business opportunity, and the markets reacted to that. Share prices got a good solid bump that day when the announcement was made. Therefore, it is relevant to Canadians.

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Canadians need to know all the conflicts of interest around this adviser. I mentioned this in the premise of the question. The parliamentary secretary said that it was really good news because the mortgage announcement was going to increase construction, and it was going to be good for Canadians. Well, no. We had testimony yesterday at the finance committee that the only people that can get the maximum benefit of that increase to mortgage insurance limits are people who earn \$350,000 or more per year. This announcement is good for the mortgage insurance business and for Brookfield. If we had a conflict of interest disclosure, we would know just how good it might be for Mark Carney, but they will not do so.

I ask the parliamentary secretary tonight if she could tell us on what date they will ensure Canadians will have the conflict of interest disclosure on this adviser who advises the leader of the Liberal Party, but the leader of the Liberal Party, for now, is the Prime Minister, so we may only be scratching the surface. This adviser has all kinds of other business dealings with governments, not only the Liberal government, but other governments around the world.

It is time for Canadians to know what the conflicts and potential conflicts are, so we can get on with separating the interests of what is good for Mark Carney, the Liberals and their friends from what is good for Canadians.

• (1855)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to talk about what really matters to Canadians.

Since 2015, our government has been making important investments to grow the economy, strengthen Canada's social safety net and support Canadians. We introduced the Canada child benefit, which has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. We reinforced the security and dignity of retirement income by strengthening the CPP and increasing old-age security for seniors aged 75 and over. We made generational investments in \$10-a-day child care, cutting child care costs by at least half already. We also introduced the Canada carbon rebate to maintain an incentive to reduce pollution while putting more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians in provinces where the federal fuel charge applies. All of these investments have made life more affordable for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

However, we know that Canadians continue to face challenges while the cost of living remains high. That is why, in budget 2024, the government invested in new measures like the national school food program, which will help an additional 400,000 children get the healthy food they need to learn and grow, and the Canada disability benefit, which will help improve the financial well-being of over 600,000 low-income persons with disabilities.

[*English*]

This is also why we continue to invest in the dental care plan, under which two million Canadians have already been approved to get the dental care they need from a dentist or hygienist. We do this so that every generation has a fair shot at receiving the dental care they deserve while making life cost less.

We are also helping to make life cost less through our ambitious housing plan. We have committed to building more homes faster, increasing housing affordability, growing the community housing sector and making it easier to rent or buy a home. Our government recently announced a suite of bold reforms to mortgage rules to make mortgages more affordable for Canadians and put home ownership within reach. We are also expanding eligibility for 30-year insured mortgage amortization to all first-time homebuyers and to buyers of new builds.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Canadians can count on the government to continue strengthening our social safety net while managing the nation's finances responsibly.

[*English*]

In fact, for the past past nine months in a row, inflation has been within the Bank of Canada's target range. Inflation fell to 1.6% in September, a 43-month low. Today, the Bank of Canada lowered the interest rate to 3.75%, which is going to help so many Canadians with their mortgage rates, credit cards and other borrowing costs.

These are powerful economic proof points. They show that Canada's economy is strong and resilient. They show that our economic plan is fiscally responsible. That is important because it means that we can afford to make investments and in turn make life more affordable for Canadians.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I will note that there was no answer to the question. I asked a question about the conflicts of interest disclosure. I had asked it before and did not get an answer, so I am here in Adjournment Proceedings to get the answer I did not receive in question period. However, the parliamentary secretary has again refused to answer it.

In her response, she began by saying that since 2015, the Liberals have been there to grow the economy. Let me be the one to let the parliamentary secretary know that, per capita, the economy is smaller today than it was in 2015. That is the legacy of the government. It has shrunk the economy. Canadians are poorer now than they were when the government took office nine years ago. That is the legacy of the government.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Mr. Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. I am very proud to be part of a government that has a plan to ensure that everyone gets a fair chance to succeed and build a good, middle-class life. Ongoing investments like the ones I outlined are making life affordable for Canadians, and investments in economic growth and competitiveness are showing results. Canada has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and this is recognized by our AAA credit rating.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

This shows that our efforts to make life more affordable for Canadians are paying off.

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, we are back this evening to discuss UNRWA and the government's failure to safeguard Canadians' hard-earned taxpayer dollars against funding terrorism.

On October 2, I asked the Prime Minister if he shared his minister's very blind trust in UNRWA. Unbelievably, the Minister of International Development had described UNRWA as one of his "trusted agencies". So profound was the minister's trust that he broke his promise to Canadians and reinstated Canada's funding to UNRWA. This happened even before the release of a UN report on its investigation into UNRWA staff being involved in the October 7 terrorist attack. Let us be honest here: As is true whenever the UN investigates itself and examines one of its own agencies, the report had no intention of derailing the global funding gravy train. This is expected. However, the report was not all rainbows and unicorns. Even the UN had to admit that there was something very wrong with this tainted agency.

Let us look at the recommendations. The report recommended that UNRWA create a centralized neutrality investigations unit. That sounds impressive. Let us have a unit to investigate the neutrality of a UN agency. However, if UNRWA was so lily-white, why call for the establishment of such a unit? The report also recommended that UNRWA update its code of ethics and its staff training, as well as that it find more ways to screen UNRWA applicants. That is a bit strange for an innocent UN agency.

Why does it need to screen better? Could it be that it has been hiring terrorists? Unfortunately, that is exactly what has been happening. We recently learned that UNRWA is seeking immunity for staff involved in the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel. The agency was even forced to admit that one of its employees, an alleged educator killed in Lebanon, was a Hamas leader. What a revelation that is. It does, however, bring ridicule on the UN report's findings and its absolution of UNRWA.

In my initial question, I asked whether the Prime Minister shared his minister's very blind trust in an agency that Canadian taxpayers fund into the millions, which just happens to employ terrorists. What a sad charade it is. With so much smoke swirling around how UNRWA operates, it is unconscionable for Canada to have acted so quickly to restore funding. We are not talking about a few dollars. In 2022, Canada pledged almost \$32 million, making us the 11th biggest donor. In May, the Minister of International Development doubled down on his largesse in terms of terrorist support. The minister announced that Canada would provide \$65 million, including \$25 million as part of Canada's recurring payments to UNRWA. An additional \$40 million would go to UNRWA and to other experienced partners in the region.

While we have Canadians who are hungry and struggling to make ends meet, the government is giving Canadian taxpayer dollars to a terrorist-hiring agency. This is completely immoral and un-

acceptable to Canadians, and the government is failing its duty to safeguard our dollars against funding terrorism.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is the same one the Prime Minister refused to answer: Does the parliamentary secretary share the Minister of International Development's trust in UNRWA? If they will not answer that question, would they agree that Canada should not fund terrorism, yes or no?

● (1905)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we continue to unequivocally condemn the brutal terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas on October 7, 2023. Canada also continues to support Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international humanitarian law.

[Translation]

The allegations that UNRWA staff participated in the October 7 attacks were troubling. Following these allegations, the UNRWA immediately and proactively dismissed the employees who were named and co-operated fully with the investigation and review called for by the UN Secretary-General. The UNRWA has also continued to strengthen its neutrality mechanisms.

[English]

On March 8, 2024, Canada announced that it would resume funding to UNRWA. This decision was taken in light of the serious and significant reviews under way and the steps undertaken by UNRWA to address allegations and reinforce its neutrality mechanisms. Canada had seen the interim report of the investigation being done by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services and was satisfied that there was no significant obstacle to resuming aid as the named employees were no longer work for the agency. Other donors also came to this conclusion shortly thereafter and resumed funding to UNRWA before the ongoing review and study were finished. When resuming funding, Canada and other donors also considered the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and the significant need for increased assistance. It is also important to recall that UNRWA provides up to 60% of all humanitarian assistance in Gaza, and its systems are essential for delivery of aid by other partners.

Adjournment Proceedings

Reports that UNRWA is requesting that its employees be shielded from persecution by invoking their diplomatic immunity are false. These media reports conflate the initial investigation into the alleged participation of UNRWA staff in the October 7 attacks with a lawsuit filed in the United States against UNRWA and some of its senior officials.

We are aware that an UNRWA staff member was reportedly killed in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon on Monday, September 30. At the time of his death, the UNRWA employee had been on administrative leave without pay since March, following allegations that he had links to Hamas. The employee denied being a member of Hamas, but was nevertheless being investigated by UNRWA's internal investigation unit at the time of his death. Detractors incorrectly asserted the employee was subsequently reinstated.

UNRWA reports that throughout the investigation, the employee denied his affiliation to Hamas. The first time that UNRWA received confirmation of his role in Hamas was on Monday, September 30, 2024, when it was confirmed by Hamas. This case underscores UNRWA's diligence in responding to information about alleged activities by staff that are incompatible with their role as UN employees. We acknowledge the other UNRWA employees who have been killed in this crisis and are concerned about the continuing attacks against UNRWA personnel.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

The work of UN agencies and trusted humanitarian actors in Gaza is fundamental to ensuring that the large number of civilians in need receive aid. Canada continues to be a major funding provider for trusted humanitarian organizations so that they can carry out their important work.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, sadly, like the Prime Minister and the minister, the parliamentary secretary believes her talking points and eagerly adopts the “ignorance is bliss” mantra of the government. This “hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil” position

will no doubt be reinforced on November 7, with the visit to Toronto by United Nations special rapporteur Francesca Albanese. Ms. Albanese is known for her open support of Hamas and other terror groups. She knows her rigged reports and comments are used to justify attacks on Israelis and Jews. In fact, in November 2022, Ms. Albanese participated in an official terrorist conference of Hamas.

Section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibits support for terrorism, so I have two simple questions for the parliamentary secretary. Will the Minister of International Development be adding the not-so-special rapporteur to his list of most trusted people? Most importantly, will the government stop Ms. Albanese from bringing her hatred and support for terrorists to Canada?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Mr. Speaker, the rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian relief for the more than two million civilians in Gaza is critical. UNRWA plays a critical role in delivering humanitarian assistance and essential services to Gaza and the West Bank. There are 123 countries that think the same and have signed on this year to a statement of shared commitments to UNRWA.

Canada will continue to work with UNRWA and other donors to ensure they implement the 50 recommendations of the review headed by former foreign minister Catherine Colonna. The review also found that UNRWA had sound governance and stronger neutrality mechanisms than other UN organizations.

Canada's assistance is subject to our robust enhanced due diligence process to ensure that no funding is diverted. We assess UNRWA to be an indispensable partner in aid delivery in Gaza during this dire humanitarian crisis.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:13 p.m)

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