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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Decision No 1/2024 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement Between Canada and the European Community on Trade in Wines and Spirit Drinks of 4 April 2024 amending Annexes I, III(a), III(b), IV(a) and VI of the Agreement between Canada and the European Community on Trade in Wines and Spirit Drinks”, adopted at Ottawa and Brussels on April 4, 2024.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, presented on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, be concurred in.

It will be interesting to talk today about the concurrence motion coming out of the heritage committee. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

I have been on the heritage committee for years now, but last month I asked my constituents of Saskatoon—Grasswood for their views on the public broadcaster, the CBC. It was in response to the CBC paying out bonuses that added up to over \$18 million, which were approved by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Privy Council. Of that sum, \$3.3 million went directly to CBC executives. Forty-five executives had their hands in the pocket of that \$3.3 million, and it averaged out to \$73,000 each for one year in bonuses. I could not believe the number. I see that even some

Liberals are shaking their heads. They cannot believe that number either just for the executives.

I asked in a mail-out what we should do going forward with the CBC. Should we do nothing or keep it as is? Should we keep the CBC but make some changes, or simply defund it? Defunding the CBC has been the narrative of this party for months, if not a year and a half now, and for very good reason. I had literally hundreds of responses. It was probably the best response I have had in the nine years I have been a member of Parliament. Some 86.5% were in support of overhauling or even defunding the entire operation of the CBC.

CBC CEO Catherine Tait admitted recently, about two weeks ago, that Canadians want to defund the CBC entirely. She was caught off guard that Canadians were talking about defunding her operation. She said that maybe she should have responded sooner to the public's outcry on how the corporation is compensated by the federal government.

In its corporate plan summary, tabled in the House of Commons, the CBC said viewers are leaving television, especially young people. They are going to streaming devices and have been doing so for many years. That is certainly not a surprise. However, a big surprise to me was the ad revenue. It has dropped another 9.6% in the last 12 months, which is a concern. I think trust in the CBC News organization, as we have seen across this country, has also dropped.

Here we have trust, viewership and revenue dropping, but what did not drop? The bonuses did not drop, surprise, surprise. In the last year, \$18 million was handed out, and when Ms. Tait came before the heritage committee for the third time, she talked about the key performance indicators, better known as KPIs. She said that those determine the bonus structure. Amazingly, despite viewership, revenue and trust dropping, the bonuses remained. Why? Well, the CBC honchos, in their wisdom, decided to lower the key standards from a year ago so they could justify the rich bonuses. Only CBC executives would huddle up and determine that despite everything going down, they needed to protect their bonuses. They agreed to this and the Liberals bought in, agreeing to \$18 million for the top-up.

Routine Proceedings

• (1005)

Since 2018, CBC viewership has collapsed nearly 50% and the CBC has failed to meet 79% of its key performance targets. Did I mention that the executives who got these bonuses were the same ones responsible a little over a year ago for cutting 800 jobs? These cuts amounted to about 10% of the entire workforce of CBC/Radio-Canada. The federal government, as we know, compensates the CBC. It gives the CBC about \$1.3 billion a year, so the public broadcaster, to me, already has a head start over the private broadcasters in this country.

It does not stop there. It is even worse, believe it or not. The CBC was given millions in last year's fall economic statement. It was 21 million gift dollars last year, and another \$21 million this year. On top of that, it generates about \$400 million in ads, even though, as I just talked about, ad revenue is going down. Canadians need to understand that their government is choosing to give more than \$1.3 billion to a company that already makes \$400 million in advertising. Canadians are tired of their money being spent on bonuses for absolutely dismal performance.

I questioned CBC/Radio-Canada's CEO at the Canadian heritage committee. Hundreds wrote in to us and others and took to social media to express their dismay about the arrogance and entitlement at a time when so many are hurting in this country. It is astonishing. One person said, "These elites live in their own bubble, protected from us by their entitlements and their social status. They simply do not care what we think, and are shocked that we would speak up against them. It is time to clean out the corrupt federal bureaucracy the Liberals have built."

Broadcasters need to have accountability and fairness for people to have trust in them. How can Canadians possibly have any faith in an institution that rewards its executives after cutting hundreds of jobs in the last year? Canadians are tired of seeing their taxpayer funds mismanaged by the Prime Minister and his cabinet. It is no wonder nobody trusts the government anymore with their money.

The Liberals fail to see that Canadians are struggling in every aspect of their lives. Their response is that they will give \$18 million to the CBC, to their corporate buddies, at a time when a record number of Canadians are heading to food banks. In my city of Saskatoon, there was an outcry yesterday by the Saskatoon Food Bank, which is asking the public for help, as it is running out of the most essential items it gives out.

The Saskatoon Food Bank has seen a 40% increase since 2019, in five short years, yet the CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada believes it is appropriate to ask for millions of dollars in bonuses for executives after letting hundreds go. It is arrogance and is absolute tone-deafness. The CBC was failing to deliver all along on its key performance indicators, so it just changed the indicators. It lowered them from the year before and thought nobody would notice. Well, we noticed, and obviously Canadians have noticed.

The government has no remorse about giving out massive amounts of money, simply handing it out no questions asked. It is handing money over to the public broadcaster rather than supporting small and medium-sized newspapers. That was the issue with Bill C-18, some may recall. It was a bill designed to help the newspaper industry, but telcos and the CBC, the public broadcaster, took

it over. They thought they were going to get millions of dollars. It ended up that Google said it would give them under \$100 million and they could disburse it, but there we go again. It was the CBC with its hands out; it was right there. The Liberal government is absolutely out of touch and the CBC is out of touch

That leads me to its CEO, Catherine Tait, who was appointed by the government in 2018. Since taking over, viewership, as I mentioned, has been cut in half. What worries me now is that Catherine Tait has not had a bonus in 2022-23—

• (1010)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a telephone vibrating. I do not know if it is on the member's desk.

As I did yesterday, I want to remind members to please not have their phones on their desk because the mics are on. It interferes with the interpreters. It would be great if that could be respected.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood has 30 seconds.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, this is what really worries me. As Ms. Tait has less than three months left as CEO of CBC and has not taken any bonuses in the last two years, here is my prediction: She will bolt from the position in January and take two and a half years of bonuses. We will never hear from her again. The public needs a response.

Do members know what? Conservatives are right on this. As common-sense Conservatives, we will clean up the mess created by the heritage minister and the Liberal government. Call the carbon tax election now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think that the Conservatives are running out of speakers on the question of privilege. About 100-plus Conservatives have stood up on the privilege issue. Because they are possibly running a little shy in terms of something new to say, which we have not heard for weeks, they now stand up and introduce a concurrence motion as opposed to having to debate the privilege motion.

Is the Conservative Party so desperate to find speakers to deal with the privilege issue that it now has to bring in concurrence motions in order to filibuster its filibuster, which has an amendment to an amendment to a motion, a motion they actually support but refuse to allow to come to a vote? How silly is this?

Routine Proceedings

• (1015)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, the issue is the CBC bonuses. I know that the member does not want to talk about them because the Liberals paid out \$18 million. They have given CBC \$1.3 billion. It has been a cash cow for the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Privy Council. That is why they do not want to talk about it. They know Canadians are upset; they are lined up at the food bank every day, yet \$73,000 is going to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am hoping to appeal to my Conservative colleague's cultural sensibilities.

We know that there are huge dichotomies within CBC/Radio-Canada, particularly when it comes to the French side of the corporation. Radio-Canada is very profitable thanks to its advertising, while CBC has huge revenue problems. However, when it came to cutting jobs, francophones and anglophones were targeted equally.

Does my colleague agree that the government should have been much more thorough in addressing this disparity?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, the Bloc member is absolutely correct. CBC/Radio-Canada is a very good institution. It has done very good work in this country, especially in the province of Quebec, yet when it started cutting the 800 employees with CBC, the first place it looked was the province of Quebec and CBC/Radio-Canada. The most successful of the operations of CBC is CBC/Radio-Canada.

Where did it start the cuts? It started there instead of talking about television. It does not measure up at all in western Canada in television. The government and the CEO are out of touch. We cannot wait to correct their mistakes.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing I am concerned about, though, is that the Conservatives continue to talk about defunding the CBC. I agree with reining in the management, the fees and the bonuses; that should have been done a long time ago under several governments.

However, when we look at Marketplace and Go Public, we see that there are issues with Rogers; Air Canada; Porter, most recently with persons with disabilities; McDonald's and E. coli; landlord tactics using artificial intelligence against consumers; sex trafficking by CEOs from Abercrombie & Fitch and Nygard. There are issues with Honda with regard to the fuel pumps; Elon Musk over Tesla and its issues; Boeing, for example, on public safety; allowing the X platform, formerly Twitter, to use artificial intelligence against people; tobacco giants; emission scandals and car companies. It goes on and on.

We are going to lose significant investigative reporting that protects Canadian consumers when the Conservatives defund the CBC. What are they going to do next?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, the member for Windsor West and I have worked together on several private members' bills in the House of Commons, but the topic here is the bonuses; there was \$18 million handed out last year when the corporation cut over 800 jobs. How arrogant that was. I watched an interview that CEO Catherine Tait did with Arsenault on CBC, and it was astonishing that CBC's CEO had little remorse for the 800 jobs leaving, but boy did she want to fill her pockets and her executive table, which she has done in the last year.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to stand in my place to represent the good people of Battle River—Crowfoot and, in particular, to talk about something that is gaining momentum: the conversation surrounding the mismanagement, the abuse of tax dollars and the unbelievable revelations that \$18 million in bonuses were paid out to managers and executives at CBC even when that organization decided it would cut frontline workers right before Christmas.

The eighth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage addressed this very thing and reported back to the House. I will read the motion that we are debating here today. I believe the parliamentary secretary on the other side somewhat acknowledged that Conservatives are far better at getting stuff accomplished than the government is. I think that was what he was admitting in his previous question.

The motion is, "That, given the job cuts announced at CBC/Radio-Canada for the year 2024, it would be inappropriate for the CBC to grant bonuses to executive members." It is a very simple and straightforward motion, and it cuts to the heart of where there is mismanagement at CBC.

When it comes to the issue at hand, there are well-placed Liberal appointees getting rich from tax dollars. An egregious example is that job cuts were announced just before Christmas. The current president of CBC begged for more money, saying there would be more job cuts if CBC could not get more cash from the government. Unbelievably, CBC, at that same time, was going through the process of approving \$18 million in bonuses. We do not have the specifics because the president and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada refuses to disclose what her bonus package was proposed to be.

At committee the other week, the president and CEO also refused to tell Canadians what her severance package would be. Further, she refused to rule out accepting a severance package as her term comes to an end. CBC begged for more money and handed out big bonuses, yet had the audacity to lay off frontline workers. It is because of that sort of arrogance and that sort of attitude by the CEO of CBC, Catherine Tait, that the defund argument has gained momentum.

Routine Proceedings

Maybe Ms. Tait did not understand the ATIP process. For the many Canadians who I am sure are watching this very important debate, I will explain that any Canadian can ask for information from government through what is called an access to information request. There is a simple form online, and I believe it costs five bucks, a simple administrative fee. Someone can ask for information, which is virtually unlimited as long as it does not have to do with issues of privacy or national security, and there are a few other areas that are exempt.

In this case, a reporter asked for information about the communications that the CEO of CBC would have had around defunding. The emails revealed that the CEO admitted there was momentum growing to defund CBC television.

Certainly, when Ms. Tait was confronted with her own words at committee this past week, it was quite interesting to hear her response. Instead of acknowledging what she had said in a private email, she continued to defend her failed record and that of the Liberal government to the tune of \$1.3 billion in subsidies each and every year and millions of dollars in bonuses. CBC has falling ad revenue, thus requiring more taxpayer subsidy. At the same time, there are fewer Canadians watching CBC television.

There was a number thrown around at the heritage committee; the CBC talks about 20 million people interacting with its services. Many members of this place have a Facebook page, different social media presences or a website. Of course we all have the content that ends up online through ParLVU and other channels. It does not take that big a social media following to have millions of views over the course of a month. CBC, which includes some of the most expensive broadcasting infrastructure in the history of the country, brags that it has 20 million touch points for Canadians. There are those in this place, by comparison, who probably have a similar reach for some of their content, and it is done in a far less expensive way.

• (1020)

Earlier, my colleague made mention about the key performance indicators, the KPIs. When most folks hear an acronym like KPI, it does not necessarily resonate with them. However, what we found very interesting is that in the last full fiscal year, 2022-23, prior to the one we just completed, CBC fulfilled three out of 14 key performance indicators that were the metrics that CBC itself said would determine whether it was successful in fulfilling its mandate. It is a bit like a student's grading their own paper. Even CBC admitted that it was failing at fulfilling its mandate.

I would suggest that what is common sense when someone is failing is that they would make changes. CBC did make a change; I will admit that, but the change was not to improve what it was doing but to change the way it evaluates how it is doing. Therefore the circumstance is that the student was grading their own paper and acknowledged they failed the first go-around, but instead of making changes to ensure that they stopped failing in the future, they simply changed the metric by which they evaluated their poor performance in the past.

The result comes back to this: cash in the pockets of CBC executives, of which there are 43. When I learned that there were 43 executives at the public broadcaster, I thought that must be a typo.

Give me a break. The average of the bonuses was \$71,000 for each executive, to the tune of more than \$3 million. This is at a time when Canadians are hurting, food bank usage has reached historic levels, home prices have doubled and the cost of everything is becoming unaffordable for regular Canadians. The average Canadian makes less than what a CBC executive would have received in a bonus. How out of touch is that?

To add insult to injury, the president and CEO, the executives and the managers who received bonuses at the CBC went to the frontline staff, before Christmas no less, and told them that their efforts there were not appreciated, that the executives would be keeping their job and their bonus but that the staff would lose theirs. They told them to go home and tell their family that. The arrogance is astounding.

The mismanagement is such a reflection of what we see on the benches of the Liberal cabinet, where members take for themselves but literally put out on the street hard-working men and women, the people who actually do the work while those who claim to make the decisions get rich.

After nine years, there has been failing performance virtually across the spectrum at CBC, as well as lower ad revenue and a lower number of viewers. In fact, with the number of viewers the CBC gets, it is going to have to start changing the key performance indicator for that if it is even able to report it. We see increasingly that Canadians are simply not wanting to watch the content that CBC is producing. That is the simple fact of the matter.

Therefore when it comes down to it, it is time for common sense. It is time to defund the CBC and ensure that bonuses are not paid out to rich executives at the same time as they are cutting frontline workers. We get very political in this place as we are politicians in Parliament, but let me conclude by saying that I hope we can find unity in this place with respect to cancelling bonuses for executives when frontline workers are having their jobs cut.

• (1025)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will get the opportunity to address the chamber on a wide variety of issues reflecting on the CBC, but I have a specific question for the member.

The member for Lethbridge had a shell-shock moment when she was questioned about CBC/Radio-Canada; she really did not know what to say. She came back with the response that she kind of supports the leader of the Conservative Party. We are a little unclear. Can the member opposite provide a 100% guarantee that the Conservatives will not touch CBC/Radio-Canada? Will he provide that commitment now?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, over the last number of days, we have seen chaos in the Liberal ranks. I believe there are 152 Liberal members, although that number is quickly diminishing because they keep losing by-elections. More MPs seem to be resigning all the time, announcing that they will not be running again and whatnot.

There is a very interesting question that the parliamentary secretary needs to answer. Twenty-four members have called for his boss to take a walk in the snow, a walk in the sand or whatever kind of walk it is, to walk out of the doors of this place so that we can restore some semblance of integrity and accountability back to the institution that is Canada's Parliament. This is opposed to a guy that seems to care about nothing more than power and the perks that come along with it.

One question Canadians want an answer to is this: Was the member one of the 24 telling his boss to go take a hike?

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, major cuts are affecting a large number of workers, and I should point out that these cuts are mainly targeting the francophone component, which will have serious cultural implications.

However, we learned that, in spite of everything that has been happening, bonuses are still being paid out. In fact, I heard my colleague cite a figure that I find quite absurd. I am not even sure I heard him right. Could he tell us again the average amount of the bonuses received by senior executives?

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, there are a number of numbers, and I will unpack them very quickly. There was a total of \$18 million in bonuses paid out to executives, managers and out-of-scope, non-unionized employees. However, when it comes to the specifics around the executives, the average was \$71,000 for the 73 executives at CBC.

As the member mentioned, the Liberals like to accuse other parties of being the ones to make cuts, yet they are cutting French-language reporting. The Liberals are making cuts that are devastating cultural organizations across this country.

Those are the numbers. About \$3.1 million went to executives. For those 43 executives, the average was about \$71,000 each.

The Liberals prefer by far to make cuts to frontline employees and pay out their rich friends. That is shameful.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have yet another day of a full-on attack on the independence of Canadian media.

We saw the Conservative leader attack Global News and The Canadian Press. We saw him go after the Toronto Star. We saw the vicious attack on CTV and, of course, the CBC. All this is happening while questions are raised about why the member cannot get security clearance.

There is an article from October 23, this past week, in *The Globe and Mail*. It refers to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills explaining that “security clearances involve a rigorous process that includes...checks on family members, credit and criminal checks and...questions about one's sexual partners or whether they ever used drugs.” That is not a reason that a man can hide from getting a security clearance: so that we do not find out whether his family has been involved in criminal activities.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills goes on to say that the Prime Minister should reach out and just tell the member from Stornoway, so he does not have to expose himself. Simply, what are the Conservatives so afraid of exposing in the member for Stornoway's background?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that this member has such great trust and admiration for the Prime Minister.

The reality is that the Prime Minister does not actually have security clearance. He has it by nature of the position. He did not grant himself security clearance. The Prime Minister is able to declassify the information and release the 11 names; he could do that. Conservatives have made it very clear that we want the information made public so that Canadians can know.

When it comes to the cheap shots that the member often takes in this place, I would simply conclude by saying this: The names should be released so that Canadians can make the choice, as opposed to playing politics, which is what the Prime Minister and the soon-to-be former member for Timmins—James Bay are doing.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that, if they have had an opportunity to ask a question, they should wait for the answer, even though they may not like it.

The same goes for those who are not being recognized and are making comments. I would ask them all to wait for the appropriate time to do so.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I put it in the form of a question earlier, but this is something that people really need to take a note of: the silliness of the Conservative Party today under the leadership of, I would suggest, a Conservative Reformer who is heavily influenced by the far right. The degree to which the Conservatives want to filibuster is incredible. Let us think about what they are proposing today.

Routine Proceedings

First and foremost, the Conservatives moved a motion weeks ago on a question of privilege, saying that they want an issue to go to the procedure and House affairs committee. Now, after they moved that motion, we quickly found out that all members of the House were actually in favour of it. However, the Conservatives then flip-flopped a little and said no, they wanted to have some members speak to the motion. They then brought in an amendment and put up dozens of speakers. Next, they brought in a subamendment and put up dozens more speakers. This was not done to deal with the issue, but it was all in an attempt to frustrate the House of Commons. The leader of the Conservative Party is more concerned about the Conservative Party than about Canadians and the issues that we are facing, denying a litany of important pieces of legislation and other types of debate dealing with everything from online harms affecting children to courts converting from military to civilian courts, citizenship and so much more. The Conservatives are more interested in themselves and in forgoing what is in the interests of Canadians.

Today, the Conservatives brought in a motion for concurrence in order to be able to filibuster their original filibuster of having an issue go to the procedure and House affairs committee. I find the degree to which the Conservatives are focused on themselves really interesting.

There are lots of reports out there, 100-plus reports, that the Conservatives could call on. Which issue do they decide to pull out to contribute to their filibuster? It is the issue of the CBC. There is nothing new there, in the sense that the Conservative Party, especially under the current leadership, has no time at all for the CBC or CTV. The party's leader has no respect for either of those two media outlets. I suspect it is because the Conservatives do not like it when their behaviour and their actions are reflected in the national news. They would rather rely on misinformation, fake news, social media and the data bank they have of a million-plus emails. They want to take a page out of U.S. politics and spread massive amounts of misinformation. That is how they believe they are going to be successful. The more uninformed Canadians are, the greater the likelihood of the Conservatives' being successful becomes. The more they can promote hatred towards politicians, the more they will be successful. That is the reason the Conservatives want to talk about the CBC today.

It is interesting. The member for Timmins—James Bay actually raised an issue that I want to spend a bit of time talking about. I believe there is a personal vendetta that we are seeing with the Conservative Party. The Conservatives have a hatred for CBC, which is well known and well established. If we look at some of the things that it has been reporting on, that is where we will find why the Conservatives want to talk about the CBC today. The Conservatives have their sights on getting rid of CBC because CBC is informing Canadians about what is happening in a very real sense.

● (1035)

Over the last couple days, I have challenged many members of the Conservative Party on the issue of foreign interference. I do not know how many times, but it has been a lot: dozens of times. I have consistently asked these questions because the answers the Conservatives are giving are completely unrelated to the truth.

Interestingly enough, the CBC had a report on it, and I want to share some things the CBC is actually saying. I would ask members to make the connection as to whether there is any surprise the Conservative Party of Canada, headed by its extreme-right leader, has no time for the CBC and wants to get rid of it. This is the reason we are seeing that.

Here is a report that came out on CBC that members can check. The headline was “Why won't [the PM] release classified names — and why won't [the leader of the Conservative Party] get a security clearance?”

I am going to read some of the details in it, but the issue is very serious. In fact, interestingly, I actually have two reports from the CBC. I will go with the first one here on foreign interference and how much that has been raised inside the House. Canadians are genuinely concerned about foreign interference, whether it is of a highly political nature or in our communities. Yesterday, I made reference to assassinations and extortion taking place. We continue to look at a number of countries. It is not just one country. It is a serious issue.

Here is an example that was on CBC not that long ago, and it is in reference to a website that has actually been frozen, I believe by the FBI. The article reads:

A website at the heart of an international Russian disinformation operation has produced more than a dozen articles about Canadian politics in an apparent attempt to undermine support for [the Prime Minister of Canada] and boost his chief rival, [the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada].

The website Reliable Recent News has been identified by officials in Europe and the U.S. as a repository for pro-Kremlin articles.

This is Russia trying to influence what people think here in Canada. The CBC reported on this. The Conservatives do not like that, of course, because a lot of people watch CBC; they have confidence and trust in the CBC.

Why are the Conservatives so much aligned to get rid of the CBC? Let us fast-forward and remember the issue of foreign interference. We have one leader in the House of Commons who is putting his party's interests and himself ahead of the nation, and that is the leader of the Conservative Party. The leaders of the Green Party, NDP and Bloc have all received the security clearance, as has the Prime Minister, obviously. The only one who refuses to get it is the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada; he says that if he gets it, he will not be able to speak about the issues. That is one of the concerns that he actually raises.

We all know that this is not true, but that is the only thing that the Conservatives can come up with in their attempt to justify putting their party ahead of the nation's interests. The misinformation on this issue is significant. If we look at social media, whether it is from the leader or other members of the Conservative Party, we will find that they are continually and intentionally misleading people through social media and emails.

Routine Proceedings

● (1040)

We have one of Canada's most trusted media outlets. What was actually said? What was actually reported? Again, this is not the CBC saying it; this is the CBC reporting it. Who are its sources? Well, they are former CSIS directors, individuals who are in the know. They understand the issues. They are professionals. They are people we should all be respecting. When we talk about CSIS directors or the RCMP, these are institutions that should be respected, not thrown to the side in favour of Conservative propaganda.

The CBC article states that in the past, the leader of the Conservative Party “has defended his decision not to receive a national security clearance and get briefed by intelligence agencies by arguing that it would prevent him from speaking freely and criticizing the government on foreign interference issues.” That is the Conservatives' argument, so they state.

Richard Fadden, a former CSIS director, “said that wouldn't be the case.” The article goes on:

“Just because you have a security clearance doesn't mean you have to become a...monk and never speak,” he said. He also said that [the leader of the Conservative Party] could choose to be briefed only on issues affecting his own party if he wanted to create a buffer ensuring he could criticize the government on foreign interference.

In his statement on Wednesday, [the leader of the Conservative Party] said his chief of staff has received classified briefings.

“At no time has the government told me or my chief of staff of any current or former Conservative parliamentarian or candidate knowingly participating in foreign interference,” he said.

So says the leader of the Conservative Party, because he refuses to get the security clearance.

But Elcock said that CSIS would not brief a chief of staff on foreign interference issues pertaining to individual parliamentarians.

“What could the chief of staff do with the information?” Elcock said. “[The leader of the Conservative Party] doesn't have a clearance, so the chief of staff can't tell him the information. And the chief of staff has no power to do anything about the MPs or make decisions about the MPs because he's not the leader of the party.”

During the inquiry hearing on Wednesday, lawyer Nando De Luca, acting for the Conservative Party, argued that CSIS could use something called a “threat reduction measure” to inform [the leader—

● (1045)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary. The member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is rising on a point of order.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, foreign interference is an extremely important issue. I am just trying to understand how it is connected to the CBC.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We know that a lot of latitude is given to members during discussions. However, the points raised during a debate have to have a connection to the subject of the debate. I am sure that the hon. parliamentary secretary will make a connection to the motion before the House by mentioning certain aspects of it in his speech.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, if there are members who are coming in somewhat late and did not hear the beginning, we are talking about the CBC.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows he is not to mention whether someone has been or is in the chamber or anything like that. Is he speaking now on the point of order?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, on the point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I made it very clear, on the point of order, that I will allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to add something if he needs to. As I have indicated, the hon. member can go on with his speech, and I am sure he will ensure that he is referencing the motion that is before the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on the point of order, in case I did not make it clear, this is all related to why the Conservatives are bringing in this particular concurrence report. They do not like what the CBC is saying, which is why I am conveying to the House what the CBC reported.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As I have indicated, there is some latitude. We recognize that. I am sure the hon. member will continue to ensure that his speech is relevant to the discussion.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

● (1050)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the report goes on. Again, these are not the views of the CBC. After reading the entire story, we see there is fair criticism across the board. It points out facts and a great deal of misinformation. That misinformation is what the Conservatives are thriving on, and that is why we are seeing an attack once again, today, on the CBC.

The report continues:

...Fadden said those threat reduction measures are meant to inform politicians when they may themselves be targeted and wouldn't be used to share classified information with the leader of a party.

Interestingly enough, it goes on here:

“You can't give classified information to people if they don't have security clearances. Can you muck around on the margins and try and get people to think differently? Yes, but that's not what we're talking about,” he said.

This is an expert.

The leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservatives have been calling on the Prime Minister “to release the names of allegedly compromised parliamentarians. They repeated that demand on Wednesday.” How many times have we heard that demand here in the form of formal speeches and through heckling? We hear them make that demand constantly. Here is what the professionals, the individuals in the know, have to say:

But law enforcement and national security agencies have been clear on this point: sharing any classified information is a crime.

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Every time we hear Conservatives demand that we tell them the 11 names, number one, I do not know the 11 names, but if I did, it would be a crime to tell them. Again, I go back to the story:

“Anyone who reveals classified information is subject to the law equally and obviously, in this case, those names are classified at this time and to reveal them publicly would be a criminal offence,” RCMP Deputy Commissioner Mark Flynn told MPs on the public accounts committee in June.

I am very disappointed in how the Conservative Party has played a very strong, destructive role. I remind them that they also have an obligation. As they focus their attention purely on what is in the best interest of the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party, we will remain focused on Canadians and their interests, on providing programs and supports, and supporting our economy, knowing full well that we need to build on our infrastructure, support Canada's middle class and encourage an economy that works for all Canadians. We are starting to see the signs of that when we get interest rates coming down, the inflation rate finally under control and on target, and the creation of jobs. Hope is there; 2025 is going to be a good year for Canadians.

We will continue to work for Canadians, first and foremost. That is the right thing to do, as opposed to looking at ways to filibuster. That is what today's motion on the CBC is all about. It is not about the issue. Conservatives are using it as a mechanism to prevent the House of Commons from being able to have debates, to pass legislation and to look at issues affecting Canadians on a day in, day out basis.

• (1055)

No matter how obstructive Conservatives are, I can assure members opposite that the Prime Minister and the government will continue to be focused on Canadians.

Having said that, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following:

The 8th report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, presented on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for further consideration, provided that it be an instruction to the committee to study the consequences of defunding the CBC and Radio-Canada, including the effects on smaller communities, as promised by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Drummond is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I would like to make sure that the French version of the amendment will be sent out shortly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The French version will definitely be sent shortly.

In the meantime, we will move on to questions and comments.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Before we move on to questions and comments, I would like to see the French version of the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The English version of the amendment was translated into French by the interpreters.

I would like to inform the hon. member that, when someone is reading a motion, it need not be in both French and English, because we have access to interpretation services. That said, it will be available in writing in both official languages afterwards.

• (1100)

[*English*]

The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North was here during previous speeches. Some of my Conservative colleagues talked about the KPIs of the CBC and the way CBC executives reduced the KPIs so they could achieve their goals and, therefore, get these incredible bonuses we have been talking about today. My colleagues did a great job of explaining how that is a level of incompetence at the CBC that Canadians are very concerned about.

How could the Liberal government stand by and watch this happen? How could it watch the management of this organization lower its standards to achieve the bonuses and not say something? I would like to understand how the government operates with such incompetence and disregard for the obvious management principles of an organization.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, first of all, the discussion we are having today is only occurring because the Conservatives want to continue to play games in a filibuster of their original motion.

With regard to the specific question, it is important to note the amendment that I moved. If the Conservatives are genuinely concerned—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé: Madam Speaker, I am new to the House. I would like to know whether parliamentary practice allows members to impute motives during speeches.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Sorry, could you repeat that, please?

Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé: Madam Speaker, I would like to know whether it is possible and permissible for members to impute motives when we rise in the House. The official opposition's motive was imputed, and I would just like to know whether we have the right to do that in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): A motive was imputed? Can the hon. member clarify what he means by that?

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Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauv : Madam Speaker, imputing someone's motive is when we assume we know the intentions of people we do not know. I just wanted to know if that is allowed here in the House, because it was prohibited in other assemblies I have been part of as an activist.

I would like to know whether we have the right to impute motives. Imputing motives is a fallacy in which one presumes to know the intentions of others without knowing them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It goes without saying that different arguments are made during debate. Yes, we ask members not to impute motives to other members, but this is the sort of thing that we often hear in the House, whether it is when one person approaches another or when a person is sitting next to someone.

I hope that I correctly understood what the hon. member was saying, but, yes, from time to time, there are messages passed in the House to clarify certain things or to give advice during debate. We see that regularly.

I will give the floor back to the hon. member, but this is beginning to be a point of debate. After he stands, I would ask the member to wait for the light to come on before he begins speaking. If his microphone is not on, then I cannot hear him when he starts to speak.

The hon. member for LaSalle  mard Verdun.

• (1105)

Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauv : Madam Speaker, thank you for that clarification, and I apologize for not standing while you were speaking.

I would also like to apologize to the hon. member for Winnipeg North for interrupting his very interesting speech.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The parliamentary secretary is in the process of answering the question from the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the interruption is okay. There is no worry.

I believe the Conservatives should feel a bit of hope because of the amendment we have proposed. We are saying that this should be given to the committee, where we could talk about what the Conservative agenda is on the issue of the CBC. I see that as a positive thing. I trust members of the Conservative Party, along with other members, will support this well-thought-out amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I know that the Conservatives are prone to vilify the CBC. It is the story of their life. Ever since I arrived here in 2019, that is all we have heard them do. If that is their position, they are welcome to it.

That said, not everything is necessarily false in our Conservative friends' sea of disinformation about CBC/Radio-Canada. There are some things that actually deserve consideration. Unfortunately, the Liberals' defensiveness makes it difficult to navigate between these

two extreme positions when it comes to subjects we should be debating and discussing.

I am very uncomfortable about the bonuses Ms. Tait awarded to CBC executives, especially given the context in which this was done. I would like us to be able to discuss this context, as well as the compensation system in effect at CBC/Radio-Canada. A new mandate will soon be proposed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage. I would like us to discuss our expectations concerning this mandate.

Does my colleague from Winnipeg North agree that there are concerns about the current compensation system at CBC/Radio-Canada? Does his government agree that we should look into this to ensure that the manner in which the CBC/Radio-Canada personnel and executives are compensated is acceptable to Quebecers and Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I do look for ways in which we can improve the system. CBC/Radio-Canada is such a critical part of our identity. As an example, it highlights the uniqueness of the province of Quebec.

I am open to having a dialogue about how we can make CBC Television or CBC Radio more efficient to better answer needs into the future. That is why I think this is a good amendment. Hopefully, we will be able to get members from the Bloc to also support it.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that the Conservatives put forward this motion, and the NDP supports ending bonuses to CEOs. We opposed bonuses when the Harper government was doing the same thing at the CBC. At a time when workers were losing their jobs, the Conservatives had an opportunity to put forward a motion to return those bonuses to workers instead. However, we know that their goal is not to defund the CBC, but to eliminate the CBC.

Susan MacVittie wrote on my Facebook page the other day. She wrote, "CBC radio is desperately needed in rural Canada. It gives a voice to local news, our community events and issues, our musicians, call in talk shows, etc.—the very fabric that binds us together as Canadians. Publicly owned not for profit and proudly Canadian owned by Canadians for Canada. Maybe more people could start questioning government oil and gas subsidies, etc. instead of supporting the erasing of Canadian content."

We know the Conservatives are never going to go after the subsidies for oil and gas, and neither will the Liberals. Will the government make sure that it is also going after oil and gas subsidies, and make sure that it continues to provide stable, long-term funding to the CBC?

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• (1110)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, with the support and help of the NDP, we were able to eliminate those oil subsidies the member made reference to, and I think that is a good thing. We can accomplish some great things when NDP and Liberal members work together in a progressive nature.

From day one of my being a parliamentarian, I have seen that Liberals consistently support the CBC. At best, the Conservatives flip-flop depending on the leader of the Conservative Party. Sometimes they are quiet, and sometimes they are vocal. Under this far-right Conservative leader, they want to get rid of the CBC. Let there be no doubt, if the Conservative leader were to become prime minister, the CBC would be gone.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as my colleagues are perhaps aware, I have done interviews with CBC/Radio-Canada from one end of the country to the other.

What we see pretty much throughout the country is that the English-language and French-language services of this corporation are connected. If the CBC is abolished, as proposed by the Conservative Party of Canada, what will that mean for the French-language service, not just in Quebec but especially outside Quebec?

The Conservatives would have us believe that there would be no consequences and that Radio-Canada would be able to continue operating without any problems, even if the CBC were to be abolished. I would like to hear my colleague from Winnipeg North talk to us about consequences.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the minister raises an excellent point. Part of our Canadian heritage is our languages. We have the French language and English language. The impact the Conservatives would have on the French language, not only in the province of Quebec but also, and especially, in other regions of Canada, would be profoundly negative under the current leader of the Conservative Party.

In Winnipeg, I think of St. Boniface, Manitoba. We can also talk about St-Pierre-Jolys. So many communities across Canada benefit because of the way the CBC is integrated and has what I would classify as a bilingual factor. It is a part of our identity and our heritage. That is why it is so important that Canadians understand that, under the Conservative Party, the CBC would be gone. The best way to protect the CBC is to ensure that the Conservatives do not form government.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am interested in raising a point because there is a certain irony here.

I should put it on the record that the Green Party supports the CBC and wants to see commercial-free news and a public affairs function for CBC Television.

[*Translation*]

We would like to see that for Radio-Canada as well, for programs broadcast on radio and television.

[*English*]

I am puzzled by the Conservative stance, which appears to be that they want to have an election platform to get rid of CBC, but the party is currently one of the biggest advertisers on CBC. Maybe in this debate we can find out how much money the Conservative Party is spending. I certainly enjoy seeing the Leader of the Opposition and his wife doing what most Canadians do on weekends, which is to stride across a field in hope of finding an empty flag-pole so they can pull a Canadian flag out and hoist it. It is a wonderful family moment that we always enjoy.

I am wondering how much money the Conservative Party is now spending on advertising outside the writ period.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there has been a suggestion that I might want to amend the motion, but maybe this would be a good discussion point once it gets to committee. I like to think that progressive parties, whether it is the Greens, the NDP or the Bloc, understand and appreciate the true value of the CBC.

It is somewhat ironic that we have the Conservative Party saying, on one hand, that it is going to get rid of the CBC if it is elected in government while, on the other hand, it is advertising on the CBC. The reason why it is advertising on the CBC is that the Conservative Party knows that a lot of people follow and have a lot of respect for the CBC.

There seems to be a bit of a contradiction there, but the reality is that the Conservative Party has been highly critical of not only the CBC but also CTV. Conservatives tend to shy away from any sort of mainstream, strong, healthy media outlet in favour of social media and the far right in its spreading of misinformation.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have to admit, I would have liked to keep listening to the answers of the member for Winnipeg North, because he is one of the public broadcaster's defenders.

I also support a healthy, neutral, and reliable public broadcaster, but one that can take criticism, because I think that the broadcaster we have right now has shown us that it deserves a healthy dose of criticism.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, I would like to digress for a moment and remind everyone that we have reached that time of year when we honour those who served in the armed forces down through the years and decades and who fought in global conflicts in which Canada took part. Many of the people whose memory we honour lost their lives. Most parliamentarians and employees on Parliament Hill wear the poppy, and I think that is wonderful. I also think it is important to take a moment every year to remember those who, in some cases, laid down their lives for the freedom that we enjoy today.

I would like to raise a small matter that is nonetheless important from a protocol standpoint. I would like to remind my colleagues that the poppy should be worn above all other distinctions, decorations or pins. This message may prompt my colleagues to rearrange their clothing a bit in the lobby before they enter the House later.

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I mentioned earlier that our public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada, is not exempt from criticism, and certainly not under Catherine Tait, whose term is drawing to a close. I cannot say that I was a great fan of many of her decisions. I also cannot say that I applauded all of her decisions or actions during her term, which, in my opinion, was unduly extended by the then minister of Canadian heritage. I think she missed a few good opportunities. She had the opportunity to make certain decisions, but she missed the boat, as we say.

For example, her decision to have an English podcast translated in Paris rather than hiring Quebec dubbers, who are among the best in the world, was extremely questionable. In fact, you could say flat out that the dubbing industry in Quebec is the best in the world. Tait's decision showed a lack of familiarity with the francophone market, which she should have represented with the same effectiveness and knowledge as she did the anglophone market.

In my opinion, some of her decisions were based more on irrational ideology than on what we could call common sense, although the term "common sense" is debatable these days. Thus, the scandal surrounding the use of the N-word by columnist Simon Jodoin to refer to a book title reached extremely uncomfortable proportions. We could also consider the resignation of Michel Bissonnette, a prominent figure in Quebec television with unimpeachable credibility. The fact that he decided to leave Radio-Canada because it no longer aligned with his convictions was a sign that something was wrong.

Then we have the decision to announce major cuts just a few weeks from Christmas. Last year, on December 4, 2023, Tait announced that 250 jobs were to be cut at Radio-Canada and another 250 at CBC, and that 200 already vacant positions would be abolished. In all, 700 to 800 jobs would officially disappear. The decision to make equal cuts in French-language Radio-Canada services and English-language CBC services was never implemented, for a number of reasons.

First, we absolutely have to protect the public broadcaster's French-language services. We absolutely have to protect Radio-Canada, which is doing well, is surpassing its targets, is profitable, if we can use that term, and makes quality productions that appeal to television audiences. It also offers content that appeals to users on different platforms, whether on television, radio or online.

● (1120)

Also, Radio-Canada must make do with fewer resources than its anglophone counterpart, CBC, so when it was announced that the 500 job cuts would be distributed equally between Radio-Canada and CBC, my goodness, this was the straw that broke the camel's back. This is just unbelievable, not to mention that this hamfisted announcement came right before Christmas.

It had the following effect. In the months that followed, staff unsure about whether their job would be cut had to work with this sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. This strikes me as extremely poor judgment on the part of someone holding such an important position.

Having said that, despite being critical of Ms. Tait, I will distance myself from the Conservatives in that we cannot make the facts say

what we want them to say strictly in service of an ideology, a conviction, an idea or a populist plan like the one to slash CBC funding. As we know, the Leader of the Opposition and Conservative Party leader wants to cut the CBC's funding. I always figured that it was because the Conservative Party leader was allergic to quality journalism. In fact, a good journalist will call him out when he talks rubbish. A serious journalist takes in the information communicated to them, analyzes it and makes sure that the public is not fed falsehoods, misinformation or even disinformation.

I do not think that all is perfect with CBC/Radio-Canada's news coverage. However, I do believe that the organization adheres to the news sector's most exigent and stringent standards in Canada, North America and elsewhere in the world. I know that CBC/Radio-Canada models itself after other public broadcasters. In fact, they all draw inspiration from and are associated with one another, to some extent. I know that we here draw inspiration from what is done elsewhere, and those elsewhere draw inspiration from what is being done here.

We can be critical. We do not always have to agree. Indeed, there are complaint mechanisms in place. If the leader of the Conservatives wants to complain about how a news item was covered, he has the right to do so. He can do that. Anyone can do that; every citizen has that right. There is a mechanism in place. Sometimes corrections are made if a piece of information was poorly communicated or if false or biased information was communicated.

However, the Conservatives have a tendency to want to manipulate the facts, to play with the truth and to be a little creative so that the information the general public receives is easier to digest and, in some cases, more objectionable. For example, they might try to get people to believe that the government is incompetent or that the House cannot do its job while the Liberals are in power. A rigorous public broadcaster does not fit into that scenario. I think that is probably the main reason why the Leader of the Opposition wants to cut CBC funding. CBC journalists spend their time explaining to the public that what the Leader of the Opposition says makes no sense. That is not bad journalism, it is rigorous journalism.

Now, should CBC/Radio-Canada continue on as is? I do not think so. On the contrary, I think that a lot of things need to be looked at. I will not get into details, because I am not familiar with the details. The minister is about to move a motion for a new mandate for the public broadcaster, and we are waiting with impatience, since it will establish what kind of public broadcaster we will have in the coming years.

A lot of things need to be looked at, and first to allow CBC/Radio-Canada to face the challenges the entire industry is currently facing. I am thinking about the arrival of the digital giants and the opening up of digital media in general, the access we have to information in general through the digital media.

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• (1125)

Yes, regulation is important, but the fact remains that news is abundantly available and that people these days generally seek out a variety of news sources. These are the challenges that must be faced.

We are also faced with a fragmented advertising market. So many players are being added and advertisers have so many options that some consideration must be given to how a public broadcaster will be funded. Is it a good idea to have advertising on CBC/Radio-Canada? I think we must give this some very serious consideration. I think that if we also want to grant total independence to a public broadcaster and we want it to be rigorous and neutral in delivering the news, we can certainly revisit the idea of having it air advertising in all circumstances.

That said, doing away with advertising as a means of funding CBC/Radio-Canada opens the door to another form of funding, namely public funding. Are Quebecers and Canadians open to the idea of increasing public funding for CBC/Radio-Canada so that advertising can be eliminated? These are the questions we have to ponder, and this is not the kind of thought process we can undertake when people are being bombarded with idiotic slogans about defunding the CBC because it is the government's propaganda arm or whatever. Can we not just behave as adults and deal with the actual challenges facing us?

The first question to ask is whether we want a public broadcaster and whether we want CBC/Radio-Canada. If nobody wants it, we can scrap it, toss it in the trash and switch to something else. However, when Canadians were asked whether they wanted a public broadcaster and liked their public broadcaster, 83% answered yes. That is a lot of people, 83%, saying they do not want to lose CBC/Radio-Canada. When Quebecers are asked whether they want to keep Radio-Canada's French-language service, the percentage is even higher, because Radio-Canada is part of Quebec's cultural and television landscape. It is an indispensable vehicle for the transmission of Quebec and francophone culture. An impressive number of top-notch Quebec productions have been broadcast on Radio-Canada or created by Radio-Canada itself, and some have been translated and exported to other countries. Radio-Canada is something we cannot do without.

The question we need to ask is whether we even want a public broadcaster. The answer to that, if we ask the main stakeholders, Quebecers and Canadians, is yes. Consequently, if we want to work according to people's wishes, if we want to be effective and to avoid disinformation and populism, we can do something. If the Conservatives really wanted to be productive and do good work, they would ask themselves the right questions.

Okay, we do not want any more bonuses. Let us review CBC/Radio-Canada's compensation model so that everyone is comfortable with it. Let us see what is done elsewhere. Let us look at other countries, like Australia, that have public broadcasters. The CEO of ABC, which is the Australian equivalent of CBC/Radio-Canada, earns \$1.2 million a year. Ms. Tait earns \$500,000 or \$600,000 with her bonuses. Is that comparable? Can we tell people who think she is earning too much at \$500,000 that the CEO of Bell is earn-

ing \$13 million? The private sector pays 5, 6, 7, 8 or 10 times what she earns.

At some point, can we talk responsibly, knowledgeably and reasonably and figure out what we want? Do we want a quality public broadcaster, knowing that it will cost x amount? Some people think that CBC/Radio-Canada costs a fortune, that it is terrible and that it is impoverishing Canadians. I cannot get over that one. To hear the Conservatives speak, people are about to start lining up at food banks because Radio-Canada costs too much. I sense that that is where we are going, yet I would like to remind members that it costs about \$31 a year per Canadian for CBC/Radio-Canada and all it has to offer: television, radio, online content and international coverage that we would certainly not be able to afford if we had only private broadcasters. I said earlier that there appears to be a consensus that we should keep CBC/Radio-Canada.

• (1130)

If we want a public broadcaster, we need to compare ourselves with other countries that have one. I said earlier that Canadians pay \$31 per capita per year. Switzerland has a public broadcaster that costs \$191 per capita per year. We can also look at Sweden. We love comparing ourselves with Sweden. We like comparing ourselves with the Scandinavian countries. It looks like everything is perfect over there. Sweden is a small country of 9 million people. It has a public broadcaster, and it costs \$106 a year per capita. No one there complains that it costs too much or that the CEO is earning a fortune. If we want to compare ourselves with the most prestigious public broadcaster in the world, the BBC, it costs \$96 Canadian a year per capita for the BBC's services.

We all pay \$31 out of our pockets every year. I do not think that is outrageous for what we get in return. Does that mean we cannot question it? Absolutely not. Does that mean that everything is well done and well managed? Again, absolutely not. Does that mean we should not be looking at how these people are being paid? No, quite the opposite. However, we have to go about this responsibly and productively, as adults, not with slogans like "defund CBC/Radio-Canada" because Catherine Tait gave her executives \$18 million in bonuses this year.

Returning to the question of bonuses and compensation, there is nothing easier than to make a lot of noise. Telling a lie or using coarse language, that takes five seconds. Once that has been said and it is out there, it takes energy, resources and determination to take it apart and explain to people that this is rude and not at all true, and to lay out the facts. This is by no means self-evident. Along the way, we lose at least half the people, who will continue swallowing the lies and the crudeness. Taking the bonuses paid to executives and turning that into a mismanagement scandal involving CBC/Radio-Canada, well, that is quite a stretch. Let us break this down, or at least put it into perspective.

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I will come back to the fact that paying \$18 million in bonuses to executives and personnel while at the same time announcing that there will be job and budget cuts and that the government must advance a few million more dollars to end the fiscal year can indeed be seen as somewhat indecent and can breed a certain cynicism. I will admit that.

We have to tell it like it is. I said it right from the start: I am by no means Ms. Tait's biggest fan, but in her defence, she came to committee several times and explained how the system works, a system she did not put in place. This is how things work at CBC/Radio-Canada. She explained how the compensation model works. It struck me as questionable and it should perhaps be reviewed, but it certainly was not the scandal the Conservatives have described today.

Yes, the compensation model for senior executives, and even for the entire staff of CBC/Radio-Canada, needs to be reviewed. We say yes to this. Yes, we need to discuss how to put people at ease when an employee's salary is announced, so that people will say they are aware, that they know how things work, that they are comfortable with that, and that this is part of the overall picture. We say yes to this, but we say no to the type of disinformation only intended to vilify a public broadcaster that has the potential to deliver excellent quality and that remains, in my opinion, among the most credible news sources we could have here in Quebec and Canada.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I had the honour of working with that member on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We worked very hard on increasing the amount of Canadian content available, in order to hear more Quebec and Canadian voices. He already talked a bit about that. I would like to ask him how we can make sure that these Canadian and Quebec stories are told. Why does it seem like the Conservatives do not want to hear them?

• (1135)

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, yes, we did some great work on Bill C-10, the first version of Bill C-11, which would later become the Broadcasting Act.

The reason is that the Conservatives do not want anything that could possibly improve CBC/Radio-Canada. They are constantly looking for the little irritant, the little blip, something they can blow out of proportion to ensure that people do not see the positive aspects, do not think about the positive aspects and only focus on what appears scandalous or reprehensible.

At the end of the day, we cannot move forward unless everyone is willing to move forward.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that when CBC made its cuts last year, it started in Quebec. CBC/Radio-Canada had 25% listenership in the province of Quebec, and yet CBC executives decided to hit CBC/Radio-Canada first, with 800 employees losing their jobs. Some \$18 million was presented in bonuses, with \$3.3 million going to executives. I know my friend from Drummond has been on the heritage committee for a long time, but when Google came out

with \$100 million to help the industry, guess who was at the trough first? It was CBC, who he complained about being at the trough with Google.

I would like the hon. member for Drummond to talk about Google and CBC again putting their hands in the public broadcaster trying to get more money out of the public.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, it is true that my colleague and I work well together on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We disagree on a lot of things, but we agree on many others. We both have fondness for the media industry and for quality journalism. That I know.

Regarding the announced cuts, I said in my speech that we found it unacceptable that the cuts were divided equally between CBC and Radio-Canada. The cuts announced in December did not happen that way. That being said, it is no less scandalous, because it means that 600 people throughout the CBC/Radio-Canada network lived for months under the sword of Damocles, not knowing whether their position would be eliminated and they would lose their job. In all, 346 jobs, not 800, were cut. One hundred and forty-one people were let go, and 205 positions were eliminated. That is still way too much. When you announce cuts like that at the same time as you award bonuses, you need to explain yourself to the public.

I repeat that we need to review CBC/Radio-Canada's compensation model. That would be a very useful discussion to have.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for raising very important points about how a public broadcaster like CBC/Radio-Canada is essential in Canada. I would also like to point out the importance of Radio-Canada, especially for our minority francophone communities here in western Canada.

That being said, it is clear that CBC/Radio-Canada needs to be reformed. We want to protect it as a public broadcaster, we want to support it, but the bonuses awarded to managers are totally unacceptable right now.

Does the Bloc Québécois agree with the elimination of bonuses for managers at our public broadcaster CBC/Radio-Canada?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, my colleague was talking about regional coverage. I did not really address this in my remarks, but I think that Radio-Canada has a difficult mission to fulfill these days. That mission is to provide news coverage in all the regions of Quebec and Canada. Here again, improvements are in order.

Routine Proceedings

As for the bonuses, I have said time and again that a review of CBC/Radio-Canada's compensation structure must be part of the discussions about renewing our public broadcaster's mandate. Regardless of what is decided and what ends up happening, it is essential that the public broadcaster remain free from any political interference. I think it would be extremely inappropriate to come here and prohibit CBC/Radio-Canada from paying out bonuses, or to ban bonuses or performance bonuses or whatever they call them.

That said, should we revisit this compensation model? I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague that we should.

• (1140)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his excellent presentation. He is a peerless communicator and a big fan of Quebec culture. I thank him for the work he has done these past five years.

As part of the current debate, an amendment that was just introduced by the government has me asking a lot of questions. I think it is interesting. As a regional MP, I can say that the impact of Radio-Canada is huge. However, by focusing solely on this, is the government truly showing an interest in the regional media ecosystem as a whole?

What has it done to ensure that local, independent media outlets have the means and resources on the ground to report on our lives and our realities as residents of a remote region? I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, what my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue is proposing is very interesting.

As part of the discussions we could have about our public broadcaster, we could indeed consider getting CBC/Radio-Canada to establish collaborations, for example, between the public broadcaster and small regional media outlets that are essential for regional coverage, which is often an afterthought but is no less vital to democracy.

Using the tools and means at our disposal, with a public broadcaster that is virtually ubiquitous but that does not necessarily have the means right now to take full advantage of its resources, and creating collaborations to help support regional newspapers or media outlets could be an extremely useful solution to explore.

I agree completely with my colleague. We really need to do a lot more for our regional media, especially in remote regions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member highlighted how our communities have benefited greatly by the presence of CBC/Radio-Canada or CBC in general. Looking at what other progressive nations around the world have, these are jewels that we need to preserve. It does not mean that there is no sense of accountability. We have standing committees in good part to ensure that there is a higher sense of accountability. Is the member inclined to support the motion that we put forward?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I have here the amendment proposed by my colleague.

Personally, I have nothing against conducting an inquiry into the consequences of defunding CBC/Radio-Canada. I think that could be a very interesting and relevant study in committee. As to whether I will support the amendment, right now I can only say that I will think about it. If we are going to go back to committee to study that, I would like us to also think about the impacts of news coverage in media deserts. We know that there are a number of regions that have no news coverage at all.

I would also like to address another component of my colleague's question, which was more of a comment on the benefits of a quality public broadcaster. We are all glued to our screens for major international sports competitions. We all watch the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. We are all very happy to watch these things. However, the costs, including the cost of sending teams to Paris, for example, to cover this summer's Olympic Games, are exorbitant. If we did not have a public broadcaster to offer quality coverage, I do not know who we would turn to; probably a foreign giant. That is one of the benefits of having a quality public broadcaster.

• (1145)

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the following main motion, "That, given the job cuts announced at CBC/Radio-Canada for the year 2024, it would be inappropriate for the CBC to grant bonuses to executive members."

The NDP supports the motion, but what I find fascinating is that it is coming from the Conservatives, the same Conservatives who have finally met an executive bonus they oppose. That is how ideologically committed they are, that their love of billionaires and millionaires trying to join them can be overcome to the point that they will oppose excessive executive bonuses, but only as long as those bonuses are going to CBC executives. If it were anyone else, they would be fine with it.

This is why it really is a misnomer when the Liberals say that the Conservatives hate the CBC. I am not sure they do. In fact, I would argue that the Conservatives love the CBC and love, in particular, that someone like Catherine Tait has so poorly run the CBC that they found the one group of executives they can rail against. They love that they comfortably attack these executives and hope that no one notices they cater to every other wealthy executive. As we have heard here today, it is the same Conservatives who are spending significant resources to advertise on the CBC as well.

Routine Proceedings

Would the Conservatives argue against bonuses for oil executives who are ravaging the planet? A report released by the Bedford Consulting Group looked at executive compensation at 68 oil and gas companies. While Canadians struggle to fill up their cars, executive bonuses increased over 20%. The average compensation for executives at companies with assets over \$30 billion was over \$16.6 million. Did the Conservatives speak up when it came to those executive bonuses? Of course not. They really love these ones.

Galen Weston's bonuses increased by over 50% in a single year, while at the same time his board argued that he was underpaid. I am sure that my Liberal and Conservative friends agree. If they did not, they would have supported an NDP effort to tie executive pay to workers, but they did not. Once again, they love these bonuses.

Speaking of telecommunications, Bell Media's Mirko Bibic received over \$30 million in bonuses in a single year, while laying off thousands of workers, and yet the Conservatives and Liberals approved millions of dollars in taxpayer money, sent directly to Bell Media.

It is clear why the Conservatives are so beholden to corporate interests, especially when the Conservative Party has at least five billionaire donors, two in real estate, which is also probably why the Conservative leader refuses to take on corporate landlords, making buying a house unattainable for young Canadians. Two donors are in finance, which is why the Conservative leader joined the Liberals in voting against closing tax loopholes that allow billionaires to hide their money in offshore tax havens. One billionaire donor sells food and other basic needs, which is probably why the Conservatives joined the Liberals to block an excess profits tax for grocery stores.

However, the Conservatives still complain when the NDP forces the Liberals to deliver for Canadians, fighting for billions in housing for first nations, for pharmacare and dental care, so Canadians do not have to make impossible choices; to increase the fight for increased union power by banning scab labour. It is because the idea of standing up for anything is so anathema to the Conservatives.

While the Conservatives like to go on and on about a coalition of the Liberals and the NDP, they hide the real coalition in the country, one of corporate greed enabled by two political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, who prefer to do nothing while Canadians struggle. The reality is that 56 of the richest Canadians donate to the Liberal Party while 61 have donated to the Conservative Party. The wealthiest people in our country do not see a difference between Liberals and Conservatives. Therefore, excuse me if I ask to be spared the Conservative crocodile tears about CBC bonuses.

CBC bonuses are wrong, and the NDP is clear that they are wrong. A public broadcaster, a Crown corporation, should not be doling out executive bonuses, especially at a time when it is making cuts and it is failing to fulfill its regional broadcasting mandates. However, I would argue that the Conservatives do not actually care about executive bonuses. What they really care about is hurting the CBC.

• (1150)

That is why the leader of the Conservatives will appear on True North, a conspiracy theory website that platforms banned far-right hate groups like the Proud Boys, to proclaim that he cannot wait to defund the CBC. This plays right into Liberal hands. The Liberals can demonize the Conservative leader for wanting to destroy the CBC, and ignore their own record of doing exactly that. It was after their threat of a 3% cut across the board that Catherine Tait and her board decided to lay off 800 workers.

It is under the current government that the CBC's workforce has shrunk to the point that it is smaller than it was under the Stephen Harper government, those dark days when it came to cuts to the CBC. We are once again seeing the Liberal special, and that is to criticize the Conservatives for doing what the Liberals do by stealth.

The end result is that Canadians are losing out. While the CBC is cutting jobs across the country, it is really Canadians who are paying the price. It is Canadians, especially in northern, rural, indigenous communities, living in media deserts who do not have their stories told.

When the CBC relies on offices in Winnipeg and elsewhere to tell the stories of people like here in northern Manitoba and in other northern and rural regions of the country, it is all Canadians who lose out. We lose out on our stories, our voices and our reality that matters to all of us.

As media becomes more concentrated, we hear less about how the 20 richest Canadians have \$214 billion in wealth, equivalent to over 10% of Canada's GDP. That is 20 people, 10% of the country, in terms of GDP. This reality is unsustainable, and we need to do something about it.

We hear less about how 123 corporations get out of paying \$30 billion in taxes in a single year, relying on loopholes that the NDP has called on the government to close. However, the Liberals and Conservatives, once again, do everything they can to keep those loopholes open.

I want to go back to the Liberal subamendment to this debate. The Liberals are, once again, coming across that they want to do something when it comes to saving the CBC, but the reality is that we know that the threats made by the Liberals to cut the CBC contributed to an environment where the CBC went ahead and cut 800 positions not too long ago. The Liberals talk a good talk when it comes to the CBC, but the reality is that they are doing little to strengthen a public broadcaster and pursue the kind of accountability Canadians deserve.

Routine Proceedings

A couple of months ago, when the story first broke that executive bonuses had been doled out at the CBC, we released the following statement, "It is...time to ban the CBC from paying bonuses." The Liberals have failed to act. When CBC president Catherine Tait came to committee, I made it clear the CBC was acting more and more like a private broadcaster, including on bonuses. Canadians deserve better. I also called on President Tait to commit to cancelling executive bonuses to save CBC jobs. Now we hear that not only did they take the bonuses, but they add up to more than \$18 million. This is while Canadians lost their jobs at the CBC.

Unlike the Conservatives who want to cut the CBC, we want accountability and we want to improve it. The Liberals have overseen a CBC that has not fulfilled its regional mandate the way it ought to fulfill it. Earlier, we heard about cuts to Radio-Canada, which is an essential service for francophone communities, for Quebec, for regions in our country like New Brunswick, where Radio-Canada is the go-to broadcaster for francophones. We also know that CBC has cut and failed to fulfill its mandate in regions like mine, here in northern Manitoba, where, for years, we have not had a permanent presence to fill the local broadcasting station, known as CBC North Country.

• (1155)

In fact, very cynically, the president of the CBC, President Tait, when she came to our committee in May of this year, declared that the position here had been filled. We went on to find out that it was by a journalist who came in for two months as a secondment from another CBC office elsewhere in Canada. To me and to our region, that was a cynical message from the CBC, that it was willing to get away with PR messaging that it had filled this critical position, a position that it is mandated to fill. However, the person who filled it was only here for two months.

I want to recognize that over these past years, the fact that we have not had a CBC presence has meant that the CBC coverage of our region has not been up to par. One-off stories about our communities do not cut it when it comes to relaying the real issues, challenges, opportunities, good news and bad news stories that need to be told on behalf of our region.

We also know that the CBC has not built the relationships on the ground to convey the stories that people have to share, stories that undoubtedly inform the view of Canadians of what is happening in northern Canada, what is happening in indigenous communities and what is happening in resource-based communities, many of which are facing immense challenges but are also pursuing exciting opportunities.

Our voices and these stories are not being told as a result of the CBC failing to fill the position in our station, which at one time had three people working in it. As a result of cuts, it was reduced to one. Now, as I mentioned, it has been years since that position has been fulfilled.

I will note that our region has a proud history when it comes to the CBC. I believe it is the first region that had full-time programming in Cree, again based in northern Manitoba. It was also the region that gave Peter Mansbridge his start. He was discovered in Churchill, interestingly enough not broadcasting but working at the airport. It is said that a CBC producer heard his voice and thought

he would be great for radio. He of course went on to have an illustrious career broadcasting for the CBC.

Our region has a rich history when it comes to broadcasting and the CBC. However, instead of respecting that and instead of living up to its obligations under the CRTC and its mandate for regional programming, the CBC has failed to fill this position.

I want to raise the issue of leadership. Some years ago, when it was announced that our station would be shut down under the Harper government, we worked closely with then-president Hubert Lacroix. He listened to our communities, he worked with our communities and we were able to restore service in northern Manitoba. This was much appreciated. People in northern Manitoba felt heard by the CBC at that time.

I contrast that to Ms. Tait's leadership, where we have not seen support for this station and just a short-term fill, which is not a solution to the broadcasting needs of our region and CBC's mandate. In fact, when I raised this issue in committee last week, the answers I received were entirely inadequate and, frankly, irrelevant.

Ms. Tait went on to talk about other regions in the country. This was not about that. Regions like ours, northern Canada and indigenous communities, deserve local and regional broadcasting in their regions telling their stories. That is why it is critical that we talk about strengthening the CBC and ensuring that we are investing in the regional and local journalism that is required. This is especially urgent at a time when private broadcasters are pulling out from regions across the country.

• (1200)

We saw record cuts made by Bell Media. We saw cuts and the loss of broadcasting when Rogers took over Shaw. We have seen cuts by media outlets across the country. What we have now are entire media deserts in parts of our country where journalists are not based to tell the stories within these regions. This makes Canada less well off in its connections and is absolutely a hindrance to building an informed citizenry. It is a hit to our democracy in many ways, as Canadians do not have access to and knowledge of the stories of people even within their own regions, provinces and other parts of the country. It is also a contributor to misinformation. People are turning elsewhere to get the news, and not necessarily to reputable sites and sources. Of course, we know the far right has taken advantage of this void and sought to push its agenda through.

Routine Proceedings

While we support the banning of executive bonuses, we certainly do not support the Conservatives' full frontal attack on the CBC and Radio-Canada. We need a strong public broadcaster, but not one that doles out executive bonuses and cuts jobs, not one that does not fulfill local and regional broadcasting mandates, as we are seeing right now with the CBC, and not one failing to tell Canadian stories from across the country. We need a public broadcaster, a CBC, that is accountable to Canadians and has as its priority local and regional journalism.

We also need to cut through the Liberal games. The Liberals have threatened to cut the CBC, have overseen the doling out of \$18 million in bonuses and have failed to ensure the CBC fulfills its local and regional broadcasting mandates. Canadians deserve a strong CBC, an accountable CBC, a CBC that puts Canadians at the centre, does not prioritize bonuses and does not leave glaring gaps when it comes to local and regional broadcasting.

With that in mind, I would like to make an amendment to the amendment. I propose that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following: The eighth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, presented on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for further consideration, provided that it be an instruction to the committee to study the consequences of defunding the CBC and Radio-Canada, including how the Liberals' threat to cut funding led to hundreds of CBC/Radio-Canada job cuts, including the effects on smaller communities, as promised by the Leader of the Opposition.

I hope my fellow colleagues will support the subamendment we are putting forward, and, more importantly, that as Canadian parliamentarians we get behind strengthening our public broadcaster, rendering it accountable by banning executive bonuses and investing in local and regional journalism. Canadians deserve it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will check to make sure the amendment to the amendment is in order.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): While the amendment to the amendment is being considered and before we move on to questions and comments, I will suspend the House until I can determine whether the amendment to the amendment is in order.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 12:05 p.m.)

• (1215)

[*English*]

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:16 p.m.)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Having reviewed the subamendment the hon. member was looking to table, unfortunately it was not tabled in the proper format. Therefore, it is not receivable. The hon. member can approach the clerks if she wants more information on that.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the move by the current president of the CBC to accept bonuses and raises for the executive while cutting positions in the corporation was totally unconscionable, and I trust that her successor has learned something from her experience.

That said, as a former programmer of small market stations that were CBC affiliates, on the radio side, we very much valued the news coverage the CBC offered back in the day, as well as programs like *As It Happens* and *Cross Country Checkup*. However, when it came to television, back in the day when I was at those small market stations, the CBC was the only game in town. There was no cablevision. There was certainly no satellite.

Could the hon. member comment on what the mandate of CBC Television should be? I think she will find very broad support for restoring as many radio services as possible, especially given that commercial broadcasters are very much letting us down on the radio side.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate hearing from the member. I wish other Liberals felt that the executive bonuses doled out at the CBC were not a good idea and were, frankly, outrageous at a time when Canadians are suffering and when the CBC is making cuts.

I will say once again that the Liberals' threats to cut the CBC led to the elimination of 800 positions not too long ago. I am so disappointed that, while we are all talking about how to strengthen the CBC, although I should not say "all", as certainly the Conservatives are not, the way the Liberals have overseen the CBC and the way the CBC has been run in recent years have contributed to an attack on its reputation.

We need to restore support for the CBC, which is very much centred on local and regional journalism, as the member referred to. In my region, we lost radio. Under the Liberals, the CBC has not fulfilled its mandate in northern Manitoba.

We need to get back to the basics. Canadians deserve a strong CBC but also an accountable CBC that is committed to local and regional broadcasting.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

Routine Proceedings

If I understood the intention of the defeated amendment correctly, my colleague was saying that she thinks that we should review how CBC/Radio-Canada employees are paid. I think that is an excellent point. However, it is a complex issue. Competing private broadcasters pay their executives big salaries. Of course, everyone currently agrees that it is completely unacceptable to give multimillion-dollar bonuses to executives when they are cutting jobs. Everyone agrees with that.

Could my colleague elaborate on how she thinks we should proceed? How could we review the compensation scheme without any political interference, since a Crown corporation that reports the news must be completely at arm's length?

• (1220)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

One of the reasons we put the amendment forward was to demonstrate that the Liberals are part of the problem when it comes to CBC/Radio-Canada's reputation crisis. Clearly, Canadians and Quebecers are not happy that bonuses were paid to executives. We are talking about a Crown corporation, a public broadcaster, paying out bonuses at a time when Canadians are suffering and inequality has never been worse.

Political interference must be avoided when it comes to news broadcasting, of course, but this is a governance issue. I think it is obvious that, in order to protect CBC/Radio-Canada, we need to render it accountable, and that means banning executive bonuses.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, we cannot justify the bonuses. There is no way. The Liberal member is even questioning his own party, the Prime Minister and the Privy Council. The bonus structure came to cabinet and the Minister of Canadian Heritage rubber-stamped it for \$18 million, \$3.3 million of which went to CBC executives, averaging over \$70,000 for each executive member.

The member from Manitoba has always complained about CBC coverage in northern Manitoba. I come from TV, and APTN picked up what the CBC should have. APTN saw a need for indigenous broadcasting, which CBC avoided for decades. That is why we have APTN today.

I wonder if the member from Manitoba would like to comment on APTN, which is stationed in Winnipeg.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member raising the important work of APTN. I am a big fan of APTN's work, as are many constituents across Manitoba. For indigenous communities, APTN is a trusted source that brings them news that is relevant to their communities. I know that work is not easy, and we need to make sure APTN is fully supported in its work.

The CBC could be doing similar work, but unfortunately it has pulled out of much of Manitoba and is concentrated in Winnipeg, and does very little work to build relationships to ensure there is local and regional broadcasting relevant to our communities. Obviously the first step to doing that is reopening its station here, which is also part of its mandate. We are expecting it to do that.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, CBC/Radio-Canada plays an essential role in northern Ontario, connecting isolated communities and indigenous communities and being a voice for the Franco-Ontarian community. What worries me is that we have seen over the last nine years of the Liberal government a complete abandonment of the vision for the CBC. It is listless and lost. The present management has failed. When we listen to radio, it is like we are listening to a bureaucrat tick boxes as opposed to providing the kind of top-quality service that we grew up hearing. It has put the CBC in a very weak position, and we know the member who lives in Stornoway is going to make killing the CBC job number one on the first day.

What does it mean for regions in the north, rural regions and francophone communities that the government has abandoned its vision and put CBC/Radio-Canada in such a weak position?

• (1225)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for making that reality very clear. Regions like ours in northern Ontario, northern Canada more broadly, indigenous and francophone communities and folks who live in Quebec will pay the highest price. Regions like ours have historically relied on the CBC to tell our stories.

I have talked about how in our region, as the member pointed out, over the last number of years we have not seen leadership from the CBC to protect broadcasting. The CBC has allowed our station to be emptied out and has made very little effort to ensure that we have local and regional journalism. We are—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry; I need to get one more quick question in.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, if I could have, I would have supported the hon. member's subamendment if it had been in the proper form.

Restoring what we used to call “the supertime news” to local communities is an essential part of a healthy democracy, as is a news service that can be provided in a way that gives Canadians a shared context. That helps us minimize the impact of disinformation from social media.

I wonder if the hon. member wants to expand on the benefits of fully funding the CBC to provide commercial-free public affairs and television news.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, my colleague brings up a very important point, and I appreciate her support on our intended amendment to the amendment. She is highlighting a point that many Canadians have been very clear about: The cuts to evening broadcasting by the CBC are something they oppose. It has made Canadians' lives and their ability to access vital information poorer.

When we talk about strengthening our public broadcaster, it has to be with deliverables. That means restoring local and regional journalism, including local evening broadcasts. If we are looking for where to get the money, I say ban executive bonuses. Canadians deserve the news in their regions. Let us prioritize that and strengthen CBC/Radio-Canada by ensuring that it has the resources to do that critical broadcasting work.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that every woman has the right to make informed decisions about her body. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I would like to table, in both official languages, a notice of ways and means motion that contains our plan to require more transparency from charities that use deceptive tactics to push women away from making their own reproductive decisions.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I would ask that an order of the day be designated for the consideration of this ways and means motion.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to have the opportunity to stand in this place and bring the voice and perspective of my constituents from the beautiful riding of Kings—Hants, just next door to you, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot help but remark on the point of order that was just made by the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth about the importance of ensuring proper access to abortion services, and that women be able to make that choice themselves. I thank the minister for her work and for making sure that charities are not trying to undo or limit the ability of women to make that choice. I do think that this is going to be an important element in the days ahead. We see what is happening south of our border on these questions. When I speak to women in my constituency, they want to make sure that they have the ability to make that choice for themselves and not have other people make that choice for them.

However, we are here on a concurrence report. What does that mean? It means that the opposition has chosen to use more time in this House to bring forward a committee report that was already duly passed at the committee stage and requires a government response.

In this particular instance, I am actually pleased to have the opportunity to explain and to give some context to my Conservative colleagues about the concern I have about the direction they may want to take on public broadcasting. However, I would be remiss if I did not use at least a minute or two to explain to Canadians the concern I have about the fact that the procedural elements of this House, the ability for this House to get work done, has been completely gummed up by the Conservatives, closing on three weeks now.

There is, before this House, a question of privilege. Questions of privilege are undoubtedly important. They matter, and there have been two of them raised, according to the Speaker. Now, the Speaker has been very clear that, in relation to the question of privilege that is before this House right now, it should be referred to committee. However, what has happened is that there has not been an ability to actually have that vote called because, of course, our procedural rules allow, on questions of privilege, every single member in this House to be able to rise and speak to it. What have members of the Conservative Party done? They have continued to move amendments and subamendments to continue to restart that clock, and not on a genuine concern about the question of privilege, but to tie up the affairs and the resources of this House so that other business cannot actually happen. I think that is shameful, particularly because the House leader has been very clear that we would welcome a vote, an ability to actually litigate this matter, and be able to move it forward. At some point, I think Canadians are going to have to ask: When will the Conservative Party actually allow this House to get back to the legitimate business of government and the things that matter most crucially to Canadians?

I am not saying that the question of privilege is not important, and I am not saying that the issues surrounding it do not matter, but there is clear consensus in this House to actually move forward. Instead, the Conservatives are using procedural tactics to delay the ability for the government to perhaps introduce a fall economic statement, and the ability to discuss other things that actually matter to Canadians. We are going on three weeks, and I hope that at some point during my question time here today when I am asked, one of my Conservative colleagues will tell me when we can actually get on with it. However, it does allow me to focus on my constituents and the needs at home, and I do welcome that. I welcome the opportunity to continue to be at home and focus on the needs for my constituents, and so I thank the Conservatives in the same breath as well.

Routine Proceedings

Today's aspect is a question around a report to the House that relates to executive compensation awarded to Catherine Tait, the CBC president. It is important to remind Canadians that the agency, our public broadcaster in this country, is, of course, accountable to Parliament because of the money provided on an annual basis, which is around a billion dollars, but it is independent of government. Of course, we would not know that when, at times, we hear the opposition stand up to suggest that it is a "propaganda arm" of the government, which is dangerous language, because it undermines public broadcasting in this country. Also, the leader of the official opposition has gone so far as to suggest that CTV is a "propaganda arm" for the Prime Minister. This is the kind of playbook that we are seeing by right-wing parties and leaders around the world to try to undermine the credibility of media institutions across the country and this idea that we cannot believe what journalists report. I will take a moment to give my perspective on this.

• (1230)

When I read the National Post, I inherently understand that it has more of a centre-right bent. I do not stand here in this place and say what I read in the National Post is untrue, or that it is out to just attack the government, or it is an attack dog for the member for Carleton. I do not say that, because I am not trying to undermine journalism integrity in this country. When I read The Globe and Mail, I would say that is right down the middle. Others may see it as right-wing or left-wing, but I do not believe what The Globe and Mail is saying in this country is factually untrue, even if it may have a journalistic bias; the same with our public broadcaster. Again, the Conservatives will voice concerns about the integrity of that institution. They call it into question.

The irony in all of this, though, is that if we actually watch the social media channels of the members of the official opposition we can see how they love to cherry-pick stories when there is an actual story that is critical of the government. Of course, it is the job of our public broadcaster to be critical and to provide information. In one breath, they will say it is the "propaganda arm" of the Prime Minister or some type of North Korean dynamic here in this country. They gaslight and fire up Canadians, but yet they will use the content from our public broadcaster when it suits their narrative. In my neck of the woods, we call that hypocrisy and it is disingenuous to the debates that we need to have in this place.

I am going to get to the debate in this place where, of course, the text of this motion deals with the compensation that the CBC has provided to executives and other members of the team. Do I think that that was ill-suited in today's context? Absolutely, I do. When the CBC CEO announced job cuts to our public broadcaster, I think there needed to be more context. That was unconscionable. I think the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells used that word. In an environment where an employer is laying off employees while choosing to compensate at the same time, usually that would be a moment when the employer would tell their executive leadership team that they are proud of their work, but right now they are in an environment where they maybe just cannot provide that because it would send the wrong message as they lay people off. It is just not the right course.

I do agree with that motion of the text. I think it was unfortunate. Here is the thing, though, as this is the dynamic as well: a govern-

ment ought to be and needs to be careful. I think it was the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood who talked about the idea that the government should have intervened. If we truly want an independent broadcaster, a public broadcaster, the government ought to be careful about intervening in those cases. I heard Conservatives talking about the idea that the public broadcaster is too tied to the agenda of the government, yet they want the government to intervene directly. Rather, we actually want our independent broadcaster to be truly independent.

I think there is also a legitimate question about talent and maintaining talent in these environments. There are people who have requisite skill sets. It is a competitive environment out there in the media landscape. I do think an important question to ask is about remuneration. That matters, as it will ensure we have quality journalists and quality management that will be able to ensure our public broadcaster stays competitive in the media landscape. I want to address that. However, this opportunity has arisen where it gives me more opportunity to speak to public broadcasting across the country and why it matters.

Mr. Speaker, you and I represent rural ridings in Nova Scotia. Maybe you do not go out to make an announcement as often as you would like, but the government has done some good things in West Nova. We want to get out to talk about that or about the initiatives we want to do as MPs, but it is not easy to find an actual media outlet in West Nova or Kings—Hants because the environment we are in right now is one where we have actually seen a shrinking of local media in this country.

It is extremely challenging. Whether someone is a member of Parliament or a citizen, we are living in an environment where people are trying to find credible information about what is happening in the world. Often, we are getting our information from our cell phones. There is power in having a computer in your hand, an ability to find information all around the world, but we are also in a world of algorithms and social media.

When I went to Hants East Rural High, there used to be papers laid out at the library. When we had a free block of time we would read the news about what was going on in the world. We had flip phones; we did not have the whole Internet to access at our fingertips. When I talk to young people, when I go into high schools in my riding, I ask them where they get their news. Many will answer that they get it from TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram; social media. That tells me how old I am feeling in this place. I am 33.

Routine Proceedings

● (1235)

It has been a very interesting exercise as I talk to young people about who comes up a lot on their social media. It is Joe Rogan and Elon Musk. These are the types, even among young women. We can see the algorithm. Once one goes to see one or two things, one starts seeing it in echo chambers. Whether or not it is individuals who I think we could clearly classify as on the far right or even on the far left, it does a disservice to our society to be in a situation where we do not get a breadth of information to be able to help inform our opinion. We are in an echo chamber. We are seeing the same things. We might start to believe that everything we are seeing is absolutely true. I think it is important to have critical thought and that we have individuals and trusted journalism that can actually help us understand the context of what we are dealing with.

I want to talk about the CBC in the context of the regions. Atlantic Canada is, I think, perhaps the best example of where the public broadcaster has an important presence and a long and storied tradition. I can think of programs like the CBC's *Land and Sea*. I do not know how often members have watched it, but I know many of my constituents do. It is an informative documentary series that talks about our communities. Global, CTV or other private broadcasters are not going to deliver that element of Canadian content.

I think about *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. Its editorial control is still in Halifax. I think about family friends, including Kendall Nowe, who do important work there. I have been in the studio. It is being driven by Canadian actors to provide a bit of comedic relief. I think we could use more of that here in Ottawa and a little more levity in this place. It is important because it is true Canadian content being developed in the regions. I think of *Son of a Critch*, and these Newfoundland types of shows. I think about the CBC's evening news in Prince Edward Island, which is by far the leading example of our public broadcaster having a large market share of that evening news where Islanders will tune in to watch the CBC.

However, the CBC is not above reproach; we cannot suggest there does not have to be reform. In fact, I am of the view that, although public broadcasting is absolutely crucial in this country, we need to maintain it. It scares the heck out of me that members of the opposition want to cut it in a world of algorithms and declining local media. They want to get rid of trusted journalism, and that is concerning, but let us not pretend they do not need a bit of a boot in the butt. I think that is important.

There are a couple things that I would note based on the conversations I have had over the last 10 years. Increasingly, the CBC and its editorial control is centralized in Toronto. I love my good friends from Toronto, I love the members of Parliament of all sides who reside there. It is a great city, but I am sorry, that is what our big, privately held media companies are doing. They are centralizing their editorial content out of the middle of the country. I can tell members that there is a vastly different perspective in regional Canada and in rural Canada, so we need to be able to make sure that there are resources not in our biggest city of the country that may not reflect what is happening in rural Canada, which is the entire emphasis of our public broadcaster, but in the areas of the country where the private broadcasters would not go because, frankly, there was not a business case to do it. Why is it that, under the CBC's leadership, it has increasingly put its resources in the middle of the coun-

try, which is already being served quite well by private broadcasters? We need the exact opposite.

I will give one example that CBC executives were putting out to the regional headquarters in downtown cities across the country. They need to sell those locations and move a bit further out to the suburbs. We cannot afford those properties downtown. Guess what? They did not take the Kool-Aid in Toronto. It is right downtown. If we are going to say that in Halifax, we ought to be doing it in Toronto. Let us put CBC headquarters out in the suburban areas, if that is what we think is good for St. John's, Halifax, Charlottetown and other areas. I think if we are going to maintain the confidence of a public broadcaster in this country, we need to make sure that, first and foremost, it is serving the regions where there is no private broadcasting to actually meet their needs.

I can tell members that when I go to make announcements in my own riding, maybe I get lucky with a SaltWire journalist who will actually show up and put it into the paper, which matters, although there is declining readership. Certainly on television, it is a lucky day, a cold day in, and I better not say "H-E double hockey sticks", that we will actually see CTV and Global.

● (1240)

I appreciate the journalists who come. They tell important stories, but they are few and far between because the private broadcasters do not want to drive an hour down to the valley. They sure as heck do not want to drive down to beautiful West Nova; it is too far from Halifax. However, reporters from CBC/Radio-Canada will show up, and that is important because they are telling the stories that matter.

We have to get back to editorial capacity and resources in the regions. We have to focus on true Canadian content. I mentioned CBC's *Land and Sea*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and other documentaries that are focused on Canadian content. I am sorry, but we do not need a Canadian *Family Feud*. We do not need Americanized content in which we put lipstick on a pig and call it Canadian. That is where I think, at times, the public broadcaster has lost its way.

Routine Proceedings

I want to take the opportunity to talk about my concern about the opposition cutting public broadcasting. We have established that, in many cases, it is our public broadcaster, on television and certainly on radio, that provides really important news and content information. There are many places where we have, essentially, media deserts where the private sector either does not have a business model to do it or has not been able to find a way. The public broadcaster matters for news and information.

There are many constituents in my riding who believe in this important work. We have the Conservatives saying that they would cut it. They would cut this in an era of social media and of algorithms. I do not understand why. I want to go back to the bigger narrative. It is not just the CBC the Conservatives want to cut. They want to denigrate media and journalism across the board. I asked this in the House a few weeks ago: Which news agencies are the Conservatives not going to try to denigrate? Which ones do they trust?

When I watch Vassy Kapelos take a hard stance on a cabinet minister in the current government, I do not think that CTV is a propaganda arm for the government. I do not think it is appropriate for the member for Carleton to stand in this place and attack CEOs with his parliamentary privilege to try to downgrade the stocks of Canadian companies that Canadians have in their retirement plans. That is irresponsible leadership. It is a symbolic element of where the Conservative Party has ended up.

Are there good, honourable members on the other side whom I believe in? There absolutely are. However, under the leadership of the member for Carleton, the Conservative Party does not have the true progressive and moderate Conservative views that I think have resonated with people in this country for a long time. What do George Nowlan, Joe Clark and Scott Brison all have in common? They represented the good people of Kings—Hants as true Progressive Conservatives, and that party does not exist anymore.

My message to my constituents is very clear when they look at the modern Conservative Party of today. I will say that I was not a huge fan of Stephen Harper. I did not agree with everything he did, but he looks like a heck of a statesman compared with the member for Carleton. My God, bring back Harper over that guy. The member for Carleton makes Stephen Harper look like an absolute statesman. That scares a heck of a lot of people in my riding.

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh!

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I am getting a rise out of them now.

It scares people in my riding because they did not like Harper. Harper was the guy who called Atlantic Canada a culture of defeat. We were not pleased with Harper at the time. Can we guess what? My constituents say the guy from Carleton is even scarier. He is further down the line, and he is trumpeting the same playbook that we are seeing more and more out of the United States from the Republican Party, or at least its presidential nominee.

We have to find a way to maintain broadcasting in this country and to maintain our public broadcasters. They tell important stories and make sure information gets to residents across the country, particularly in areas where the private media companies will not go.

The Conservative agenda to cut the CBC and to cut our public broadcaster, with no conversation about reform, is absolutely irresponsible.

Concerning the idea that the Conservatives' cutting CBC would not have an impact on Radio-Canada, I say this to my colleagues from Quebec: *C'est absolument fou*. It is crazy to think that there will not be an impact. Quebeckers know the importance of Radio-Canada. They ought to be careful.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, considering my colleague's choice of words and targeted attacks, he must be thinking ahead to the upcoming election. Of course, I am only teasing my colleague. I essentially agree with him, especially the last part of his statement when he emphasized the importance of the francophone side of CBC/Radio-Canada. I would like him to tell me what he thinks about this: When CBC/Radio-Canada made its cuts, it cut the francophone and anglophone sides 50-50, even though the francophone side is turning a very good profit. It is sad to say, but right now, the francophone side is pretty much keeping the anglophone side afloat.

Does my colleague see any unfairness in that?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I think that public broadcasting in English-speaking Canada outside Quebec is very important. I also think that public broadcasting in Quebec and in francophone communities outside Quebec is even more important. In the Deputy Speaker's own riding of West Nova and in communities across the Maritimes, Radio-Canada plays a vital role. If the Conservatives slash the CBC's resources, as they hope to do, it will undoubtedly affect Radio-Canada's efficiency and French-language services. It will also affect our French-speaking constituents across the country.

• (1250)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on the quality of his French. Answering a Bloc Québécois member's question entirely in French is really impressive, and I congratulate him.

I listened very carefully to what he had to say. In his speech, he said that *The Globe and Mail* is a credible newspaper that always publishes relevant, fact-checked information. However, when the big SNC-Lavalin scandal happened, and the democratic tragedy of the Prime Minister's meddling in the judicial process for partisan reasons unfolded, *The Globe and Mail* broke what came to be known as the Jody Wilson-Raybould affair. Soon after *The Globe and Mail* ran that front-page headline, the Prime Minister of Canada—who is the current Liberal leader and therefore my colleague's boss—said that everything written in *The Globe and Mail* was false. That turned out to be true.

That being the case, who here in the House is attacking the integrity of a credible media outlet?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, first, with regard to SNC-Lavalin, I am rather surprised that my hon. colleague did not think about the importance of protecting jobs in Quebec. It was imperative that the SNC-Lavalin executives be prosecuted, but had the former justice minister's decision been implemented, it would have directly impacted jobs in Quebec.

Second, when it comes to the Prime Minister's comments regarding The Globe and Mail article, there is a difference between stories, comments, facts or reports that are false and a general impression that there is bias at work. That is what the hon. member for Carleton says.

[*English*]

There is a difference between saying the story is false and saying that an agency or journalists are out to get us and that they cannot be trusted at all. Therefore, hon. members can disagree with reporting from a certain journalist on a story. However, when they start to lather through this idea that all of it is problematic, journalists have a bias and it is a propaganda arm, that is a wholly different standard, and the member knows it.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I agree with so much of what the member has said today. It is highly problematic to hear the Conservatives, once again, bringing forward short-sighted misinformation around how to best move forward. There are some things I just do not understand. For example, we hear the leader of the Conservative Party talking about cutting and defunding the CBC but not Radio-Canada. They use the same infrastructure, and there are laws around this. It is just completely confusing and seems to provide misinformation.

I appreciate that the member spoke about the impacts and the importance for people in rural communities to have access to the CBC. The CBC also has stations that are in eight indigenous languages now. This is vital for Canadians, and we know that the majority of Canadians support public broadcasting. We need to make sure that we support the CBC and public broadcasting to be the best so that Canadians have the confidence they need, as the member said. What can the Liberals do differently to help ensure that Canadians have that confidence and that public broadcasting is supported to the best of their capacity?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, there was a lot in that question; I appreciate the sentiment.

First of all, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has committed to releasing guiding principles and the things the government would like to see in terms of coverage in rural Canada. Obviously, depending on the plan and its contents, which will be coming, it may mean an increase in funding and an examination of how we can best support our public broadcaster to reform and meet the needs of modern Canada today.

In my speech, I did not say that CBC is beyond reproach. Public broadcasting is fundamental in this country, but reform is also necessary. I completely agree with the member's sentiment about the reckless nature of the Conservatives talking about cutting public broadcasting in an environment in which we are being subjugated to algorithms, increasing social media and disinformation. This is not just from content users, necessarily, but also from foreign

states. It has been very clear that foreign states are trying to use social media platforms to sow discontent in democracies.

The last thing I want to say, which I said in my remarks, is this: I find it ironic that the Conservatives will run down our public broadcaster, but when it suits their narrative, I see stories from the public broadcaster that are critical of the government on their social media. I repeat that, in my neck of the woods, it is called complete hypocrisy.

• (1255)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know there are other issues we should be debating, but there is some merit to this motion that has been presented by the Conservative Party of Canada. From the emails in my inbox, the constituents in the riding of Waterloo wholeheartedly support a public broadcaster. They recognize that we can do better, as can the CBC, but they fear the Conservative approach of just cutting programs and services available to Canadians.

After the member spoke, I received an email from a constituent reminding us that former prime minister Stephen Harper put Conservatives first; similarly, the leader of the Conservative Party does this. I believe that most Canadians, myself included, would put Canadians first. I am proud to have been born and raised in the Region of Waterloo; for me, Canadians and Canada are my priority and focus.

What is the importance of supporting a public broadcaster? How does it benefit constituents in his riding of Waterloo? If Conservatives had it their way, what would their idea of a public broadcaster be?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I will correct the record. The hon. member for Waterloo gave me the privilege and distinction of representing the good people of Waterloo; that is her job, and she does an excellent job of it. I am pleased to represent the good people of Kings—Hants.

We are in an environment right now where there has been a decline of local journalism and where foreign state governments are trying to sow discontent in democracies by driving misinformation online. Increasingly, we do not have access to trusted journalism. Our public broadcaster is extremely important for providing that information. The Conservatives are planning to cut our public broadcaster in this country at a time when rural and regional Canada need it even more.

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Many of the members of Parliament on the opposition benches have constituents in areas where there would be very little to no local media at all. It is extremely important to maintain that public broadcaster; it is also important to focus on reform. Let us not suggest that the CBC has been perfect. I think now is a great opportunity to focus on how we reform our public broadcaster to meet the needs all across the country, including re-engaging communities very strongly in western Canada, where the presence is not what it needs to be. However, it does not help when the opposition party continues to denigrate our public broadcaster.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear a Liberal member, after nine years, realize the Liberals have now also broken the CBC. They broke housing. They have broken the criminal justice system. I can go down the list of what they have broken over the last several years, including when the Prime Minister broke the English language by inventing the word “brokenist”, which was a treat for all of us to listen to just last week.

What came out of the committee is this: Given the job cuts announced at CBC/Radio-Canada for the year 2024, it would be inappropriate for the CBC to grant bonuses to the executive members. Because the Liberals broke the CBC so badly with terrible appointments and terrible management, a committee had to take the unprecedented step of telling the CBC not to give out bonuses when they had performed so poorly.

It is really unheard of. This has not happened in the history of the CBC, so I have to wonder how the government so incompetently managed the CBC through the people it appointed to run it. The Liberals have done an absolutely abysmal job. They have run the CBC into the ground.

Viewership at the CBC has collapsed by 50% since 2018. In any other environment, say, if I had declined my goal production in hockey by 50%, I am guessing my team would not be giving me a bonus. I have never run an NHL team, but I cannot imagine a player going to the owner and saying, “I scored 40 goals last year. This year I scored 20. I want to talk about my bonus.” It just would not happen. However, because the Liberals are just so incompetent with everything, everyone now thinks they can do whatever they want.

The CBC executives, because there is really no one running the ship over there, do not know what is going on. Their incompetence is spreading to every department. These people thought, “Let me think about this for a second. Viewership is down by 50%. We failed to meet 79% of our performance targets. Let me think of what we should do about that. I have an idea: let us cut 800 employees and give ourselves bonuses.”

This is the madness that is going on at the CBC, and it can only happen under the absolutely corrupt, bankrupt-of-ideas Liberal government. As we often say, a fish rots from the head down, and the rot from this government is spreading everywhere. It has spread so badly that Catherine Tait at the CBC thought this was a good idea. I can just see it now: They call everybody into the boardroom to pitch some ideas. Viewership is down 50%. They did not meet 79% of their KPIs. They go around the table to figure out the solution. They need to get things back on track. What if they cut 800 employees? “Oh yes, I like that.” What if they gave out \$3.8 million in

bonuses? “Oh yes, I like that. That is exactly the direction we need to go.” Then the Liberals stand here, do nothing and defend it.

How the CBC is behaving is offensive to average Canadians, so the committee had to take the unprecedented step of saying the CBC should not be paying out bonuses while laying off people. The government did not say anything. Its members just said, “Well, whatever,” as they do on most files. They are out of touch, asleep at the switch and making a mess of everything. They made a mess of this.

I want to go just on a bit more. Catherine Tait's salary is between \$468,000 and \$551,000 a year. That is a pretty good wage. Most Canadians would be really happy to make a wage like that. In fact, they would be happy to make a fifth of that. As the performance of the CBC was going into the tank, she decided bonuses were great and the bonuses could be up to 28%. She tanked viewership, they have not met any of their KPIs and missed 79% of them, and what she thought would really fix things up was giving herself a \$154,000 bonus. I really cannot make this stuff up.

● (1300)

Any average Canadian hearing this would say it has to be a joke, an article in *The Beaverton* or something like that. No corporation would behave this way except if it was being run by a really incompetent Liberal government. The government appointed people to the green slush fund who just paid themselves and their companies whatever they wanted. There is now an RCMP investigation. As I said, a fish rots from the head down. This Crown corporation sees that Crown corporation making it rain by sending its money to all its buddies' companies, and it wants to get in on that action and gives itself some gigantic bonuses. It is absolutely reprehensible conduct by a Crown corporation that is running itself into the ground.

The CBC dished out \$18.4 million in bonuses to non-union staff and, wait for this, \$3.3 million in bonuses to 45 executives. That is more than \$73,000 each. After the CBC had given itself this wonderful Christmas present, these gigantic bonuses, it decided to give some employees at the CBC a Christmas bonus as well: It sent pink slips to 800 employees. That is what it decided was a good thing to do as it made it rain for itself.

That is why a House of Commons committee took the unprecedented step to say this had to stop. We would think that if there was a decent minister over there, or a decent Prime Minister, the government would have put a stop to that, but no, absolutely not, just like it did not put a stop to all the corruption at the green slush fund. The government let it go on for years despite all the warnings and all the questions at committee. It said these people can run amok and do whatever they want, and that has spread. It has now spread to the CBC.

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Then where did the CBC go? It realized it missed 79% of its KPIs and people were questioning its bonuses. It asked, “Does anybody have any ideas what we should do? Should we try to actually do content that people want? Should we make sure our local affiliates are getting some coverage?” No. Someone put up their hand and said, “What if we just changed the KPIs so we all reach them? Then we can keep getting our bonuses.”

Again, we cannot make this up. When the CBC realized it could not meet any of its own KPIs but still wanted to make it rain for itself, it just changed the KPIs. Why would it do that? I go back again to this: A fish rots from the head down. The corruption that the government has engaged in for the last nine years has spread out all over the place, and people feel like they can do whatever, as a former member said, the “H-E double hockey sticks” they want. This is what happened.

The committee had to get into it and say it had absolutely had enough. If we look at the CBC itself, the bonuses alone have cost taxpayers \$132 million since 2015. Think about that, \$132 million, all while the CBC is missing all of its performance metrics. This is a corporation that has completely lost its moral compass in dealing with people. Imagine sending out layoff notices to 800 employees just before Christmas after giving these bonuses. It is the epitome of disgusting. If anything, the CBC should have been taking care of those workers as opposed to making it rain for itself with these exorbitant bonuses.

However, it did not happen, and there was no condemnation from the Liberals. The Prime Minister did not say this was absolutely unacceptable and the CBC should reverse this decision—

• (1305)

Mr. Martin Shields: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, when will this debate end?

The Deputy Speaker: The end of the debate will be at 1:14 p.m., so we have about six minutes left.

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon has the floor.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, 1,450 CBC staffers are taking home six-figure salaries. Since 2015, the number of CBC employees taking six-figure salaries has spiked by 231%, again, all the while, with absolutely declining viewership, not meeting any of their KPIs and giving themselves these lavish, gigantic bonuses. Catherine Tait has not ruled out taking more bonuses. It is really incredible.

In the face of all this, a responsible CEO would say they have made some serious mistakes, they are running the corporation into the ground, they are going to turn this thing around, and the first thing that is going to happen is they are not going to take any bonuses until the ship gets going in the right direction. However, that is not what is happening. In the real world, all these executives would lose their jobs for this terrible performance, but in the Liberal world, they give themselves gigantic bonuses, pat themselves on the back and then lay off the workers. That is the record of the Liberal government with the CBC, which is, again, why we are here today.

I have heard members from the Liberal government say how dare we take up valuable House time to discuss this. I think Canadians

want to know what the government has done to the CBC, how it has run it into the ground. I understand, when we have a Prime Minister who says he admires the basic dictatorship of China, that he does not want debate in the House of Commons. That all tracks. I am sorry it is so inconvenient for Liberal members to have to try to get up and pathetically defend how they have run the CBC for the last nine years. I agree it is a hardship.

They actually have to stand up and defend their terrible record. However, they do not want to, so they say things like we are taking up House time. Parliament is here for a reason: to debate issues. If that is inconvenient for them, if they admire China's basic dictatorship so much, maybe there is somewhere they could go and be dictators. There are lots of countries around the world they could move to with basic dictatorships, China being one of them.

We are going to debate this because it is important to Canadians to expose what they have done to the CBC, what the people at the CBC are doing to the workers at the CBC, and we are not going to stop. They can cry about it all they want. The facts are these: they cannot defend their management of the CBC; they cannot defend the bonuses the CBC has given to itself; they cannot defend that the CBC awarded itself these gigantic bonuses and then tried to lay off 800 workers; they cannot defend that viewership at the CBC is down 50%; they cannot defend that the CBC has not met 79% of its own KPIs and then gave itself bonuses; and they cannot defend the fact that, when the CBC realized how outrageous it was to give itself bonuses while missing 79% of its KPIs, it just changed the KPIs.

The CBC learned from the best. It learned from a corrupt Liberal government that says, “Just do whatever you want; everything will be fine.” That is how the CBC is being run under the Liberal government.

I would like to conclude with this. I move:

That the amendment be amended

(a) by adding, immediately after the word “including” the following: “how the Liberal threat to cut funding led to hundreds of CBC-Radio Canada job cuts”; and

(b) by adding the following at the end:

“, provided that it be a further instruction to the committee (a) that it report its findings to the House no later than December 17, 2024, (b) that, during this study, the following witnesses be ordered to appear, for no less than two hours each: (i) Catherine Tait, and (ii) Marie-Phillippe Boucharde; and (c) the Minister of Canadian Heritage be ordered to appear for at least one hour; and (d) that, in addition to the witnesses mentioned in paragraph (b), it hear at least three hours of additional expert testimony.”

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

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I know that the Conservatives do not want us to speak in both official languages and that they prefer that we speak in English only, but was the amendment received in both official languages? Can we see a French version?

The Deputy Speaker: I think that it has now been printed in both languages and submitted to the Table and the Chair in both languages. We will check.

The amendment to the amendment is in order.

● (1315)

[English]

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time to put forth with the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the subamendment.

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

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, on this very important issue, I would ask for a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

PETITIONS

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition that has been organized by Mattie's Place. It is an organization that provides support and advocacy for homeless pets.

I am submitting a petition that has been signed by people, but there was also a petition that had been signed by companion animals in our community. They are asking for recognition of animal sentience because animals do feel joy, pain and fear. They have feelings, and they deserve to have their welfare better protected.

I would like to thank Mattie's Place for its advocacy and for its organization of this petition.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition today signed by Canadians from across the country.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to ensure that Canadians have the right to be protected against discrimination. Canadians can and do feel political discrimination, and it is a fundamental Canadian right to be politically active and vocal. It is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the exchange of differing ideas.

The folks who have signed this petition are in support of Bill C-257, which seeks to add the protection of political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act. The petitioners call on the

House of Commons to adopt this bill quickly and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

● (1320)

VANCOUVER ISLAND LIGHTHOUSES

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table e-petition 5109, which has 1,239 signatories from the west coast.

The petitioners highlight that there are significant risks to hikers, aviators, and mariners in the Juan de Fuca Strait, British Columbia. They also note that the discretion and interventions of the lighthouse keepers along the coastline have resulted in the rescue of many stranded and injured individuals, which would have not been possible through automation, and that Fisheries and Oceans Canada did not consult with local communities, mariners, union representatives or first nations prior to announcing the destaffing of Pachena Point and Carmanah Point light stations on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The petitioners are calling on the federal government to, in the future, consult with relevant stakeholders and first nations regarding the impacts of the destaffing; conduct an independent cost and safety assessment of both lighthouses and come back with a plan to move forward in reinstating the lighthouses that were closed; work with union representatives and consult with labour, as was promised in the past; and consider alternative actions to preserve the safety of lighthouse keepers without destaffing their stations.

Conservatives and Liberals have abandoned coastal people and continue to close lighthouses, and constituents are demanding action—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. This is petitions.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am sharing without indicating my own views. It is an experience I share with many constituents, and it comes up in every single town hall meeting.

The petitioners are pointing to the family doctor shortage, pointing to the fact that nearly five million Canadians do not have access to their own health care provider. They are asking that the government and the House assembled work with provinces and territories to find a fair and holistic solution for this quite critical emergency, which is that we do not have access across Canada to reliable primary health providers.

The statistic in the petition is that there are 4.8 million Canadians who lack a family doctor.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the residents of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Today, I am presenting two petitions. The first petition is from Canadians who wish to support Bill C-257. They wish to have the definition of discrimination expanded to include political belief and activity as an enumerated grounds of discrimination.

Routine Proceedings

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting is signed by 102 people.

This petition is in reference to the poverty that a number of senior citizens are experiencing. The petitioners call on the Minister of Finance specifically to provide Canadian seniors aged 65 years and over a livable pension above the poverty line.

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to table a petition submitted by Canadian firefighters that is addressing an urgent issue impacting the health and safety of firefighters across Canada.

This petition, sponsored by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, calls for immediate action to ban per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, also known as forever chemicals, in firefighter gear and firefighting foam.

PFAS 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, which is putting firefighters, who are already facing hazardous conditions, at greater risk. 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.

Let us protect those who risk their lives for us. I thank the Speaker for providing me the space to present this petition.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians across this country, as well as residents of Haldimand—Norfolk. These petitioners believe the government should recognize that Canadians can and do suffer from political discrimination, and that Canadians should be rightfully protected from such discrimination, in recognition of their rights to be politically active and vocal. These petitioners believe that it is important to protect public debate and the open exchange of ideas if we are to uphold democracy in Canada.

As such, they are calling on the House of Commons to support Bill C-257, which seeks to add protection from discrimination on the basis of political belief or activity to the Canadian Human Rights Act, and to defend the rights of all Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

● (1325)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems that some members, during petitions, have ventured into expressing their own personal opinions on subjects. I think it is important to remind members to be studiously careful as to only share the petitioners' views, not their own personal view.

With that in mind, I am tabling a petition that I received from my constituents, which asks the House to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Petitioners observe that, after eight years, it is clear that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, the crime or the corruption. Further, petitioners note that the failed Prime Minister and his failed NDP-Liberal government have increased the cost of everything and have failed to take responsibility for their failures. Petitioners are also saying that crime, chaos, drugs and disorder are filling our streets due to the failed policies of the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal government.

Without sharing any of my own views on the subject, I want to note that petitioners are asking the House to axe the tax, build the home, fix the budget and stop the crime. Petitioners are further asking for an immediate—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I appreciate the efforts that the hon. member's campaign manager put into the wording of the petition, but the member would know that he is not supposed to be reading a petition but to, in a very short way, be highlighting the essence of the petition.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for that. It seems as though we went offside when our friend from Courtenay—Alberni gave his presentation, too. This is just a reminder to summarize the petitions as best as members possibly can so we can present as many petitions during the time allotted to us.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do want to assure members that I was as surprised as anyone when this petition was sent to my office. I am but a servant of the people in this chamber, and if my constituents want me to petition the House to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, I can assure all hon. members that I will do that, regardless of my own personal views on that subject.

As I was saying, in addition to asking the House to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, petitioners would like an immediate non-confidence vote in this failed NDP-Liberal government to bring about a carbon tax election, in which case Canadians would be able to vote to end the carbon tax everywhere and for good.

I do commend this petition on axing the tax, building the homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime to the consideration of the House. I would also encourage members in the future to follow my example of avoiding statements of personal opinions when they table a petition.

Routine Proceedings

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling is in support of a private member's bill that I have tabled in the House, Bill C-257. It is an important bill, according to petitioners, who say that Canadians have a right to be protected against discrimination and that Canadians can and do face political discrimination. Petitioners note that it is a fundamental right to be politically active and that discrimination on the basis of political views can limit people's ability to be actively involved in the political conversation.

Bill C-257 would add political belief and activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination within the Canadian Human Rights Act. Petitioners ask the House to support Bill C-257, which bans discrimination on the basis of political belief or activity. They want to see the House act to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

• (1330)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next I am tabling a petition that raises concerns about a 2021 election platform commitment from the Liberal Party to politicize charitable status.

In that election platform, the Liberals proposed to apply political criteria to the charitable status definition and to deny charitable status to organizations that disagree with the Liberal Party's position with respect to abortion.

The petitioners note that this would jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations that, for reasons of conscience, take the position they do on this issue. They note as well that this would be similar to the values test previously applied by the government to worthy applicants under the Canada summer jobs program. They note that charitable status determinations should be made in a politically neutral way that reflects an evaluation of the charitable activities of the organization, not of the personal convictions or values of those who run the organization.

The petitioners therefore want to see the House protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination, and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next I am tabling a petition respecting concerns about religious freedom in India.

The petitioners draw attention to findings of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, reporting that various actors have sought to establish an explicit religious nationalism within India, contrary to India's secular and pluralistic foundations, and that this has posed a grave threat to India's religious minorities. They highlight a concerning increase in incidents targeting Christians in India. They also draw attention to threats to the Dalit community and the Muslim community specifically.

The petitioners therefore ask the House to ensure that any discussions or negotiations with India involve clear human rights provisions. They want to see sanctions against individuals who are guilty of extremist violence against religious minorities, as well as incitement, and also promotion of mutually respectful and beneficial human rights dialogue in this case.

HONG KONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling is regarding human rights in Hong Kong and applicable immigration provisions.

The petitioners note how many democracy activists in Hong Kong have been subject to arbitrary, politicized sentences, some of them under the national security law, but there have been many cases in which offences not under the national security law have nonetheless been used to target people who are involved in legitimate democracy advocacy. This creates problems when those individuals might be applying for immigration to Canada. They might be excluded on the basis of criminality even though they have not committed any crimes; they have simply been involved in pro-democracy, pro-freedom protests.

The petitioners therefore want to see the Government of Canada recognize the politicization of the judiciary in Hong Kong and its impact on the legitimacy and validity of criminal convictions. They want to see affirmation that national security law offences will be considered irrelevant and invalid in relation to prospective immigration to Canada. They further want to see a mechanism whereby Hong Kong people with pro-democracy movement-related convictions not under the national security law could also be deemed admissible to Canada, notwithstanding the criminality provisions. They want to see Canada work with other like-minded states to have similar such provisions.

I commend all these petitions to the consideration of my colleagues.

* * *

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the issue of foreign interference, not to surprise anyone, because at the end of the day, time and time again the Conservatives are quiet. They come up with bogus rationales. The bottom line is that the leader of the Conservative Party is putting his self-interest and the Conservative Party ahead of the national interest and what is in the best interest of Canadians. He is doing that by refusing to get the security clearance.

There are all sorts of issues and concerns in regard to foreign interference. Why will the leader of the Conservative Party not get that clearance? Is there something in his background? Could the member clearly give an indication to the House, and through the House to Canadians, why the current leader of the Conservative Party does not want to get the security clearance and could he explain what he might be hiding?

• (1335)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I would caution the member. It is beneath hon. members to cast wild aspersions.

The reality is, as stated by the vehement Conservative supporter, former leader of the NDP, Thomas Mulcair, that this is strictly a political ploy by the Prime Minister to gag the Leader of the Opposition from criticizing the government. The fact that the Liberals would utilize foreign interference for political reasons is disgusting.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, following up on the comment by my Conservative colleague, we have heard from experts who have said that it will not prohibit the leader from speaking on this issue. The member says that his leader would be gagged. If that is the case, why has the leader been silent? If the Conservative leader has all this freedom that he supposedly requires to hold government to account, why is he not using that freedom? Why has he been deafeningly silent when it comes to Indian interference in our government and possibly in his own political party?

Like the leader of the NDP said, he needs to put Canada ahead of politics and ahead of party.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the NDP comes running to the rescue of the Liberals whenever they need help.

The reality is, as Thomas Mulcair said, the member's former leader, that this is nothing but a political ploy. I will end with what the Conservative leader said, "name the names."

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are debating the privilege of this place and the documents that need to be handed over to the RCMP to do the investiga-

Privilege

tion on a fund where over \$400 million have gone missing or have been allocated to companies in severe conflict of interest. This is Liberal corruption at its height. The sponsorship scandal was not to this level.

Does the member have anymore comments that he would like to share about this horrendous scandal called the green slush fund?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, the member is right that the sponsorship scandal was a paltry \$40 million compared to the \$400 million that is the SDTC, or the green slush fund. It is no surprise that the NDP is coming to the defence of the Liberals once again in order to support and enable their corruption, as has been the case in this nine-year NDP-Liberal government.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before going into more detail about the subject of today's debate, I would like to remind the House about what the Prime Minister said when he came to power in 2015. He made all kinds of promises about doing things differently. People tend to forget.

When the Prime Minister came to power in 2015, people said it was really a new era of hope, promises and dreams for Canadians. We all remember that. He walked in here acting like some sort of saint. He was a saint of a man. He was picture perfect. It was the dawn of a new era. The Prime Minister said he would act for the good of Canada and Canadians. However, it did not take long for him to fall back into old Liberal habits, but multiplied by 10 or 20. In fact, it is immeasurable. We have lost count of all the scandals and the money involved.

It was clear that, once again, there were systems in place to enrich the Liberals' cronies. We saw examples of their friends profiting from the federal government's largesse. Let us not forget that we are talking about taxpayers' money. I heard someone speaking earlier about the sponsorship scandal that happened back in the day. That was a \$40-million scandal, one that led to the Liberal government being defeated by the Conservatives, because the public was so upset by the scandal. However, considering what we have been living under for the past nine years, that was nothing. It is hard to imagine, but the sponsorship scandal was small potatoes compared to everything we have seen over the past nine years.

Unfortunately, some people seem to have gotten used to it. We are currently dealing with a \$400-million scandal, but so many billions of dollars have been wasted over the past nine years that people feel like \$400 million is not such a big deal. We are talking about \$400 million. That is 40% of a billion dollars, but today's billions are yesterday's millions. To some, \$400 million may not sound like a lot of money, but I think it is.

Privilege

Let us come back to what the Prime Minister promised. At the time, he said he would do a lot for the environment, that the Liberals would really change the way things were done. That is how we ended up with this green fund thing. Instead of helping the environment, it helped friends of the Liberal Party of Canada. That is what happened. That has been proven. That is the scandal. We are not making this up. It is not a Conservative Party fabrication. It has been demonstrated and proven.

The Liberals are asking why we Conservatives are not letting this go, why we keep talking about this. What should we do? Should we simply drop it and say that their friends received \$400 million, but we will move on, it is no big deal, it is just taxpayers' money and we do not care? That is not how things work for people with morals.

The green fund is officially called Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC. As we know, the Auditor General found that this fund was being used as a slush fund for Liberal friends. There is a recording of a senior official speaking out against the Prime Minister for inappropriately awarding contracts worth \$390 million.

The Auditor General also found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that, in some cases, could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or the development of green technology. Another \$334 million was paid out in 186 cases to projects in which board members had a conflict of interest. The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the Liberal government, which did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to Liberal insiders.

The Speaker ruled that this Liberal government violated the order of the House requiring the government to turn over the documents related to this scandal to the police so that it can pursue a criminal investigation.

● (1340)

Last week, a journalist summarized this situation in the National Post. I will tell the House what he wrote. He was informed that the Liberals are still refusing to be transparent with Canadians. Here is what he wrote: “Withholding the information is significant because it appears to fly in the face of the Speaker's ruling...that the government likely had no right to do so”.

The article goes on: “The Liberal government is still providing redacted documents and withholding others on the so-called 'green slush fund' from the House of Commons nearly one month after [the] Speaker...scolded it for doing just that. In a letter tabled in Parliament Monday, Commons Law Clerk Michel Bédard told MPs that he had recently received new documents from three government departments relating to Sustainable Development Technology Canada”.

The article goes on to say that, “In all three cases, information was withheld.... In June, three opposition parties banded together to pass a Conservative motion ordering the public service, the auditor general and SDTC to provide all documents on the latter to Bédard. The motion did not provide for any information to be redacted or withheld. The 'unprecedented' motion then called on Bédard to provide the documents to the RCMP.... 'The House has clearly ordered

the production of certain documents, and that order has clearly not been fully complied with,' [the Chair] said in a Sept. [26] ruling.”

The article continues: “Because of that, [the Speaker] found he 'cannot come to any other conclusion but to find that a prima facie question of privilege has been established' and suggested the issue be sent to a committee for further study. In other words, [the Speaker] found the government had likely violated the Commons' 'absolute and unfettered' constitutional power to call for information.... In a report published in the spring, Auditor General Karen Hogan concluded that one out of six projects funded by [SDTC] that she audited were ineligible and that the organization had serious governance issues. On the day her audit was published, the government announced it was abolishing the fund and folding it into the National Research Council.”

This part of the article from the National Post published on October 21 provides a nice summary of what we have been saying for the past two weeks now. We are not letting this go because there is a clear, specific scandal and we have a government that is hiding and wants to keep hiding the information and is not sharing it with the police. The government can say what it wants, but there are enough facts to prove there is a scandal. Now we have to take this further. That is where we are.

What is more, testimonies at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts about SDTC revealed a lot of information about Liberal corruption. A whistle-blower told us the following:

I think the Auditor General's investigation was more of a cursory review. I don't think the goal and mandate of the Auditor General's office is to actually look into criminality, so I'm not surprised by the fact that they haven't found anything criminal.

...

The true failure of the situation stands at the feet of our current government, whose decision to protect wrongdoers and cover up their findings over the last 12 months is a serious indictment of how our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference. It should never have taken two years for the issues to reach this point. 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.

...

It's because I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.

If only this latest scandal involving \$400 million in taxpayers' money being redirected to Liberal insiders was an anomaly for the government, then Parliament could move on to something else. I am saying that, but I am not so sure. As I said earlier, \$40 million was missing in the sponsorship scandal when the government ended its term in office. We are at \$400 million for this scandal alone, not to mention the billions of dollars that were wasted in other scandals.

Privilege

The Auditor General has her work cut out for her because it never stops. Every time she looks into something, she ends up writing a scathing report.

● (1345)

I do not think that the Auditor General has published even one report in recent years that said that there was nothing to see and that everything was fine. There is always a problem. Last week, she confirmed that her office was launching an investigation on GC Strategies. Does everyone remember that? As I was saying earlier, memory has a way of fading quickly in our Parliament and around the Hill. However, we remember GC Strategies and the little ArriveCAN app.

The Auditor General is starting her investigation because, as we know, the Liberal government has given the people behind GC Strategies \$100 million since the member for Papineau became Prime Minister. Many of those contracts were sole sourced, which means that government representatives awarded multi-million contracts directly to that company.

For the ArriveCAN app alone, GC Strategies pocketed \$20 million in taxpayer funds when it should have cost just \$80,000. We talked about that at great length last spring, and it is not over. Accordingly, the Auditor General agreed to audit all payments received by GC Strategies as well as all Government of Canada contracts awarded to the company outside the ArriveCAN fiasco. Oddly enough, ArriveCAN was just one among many other contracts that the company received since this government took power in 2015.

GC Strategies and its partners became multi-millionaires under the Liberal government. They admitted that they were paid up to \$2,600 an hour for recruitment and that they invoiced the government as many as 1,500 times a month. It must be something to have a company like that, a company that can invoice the government 1,500 times a month and hire a full-time employee to do nothing but send out invoices. If no light bulbs went on in anyone's head at that point, this country has one heck of a problem.

GC Strategies was founded in 2015, as I said, and started receiving contracts within a few weeks. We have the dates. It was a few weeks after this government came to power on November 4, 2015. In the past year alone, more and more revelations have come to light about the unethical behaviour of those folks. They bragged about their close ties to government officials and were hauled before the bar of the House of Commons to answer questions after refusing to appear before a committee.

Earlier this year, the RCMP raided the home of GC Strategies founder Kristian Firth as part of the investigation into the ArriveCAN app. Canadians deserve a government that will treat their tax dollars and the public purse with respect. Only common-sense Conservatives will continue to fight to get to the bottom of how the Prime Minister gave millions of dollars to this shady company.

This brings me to the green fund scandal, the slush fund, the \$400 million that was given to friends. The Auditor General is about to begin her investigation into GC Strategies, which, over the past nine years, with the new company, has been award-

ed \$100 million in contracts, oddly enough, including \$20 million for the notorious little ArriveCAN app.

This also leads us to rethink everything that has happened over the past nine years. Here is what history will remember about this Prime Minister's record: a legacy of scandals. At least, that is what I will remember. If I were to write a book, it would be the story of scandals, plural. The title would be something that talks about this Prime Minister's legacy: scandal after scandal after scandal.

I want to go back in time. Let us think of the Aga Khan's island. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner issued a report. I think this was the first time ever that a Prime Minister was the subject of a Ethics Commissioner report in which he was directly blamed.

Then, the Prime Minister fired the justice minister, Ms. Wilson-Raybould, because she did not help SNC-Lavalin circumvent the law. We spent weeks and months talking about the SNC-Lavalin scandal in the House. A lot of people seem to have forgotten that, but Ms. Wilson-Raybould has not, and neither have I.

There was the WE Charity scandal. That amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars. WE Charity is the organization that used government money to directly help the Prime Minister. I am not going to go into the details, but that is another one.

Another scandal that kind of slipped under the radar happened during the pandemic. At the time, as the Conservative Party's procurement critic, I was responsible for monitoring procurement files related to what was going on in the midst of the pandemic.

What the government did was take Canada's PPE stockpile and send it to China. At one point, when I said we were going to need that stuff, people told me I was racist. I do not know what that has to do with it, but whatever. We sent our PPE to China. What happened next? Two or three weeks later, we ran into problems. We needed PPE, but we no longer had it because we had sent everything to China.

● (1350)

What did the government do next? They made new friends. Who could forget Tango Communication Marketing and the Brault family, the sponsorship scandal and the \$80-million contract to bring masks in. When the masks arrived, they were garbage. People could not even use them. What did the government do about it? They said, oh well, the money has already gone to the Chinese. The second scandal we heard about after that is that it cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to destroy the \$80 million worth of masks that were never used. The scandals just keep piling up.

Statements by Members

Among the government's friends is former MP Frank Baylis, who offered to supply 10,000 ventilators for \$226 million during the pandemic. Everyone said we did not need 10,000 machines. After all, we do not have 10,000 emergency rooms in hospitals to operate them. On top of that, the market cost to build those machines should have been \$100 million less than that. In committee, Mr. Baylis was asked how he justified charging Canadian taxpayers \$226 million for machines that should have cost \$125 million at most. The committee heard all kinds of answers, including that it had to do with administrative costs or the cost of keeping staff on. It was nonsense, and everyone knows it. Despite that, the money was paid out, and taxpayers footed the bill.

We could talk about McKinsey, which suddenly started getting over \$100 million in contracts for things like writing phony reports that served no purpose. We tried to understand why, but we could never grasp the point of it all. Even though an extra 100,000 employees had been added to the public service and experts were at the government's disposal, ready to offer it advice and submit proposals on various policies, the government chose to give the money to its friends, the McKinsey gang.

There has been no shortage of scandals. Eventually, they all blend into one mind-boggling mess. As I said earlier, memories fade, unfortunately. Today, this is where we are, after nine years of this government. When the Prime Minister took office, he told us that he was going to be perfect, the best in the world, that Canada was back, and that everything was going to be great. After nine years of this government, it is hard to fathom how we reached this point.

The country's debt has doubled. The interest alone costs \$50 billion a year. Now we have another scandal in which \$400 million was given to friends for a program that was supposed to help the environment. This is like the election promise to plant two billion trees. The Liberals claimed to be so green that they were going to plant two billion trees. People who heard that on the news said it was a good idea. I do not know how many trees they have planted so far, but it is nowhere near two billion.

Back to the green technology program. Conservatives are in favour of green tech. Conservatives support investing in green tech to protect our environment. However, instead of doing things that help people, as the Prime Minister promised in 2015, the government gave \$400 million to its friends, who did nothing with that money. That is money wasted.

We know that we are going nowhere with this government, and that is why we are at the point where this government must go. I have another 10 pages of scandals. It gets old after a while, but we have a duty to remind everyone of all of this. If we do not do it, no one will, and people will forget. That is why we are here today, to keep the pressure up and to stay the course. We must never accept corruption. We must never accept the idea of giving out millions of dollars, maybe even billions over the course of nine years, left and right to Liberal friends. When we ask why things cost more, we cannot accept "because that is how things work" as an answer. This needs to stop.

I can confirm that a Conservative government will restore order in this country. It could be in the coming weeks or in the coming

months at most, or so I hope. A Conservative government will put a stop to giving people millions of dollars. When we ask the government why this is happening, we can no longer accept the answer that that is just how it is and that we need to move on. This needs to stop. Let us hope that there will be a change in government soon.

• (1355)

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about so many things. Why does he not speak about the state of the economy today? Inflation is down to 1.6%. Interest rates have been cut, reduced four times, to 3.75% and are expected to go to 3% or less by July 2025. Rents are coming down and renting is becoming more affordable. The consumer confidence index has increased to a 30-month high. Why does he not talk about that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, my colleague would like me to say that the interest rate is dropping and so things are improving.

Over the past year or two, the Bank of Canada and everyone made a tremendous effort to tighten their belts and pay more interest because this government doubled the debt and completely abandoned the economic sector.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

CANCER RESEARCH

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network is a bold collaboration bringing precision medicine to Canadian cancer patients. In 2016, the Terry Fox Research Institute's founding president and scientific director, Dr. Victor Ling, told me they have the road map to cure cancer; all they need is \$150 million from the federal government.

In budget 2019, we invested \$150 million to create the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network. Canada's brightest minds are now working with a common vision to revolutionize cancer research in Canada. This week, they are here to talk to parliamentarians about their work, and tomorrow night, we will be at a reception with Terry Fox's brother Darrell, Dr. André Veillette and others to share the good news about their progress.

Terry Fox said, “Anything is possible if you try. Dreams are made possible if you try.” Because of this team Canada of cancer research, the dream of a world without cancer is closer than ever.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on World Mental Health Day, Mental Health Research Canada released its landmark collaborative national report, titled “A Generation at Risk: The State of Youth Mental Health in Canada”. This report brings together research and lived experiences to help us better understand the youth mental health crisis.

Three key take-aways are declining mental health, service gaps and access barriers, and collaborative action. While 19% of youth accessed mental health services last year, an additional 9% are still in need of care but not receiving it. The report outlines key recommendations to improve youth mental health, including enhancing prevention, improving the quality of mental health services and expanding access.

I give a special thanks to the organizations involved in the report, including Aire Ouverte, Jack.org, Kids Help Phone, the National Association of Friendship Centres, the Strongest Families Institute, the Youth in Mind Foundation, youth wellness hubs and, of course, Bell Let's Talk. I thank them all for their continued support in building a future of better mental health for all.

* * *

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to house asylum claimants, the City of Ottawa is proposing glorified tents called “sprung structures”. Their proposed locations are far away, about 20 to 25 kilometres, from other support systems needed for asylum seekers.

We have to treat people with dignity, and herding them into the proposed structures is not the way to accommodate them. Hence, I firmly oppose the City of Ottawa's proposal to accommodate asylum seekers in Barrhaven using sprung structures.

The city should use federal funds in a more productive way, like upscaling existing buildings that provide actual homes, security, privacy and dignity. There is a significant decrease in the number of asylum seekers. Using funds to create more livable places today means they will be available as affordable housing tomorrow.

* * *

[Translation]

RAYMOND TESSIER

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 40 years, four decades or 14,610 days: whichever way we count it, that is a lot of time to dedicate to a cause.

It requires an unshakeable sense of conviction, and that is exactly what Raymond Tessier has embodied over the course of his career as a Saint-Eustache city councillor. Since 1984, when he was first elected to the Saint-Eustache city council, Raymond Tessier has truly exemplified dedication to the common good. His close con-

Statements by Members

nection with the people, his ability to listen and his determination to take action make him a well-respected and highly appreciated leader and a pillar of our local democracy.

By tying for the record with my colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, Raymond Tessier is also proving that political involvement has no limits, as long as it comes from the heart. I am certain that Raymond's desire to improve the quality of life of his community helped him make his mark and influence future generations for the better. I thank my friend Raymond for his dedication and passion.

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ASSOCIATION POUR AÎNÉS RÉSIDANT À LAVAL

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Association pour aînés résidant à Laval, or APARL, an organization in Alfred-Pellan that has enriched the lives of Laval seniors, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a wonderful event organized by and for seniors in my riding.

Over the past five decades, APARL has been a place of social integration that provides the services and resources needed to help seniors overcome isolation, maintain their independence and stay in their homes. I am deeply grateful for the work done by the entire team and all of the volunteers. Through their dedication, they have met the diverse needs of seniors with care and respect, making APARL a place where everyone feels valued and supported.

I want to congratulate APARL on this important milestone and extend my best wishes for many more years to come.

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● (1405)

[English]

2024 SASKATCHEWAN GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, there was a general election in my home province of Saskatchewan, and I would like to congratulate the Saskatchewan Party, led by Premier Scott Moe, on its victory. To all those who knocked on doors, volunteered to run as candidates and went to the polls and voted, their participation in our democracy is what it means to be a proud Saskatchewanian. Elections do not run themselves and democracies cannot happen without the people.

I would like to congratulate Alana Ross, Eric Schmalz, Darlene Rowden, Todd Goudy, Terri Bromm and Kevin Kasun on their recent election victories. I would also like to thank Fred Bradshaw, Joe Hargrave, Nadine Wilson and Delbert Kirsch for their many years of service.

I look forward to working with each and every one of my provincial counterparts, both new and old faces, to continue to serve the people of Saskatchewan.

*Statements by Members***BREAST CANCER**

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and each year, 28,000 Canadians are diagnosed with breast cancer and thousands more live with its lasting impact. Breast cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Canadian women. As a two-time survivor of breast cancer, first diagnosed at age 42, I know first-hand about the importance of early detection. That is why I have long advocated for reducing the screening age from 50 to 40 in Canada so that women do not have to wait for mammography testing but rather have a choice.

I encourage all provinces to follow the lead of the United States, Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Yukon, which have already reduced mammography screening to age 40. The Liberals agree and so does the Canadian Cancer Society that we need new national benchmarks to ensure that women across the country have access to early screening and detection.

I am proof that early detection saves lives, so I encourage all women to get their mammogram. It could make all the difference in their lives as well.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, almost two years ago, we learned that several countries, including China, Russia and India, were trying to interfere in democratic processes in Canada. Last June, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians tabled a report alleging that certain parliamentarians were unwitting or witting participants in foreign states' efforts to interfere in Canada's democratic process. These are serious and worrying allegations that have sowed doubt in our democratic institutions.

Since that time, all opposition leaders, except one, have chosen to obtain their security clearance to be able to act on foreign interference within their parties. The public inquiry into foreign interference has made it clear that every member of this chamber has a responsibility to combat foreign interference in our democracy.

I have a simple question for the leader of the Conservative Party: When will he get his security clearance and put the safety of Canadians before partisan politics?

* * *

JASPER WILDFIRE

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Jasper wildfire investigation has uncovered damning evidence that reveals the Liberal government was grossly negligent in protecting Jasper. To cover up his government's failures, the Prime Minister appointed a minister for Jasper's recovery. The Jasper wildfire investigation ordered the minister to testify 20 days ago, but we have learned that he is refusing to testify until December. If the minister in charge of Jasper's recovery takes two months to show up at committee, how long will it take him to rebuild Jasper?

For years, multiple Liberal environment ministers were warned by experts that Jasper was a tinderbox ready to ignite. As warning letters piled up, so did the deadfall in Jasper National Park. However, instead of taking action, the Liberals ignored experts and allowed Jasper to burn. The Jasper wildfire investigation has revealed one thing for sure: The Liberal government has nothing more than fake environmentalists.

* * *

● (1410)

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, by now we all know that Conservatives prefer to ignore the truth and spread fear, so it should come as no surprise to any of us that the Conservative leader continues to refuse to get top secret security clearance and a briefing by intelligence officials. He prefers to speculate on what could be true and claims that learning the truth would prevent him from speaking on the topic. Is it because he has problems with the truth? Is he not able to tell the truth? Maybe he is afraid of the ugly truth that he could learn about his own party and about his own leadership race.

Canadians should be alarmed that the Leader of the Opposition continues to ignore the risks to our national security within his own party. We all want to know what he is trying to hide.

* * *

FOOD SECURITY

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-NDP carbon tax is fuelling an affordability crisis Canada has not seen in generations. According to Food Banks Canada, a shocking two million Canadians use a food bank in a month.

To be clear, it is not just the unemployed or people with limited income who need to use a food bank; nearly one in five food bank users has a full-time work. This increase in usage is causing havoc for food banks themselves, and nearly 30% are running out of food. People who were donating nine years ago are now the ones standing in line. I have spent most of my life in rural Ontario, and never has food bank usage been this high. Worst of all is that nearly one-third of food bank users are children.

Despite record-high food bank use, the NDP-Liberals continue to increase the cost of groceries by increasing the carbon tax by 23% on their way to quadrupling the tax. Food insecurity is real and many Canadians are desperate.

The Prime Minister must call a carbon tax election. Will he?

HOUSING

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal government, rents have doubled, mortgage payments have doubled and the amount needed for a down payment has doubled. The dream of home ownership has slipped away from Canadians.

That is why common-sense Conservatives have announced that we will axe the federal sales tax on all new home sales under \$1 million. That means that for a \$800,000-house, there will be a one-time savings of \$40,000, and then \$2,200 of annual mortgage payment savings.

People agree this is great. Eric Lombardi, a housing advocate, said that he is glad to see this and that it is a much-needed change. Richard Lyall of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario said, “We commend [the Conservative leader] and his party for putting forward this plan.”

Home ownership should not come with a GST-sized surprise. Only Conservatives will build homes and make sure they are more affordable. Conservatives will axe the tax, build the homes and bring it home to Canadians and their families.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members were elected to the chamber to represent all Canadian communities and to uphold our nation's sovereignty. Democracy belongs to everyone. However, the Conservative leader seems to fight only for Conservatives rather than for all Canadians, despite aspiring to become the prime minister.

Obtaining a security clearance, staying informed and making decisions based on evidence rather than ideology is the responsible approach. However, the Conservative leader is still the only party leader who refuses to get his security clearance and to act on foreign interference in his own party.

I ask the leader of the Conservative Party why he will not get his security clearance. Whom is he trying to protect? What does he have to hide?

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today because, unlike what lawyers for the Liberals are arguing when they fight first nations in court, we in the NDP believe in first nations' right to clean drinking water.

Canada shamefully argues that first nations are to blame for the lack of clean drinking water. Its lawyers even said, “Canada doesn't stop you from helping yourself.” On the one hand, Liberals in Parliament say that all first nations deserve clean drinking water, while on the other, Liberal-hired lawyers say in court that these are not statements that should be taken seriously.

If we cannot take Liberals' words seriously, let us look at their actions. It has now been 1,338 days since the Liberals promised to eliminate all long-term boil water advisories, with no end in sight.

Statements by Members

In my riding, Shamattawa First Nation and Tataskweyak Cree Nation are fighting the Liberals over that failure. The tap water in Berens River has been brown since May and is a danger to people's health, including people on dialysis.

It is time for the Liberals to call off their lawyers, recognize first nations' right to clean water, and deliver it.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi, or MASSE, is on Parliament Hill today to launch the 2024-25 edition of its report on unemployment, the “Dossier noir de l'assurance-chômage”. This document paints a picture of the problems encountered by the unemployed. Through their stories, they share the many ways the system has failed them. It is an unfair, outdated federal program that the Liberal government has repeatedly promised to reform, yet it has done nothing. After 10 years, it is time for the government to take concrete action for workers.

MASSE, the Conseil national des chômeurs et chômeuses, or CNC, and Quebec's major labour organizations are leading a major campaign under the theme “Employment insurance must protect us” to demand that the injustices and inequities of employment insurance be corrected. The Bloc stands with them in solidarity.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost of housing. Rent has doubled. Housing prices have doubled. We used to pay off our mortgage in 25 years. It now takes 25 years to save for the down payment.

Thankfully, Conservatives have a plan. We will axe the GST on new homes. On an \$800,000-house, this will save \$40,000. This tax cut will spark 30,000 additional homes' being built every single year. The Canadian Home Builders' Association said, “today's announcement by the Conservative Party of Canada...will make a big difference”. The West End Home Builders Association said, “removing the GST for new homes under \$1 million may be the most significant housing policy commitment in the past two decades”.

Oral Questions

NDP-Liberals puff up with fake pride with every fake photo of them they have on housing. Common-sense Conservatives will get the houses built for all Canadians.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we recognize that foreign interference is a serious issue. We are not alone; Canadians from coast to coast to coast understand and appreciate how important the issue is.

The Conservative Party and the leader of the Conservative Party are putting the leader's self-interest and the interests of the Conservative Party of Canada over the interests of Canadians. I find that very shameful.

The leader of the Green Party, the leader of the NDP, the leader of the Bloc party and the Prime Minister all have the security clearance. Only the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada has chosen not to get the security clearance. What is it that the Conservative leader is hiding? Is there something in his past that Canadians should know about? I believe that the leader needs to step up and get the security clearance today, or tell Canadians what he is scared of.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the Prime Minister copied and pasted my idea to get rid of the GST on rental housing construction. That is the only thing he did because his other policies have inflated the costs. Yesterday, I suggested eliminating the GST on homes selling for under \$1 million, and the Prime Minister's housing adviser, Mike Moffatt, said it was "the boldest middle-class housing proposal released to date from any federal political party".

Will the Prime Minister accept my idea?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition was Stephen Harper's minister responsible for housing, he failed. He built only six affordable housing units across the entire country. Now he is proposing a program that will cut transfers to the municipalities and the investments that we are making in infrastructure to build more homes across the country. The Conservatives are offering budget cuts to the programs and services that Canadians rely on, whereas we are investing in building housing for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

• (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to eliminate the GST on homes valued at less than \$1 million. It will save the buyer \$25,000 on the purchase of an average home in Quebec. That means \$1,300 a year less in mortgage payments.

In contrast, the Prime Minister wants to funnel that money into bureaucratic programs that, as his own Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities admitted, will not even build any new housing.

Will the Prime Minister accept my plan to cut red tape and eliminate taxes to build housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Conservative leader wants to cut is the \$900 million we are sending to Quebec through the housing accelerator fund, which has already rolled out in Quebec and elsewhere in the country.

He wants to cut and eliminate the \$900 million that we sent to Quebec to build more housing, to address the challenges facing Quebecers, especially young Quebecers. His solution is not really a solution, because his ideas always come with cuts to services, investments and the programs that Canadians need.

Quebeckers do not want cuts and austerity. They want investments to build a better world.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister took my idea last year to remove the GST from rental housing construction. It is the only thing he has done right, because of course after nine years, he has doubled housing costs.

Yesterday I came up with another common-sense idea. Let me quote the Prime Minister's housing adviser, Mike Moffatt: "[The Conservative leader's plan] to eliminate the GST for newly constructed homes selling for under \$1 million is the boldest middle-class housing proposal released to date from any federal political party."

Will the Prime Minister accept my common-sense idea?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the decades, Canadians have learned the hard way that with Conservative promises, one always has to check the fine print. The fine print on this one is that Conservatives are going to cut the investments we are making across the country, working with municipalities to cut red tape, to invest in more housing, to invest in more affordable homes, to accelerate permitting and to create densification.

The Conservative leader is going to cut the services, programs and investments that Canadians are counting on to solve the housing crisis. That is all he offers: cuts to the programs and supports that Canadians need. Whether it is the housing accelerator or housing and infrastructure investments, he is going to build—

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

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister named the two bureaucracies I would get rid of. One is ironically named the housing infrastructure fund, which is \$5 billion. How many houses has it built? Zero. How many pieces of infrastructure has it built? Zero. Can one even apply for money from it? No; it is just for bureaucrats.

Then there is the housing accelerator fund, which the Prime Minister's own Liberal housing minister said does not go toward the cost of building houses. It does not actually lead to the construction of specific homes.

The housing accelerator fund does not actually directly build homes, so why not take the money, axe the tax and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is intending to cut the housing accelerator fund, which is all about creating densification across our communities, accelerating permitting, cutting red tape, using more public lands and creating more opportunities for public lands to be used for the creation of affordable homes. It is about changing the way homes get built so they get built faster and more accessibly for Canadians.

The Leader of the Opposition is about cutting the programs and services Canadians rely on. That is what Canadians have learned about Conservative promises. They have to look at the fine print, and the fine print is cuts to things Canadians need.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are cuts to taxes Canadians pay.

We will axe the tax, the sales tax on new homes of under a million dollars. This will save up to \$50,000 on a new home or \$2,700 in lower mortgage payments every single year.

By contrast, in the last three years, the number of young people who have ownership of a home today has fallen by half under the Prime Minister and his incompetent housing minister. Why will he not cut the bureaucracy, axe the tax and build the homes?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have learned that, when Conservatives make promises, we have to check the fine print. The fine print on this one is cutting programs that are investing in building new homes right across the country, working with municipalities and delivering the homes that Canadians, particularly young Canadians, need.

Now, if the Leader of the Opposition actually cared about young Canadians, he would not be standing against the fact that we are asking wealthier Canadians to pay a little more in taxes to help young Canadians with buying a home, with creating a future and with creating the jobs that they need.

We are going to continue to invest in young people for intergenerational fairness while he gives tax breaks to the wealthiest.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of the parties in the House have supported two measures at the various stages.

One measure was meant to help four million pensioners in Canada, including one million in Quebec. The other was intended to help tens of thousands of farmers. We gave the government five weeks, and it ultimately said no. I wonder why. I wonder whether the Prime Minister, like his Quebec lieutenant, is saying that our proposal is bad, because they voted for it.

Why does he not ask about the relevance of what we are proposing to Quebeckers and Canadians, namely, an election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois leader is well aware that, when it comes to protecting our farmers, we are moving forward, we are there to protect supply management, and we are there to ensure that the Senate is going to pass this bill, or an equivalent bill, because we will always be there to protect our farmers.

As for our seniors, we are always going to be there to protect them too, whether through dental care, which has now been provided to almost one million Canadians, especially seniors. We were there to increase the GIS in our early years in office and to increase the OAS for older seniors. We will always be there for seniors.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he could have fooled me.

This is like a madhouse: the Conservatives want to bring down the government. To move a motion to bring down the government, they need to stop filibustering the House. The Conservatives are currently protecting the government. The Conservatives' filibuster is convenient for the Liberals, who do not seem to want to work any more than the Conservatives do.

Can we stop with the nonsense, send everyone to the showers and call an election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty clear who is here in the House to play petty politics and who is here to get results for Quebeckers and Canadians.

That is exactly what we are doing by offering dental care across the country that has already helped nearly one million Canadians. We have been there to invest in more child care spaces and we will continue to be there to provide free insulin to people who need it and cannot afford it, as well as prescription contraceptives to women who need them. We have work to do and we are working for Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]***TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Rogers is ripping off Canadians with hidden TV box fees. The Conservatives laugh about this while Canadians get ripped off. It is very interesting.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Oh, that makes sense. I get it now—

The Speaker: In order for us to get through question period, it is important that members not be interrupted and that the Chair can hear the question.

I invite the hon. member for Burnaby South to start from the top.

● (1430)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I am curious about whether the Conservatives are going to laugh again when I mention that Canadians are getting ripped off by Rogers, which is charging them hidden fees every month when they rent their TV box. I know that the Liberals have helped Rogers do that by allowing the multi-billion dollar merger with Shaw. The Conservatives do not care about helping Canadians, because their leader gets big cheques from Edward Rogers.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he commit today to forcing Rogers to reverse these fees or ban it from receiving any federal contracts?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, we have seen data fees and cell-phone fees decrease across this country because of the efforts of the current government, which has brought in more competition and support for consumers. We know there is always more to do. We are going to continue to hold the telcos to account to deliver high-quality services to Canadians at affordable prices. That is something we will continue to be there for.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, competition got worse because the Liberals allowed a massive merger to happen.

[Translation]

In her documentary, *La peur au ventre*, Léa Clermont-Dion shows that the anti-choice movement is gaining ground and that anti-choice groups are pulling Conservative strings. The Liberals, for their part, have not improved access to abortion.

When will the Prime Minister finally ensure safe and equitable access to abortion across the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a party, as a government, we have always been there to defend women's rights. We will continue to do so and increase access to reproductive health care and services across the country.

That said, I share my NDP colleague's concern about the Conservative Party. I would like to point out that the Quebec members of

the Conservative Party remain silent when it comes to defending women's rights. They are not standing up to push back against Conservative attacks on women's freedom of choice.

We saw their colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska, who is strong—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is finally flip-flopping after voting to keep the most centralizing and expansionist Liberal government in history in power 188 times.

After two more votes on confidence motions this fall, the Bloc achieved nothing—nothing for seniors and nothing for farmers. I hope that it will finally vote with us to put an end to this government, which is bad for Quebec.

[English]

Will the NDP finally break off its costly coalition with the government and call a carbon tax election—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I listened carefully to the question from the Leader of the Opposition. We have been through this before. At some point, the Chair is going to have to cut questions if we continue to have questions which do not deal with the administration of government.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the very angry housing minister has been up all night trying to dream up some snarky comment in response to the very popular announcement that common-sense Conservatives made yesterday to axe the federal sales tax on homes under a million dollars. This is something that his own adviser, Dr. Mike Moffatt, has said is the boldest announcement of any federal party for middle-class home ownership.

The minister took my idea on GST for rental housing. Will he accept this common-sense plan to axe the tax?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: There is a lot of chatter, and I can only identify the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, but I would warn other members to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.

Oral Questions

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all the time and energy he spends on me, I am going to have to send him a cheque for the time I have been living rent-free in his head. I have to say, members should make no mistake: The Conservative leader announced yesterday that he would make multi-billion dollar cuts to programs that will get homes built in this country. Now, he knows that and we can agree on that piece. What he does not know is that his caucus colleagues have been going behind his back, writing me letters advocating for their communities to receive funding through the housing accelerator fund because they believe it will get more homes built.

Will the Conservative members of his caucus have the courage to stand up and tell him he is wrong?

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the only rent he has not doubled. Nobody else has to tell the member he is wrong, because he told himself. This is what he said about his own housing accelerator fund: “[T]he housing accelerator fund doesn’t [actually] go toward the cost of building houses.... It doesn’t actually lead to the construction of specific homes.” He also said, “The housing accelerator fund doesn’t directly build homes.” He is right. Since he started forking over these big checks, construction has gone down in the major municipalities that have received it.

Will he cut the bureaucracy, axe the tax and build the homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a time not so long ago when the Conservative leader was actually advocating that the government do more to increase density near the services people need, where infrastructure already exists. There was a time when he was actually advocating for doing something to reduce development cost charges to make it cheaper to build homes in this country. There was a time when he was advocating that the government do something to actually speed up the process of permitting. Now that we have actually moved forward with billions of dollars of investments that are getting homes built and making changes, he has changed his view and says we should do nothing on any of these programs. He blames the government for making the investments he once thought were a good idea.

We are going to do what it takes to build homes. I wish he would join us.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he has done precisely the opposite. Since he gave Toronto half a billion dollars, that city hall has jacked up development taxes by 40%. No wonder construction is down 20%. That is probably why Dr. Mike Moffatt, the minister’s housing adviser, said it is hard to deny the view that “[t]he housing accelerator fund is turning out to be nothing more than a heist of tax dollars flowing from the feds to the municipalities.” It is enough with the heists.

Will he not cut the bureaucracy, axe the tax and build the homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sometimes ask myself where they found this guy. He twists the facts to suit his narrative whenever he wants. It is almost as though the Conservative Party, when looking for a new leader, hopped on Temu and typed in “far-right

Conservative”, so it spat this guy out. He opposes investments in affordable housing. He borrows lessons from his cousins south of the border when he opposes birth control for women. During the January 6 of Canada, the convoy, he was not only telling people to stand by, but he was also bringing them coffee in the streets.

It might be election season in America, but we do not need this far-right, right-wing populism here at home.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of leadership contestants, the member must be so uptight and angry because the polling shows that, though Canadians want to fire the Prime Minister, the housing minister ranks dead last in the polls to replace him. Why would he not? This is the guy who lost track of a million people when he was immigration minister. He ignored warnings from his own department that letting in 200% more people would cause a housing shortage, and his own government spent the last week trashing his entire immigration record.

How can arrogance and incompetence so comfortably reside in one man?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader asked how arrogance and incompetence can live so comfortably in one man. He manages to show us every single day. Let us actually look at the facts: While he is concerned about my polling numbers, I am concerned about helping people in need. We put billions of dollars on the table to build or repair hundreds of thousands of homes in this country so that vulnerable Canadians have a roof over their head. Let us look at his record: It shows the worst level of home building in the last 10 years; when he had the chance to help the most vulnerable, he got six units built across the entire country.

The only thing he has done to help vulnerable people is show up with a video camera to treat those living without a roof over their head as props, and it is unacceptable.

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the sum total of the chaos in our immigration system that happened under the government happened while he was the minister. His own subsequent Liberal successor has now denounced him and blamed him and his policies for the housing shortfall we have today.

Now, as housing minister, since he took office, the number of young people who own a home has gone from 47% down to 26% as he builds bureaucracy to block homes.

Why does he not realize his failure and accept my common-sense plan to axe the tax and build the homes?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has said that there has been consensus on immigration for 150 years. That means he is okay with the Chinese head tax. That means he is okay with not letting Jews in after the Second World War. That means he is okay, and we know it already, he was in cabinet, with the barbaric practice of a snitch line.

How does the Leader of the Opposition want to fix things? He wants to use math. The last time he used math he was the housing minister, and he could barely count to six.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with one day to go before Quebec allows advance requests for medical assistance in dying, the federal government is still refusing to amend the Criminal Code. This is what the joint committee called for a year ago. The Liberals have been dragging their feet for a year and a half and now have the nerve to say that they did not have enough time to hold consultations. It is not time they are lacking, it is courage. Today they are validating the concerns of doctors who are worried and might end up not providing care.

Do they realize that they are limiting access to end-of-life care?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I lost my grandmother to Alzheimer's. It is a sensitive topic that calls for a national conversation across the country and a conversation with my provincial and territorial counterparts.

I wonder if the member across the way can co-operate with me so we can take the time to have a national conversation and ensure that the system is ready and that there is a conversation in every family across the country. I think that is so important.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals lack courage and are making it more complicated to access end-of-life care. As if that were not enough, they are passing the buck to the next government. So much the better if it means current ministers do not challenge Quebec's decision to accept advance requests. That said, can they make any guarantees that those who take their place after the next election will not challenge it? The answer is no.

Do they realize that they are giving the Conservatives the responsibility of deciding whether to legalize advance requests?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of courage, not at all. It is a question of logic and compassion. We need to take the time to ensure that the system is ready for such a significant change. It is about making sure that, when it comes to something as sensitive as this issue, every family across the country has the time to have a conversation. That is why we are now having a national conversation. It will not last long, only until next March. This is a good opportunity to talk and make sure our system is ready.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is not the time for conversations, this is the time for action. The Liberals are punting the decision about the legality of advance requests to the Conservatives, a party that has been against any form of medi-

cal assistance in dying from the very beginning, a party that is basically controlled by the religious right. This is a party that gets its funding from the collection plates of fanatical churches out west. This is the party that is going to decide whether they will or will not legally protect physicians who offer end-of-life care to Quebeckers.

How can the Liberals be so irresponsible?

● (1445)

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is irresponsible is to implement measures without first ensuring that the system is ready. As far as I am concerned, this step is absolutely essential.

That is why we are engaged in a nationwide conversation. It will not take long, only a few months. Never before in Canada's history have there been advance requests. It only stands to reason that we should take a few months to make sure that the system is ready, to hold a conversation and to allow everyone in every family across Canada to participate.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was dismayed that earlier in question period, in response to the Leader of the Opposition's questions on housing, the Minister of Housing treated those questions like they were a joke.

Today, Scotiabank has said that nearly 25% fewer Canadians can own a home now than when the minister took office. This is on top of the fact that housing has doubled under the government. Housing should be for everyone.

Will the minister commit to axing the federal GST on new homes so that young Canadians can afford them?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, what the Conservative Party announced yesterday was billions of dollars worth of cuts to programs that would actually get homes built in the country. While the member has portrayed herself as having a moral high ground in her question, I would remind her that it is the Conservative leader who showed up in Niagara with a video crew so he could call a woman's home a shack. It is her leader who goes to encampments across the country, not to see what he can do to help people but to put them in the background of his social media videos for likes.

People who are unhoused are not political props. They are human beings who deserve to be treated with respect.

Oral Questions

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing accelerator fund does not actually directly build homes. Who said that? The Minister of Housing. This is the same man who juiced temporary visas knowing that students were sleeping under bridges and were performing sex acts because they could not afford rent. That minister has been allowed to fail upward. Even his caucus members know that.

When will the Prime Minister stop letting the minister fail upward while Canadians are failing to pay their rent?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the attempt to link very challenging life circumstances to the government's housing accelerator fund is beyond disingenuous. The member wants to talk about what her colleague members know. They know that this fund is actually helping to get more housing built in the country. A number of them are writing me personally, asking that their communities be picked for funding, because they know that it is going to succeed in building more homes in their cities.

My question is whether they will have the courage to actually stand up and tell their leader that he is wrong to make billions of dollars of cuts to housing, like he was wrong when he did it when he was the minister.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the “Liberal Bloc” government has shattered the dream of home ownership with rents and mortgage payments that have doubled. Today, 80% of Canadians believe that home ownership is only for the very wealthy. The Leader of the Opposition is proposing to eliminate the GST on new housing so that buyers can save \$40,000 on a home worth \$800,000, for example.

Will the government implement this proposal, or will it continue to burden Canadians with programs that are entirely ineffective?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear. Yesterday, the Conservative Party proposed cancelling the construction of 8,000 social and affordable housing units in Quebec.

What I would like to know is how the member opposite, who is from Quebec, will explain to Quebecers that she is eliminating 8,000 affordable and social housing units? That is what her party proposed yesterday.

● (1450)

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the record, the Conservative leader built 195,000 new homes when he was the minister responsible for housing. That deserves a round of applause.

In contrast, the Liberals have doubled the cost of rents and mortgage payments. That is a fact. It is high time to act and truly invest in housing construction. When will the government call an election to give Canadians a chance to choose a common-sense option to resolve the crisis it created?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what exactly are we talking about when we talk about a housing crisis? We are talking about the supply of social and affordable housing. They boast about having built 150,000 housing units. On this side of the House, not only have we built housing, we have built social and affordable housing. What I keep telling the Conservative Party is that the Conservative leader built six social and affordable housing units. When my family and I were looking for housing in the Conservative era, we could not find social and affordable housing, because the Conservatives do not care about vulnerable people who are looking for housing they can afford.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is our body, our lives, our choice. Abortion care is health care, but the Liberals keep letting Conservative premiers erode access, while these Conservatives creep anti-choice legislation into Canada.

Conservative cuts mean no family doctors, no midwives, no nurses to staff clinics. This is not real access. Everyone should be able to get health care when they need it, including abortion care.

Will the Liberals enforce the Canada Health Act to stop Conservative attacks on abortion?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our message is clear. The right to an abortion and access to abortion go hand in hand, yet there are a growing number of anti-choice pregnancy crisis centres that use deceptive tactics to deter women from making informed decisions and to make choices about their reproductive health.

That is why today I introduced a motion to require more transparency from these centres providing pregnancy counselling. Organizations that do not clearly or prominently provide this information to clients risk losing their charitable status. This is about holding them accountable. This is about supports on which women can rely.

*Oral Questions***PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the U.S. Department of Transport fined American Airlines \$50 million for its horrible treatment of people with disabilities. In Canada, people have been dropped on the floor, they have had their wheelchairs broken and lost, one even had to drag themselves off a plane by their arms. What was the government's response? The minister held a summit with plenty of nice words and zero action.

Why is it that the Americans get a secretary of transport that stands up for passengers while here in Canada we get ministers of transport that continually cave to the big airlines?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. I am standing up in the House today, after meeting with our government's chief accessibility officer, to definitively emphasize how important passenger safety and accessibility is for this government. I will repeat that over and over again in the House and outside of the House. There is nothing more important than non-discrimination and more accessibility and safety for our air passengers, rail passengers and freight passengers also.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, we found out that an ex-Conservative MP left his party after seeing the increase in the number of anti-choice MPs in the caucus. Anti-choice organizations that support those MPs use deceptive tactics to push women away from making informed choices and accessing a full range of reproductive care through so-called pregnancy crisis centres.

Could the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth please share with the House what our government is doing to require more transparency from pregnancy crisis centres that encumber a woman's right to choose by providing biased and unscientific counsel?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people have the right to make informed decisions about their own bodies. Across the country, we are seeing anti-choice pregnancy crisis centres undermine a woman's right to choose. Today, I tabled a motion to require more transparency from charities providing pregnancy counsel. If they do not, they stand the chance of losing their charitable status.

Women have shared stories with me about how they have felt when they have walked into these centres, how they have felt shame, how they have felt guilt, and how it has been at the most difficult time in their lives. This legislation would ensure that no woman will endure judgment or pressure from groups that restrict her freedom.

* * *

● (1455)

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Liberal-NDP government is not worth the

cost. Over two million Canadians use a food bank on a monthly basis. In Calgary, food bank use is up 28% over the last year, and that is because the Liberal-NDP government put a 23% punitive carbon tax on everything.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, take responsibility for the mess that he created and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member to point to a single thing the Conservatives have done to help Canadians who are struggling. It is easy. She cannot. It is appalling. The three-word slogans on that side of the House are empty words. On this side of the House, we continue to make investments in things like the Canada child benefit and the Canada carbon rebate.

On this side of the House, we will continue fighting for Canadian families.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the numbers do not lie. The Calgary Food Bank paid \$10,000 in carbon tax and that was to facilitate 41,000 visits. That is because food bank use is up 300% since 2019, the year the Liberal-NDP government implemented its punitive carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, take responsibility for the mess he created, for the Canadians he drove to the food bank, and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wants to talk about numbers and facts, so let us talk about the numbers and facts. Eight out of 10 Albertans get more money back from the Canada carbon rebate than they pay in the price on pollution. The best solution for people who are struggling is a good job. There has been \$22 billion in investments from this government into the energy sector, into clean electricity, into carbon capture, use and storage, and \$25 billion for the health care system.

Do members know what the price for a Conservative government would be? It would be \$20,000 per Alberta family with one kid. That is a tax nobody can afford.

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are simply not worth the cost. Food Banks Canada reveals a devastating truth: Over two million Canadians are turning to food banks. It also reports that up to 25% of Canadians are living in a state of poverty. In Manitoba, food bank usage has surged by 30% in just the last year alone. Despite this crisis, the Prime Minister still thinks it is some sort of a brilliant idea to quadruple the carbon tax.

When will the Prime Minister put an end to this misery and finally just call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity recently to be in Manitoba and to announce that Manitoba has signed on to our national school food program. This year alone, 19,000 additional kids in that province will receive food at school through this program. That is real children and real food, not the bureaucracy that the leader of the Conservatives would like to claim this program is. That is the impact of the work we are doing as we roll out this program across the country.

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians recognize the impact of the Liberal government's policies, and it is that they are being recklessly driven into poverty. How many more families have to suffer? How long do the lineups at food banks need to be before the Prime Minister realizes that he and his government are the cause? If we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food and the grocer who sells the food, how can he be surprised when we are seeing record-breaking food bank use?

Canadians want a carbon tax election. When will the Prime Minister give it to them?

• (1500)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader does not usually give press conferences. That is why it is understandable that he goofed yesterday and he admitted his true plan. He said, "We're going to cut two programs for sure, and more beyond that."

Now we all know that the Conservative plan is one of cuts, cuts, cuts. They are going to cut that school food program that is going to feed 400,000 kids. They are going to cut dental care that has provided care to one million Canadians. They are going to cut pharmaceutical care. They are going to cut early learning and child care, but we will not let them.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, correctional officers working at Montreal's Bordeaux prison say that there are so many drones flying around that it feels like an airport. These drones are delivering knives, drugs and contraband phones to criminals in prison. Ottawa is aware of all this but is doing nothing about it. Quebec is calling for the right to jam signals in its prisons. The correctional officers are calling for the same thing, but nothing is happening. The drones are still flying around.

Oral Questions

When will the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs take action to block access to cellphones in prison?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking action. We are already deploying several technologies to federal prisons. Obviously, we are not going to publicly discuss the details and capabilities of those technologies.

I myself have visited federal institutions in Quebec and seen how these technologies are being used. I had a very good discussion with Quebec's Minister Bonnardel on what we can do to help the Government of Quebec ensure that its prisons have access to these technologies as well.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem with cellphones in prisons is that they allow gang leaders to continue their criminal activities from behind bars. Gangsters can order hits on their enemies, order businesses to be burned down and broker drug deals. In short, they can continue to pose a real threat to public safety from inside a federal prison. It has been documented. Everyone knows it. The minister knows it, too.

Why is he not taking action to ban cellphones in prisons once and for all?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we are doing just that, as my colleague is well aware.

I will be in Quebec again on Friday. I will be touring a prison with the deputy commissioner of Correctional Service Canada responsible for Quebec. We will be discussing this exact issue. I would be happy to organize a briefing for our Bloc Québécois colleagues to discuss the technologies that are in place and why it is not as simple as they claim.

Of course, we do not want to give gang leaders this information in the House of Commons.

Oral Questions

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the misery. Every month in Ontario, three-quarters of a million people must rely on food banks to get by. That is up nearly 10% over last year. Worse, monthly visits by Ontario's children are up almost 117% since 2019. Despite these record numbers of children relying on these food banks, the NDP-Liberals continue to increase the carbon tax by 23%, on the way to actually quadrupling it, making groceries even more expensive.

How many more families must suffer before the Prime Minister calls an election?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been facing challenges in these expensive times, and that is exactly why we have been delivering programs to help them. Our \$10-a-day child care program is saving families thousands of dollars each and every year. The national school food program will see 400,000 additional kids receive food at school.

The Conservatives would like to make us think they are pro-family, but we know they will cut these programs at the first possible opportunity.

- (1505)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, indigenous people and families living in rural and remote Ontario know the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost. The impact of the carbon tax on the cost of groceries is a real issue for those trying to make ends meet and feed their families. HungerCount 2024 reports there were over two million visits to food banks across Canada in March of last year. That is up 90% since 2019.

When will the Prime Minister stop ignoring the evidence, admit the carbon tax scheme is not working and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for a moment I thought my official critic was going to ask a question about indigenous peoples, but again we saw a return to Conservative talking points, not the kinds of things that matter to the first nations people I have been working so hard with, along with my colleagues. In fact, that member voted against indigenous health care, the Grassy Narrows care home, emergency management support, schools, roads, housing and water. We get the picture. They are no friends to indigenous people.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost. Yesterday, Food Banks Canada reported that the need for food banks is spiralling out of control, with two million Canadians per month depending on them. Demand at Bridges to Hope food bank in St. John's is expected to surge 30% compared to 2023. Despite record-smashing food bank usage, the NDP-Liberals increased the cost of groceries by raising the carbon tax 23%.

Instead of quadrupling the carbon tax, will they axe the tax so people can afford to eat?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, regarding what they would axe in a place like Newfoundland, let us remember that the Conservative leader said the dental care program did not exist. He said it is not going to work and not going to happen. Newfoundland now happens to be one of the leading places in the country for people getting care, and on average, the program is saving them \$730.

Do they know what is going to save our emergency rooms and create space? It is \$1.8 billion for the opportunity to serve emergency rooms. Imagine those savings. That is what they are going to cut. When they look vulnerable people in the eye, they should tell them the truth and tell them what they are going to do. They are going to take away their dental care. They are going to make sure people do not get the diabetes medication they need and that is going to cost some big money.

* * *

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is refusing to take our national security seriously. Every other party leader has received their security clearance, but not him. If the Conservative Party leader is unable to grasp the importance of obtaining his security clearance, could the government tell all the other Conservative members why protecting our democracy is important?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Sudbury for her question. Our government recognizes the importance of protecting our country and our democratic institutions from the threat of foreign interference. That is why we offered every party leader the opportunity to get their top secret security clearance.

The Conservative leader is the only one running away from his obligations. Why? If he has nothing to hide from Canadians, he can get his security clearance and secret briefing right away. Unfortunately, the Conservative leader is only in Ottawa to do what he has done best for 20 years, and that is to serve his own interests at the expense of Canadians and their safety.

Oral Questions

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of Liberals, crime is up and small businesses are fed up. The Liberal Prime Minister changed the laws to make it easier for violent repeat offenders to get bail, and now break-and-enters, thefts and vandalism have become everyday realities for small businesses in Canada. Nearly 60% of small businesses in B.C., for example, are being directly impacted by crime; eight in 10 are worried about their personal safety. This has cost businesses thousands of dollars, driving up costs of food and goods for their customers.

When will the Liberals reverse their catch-and-release policies so Canadians can shop safely and affordably once again?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent 39 years fighting crime in the city of Toronto. One of the things I learned in that 39 years is that cops count.

Today there are 700 fewer police officers in the city of Toronto than when I was the police chief. Those are the same cops, by the way, who fought guns and gangs, gave evidence at bail hearings and kept our neighbourhoods safe. Just like the Harper government that cut 1,000 RCMP positions, Conservative mayors and premiers have frozen police hiring. This is the price we are all paying for reckless Conservative cuts. If the Conservatives are looking for causation of the rising crime, they should look in the mirror.

• (1510)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with its soft-on-crime policies, the Liberal government is proving once again that it puts the comfort of criminals before the safety of children.

Journalist Paul Arcand is reporting that André Faivre, a pedophile who ran a “social club” of child abusers to teach them the best ways to lure and groom young people, has been released by the Parole Board yet again.

The minister appears to accept the assessment of leading experts who say this man's risk of reoffending is low, even though he has a history of repeatedly breaching his parole conditions over the past 50 years.

Is the minister aware of this? If so, why is he not doing anything about it?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows perfectly well that the Parole Board operates at arm's length from the government. It makes good decisions, and the most important criterion it uses is, of course, public safety. We will not comment on cases before the Parole Board. We have confidence in its work.

However, as my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, just said, we are a bit surprised that the Conservatives, who cut staff so drastically at the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency, are now claiming that they want to go after criminal gangs.

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Liberals have allowed fraudulent, non-indigenous insiders and shell companies to steal contracts that had been earmarked for indigenous businesses. Now that companies like the Canadian Health Care Agency and Dalian Enterprises, which got over \$100 million each, have been removed from the indigenous business list, they should pay back the money that had been set aside for indigenous companies.

When will the government get our money back from bad actors who pretended to be indigenous?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows full well that investigations are regularly carried out to ensure that things are being done properly at my colleague's department.

However, something that my colleague has never said is whether he is in favour of the minimum target of 5% of all procurement contracts being awarded to first nations companies and business owners across the country.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting a woman's right to control her own body includes access to clear and transparent choices in health care. Far too often, we see bad actors operating in the charitable health care sector, victimizing vulnerable women seeking sexual and reproductive health services.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance update the women of this country on what this government is doing to ensure they are protected from these nefarious predators?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank my colleague from St. John's East for her hard work for Canadian women. She is a nurse and knows what she is talking about on this issue.

Today, we introduced legislation that would deny charitable status to centres that fail to disclose services they do or do not offer. This is about telling the truth. It is about women and girls across our country having control of their own bodies. That is what our government is proud to stand up for.

*Routine Proceedings***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Israeli Parliament banned UNRWA from operating in Israel-occupied East Jerusalem and designated this life-saving organization—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, I need to hear the question.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, from the top.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, this week, the Israeli Parliament banned UNRWA from operating in Israel-occupied East Jerusalem and designated this life-saving organization as a terrorist organization. Millions of Palestinians are living through hell and need aid, and there is no aid organization that can do what UNRWA can do on the ground.

Canada must act now. We cannot tolerate these outrageous attacks on the United Nations and international law.

Will the government finally sanction Netanyahu and his extremist cabinet?

• (1515)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we expressed serious concern about the passage of legislation by the Israeli Parliament that undermines the operations of UNRWA. As the member opposite stated, UNRWA is the backbone of the humanitarian response that supports over two million civilians in Gaza, Palestinian civilians. This poses a significant risk and an obstacle to more aid going in.

We urge the Israeli government to allow UNRWA and the organizations that depend on UNRWA's network to do the work that is necessary and continue to deliver aid without obstruction.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that response did not respect the seriousness of what is going on and the dire situation going on.

I want to take a moment to talk about one of the premier events in Toronto, something that many people come to. It brings millions of people together and creates thousands of jobs. It is the Toronto Caribbean Carnival. It is one of the most important events in Toronto, but sadly, because of Liberal government underfunding, this festival is at serious risk.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to the appropriate level of funding to protect this vital festival, which celebrates Caribbean culture and the Caribbean diaspora in the GTA?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the last few years, this government has been proud to support the Toronto Caribbean festival. It brings hundreds of thousands of people from around the world to the city of Toronto. We are going to continue to work with the organization to support the work it does in celebrating the Caribbean festival in this country.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. While my colleague was answering a question, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, in reference to his former Conservative Party colleague, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, used language that was not only unparliamentary, but also disgraceful. I would ask him to withdraw his comments and apologize to the member.

The Speaker: I thank the member for this point of order. The Chair will verify the record of the House of Commons and return with a ruling if necessary.

[*English*]

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When my hon. colleague was answering a question, my name was up on the screen. I know that we are both of similar backgrounds, but we are different people, and I would appreciate it if the correct name is shown when the other person is speaking.

The Speaker: I appreciate the hon. minister raising this point. We always strive to make sure that we are accurate in what we do. We apologize to the two hon. ministers. We will take measures to ensure that it does not happen again.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1520)

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

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

The Speaker: It being 3:19 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the subamendment of the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon to the motion to concur in the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 871*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif
Albas
Angus
Ashton
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet

Aitchison
Allison
Arnold
Bachrach
Barlow
Barron
Beaulieu
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas

Routine Proceedings

Blaney
Boulerice
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Cooper
Dance
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hallan
Idlout
Jivani
Julian
Khanna
Kmicc
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacGregor
Majumdar
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Sauvé
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Small
Steinley
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Strahl
Thériault
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal

Block
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Collins (Victoria)
Dalton
Dancho
Davies
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Green
Hughes
Jeneroux
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Kwan
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Martel
Mathysen
Mazier
McLean
Melillo
Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Singh
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)
Stubbs
Therrien
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien

Viersen
Villemure
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zarrillo

Alghabra
Anand
Arseneault
Atwin
Bains
Battiste
Bendayan
Bittle
Blois
Bradford
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Miao
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia

Vignola
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson
Zimmer— 178

NAYS

Members

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Baker
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Brière
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendicino
Miller
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe

Routine Proceedings

Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara	Sousa
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zuberi— 152

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment carried.

[*English*]

The next question is on the amendment.

I see the hon. chief government whip is rising.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the result from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting nay.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote, with the Conservatives voting yea.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats agree to apply the vote, and we will be voting yea.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, Greens agree to apply the vote, and we will be voting yea.

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

(*Division No. 872*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Dalton
Dance	Dancho
Davidson	Davies

DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Garrison
Gazan
Genius
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hallan
Idlout
Jivani
Julian
Khanna
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacGregor
Majumdar
Masse
May (Saaneh—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Singh
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)
Stubbs
Therrien
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson
Zimmer— 177

Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Fortin
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Green
Hughes
Jeneroux
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Kwan
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Martel
Mathysen
Mazier
McLean
Melillo
Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Rood
Sauvé
Scheer
Seeback
Shipty
Sinclair-Desgagné
Small
Steinley
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Strahl
Thériault
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Vierson
Villemure
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Alghabra	Ali
----------	-----

Routine Proceedings

Anand
 Arseneault
 Atwin
 Bains
 Battiste
 Bendayan
 Bittle
 Blois
 Bradford
 Carr
 Chagger
 Champagne
 Chen
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Coteau
 Damoff
 Dhillon
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Dzerowicz
 El-Khoury
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fraser
 Fry
 Gainey
 Gould
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hussien
 Iacono
 Jaczek
 Jones
 Kayabaga
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martinez Ferrada
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLeod
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Murray
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Powlowski
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sousa
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Trudeau
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenberg
 Weiler

Anandasangaree
 Arya
 Badawey
 Baker
 Beech
 Bibeau
 Blair
 Boissonnault
 Brière
 Casey
 Chahal
 Chatel
 Chiang
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Ehsassi
 Erskine-Smith
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Freeland
 Gaheer
 Gerretsen
 Guilbeault
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Ien
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kelloway
 Khara
 Kusmierczyk
 Lambropoulos
 Lapointe
 Lauzon
 Leboutillier
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 Maloney
 May (Cambridge)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Miao
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Noormohamed
 Oliphant
 Petitpas Taylor
 Qualtrough
 Rogers
 Rota
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Sorbara
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thompson
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Virani
 Wilkinson

Yip
 Zuberi— 151

Zahid

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment adopted.

The next question is on the main motion as amended.

I see the hon. chief government whip is on her feet.

• (1535)

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I believe once again that if you seek it you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting nay again.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote, with Conservatives voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats agree to apply the vote, and we will be voting yes.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, Greens agree to apply the vote, and we will be voting yes.

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

(*Division No. 873*)

YEAS

Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Dalton
Dance	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux

Routine Proceedings

Genius	Gill	Chen	Chiang
Gladu	Godin	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Goodridge	Gourde	Coteau	Dabrusin
Gray	Green	Damoff	Dhaliwal
Hallan	Hughes	Dhillon	Diab
Idlout	Jeneroux	Drouin	Dubourg
Jivani	Johns	Duclos	Duguid
Julian	Kelly	Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
Khanna	Kitchen	El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Kmiec	Kram	Fisher	Fonseca
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Fortier	Fragiskatos
Kusie	Kwan	Fraser	Freeland
Lake	Lantsman	Fry	Gaheer
Larouche	Lawrence	Gainey	Gerretsen
Lehoux	Lemire	Gould	Guilbeault
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)	Hajdu	Hanley
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert	Hardie	Hepfner
Lloyd	Lobb	Holland	Housefather
MacGregor	Maguire	Hussen	Hutchings
Majumdar	Martel	Iacono	Ien
Masse	Mathysen	Jaczek	Joly
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	Mazier	Jones	Jowhari
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean	Kayabaga	Kelloway
McPherson	Melillo	Khalid	Khera
Michaud	Moore	Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Morantz	Morrice	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Morrison	Motz	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Muys	Nater	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Normandin	Patzer	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Paul-Hus	Pauzé	Lightbound	Long
Perkins	Perron	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Plamondon	Poilievre	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Redekopp	Reid	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Rempel Garner	Richards	Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Roberts	Rood	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Ruff	Sauvé	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer	McLeod	Mendès
Schmale	Seeback	Mendicino	Miao
Shields	Shipley	Miller	Morrissey
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné	Murray	Naqvi
Singh	Small	Ng	Noor Mohamed
Soroka	Steinley	O'Connell	Oliphant
Ste-Marie	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)	O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)	Strahl	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Stubbs	Thériault	Robillard	Rogers
Therrien	Tochor	Romanado	Rota
Tolmie	Trudel	Sahota	Sajjan
Uppal	Van Popta	Saks	Samson
Vecchio	Vidal	Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Vien	Viersen	Schiefke	Serré
Vignola	Villemure	Sgro	Shanahan
Vis	Wagantall	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Warkentin	Waugh	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sorbara
Webber	Williams	Sousa	St-Onge
Williamson	Zarrillo	Sudds	Tassi
Zimmer — 177		Taylor Roy	Thompson
		Trudeau	Turnbull
		Valdez	Van Bynen
		van Koeverden	Vandal
		Vandenbeld	Virani
		Weiler	Wilkinson
		Yip	Zahid
		Zuberi — 151	

NAYS

Members

Alghabra	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion adopted.

Accordingly, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage is referred to the standing committee.

[Translation]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 16 minutes.

* * *

[English]

PRIVILEGE

ACCESS TO PARLIAMENT HILL—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on October 7, by the member for Thornhill concerning public access to Parliament Hill.

In her intervention, the member for Thornhill alleged that an officer of the Parliamentary Protective Service, PPS, prevented a member of the public from accessing the grounds of Parliament Hill, ostensibly because of his political ideology. This interaction was videorecorded and then posted to social media.

The member for Thornhill argued that the officer was applying some sort of political test by which a person would be barred from accessing the parliamentary precinct if they did not support a particular cause, in this case relating to Palestine.

[Translation]

The member contended that in similar circumstances, if a member of Parliament had refused to identify themselves as a “supporter of Palestine”, they would have also been barred from the Hill, constituting a breach of their right of access to the parliamentary precinct. She concluded by declaring that no member or individual should be denied access to the grounds of Parliament Hill because of the political views they hold. The issue should therefore be considered by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[English]

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader countered that no member of Parliament was impeded in accessing the precinct nor, in fact, involved in the incident. Therefore, there was no question of privilege. The member for New Westminster—Burnaby made a similar argument, pointing out that the fundamental right of access to the precinct free of obstruction is enjoyed by members of Parliament. It does not extend to members of the public.

The Chair will first address the member for Thornhill's assertions that members' privileges were breached because of the interaction that occurred between a PPS officer and an individual on October 5, 2024. The Chair will then provide members with some information on the administrative protocol for the use of Parliament Hill's front lawn by various groups for organized demonstrations and other types of events.

[Translation]

As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, on page 110, and I quote, “In circumstances where Members claim to be physically obstructed, impeded, interfered with or intimidated in the performance of their parliamentary functions, the

Speaker's Ruling

Speaker is apt to find that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred.”

In those cases, there must be demonstrable evidence that a member, or the House collectively, was impeded in fulfilling their duties for a prima facie question of privilege to be found. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, on page 148, also states, “In deliberating upon a question of privilege, the Chair will take into account the extent to which the matter complained of infringed upon any Member's ability to perform his or her parliamentary functions or appears to be a contempt against the dignity of Parliament.”

● (1540)

[English]

Recently, in another ruling on September 23, 2024, which can be found at page 25726 of the Debates, the Chair stated, “The member must demonstrate, concretely, how they, or the House, were impeded in the discharge of their functions, and, most important, that evidence exists as to the material interference.”

To this I can add that any alleged breach of privilege that is being complained of must be an actual breach, not a hypothetical one. While members' freedom of access to the Hill is well documented in many precedents, none of these suggest that this privilege extends to public access to the Hill for demonstrations.

With these important principles in mind, the Chair examined the events of October 5, 2024. After reviewing the video on social media that captures a portion of the interaction and consulting the House security partners, the Chair cannot conclude that members were denied access to the parliamentary precinct, nor was the situation related to any proceeding of Parliament. This is therefore not a prima facie question of privilege.

[Translation]

Before concluding, the Chair would like to share with members some additional information about organized demonstrations and other types of events on the front lawn of Parliament Hill. By default, the grounds of Parliament Hill are open to the public. The front lawn is also accessible to those who wish to organize a demonstration to highlight a particular cause or political concern. We are all used to seeing demonstrations on the front lawn and in the vicinity of the precinct.

Decisions about the use of the grounds of Parliament Hill are made under the authority of the Committee on the Use of Parliament Hill. The committee is co-chaired by the House of Commons Sergeant-at-Arms and the Senate Director of Corporate Security, on behalf of their respective Speakers. Its membership also includes representatives of various government departments.

[English]

A key consideration for this group is to ensure that any use of the grounds remains peaceful and incident-free and to protect the safety of all visitors to the Hill and those who work in the precinct. I can assure all members that this protocol is entirely administrative and that no member of Parliament, nor the Speaker, is involved in the operation of this protocol.

Privilege

Groups that want access to Parliament Hill for specific activities, such as holding a public demonstration, must first obtain authorization from the Committee on the Use of Parliament Hill. The committee reserves the right to change the conditions included in a public event permit. It can also cancel activities for security reasons, or even refuse permits on that basis.

[*Translation*]

On the day in question, a group of pro-Palestinian demonstrators had requested and received permission to organize an event. A space on the front lawn was designated for their demonstration, and the members of their group and sympathizers with their cause were directed to that space as they arrived.

Anyone present on the Hill that day could access the grounds. Pro-Palestinians demonstrators were directed to one area, while the general public and any counter-demonstrators were directed away from the grounds where the demonstration was taking place. Other parts of the front lawn and other parts of the precinct remained accessible to visitors.

[*English*]

To be clear, the events from that day followed well-established guidelines, which are in place to ensure the safety of everyone wishing access to Parliament Hill, including the demonstrators, any counter-demonstrators and the general public.

At no time was there any general directive to refuse access to the Hill on the basis of political views. The PPS followed its operational guidelines pertaining to the often challenging situations that they face daily. These guidelines are in place to preserve the safety and security of all people present on Parliament Hill.

I thank all members for their attention.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1545)

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

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

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.

It is generally a pleasure to speak in the House of Commons, but today is a difficult day. Before I begin my speech, I want to recognize a Toronto police officer, Constable Todd Baylis. He died as a young man on June 16, 1994. People may be wondering why I am raising this in my speech. It is because the person who killed Constable Baylis and attempted to kill his partner, Constable Michael Leone, who was also injured, is up for parole today.

I was listening to the victim impact statements by Constable Leone and by Constable Baylis's family, and they were very heart-wrenching. Constable Baylis was shot execution style. The offender then tried to kill Constable Leone, but the gun jammed.

Sometimes we forget that police officers, including the ones on the parliamentary precinct here with the PPS, put themselves in harm's way all the time, and when they do so, they are ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. Therefore I do want to recognize the case. I will be watching the parole hearing very closely. As was mentioned in the victim impact statements, I do not know how somebody who killed a police officer and attempted to kill another police officer execution style got to minimum-security prison, but that is for another day.

On a more positive note, I want to wish a happy birthday to Shirley Rennick, who is turning 90 tomorrow.

Before I really get into the privilege debate, let us talk about the nature of the motion and the amendments that are before us. It is a motion from the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, seconded by the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, about the government's failure to fully provide documents as ordered by the House on June 10. There was a further amendment from the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, seconded by the member for South Shore—St. Margarets, which stated:

provided that it be an instruction to the committee:

(a) that the following witnesses be ordered to appear before the committee, separately, for two hours each:

(i) the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry—

I know that the minister always loves to talk in the House of Commons and say that he will take no lessons from the Conservatives. Well, let us see if he will take lessons from the Canadian public when it comes to \$400 million that has been defrauded.

The amendment continues:

(ii) the Clerk of the Privy Council,

(iii) the Auditor General of Canada...

That is someone whom the Liberals do not seem to want to listen to these days.

It continues:

(v) the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada,

(vi) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons,

(vii) the Acting President of Sustainable Development Technology Canada,

(viii) a panel consisting of the Board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada; and

(b) that it report back to the House no later than Friday, November 22, 2024.

Then there was a subamendment from the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, seconded by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, adding the Privacy Commissioner of Canada as well as Paul MacKinnon, the former deputy secretary. It would not surprise me if we need more people.

The scandal is 10 times larger than the sponsorship scandal, which I am sure many Liberals will remember. I certainly remember, as a young man who was interested in politics, looking at the sponsorship scandal and how it brought down a Liberal government. However, it was not just the money; it was also the hubris. We fast-forward many years later, about 20 years by my count, and the same hubris is really revealing itself.

Let us make no mistake: This is theft, but it is theft of the worst kind. It is theft from the government or theft from the state. I have dealt with a lot of people who have stolen. Many people have stolen in one way or another in their lifetime. Obviously people are entitled to chances and sometimes second chances. Sometimes people are driven to steal by addiction. It is not uncommon that if somebody walks into court, especially into remand court, they will hear stories of somebody who says they have such a substantial addiction that they break into houses or that when they drink they assault their partner.

• (1550)

This does not make what they do right. It is still very wrong, but one tends to understand the role that substance abuse plays as one of the salient factors in offending. We can juxtapose theft by somebody who has an addiction to substances, or even an addiction to gambling, with theft from the government, theft from the taxpayer.

I wonder how many people in Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo it would take, what the average tax burden would be, if we were to divide \$400 million by that number of people. For the average taxpayer, how many taxpayers, or how many families of taxpayers, would it take to get to \$400 million?

It is like these scandals mean nothing when we get into the millions for these Liberals. They will say that it is just \$56 million for the ArriveCAN scandal, so it is no big deal. There are a few million here, a few million there. It just does not seem to matter. There is this theft from the government, and there is the arrogance, the hubris.

One of the greatest problems here is that this was, from what I can see, pure greed. In my view, that is the worst type of offence. We had people who were sophisticated. They were often business people. The chair and the many others who did wrong had been appointed by the Liberal government. What did they do? They lined their own pockets.

Unlike the situation for the person who has been driven to offend based on external factors, from what I can see, this was pure greed. This was business people who sought to line their own pockets and make even more money. They did this on the backs of Canadian taxpayers. That is bad enough. Worse, the Liberals do not want to provide the documents. We have people who were stealing, and they were stealing out of greed. They are rich people who were seeking to get richer. The Liberals are seeming to say that those are their kind of people and that they do not want to provide the documents. The Liberals not only not want to provide documents, particularly unredacted, but also are prepared to go against a House order to provide those documents. It pays to be a Liberal these days.

This is so wrong. This is absolutely so wrong. As a former prosecutor, I can tell members that, if somebody has to give things to the police, if they are representing a bank or a credit union and somebody has defrauded them, do members know what they do? They give the documents to police. I have seen so many Liberals stand up to make fallacious, dubious and specious arguments about how the documents should or should not be delivered. If somebody is a victim of the crime, do members know what they do? They go to the police to say that they have been a victim of a crime and that this is the evidence.

Privilege

There was one Liberal who actually responded to this because I asked a question about charter rights. I have an idea of how the Liberals, at least some of them, would make the argument. I would love for one to actually make the argument so that I could see what they are thinking on this. They essentially say that people have a right to not be a witness, that we should not have people's finances exposed.

I agree. It would be wonderful if that were not the case, but sometimes we witness a crime. If we witness a crime, sometimes we have to go to court to testify. I should not say nobody but, in my experience, few people show up to court and say that they cannot wait to testify, that it is so great that they are not at work, not with their family, and that they would much rather be in court. Very few people ever say that. Why is that? It is because people do not want to be victims. They do not want to be witnesses, but what do we have? We have these documents that would disclose criminal wrongdoing. They would disclose criminal offences. The Liberals, looking out for Liberals, do not want those documents to be provided unredacted.

When one compounds that with the fact that we are dealing with the worst kind of offending, it is my view that this is an untenable situation. It is egregious that the Liberals will not put these documents forward. What are they waiting for?

The Prime Minister talks about people in the middle class and those wanting to join it. The people who stole this \$400 million, who committed fraud, are not part of the middle class. In fact, the people who are in the middle class, and those hoping to join it, are the victims, as is every single taxpayer in this country. What would \$400 million get us?

• (1555)

I am attempting to get more doctors to my riding. I cannot say what \$400 million would do to aid in that effort. What would \$400 million do, when about 50% of the people in Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo do not have a family doctor? It would be easy to point my finger to say it is the province's problem, but when I get a letter or two a day from people saying, "I am eight months pregnant", or "I need a hip replacement, and I have been waiting", I can only get so many of those letters and not act. That is why I have decided to show off the wonderful nature of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I believe in the people who are coming to my riding who are doctors. They might be from overseas and looking to immigrate to Canada to live the same dream that my parents and I lived. Four hundred million dollars could certainly go a long way there.

What about food and poverty? Our food banks in Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo are stretched thin. I know this because I visit them regularly. In fact, I was at Kamloops Food Bank within the last couple of months. I was also at the 100 Mile House Food Bank not long ago. The numbers of people at both have skyrocketed. Members can imagine what \$400 million could do.

Privilege

How much housing could we build with \$400 million? I know the City of Kamloops recently hoped for federal funding for housing, but it did not come through. What would \$400 million have gotten for the City of Kamloops?

What are we left with? We are left with 186 conflicts of interest. For those at home who do not know, a conflict of interest is when a person is acting on something and they, or someone else, could benefit. There are actual conflicts of interest, as in, "I will benefit from this or I could benefit". Then there are what we call "apparent conflicts of interest", where it just looks like somebody could benefit. From what I can see, these seem like actual conflicts, but who knows. Some may have been apparent. There are 186 of them. These were committee members who owned their own businesses and essentially said, "You scratch my back, and I will scratch yours. Together, we will all get rich."

Then it came time for accounting, for there to be a reckoning and for Parliament to follow the law. Parliament is not encumbered by the laws that might be in other statutes. We have our own process here to produce documents. The Speaker can order that, and that is exactly what happened.

When the Liberals talk about their respect for institutions, they say, "Oh, we just love our institutions, and the Conservatives just want to drag them down", but what about the institution of Parliament? Where is the respect for that institution to turn over the documents they were ordered to turn over? There is no respect for the institution of Parliament when they stand up to say, "We are going to defy the Speaker's orders." Where is the respect for that institution?

It is made even more egregious when we think about the wrongdoing, but the Liberals will say not to worry because they are working for those in the middle class and those who are trying to join it. What message does this send? That \$400 million, and even if it were \$400, \$4,000, \$4 million, I do not care what it is, we have just lost track of it.

My parents came to Canada to live what I call the Canadian dream, and frankly, the fact that I am standing here reflects that. Many of us here are living that dream. Maybe other members are in my position and their families came to Canada. My mom arrived in 1957, and my dad arrived shortly thereafter. They were both with their parents. In my mom's case, her dad left home for, I believe, five years. I bet my mom could not even remember her dad when she saw him at seven years old. She had not seen him since she was two years old. This was not a time when people could just Skype one another, FaceTime or even talk on the phone. For those people who sacrificed so much, what does \$400 million mean to them? What does it mean when the Liberals will not turn over the documents?

• (1600)

There are people in the House who came to Canada, who are not first-generation Canadians like me, but who actually immigrated to Canada. I wonder, for them, what \$400 million means and what it means when the Liberal government will not provide that information, thereby perpetuating what could be, and what in my view is, a massive fraud.

Parliament has ground to a halt. It is no surprise that the Prime Minister is the first sitting prime minister to ever be found guilty of breaching conflict of interest legislation. In fact, he did it not once but twice. He stayed in what think was a \$9,000-a-night hotel room, and what was his talking point? He said that, like many people, he stayed with family over the holidays. Most people do not have friends with \$9,000-a-night hotels. However, that was not a conflict of interest. It is tone deaf. It is completely out of touch, but it was ruled, I believe, to not be a conflict of interest.

It just shows, though, the mentality, and the Liberal government stands for this. The Liberals are okay with it. The Prime Minister hopped on a helicopter and went to a private island. Liberals are saying that is okay and that they will still stand behind him. Well, maybe not, as apparently 24 will not stand behind him. This is not a person who is in touch with the middle class and those attempting to join it, and this is not a party in touch with the middle class and those hoping to join it. Otherwise, it would be providing the documents instead of defying the order of the Speaker, who said to provide those documents.

This is beyond arrogance. This is hubris. When we look at the nature of the Prime Minister and what he has done, it is no surprise we are here. This is somebody who fired the first indigenous attorney general and minister of justice. What did she do? She dared to stand up to him. At the time, I think obstruction of justice was a straight, indictable matter. In other words, one of the most serious types of crime. He asked her to look the other way.

Obstruction of justice is attempting to pervert, defeat or obstruct the course of justice. To obstruct justice, someone does not actually have to be successful. It is one of the few crimes where, apart from attempted murder, I suppose, someone does not have to follow through with it. They do not have to be successful. It is just the attempt.

What did the Prime Minister do? He told this person that she needed to give a deferred prosecution agreement to Liberal friends. Can members imagine if somebody were to go up to a prosecutor to say that a person was a friend of theirs and that they needed to give them a break? Can members imagine if a politician did that? That would be obstruction of justice.

However, this is not just an ordinary person. This is not a small town mayor. It is not even a member of parliament, an MLA or a minister. It is the Prime Minister, the chief servant of the people, telling somebody to give people a break. Perverting, obstructing and defeating the course of justice is exactly what the Prime Minister did, yet he stands here today. He comes into the House to say that they are not going to comply. He also will not comply with calling a carbon tax election.

I know my time is almost done, so I want to recognize a couple more people. I want to recognize Natalie Paul, a colleague of the British Columbia bar. Our families have many connections. My mother worked with her father. Natalie recently became engaged to Connor Brown in the same spot her parents were engaged 34 years ago, so I wish Natalie and Connor a lifetime of prosperity.

Last, I want to give a shout-out to Tonya at Air Canada in Kamloops. I thank her so much for her service. I want to recognize her in the House of Commons for how outstanding she was to me recently. It is so nice to see people who go the extra mile in their work.

• (1605)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservative member and several before him have made the same argument. They have said we should just turn these documents over to the RCMP. The problem is that the RCMP does not want to obtain evidence in this fashion. As the RCMP commissioner said in a letter, “Any information obtained through the Motion or other compulsory authorities would need to be segregated from an RCMP investigation.” He is saying the RCMP does not want it. However, I digress on that point.

The member reminded us once again that he was a prosecutor before coming to this place. I am wondering if he could tell us how many times during his career as a prosecutor that he or any police agency he was working with obtained evidence through a motion of Parliament. Was it one time, 10 times, 100 times? Did it ever even happen? I would like just a number. All I want to know is the number of times he received evidence through a motion of Parliament.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, let us talk about members, because we have two members, the member for Kingston and the Islands—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Oh, okay.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, he is saying “okay”, so let us talk about numbers. I count the member for Kingston the Islands and the member for Winnipeg North, two of them, and I count three strong women here—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows better than to mention the presence or absence of members in the House.

Mr. Frank Caputo: With all due respect, Madam Speaker, we are not allowed to mention who is not here and I did not mention by name who is here.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, is the member challenging a ruling of the Chair? If so, there is a process and I would encourage him to do that. Otherwise, he needs to respect the authority of the Chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member not to mention who is or is not in the chamber.

Mr. Frank Caputo: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, because the member for Kingston and the Islands is really hung up on the rule, I believe I am entitled to say how many people are in the chamber but am not entitled to say who is or is not here. Is your ruling that I cannot reference how many people are here?

Privilege

Otherwise, I will say that there were an equal number of men and women on the Liberal bench, yet only two members are consistently asking questions. We have three strong women in this chamber and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am going to ask the hon. member to refrain from doing indirectly what he cannot do directly and to answer the question that was asked so we can return to questions and comments from other colleagues.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, what is great about the member for Kingston and the Islands is not what he says, but how loud he says it.

The reality is that we are in an unprecedented time. I will readily admit that.

I have two questions for the member. Number one, when was \$400 million of tax money taken? Number two, did he sign the letter to get rid of the Prime Minister?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question. What is today's date? Today is October 29. That is the deadline for the Bloc Québécois ultimatum. I am telling you, we are ready to bring down the government.

Of course, I would prefer it if our seniors had more income, since they have suffered the effects of inflation. I would also prefer to see that our farmers have a secure income stream by passing a bill to protect supply management. However, that is not happening. Opportunities to bring down the government are even less frequent. Why is that? It is because the Conservatives are paralyzing the House with this question of privilege.

My question is simple. When are we going to be able to talk about the real issues?

• (1610)

[*English*]

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, we had two opposition days in which the Conservatives declared no confidence in the government. I would have loved to hear this same rhetoric from the Bloc at that time.

While I respect the member's sentiment that he wants to bring the government down now, we do not know where the NDP stands. We call them the NDP-Liberals for a reason, and the reason is they have been united at the hip consistently throughout this Parliament.

It is no secret that the NDP does not wish to bring down the government. I would bring down the government tomorrow. I do not have any confidence—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague. I do not need his confidence to do my work.

Privilege

Let us look at the real issues. Instead of all this taunting and filibustering in Parliament, can my colleague, unlike the other Conservatives I have asked, guarantee to seniors in this country that the Conservatives will extend and conserve the dental care program that has already helped 240,622 Quebeckers pay for a dental visit? If, by some misfortune, his party comes to power, is my colleague able to look seniors in the eye and tell them that this program will be maintained because it is important to them?

[English]

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, one of the most heart-breaking conversations I had with seniors recently was about how difficult it has become because of the carbon tax and other taxes. In fact, I presented a petition today that was about the poverty line, which seniors are often living under.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, if the member thinks I do not care, he would be completely wrong. My parents are seniors. I deal with people every single day. What I can commit to doing for seniors is my absolute best to reduce their tax burden, reduce the cost of their groceries and reduce the cost of their fuel in the hope that we will eventually give them the best life.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, as a former prosecutor back home in our province of British Columbia, in a community that I know very well, and as a parole officer, the member has served his community well.

I want to remind the packed gallery and those tuning in what we are talking about. We are talking about the theft, essentially, of over \$400 million. The Auditor General found 186 conflicts of interest where Liberal insiders, like a Liberal chair and others appointed by the Liberal government, funnelled money to their own coffers, their own businesses.

I am going to ask my hon. colleague the same question I asked colleagues previously. If somebody stole from my hon. colleague, would he call the RCMP or would he take the matter to a committee, which is essentially what we're being asked to do by the Liberals?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I would do what had the most common sense: I would provide the documents straight to a law enforcement agency. Those documents would then be reviewed by a prosecutor, and police might have more questions. People would be summoned as witnesses through subpoenas and then a trial would happen. The problem here is that we have an intermediary, an intermediate step, and the Liberals are attempting to obfuscate, obstruct and prevent that from happening.

There is obviously something really big in these documents. They seem to believe that for this \$400 million in tax funds, we should wait even longer and that it is okay to provide redacted documents rather than dealing with the fact that this was a fraud. It happened. Let us get to the bottom of it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is a very clear issue. The RCMP has said the Conservative game or tactic is not right.

The member for Kingston and the Islands asked a very good question about how many cases like this there were when the member was a prosecutor. Will the member answer the question? It is a very simple question. How many cases like this did he try in his extensive career, or any of his colleagues? Can he cite any cases above the number zero? Can he say something or should we assume it is zero? How many cases has he dealt with that were done through a—

• (1615)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, this is unprecedented. This \$400 million is something the Liberals want to laugh at. I am looking right at them. They should be ashamed, every single one of them, for this unprecedented fraud. They are standing up for it and are not providing the documents.

They should provide the documents. By the way, they should release the names too.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member is pointing at us and challenging us on numbers. All I asked was that he confirm the number was zero.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I come from the same stomping grounds in Kamloops, and I would like to draw on his experience as a prosecutor. If the hon. member were to be delivered—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon member is listening to the question. I will ask Liberal members to quit bugging him while I am trying to ask him a question.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, I want to draw on the hon. member's experience in legal matters. It troubles me that by fulfilling the motion as the Conservatives want, we would be giving the RCMP material that may badly compromise what it is trying to do in its investigation. If I was a sharp lawyer, I would say that the RCMP got this information improperly and should not have it, and therefore the case is going to get thrown out. Is that not a concern for the hon. member?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, first, this is the highlight of my day. Second, I appreciate the sincerity with which the member asked the question. Third, I am not concerned because this type of seizure is authorized by law. It is the searches and seizures not authorized by law that are subject to charter scrutiny.

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, today, October 29, will likely not be the only opportunity I have to speak in the House before October 31, which is Halloween, but before I begin my speech, I want to wish all the children in Canada, particularly those in Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, a very happy Halloween. The weather will be nice. I urge them to be careful. On Halloween, there are sometimes witches and people who scare us. I want them to be careful and vigilant. On November 1, it will all be over.

The work of the House has been paralyzed for over a month. I am rising today to add my voice to those of my other Conservative Party colleagues because the government is still refusing to produce documents related to Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC.

Before I continue, I have here the Speaker's ruling of September 26. I will not read the whole thing, but here is an excerpt. He said the following, and I quote:

Colleagues, I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 16 by the House leader of the official opposition, concerning the alleged failure to produce documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

I will skip two pages and read a short paragraph.

As it stands, the motion was adopted. The House has clearly ordered the production of certain documents, and that order has clearly not been fully complied with. The Chair cannot come to any other conclusion but to find that a *prima facie* question of privilege has been established. However, before inviting the House leader of the official opposition to proceed with the moving of a motion, I would like to make a few comments on the type of motion the Chair would consider to be appropriate in the circumstances.

We know the outcome. The Speaker of the House ruled in favour of the question of privilege. That is why we have been discussing this subject for nearly a month.

It was clear. The order requiring the government to produce a series of unredacted documents related to this organization was passed by a majority of MPs on June 10. We owe it to ourselves to be transparent. Occasionally, as the official opposition, we are criticized for using the tools at our disposal. This one is written in the books, and the invaluable table officers reference the House of Commons procedures every day to ensure that we comply with those procedures.

For several years, SDTC has been embroiled in a Liberal scandal known as the “green slush fund”. These documents were supposed to be handed over to the RCMP, but the government failed to comply with the order of the House and still refuses to do so. What got us to this point was the Auditor General's conclusion that SDTC officials broke conflict of interest laws 186 times and funnelled \$400 million of taxpayers' money to their own companies. That is \$400 million of Canadians' hard-earned tax dollars ending up in the pockets of Liberal government cronies.

● (1620)

Let us break down how that \$400 million was wasted. The Auditor General is not a member of the official opposition, nor is she a member of the second or third opposition party. She is not an inde-

pendent MP or some ordinary person. The Auditor General is the Auditor General.

Ten ineligible projects were awarded \$58 million. Those projects did not meet the eligibility criteria. None of them could demonstrate an environmental benefit or the development of green technology despite that being one of the eligibility criteria. Those projects got money anyway. In 186 cases, \$334 million was allocated to projects that put board members in a conflict of interest. I repeat: in 186 cases, the projects were linked to board members. Where I come from, and in the Conservative Party, we call that a conflict of interest. Another \$58 million was awarded to projects that did not comply with the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement.

That is how the \$400 million was spent. Keep in mind that those are the Auditor General's numbers.

This is my third term of office and I could write volumes on the number of scandals, the mismanagement, and the lack of management by this government, which has been in power since I arrived in the House of Commons. The government has been in power for nine years. If we listen to Canadians, people are fed up, exhausted, and impoverished. They want an election. However, the obstruction continues with the help of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois. The Bloc Québécois seems to have changed its mind today. Time will tell, but Bloc members have little to show for their ultimatum, which ends today. During his presentation, I asked the Bloc Québécois leader what would happen on the morning of October 30. We will return to that later.

This government is asking us to stop doing our work to help it move forward. I will give an example. At the Standing Committee on Official Languages, we moved a motion to understand the process that led to the appointment of the current Governor General, who was chosen by this government that claims to be a defender of the French language and to have concern for both official languages here in Canada. However, it appointed a Governor General who does not speak French, one of the two official languages of our beautiful country, Canada.

I just wanted to share that information. Nearly 80% of Canadians care about bilingualism, but when we talk about bilingualism, we are talking about French and English. It is unique to our country. We need to protect this bilingualism. It is a strength that attracts people who have the chance to be able to use both languages.

We wanted to understand how this was done because it is a mystery and we moved a motion in committee.

● (1625)

It was a bunch of insiders who decided among themselves to appoint a governor. In SDTC's case, a bunch of insiders decided to pad the pockets of Liberal cronies. We have seen this before.

Privilege

The Liberals were in committee, supported by the NDP. They said there was not enough time to discuss this or it was not the right time to discuss it. When will it be time to discuss it? The government keeps putting this off, and now it is criticizing us for doing our job. It is accusing us of acting in bad faith. True, if we did not do that, we would not be doing our job. This is another example of this government's lack of judgment and lack of respect. I find that troubling.

That is not to impugn Ms. Simon's competence or skills. Anyone here in the House chosen to be Governor General would have agreed to learn French. It is perfectly understandable. I can vouch that learning a second language is no easy feat. I can attest to that. I try, but I make no claim to be bilingual. Ms. Simon is a person of good faith and a good Canadian, and she is entitled to respect.

She is not the problem. The problem is the appointment process. This government says that it will not delve deeply into the matter or disclose the procedures it followed for all Canadians to see. I will leave it to Canadians to be the judge.

As a staunch defender of the French fact, I am pleased to contribute to the official languages file and to have been a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, whose work included the modernization of the legislation that received royal assent in June 2023. Reaching the point of royal assent, however, was quite an undertaking.

Bill C-13 is another example of this government's botched work. I will give two examples. The act that received royal assent in June 2023 contains two orders in council. The first gives the Commissioner of Official Languages the tools to impose monetary penalties, in other words, fines. It is October 29, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, just before Halloween 2024, which means it has been over a year since it received royal assent. However, no one on the other side of the House, from the government side, can tell me when the order will be tabled. Since the Liberals claim to care about both official languages and the French fact, that is not very impressive.

Part 2 of the act will also come into force as soon as an order is tabled and approved by cabinet. This order establishes the implementation of part 2 of the Official Languages Act on the right to work in the language of one's choice. Once again, it has been radio silence. There is no timeline for when the order will be tabled.

I will add that there are regulations that need to be written in the application of the law. Does anyone know how long it is going to take to write the regulations? It will take a third of the time of the revision, or three and a half years. Is it normal, where there is the will and the intent to protect both official languages, to have brought in legislation and say that it is going to take three and a half years to write the regulations? That is the action of people who do not have the will and the intent.

My question is simple. When will the government ensure that French is respected here in Canada, which, until further notice, is a bilingual country that uses French and English?

• (1630)

Let us not forget that. Also at the Standing Committee on Official Languages in May and June, the Liberals doggedly protected one of their own and blocked the committee's work for more than seven meetings. They did this to protect one of their friends, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who said witnesses from Quebec were full of something I will not mention here. There is a disconnect within the party. The Liberals are the ones filibustering. The Liberals are the ones preventing us from getting things done. In my opinion, they like it that way because they do not know what to do.

If they really wanted to get down to business and run our country, they would simply produce the documents. It would take a day, maybe two, at most, and then we could move on, but no, they want to blame us for what is happening.

As I said, according to procedure, there is a process. There are rules. This was confirmed by the Speaker of the House. What I am saying is that it would be so simple to produce the documents. The Liberals' argument as to why they are not doing so is that the RCMP wants the documents, does not want the documents, wants some of the documents or wants the documents this way or that way. That is not important. The important thing is that the House ordered this government to provide unredacted documents. The RCMP will do what it wants with them afterwards. All we want is for the government to abide by the Speaker's order.

Several years ago, we had the Gomery commission. I am sure members will remember that. It was the 2004 Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities that was tasked with getting to the bottom of the sponsorship scandal. It smacked of corruption, and the same thing seems to be happening here in the House of Commons in 2024. Once again, this government is trying to protect itself. What is it trying to protect itself from? If the Liberals are so honest and transparent, all they have to do is produce the documents. It is not complicated.

The list of things that make us doubt their honesty is long. As I mentioned, I have been an MP since 2015. One of my colleagues, Frank Baylis, was elected in 2015. We went through the pandemic and, in 2019, Mr. Baylis chose not to run again. As luck would have it, he became an expert on respirators. He quickly gained access to government contracts to sell respirators. These are public funds. What is there to hide? This is a great opportunity for Liberal friends.

Of course, a series of events over the past nine years come to mind. I will list them briefly. There was the Aga Khan's island trip, for which the Prime Minister was found guilty. There was the abuse of protocol activities in India. There were the Jamaica vacations, ArriveCAN, SNC-Lavalin, McKinsey, partisan judicial appointments, and so on.

While Liberal friends are getting richer, the cost of living has skyrocketed. Canadians do not need to be poorer. They have a right to know. I think it would be a significant gesture on the part of the Liberals, after the months that have gone by and been wasted, to proceed with the tabling of these documents and respect the hard-working Canadians who are striving for a better quality of life in Canada. It is all part of the process.

• (1635)

Why are politicians so mistrusted? The answer is simple. It is because the Liberal government's elected officials refuse to co-operate and be transparent.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is having flashbacks with respect to the issues with this particular government. I will remind him of when the leader of the Conservative Party was a part of the Conservative government. I have a booklet on abuses of power, scandals and corruption, and I could list off 70-plus scandals, abuses of power and corruption by the Harper government that the current leader was a part of. There was the Senate hush money scandal, contempt of Parliament, refusal to share budget information, granted immunity testimony and so forth.

I say that because of how the Conservatives have changed. There is a legitimate reason that we cannot hand the information over to the RCMP, let alone the fact that it has said this would not be appropriate. Suffice it to say that the current leader of the Conservative Party was part of a government in which the then prime minister was held in contempt of Parliament because he refused to produce the types of documents they are calling for now. Why the substantial flip-flop when they could not justify it in their situation?

Here we are listening to the RCMP as opposed to the Conservatives. Does the member not see a bit of hypocrisy?

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his question. He is always very involved in the debates.

I want to point out that the Conservative Party of Canada is not the party that has corruption baked into its DNA. Canada's Conservatives have never been involved in a sponsorship scandal. My colleague's argument is that the RCMP does not want any documents, or that it wants only half of them, or that it wants them in a certain way. That is not what matters. What the Liberals are doing is deflecting the debate.

The Speaker of the House of Commons asked that complete, unredacted documents be produced. What does my colleague not understand about that?

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked at length about languages and the fact that French is under threat. He sits on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Privilege

French is indeed under threat. This weekend, I learned something that I never knew before, which is that French is the 17th most spoken language in Toronto and about the eighth most spoken language in Calgary and Edmonton. It is not doing too well. It is not doing too well in Quebec either. All the indicators are red. The Official Languages Act promises to send \$700 million over the next five years to Quebec's anglophone community. How much is being sent to Quebec's endangered francophone community? Just \$50 million. Anglophones represent 8% of the population and are under no threat whatsoever in North America, but they get \$700 million, while only \$50 million can be spared to protect French.

If the Conservatives take power in a year's time, will my colleague commit to reviewing this absurd funding arrangement?

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for his question. I appreciate his comment. He recognizes that French is in decline in Canada.

Now, we are in a country. As the Conservative Party shadow minister for official languages, I care deeply about official language minority communities. Yes, we recognize the decline of French. We need to take action. We must protect and promote both official languages.

The fact that French is the 17th most spoken language in Toronto and the eighth most spoken language in Alberta is indeed tragic. It just goes to show that the bill that was introduced, to which I proposed many amendments that were unfortunately rejected by the Liberal government and its friends in the NDP, proves I am right to be concerned about the French language and how it will be protected in the coming years. I agree with my colleague.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am guessing my colleague will not be overly surprised by the question I am about to ask him. I am desperately trying to find a Conservative who will tell me the truth on this subject.

Earlier, he said that we are here to work, to take care of people and to improve people's quality of life. I could not agree more. That is why the NDP forced the minority government to set up a dental care program. There are already 800,000 Quebecers enrolled, 240,622 of whom have already paid a visit to the dentist.

Should the Conservative Party ever take power, can my colleague assure seniors that it will maintain the dental care program that is helping so many Quebecers?

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his question. It gives me the opportunity to tell him that the Conservative Party of Canada is very sensitive to seniors' needs. Just this morning, I welcomed a delegation from the Fédération des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada to my office.

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Its representatives asked me about two things: employability and affordable rent. I told them that there are two groups I see as important. The first is young people, who are the future of our country, and the second is seniors, who made this country what it is today. When we compare ourselves to others, we feel okay, but we can do better. I can assure my colleague that we are going to pay special attention to seniors here in Canada.

• (1645)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have asked opposition members a number of questions today. Here is my question. I am very proud that we have two official languages in Canada. I was born in the Waterloo region. My mother tongue is Punjabi. My second language is English, and my third language is French. I am very proud that my father fought very hard to give me the opportunity to go to a French immersion school.

I would therefore like to ask the member what he thinks when his Conservative colleagues tell people in the House to, as they put it, “speak English”.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Waterloo for her question and commend her on her French.

This is an issue that we are familiar with. We debated it this morning at the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I will make a comparison. In May, the Liberal member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell insulted witnesses from Quebec who appeared before the committee. He said they were “full of” something. As I said in my speech, I will let people fill in the blank.

All of the Liberal members rose to support and defend this member. It took five days for him to offer a half-hearted apology. That was after saying that he did not need to apologize, that he was not going to apologize and that he was sorry if he had hurt people's feelings. It took five days for him to apologize.

As for my colleague, unfortunately, I was not here. I was attending a francophone event on Prince Edward Island. However, my colleague apologized within two hours. I am saying it was two hours to hedge my bets, but I am sure it was less than that. He apologized.

We are seeing a double standard here. I think that the Conservatives care a lot more about bilingualism in Canada than the Liberals do.

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to get my colleague's thoughts on something here. Back in the 1990s, the Liberals were famous for the sponsorship scandal, in which former prime minister Chrétien was trying to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on building unity after the Quebec referendum.

However, Liberal insiders took advantage of a national unity crisis to get rich, with over \$100 million being awarded to them. Now we see it again; Liberal insiders are making themselves rich.

What does my colleague have to say about that?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, my colleague has once again demonstrated that the Liberal Party of Canada has no conscience and no respect for public funds. It is wasteful. Once again, what is happening here in the House is just further confirmation of this corrupt government's entire record.

[English]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a colleague across the way who is asking, “How many more Conservatives have they got to speak on this?”

An hon. member: Lots.

Mr. Martin Shields: Yes, we have lots, Mr. Speaker. You are now getting the real guys out here, the cleanup crew.

I am sure we have given you the opportunity, across the way, to have righteous indignation at what we say—

• (1650)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Doherty): I will remind the hon. colleague to direct his questions and his comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Bow River.

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, I apologize and withdraw that comment.

I have had many constituents communicate with me and ask me to clarify what we are doing here, and it is very simple. A ruling by the Speaker said, “We would like documents produced, unredacted.” That is all that needs to be done. They ask, “Why can that not happen?” We are asking the same thing, day after day, speech after speech. That is what we are doing here today. It is democracy and we are proud to be here and speak in the House. This is the House of the commoners. This is the House where we have the opportunity to express our opinions and I appreciate the opportunity to do it. For the last three weeks, we have been asking for the unredacted documents, as directed by the Speaker.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada was a non-profit corporation that started more than 20 years ago. It was to “demonstrate new technologies to promote sustainable development, including technologies to address issues related to climate change and the quality of air, water and soil”. People from an agricultural background know there have been so many innovations to do with soil and so many things developed so our agriculture is the best in the world. Agricultural programs that this fund would supposedly support are critical to Canada and to the agriculture expertise that we often share with the world because we are leading experts in it.

I am in an area where water is so critical for irrigation, and with the technology developed in the last few years, we are able to irrigate 30% more land with the same amount of water. That takes a lot of understanding, technology and research. SDTC was the kind of organization that would direct funds toward projects of real value to us.

Since the foundation began, there were nine contribution agreements with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada committing \$2.1 billion in funding. It approves grants and distributes over \$100 million a year. Now, regarding distributing grants, I had a recent conversation with the president of the University of Alberta, and this is the kind of topic he is interested in for the types of research going on at the University of Alberta. In an article, he states:

...we understand energy, and we understand innovation. After more than a century of energy breakthroughs, we have learned the key to success: when you bring together the right people, you push the boundaries of innovation.

However, the president of the university understands it takes co-operation: “This Alberta-based project brings together academia, industry, and government to advance the solutions”.

That is what SDTC was about. It was about that co-operation. That is how, he says, we diversify our economy. This is the president of the University of Alberta saying we need “co-ordinated effort from all levels of government, industry partners, and academic leaders.” That is what this fund was for. It was to give grants for coordinated efforts. He said:

Alberta’s long record of energy research and innovation makes it the ideal setting to move forward emerging energy opportunities. Dr. Amit Kumar is opening Canada up to the global hydrogen market—predicted to be at \$1.9-trillion by 2050—by blending hydrogen with natural gas without any costly changes to existing infrastructure.

...Dr. Dan Alessi is addressing the lithium supply gap by extracting the valuable metal from oilfield brines....

These are the kinds of research projects this money would have been good for, but what happened to it? Well, University of Alberta researchers are very concerned, because they are looking for projects that they know can develop diversity in our economy.

In 2023, after years of significant whistle-blower concerns and malpractice, the Auditor General announced an audit of the slush fund. Why was she poking at this? There seems to have been a whistle-blower out there who saw a problem and did not get satisfaction.

● (1655)

Probably everybody in this room, which is packed full of people, has been on many boards and in many agencies. When people are on boards and in agencies, they go through training about what to do on a board. They get training about ethics, procedures and conflicts of interest.

I remember as a mayor, we had a banker as a councillor. That banker knew if we talked about anything to do with banks, they were not at that meeting and were excused for that reason. They did not want to be in a conflict of interest. We have all been in situations and have learned that. We know that, yet we had a board that would have gone through training, made up of members who had had experience. I am sure they would not have been on that board if

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they did not have that kind of knowledge. Then we had bureaucrats sitting there, senior bureaucrats, at meeting after meeting, not saying, “Board members, I think we have an issue here. You need to reconsider what you are doing here.” Those bureaucrats did not stop them.

It is problematic when we have board members who I am sure were experienced, who came from the private sector, from non-profits. They understood what it means to be a board member and what due diligence is, and they were dealing with \$1 billion of taxpayers’ money that we needed for innovation in this country.

The Auditor General looked at a few of those contracts. She looked at a few, and almost \$400 million of taxpayers’ money went through votes in ways that should not have happened. That money went in a different direction than it should have. That is very drastic. Not only did the University of Alberta’s president say the university needed that innovative money in a proper way, and there are a lot of projects that need it, but the Premier of Alberta wrote a letter in support of the U of A president, asking the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry to consider carbon capture, hydrogen, critical minerals, and water and land reclamation.

We have the Premier of Alberta, along with the U of A president, saying that was the kind of resource money they need for innovation. Alberta innovates in co-operation with federal grants, and I have seen some of the projects. There were five projects done in the Calgary area. One was very curious; they were extracting carbon from the atmosphere, and they turned some of it into vodka. People asked, “How can you turn carbon into vodka?” Well, the consumers of vodka said it was one of the best out there.

Another one of the things they did, when we got innovation and grants handed out in the right way, was with cement. It takes fly ash to make cement, which has a huge green footprint, but they found a way to put carbon fibres in instead of fly ash, which reduced the carbon footprint. That is how Alberta innovates. That is how, with money from federal grants, in co-operation with researchers, they can produce changes that we are looking for in our environment. However, there were board members making decisions to spend taxpayers’ money and give it to themselves by passing motions in an improper, unethical way.

That is one of the challenges we have with carbon tax. It is not directed into creating projects in our country. It is taking money away from people, and as the government says, 80% of it goes back to them. Well, what about not taking it away in the first place?

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● (1700)

However, the carbon tax is really causing a problem in a different way, and most people do not talk about this. When we have school boards, such as mine or that of my neighbour beside me from Medicine Hat, which are very rural, we think of all the school buses that travel in those rural ridings and the amount of carbon tax that is paid by school boards for busing and buildings. The carbon tax on that is incredible. We can then take a look at what the carbon tax costs for all the health care facilities; it is not going to innovation. There are fewer teachers and fewer nurses. This is a problem with the carbon tax. It is handicapping our health care and our school systems with fewer staff, and it is not going into innovation.

It is a problem when we have taxes misdirected, and we have a billion-dollar fund out there that was supposed to be giving contracts to people for innovation. However, what were they doing with it? They were giving it to each other for their own companies. When the slush fund approved \$8.56-billion funding for 420 projects, only 58 of the projects were checked on, but they found a problem. In 90 separate cases, conflict of interest policies were not followed. How do they not follow these policies? How do the bureaucrats sitting in the room not say that they should take a look at the procedure and make sure they are following it?

To expand on that, our great committee members exposed that, in the funding transactions approved by the board of directors during a five-year sampling, the Auditor General looked at 82% as conflicted. Wow, we are now up to hundreds of millions of dollars in conflicted decisions; this is why we are here. It is our job to hold the government to account for taxpayers' money. As some people have said, when we get to millions and hundreds of millions, people lose track of what that means to the average taxpayer. When my agricultural producers pay \$100,000 in carbon tax, they know what \$100,000 is. It hurts. When we are talking hundreds of millions of dollars, that is a big number.

What is the timeline on the scandals? We have heard this before. We heard the member across the way referring to the Harper government. There may be some people on this side who were here at that time, but most of us were not. In talking about the time frame that we are in, the Liberals are in government; however, they try to explain that the people who were in power before did something wrong. They say it is all right when they are in power, and they should not be held accountable for it. However, the people in charge at the time are the people we hold to account. If it is the government in power now, then that is who we hold to account for this.

I remember the Vice-Admiral Norman case, which was a very brutal case. Our senior military navy official was really ruined by decisions of this particular cabinet. He was charged, but did he ever go to court? No, after the two years of his life being ruined, there was a settlement; it never went to court. That is how the Liberal government started out, with the Vice-Admiral Norman controversy. It is well documented. Members can find it if they research it. However, what upset me and many others was how they ruined a tremendous military man's career, his family and his life. That is how they started out in corruption, by ruining one of our significant military commanders of the navy in this country.

There was the cash for access scandal, which is a problem, with the Chinese government and the things involved with that, the rich lobbyists and businessmen, and events in Toronto and Vancouver.

● (1705)

Then we got into the Aga Khan's island. Most people in the world that we live in would understand the common-sense things that we do in terms of what crosses the line, what is illegal and what is in the grey zone versus what is strictly out of bounds. The Aga Khan scandal was strictly not understanding what most people understand: what is right and wrong.

There are still people who bring up the infamous India trip to me and ask why he was doing what he did in a number of ways on that trip. That was six years ago; we have still not recovered in the agricultural sector and trading. It has been brutal on the ag sector because India and Canada were trading partners in agriculture. That started to deteriorate because of the India trip in 2018. It was not the costumes alone that created a significant problem for us; it was also someone he brought with him: the terrorist at the dinner party. India is moving quickly to become the largest population in the world; it has power in agriculture that we need in trade. That was a brutal one.

Then there was SNC-Lavalin. I have read the former attorney general's book. If people have not read that book, they should. This was a person who understood what was right and wrong and understood where the lines were. I had a couple of conversations with her about legislation that she had passed in the House, and I supported the position she took on some significant legislation. She was a real politician, understanding what needed to be done and what was right and wrong. If people have not read her book, it shows how she spoke the truth; how she said, "We have crossed the line; we cannot do that"; and how she realized things were unethical. It was a sad day.

Along with the former attorney general, there was Jane Philpott. She was a strong cabinet member; she continues her work and is now working on health issues in Ontario. SNC-Lavalin was a huge scandal, and its repercussions continue to this day. The ethical decisions made just do not make any sense.

WE Charity was another tough one. That affected so many youth because representatives spoke around the country. I remember my grandson going to a WE Charity event in Calgary, but in the background, the organization got into a very unethical process.

The Winnipeg lab scandal was another serious ethical one.

The ArriveCAN scam is just brutal; we are still working at it today.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech; he mentioned many things, including cash for access, but it is my understanding that the Leader of the Opposition is having fundraisers at private homes all over the country. Somehow, we do not speak about that. However, let us put that aside; I am more interested in arguments about funding technology.

Whenever governments make economic decisions, there is room for criticism, even when there is no conflict of interest or corruption. Whenever people make decisions about which companies to fund and not to fund, they are picking winners and losers. In the view of free market economists, such as Milton Friedman, they are distorting markets.

Does the member not agree that the most elegant solution and mechanism for fighting climate change is the price on carbon because it is not government making decisions? Instead, individual citizens are making purchasing decisions every day. We could call it total freedom.

• (1710)

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, it is an interesting topic. I see the millions of dollars that leave my riding for the carbon tax and not for an investment in innovation. The private sector has worked with academics and Alberta Innovates, with some federal money in there. They develop projects because they bring the manpower of all those sectors to the table. That is where we get innovation that works, not with the carbon tax.

In my riding, when we see the millions of dollars that leave, we penalize the health system and penalize the school system. There are fewer teachers. There are fewer nurses. We have to talk about the penalties of the carbon tax. The money is not going to innovation. It is being taken away and people are getting 80% back. I say do not take it away in the first place.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, when we were talking about the carbon tax earlier, a question was asked. The net-zero accelerator is an \$8-billion slush fund to reduce emissions for the heaviest emitters in Canada. Of the \$8 billion apportioned, over \$50 million can be fast-tracked with a simple letter to the Prime Minister. What does my colleague have to say about that?

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, whenever we are spending taxpayers' money, as there is only one taxpayer in this country, we need to be careful. We need to be transparent. I agree with my colleague that it does not matter what decision we make; there are going to be people who are happy and people who are not happy.

We need to be very careful with taxpayers' money. It is hard-earned money. They work hard for their pay, and given the taxes we take from them, we need to work just as hard to make sure there are all sorts of checks and balances on how money is spent.

We need to support innovation. We have a great history of innovation in this country, with co-operation from our scientists, our

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academics and our private sector. We must hold those people accountable for what money they receive, how they got it and where they spend it. That is about the trust people have in a government.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech. In particular, he talked a lot about innovations in agriculture and how they have been born from the farm gate. Generally, farmers have led innovation because their livelihoods depend on it. They take care of the soil, take care of the water supply and take care of everything around them because that is in their best interests. Whether someone is a rancher or farmer, it does not matter what they are doing; they take care of the environment better than the government ever has or ever will.

I am wondering whether my colleague wants to talk about that point some more.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, to give an example, some people believe that the cattle industry should not exist, but cattle are a huge part of the environmental movement and keeping the environment and ecology of the Prairies whole. This was once done by buffaloes. The buffaloes are not there so the cattle have now replaced them. They are a strong part of it, and cattle people understand that. A lot of people in urban areas do not.

Another example in Saskatchewan is the air seeder. That was developed so someone does not have to continue to till the soil every time they turn it. The development of the air seeder has made such a difference in agriculture, and we can export that kind of knowledge everywhere. The member is right that agriculture has been part of a lot of environmental activities, and they have come from the farmers and ranchers themselves on the land.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague said something important. He said that we must be extremely careful with taxpayers' money. I agree. At the moment, however, I think that Conservative measures are wasting a great deal of taxpayers' money.

On the topic of saving money, the NDP decided to create a new dental insurance program that is saving people a lot of money, especially seniors and people who are vulnerable or poor. The other day, I spoke to a woman who went to the dentist and saved \$2,900. That is a lot of money for someone living on \$15,000 or \$20,000 a year.

Is my colleague willing to commit to keeping the dental care program, especially for seniors?

*Privilege**[English]*

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, at one time I negotiated contracts and benefits for employees, but I negotiated a much better dental plan than the current government one. I have a problem because this particular plan is a single-payer plan. My concern, not as a regular senior but as a supersenior, is I understand—

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Supersenior. A new category. That's why he gets new money: because he is a supersenior.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, that means the old guys. The superseniors are the old ones.

The plans I negotiated for employees had much better dental plans. The fear is that under a single-payer system, seniors would lose the better plan. That is the concern I have.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am not a supersenior even though I just turned 60 years old a few weeks ago.

[Translation]

I am very pleased to take part in today's debate on transparency and the sound management of public funds. Let us not forget that just over 20 years ago, Canada was gripped by a scandal that still reverberates today and likely will for decades to come. Of course, I am talking about the infamous sponsorship scandal.

Thanks to the hard work and sharp instincts of journalist Daniel Leblanc and his whistle-blower, known as “MaChouette”, a shameful ploy employed by the Liberal Party of Canada was exposed. Instead of awarding real contracts, the sponsorship program became a mailbox where people could send cheques to themselves in order to launder that money for partisan political purposes. This was what sadly became known as the sponsorship scandal. This led to an inquiry commissioned by Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin, a man who did the honourable thing by getting to the bottom of the matter. We know how that turned out. A total of \$42 million of taxpayers' money was found to have been mismanaged by the heads of the sponsorship program, all to benefit the Liberal Party of Canada.

Twenty years later, we are witnessing another highly compromising situation for friends of the Liberal Party regime. I mentioned a \$42-million scandal just now, but what we are talking about today involves not \$42 million, or \$100 million, or \$200 million, or \$300 million, but \$390,072,774 that was improperly awarded to friends of the regime. It is not me, a Conservative MP, saying that. It is the Auditor General who conducted an exhaustive study of the financial documents and concluded that over \$390 million had been mismanaged.

This scandal began with a fund called the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, or SDTC. I am not a big fan of acronyms, but I may be using that one again. There were good intentions behind the creation of the fund in 2001. These stories always start with good intentions, but, as they say, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The problem is that sometimes people take shortcuts. That is what happened with the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, and it is absolutely scandalous. The fund was set up to distribute about \$100 million of taxpayers' money every year to companies so they could develop new technologies to reduce their environmental footprint and pollution and

help the environment. Unfortunately, it started off well but then veered drastically off course.

It was created by the Chrétien government in 2001. It continued under Harper's Conservative government and under the current government led by the member for Papineau. I would say his name, but I am not allowed. Some people say it is disrespectful to call the Prime Minister “the member for Papineau”, but the Prime Minister is only here because there are people in Papineau who voted for him. In a few months, it is likely that people from Ottawa-Carleton will elect the Prime Minister. He will still be the MP for Carleton. That is why we must always refer to the Prime Minister and any minister or House officer by their riding name, because without their riding, they would not be here.

Back to the main point. The program looked good, and it was off to a good start. In fact, the program was definitely well on its way and, for nearly two decades, it had fruitful results, funding things like high-tech solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable development technologies. It was created in 2001, as I said. In 2017, under the current Liberal government, the then auditor general conducted an investigation, an analysis, a study of this fund and gave it a very high passing grade.

● (1720)

It was off to a good start. It was good, and it was working. It worked until 2017. That is when the problems started. In 2019, the former minister of innovation, science and economic development, the Hon. Navdeep Bains, decided to appoint as head of this fund, as a member of its board of directors, someone who owned a company that was doing business with this fund. That is when the problems began. For years, the people managing the fund were not both clients and distributors, so they were not in a perpetual conflict of interest.

The former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains, a member of this Liberal government led by the member for Papineau, helped set the precedent that, unfortunately, went on for far too long. For the first time, the individual who was appointed president and CEO had a vested interest in this fund and was awarding herself contracts. Then, two more people were appointed. All in all, the Auditor General's investigation that I was talking about earlier found that this government had appointed nine directors to the board even though they were basically in a perpetual conflict of interest and their companies were receiving money from the fund.

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Based on this information alone, the government should have immediately hit the brakes and stopped everything. Appointees should be independent of the fund, but they should know how to administer a fund. I will return to that a little later, but it raises a fundamental issue. People are not appointed to a board of directors to simply show up for meetings, cash their paycheque and walk out. They must be diligent and well versed in company management, but not the type to seek benefits for their own company. Unfortunately, more than nine board members had conflicts of interest.

In June 2019, Liberal minister Navdeep Bains appointed someone with a conflict of interest to the position of president and CEO. Others followed. I would be remiss not to mention the company Cycle Capital, whose chair was appointed to SDTC. In this specific case, the Auditor General's investigation found that approximately \$250 million was mixed up in conflicts of interest.

Through the Auditor General's investigation, we also learned that the current Minister of Environment and Climate Change was once a lobbyist for that company, which in and of itself is completely fine. I have absolutely no problem with people working as lobbyists, as long as they do it right. Today, this man is the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We are talking about nearly \$250 million here. That is quite a lot of money, especially since the current minister consulted for the government 47 times a lobbyist. That casts doubt on the situation.

Then, there was a change of governance at the department when Mr. Bains announced that he was stepping down. As is his prerogative, the Prime Minister shuffled his cabinet and appointed the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, who, as we know, is an especially active guy for whom I have a lot of respect. Time will tell whether he makes any changes to his career. Let us say that a lot of people are watching him, myself included. This member became the minister responsible for the SDTC fund.

The first alarm bells went off publicly in September 2023. In a situation similar to that of “MaChouette”, who alerted journalist Daniel Leblanc to the sponsorship scandal, a whistle-blower decided to go public and tell the media how this fund was being mismanaged.

• (1725)

When he testified later, as part of the Auditor General's investigation, this whistle-blower said the following:

Again, if you bring in the RCMP and they do their investigation and they find something or they don't, I think the public would be happy with that. I don't think we should leave it to the current federal government or the ruling party to make those decisions. Let the public see what's there.

He also said the following:

Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization.

...

I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.

It was a whistle-blower who said these things in his testimony. This had a direct impact on why we are currently debating this question of privilege.

The first reports were made public and the whistle-blowers were there. In November 2023 the Auditor General launched an investigation. In June 2024, the report was tabled. It is a scathing report on the mismanagement of this fund. Over the five years that were reviewed by the Auditor General, which cover the partisan appointment of Navdeep Bains, a total of 82% of the contracts were illegitimately awarded. This is not some minor oversight, where a few things here and there fell through the cracks. No, it was 82% of the time. Things were done improperly four out of five times. It was either a conflict of interest, or people circumvented the rules of governance, or money was sent directly to the individual's own company. It does not work like that. This happened four out of five times, in 82% of the cases.

Here is a breakdown of what we are talking about. Ten ineligible projects received \$58,784,613. In 96 cases that added up to \$259 million, conflict of interest policies were not followed. In 90 cases, conflict of interest policies were not followed, and there was no assurance that the terms and conditions of contribution agreements were respected. That is a total of \$390,072,774. There are no cents in that total, and I have to say there is no sense in any of this. We are talking about \$390 million, 82% of cases, mismanagement in four out of five projects, and conflicts of interest.

The report also makes the current minister look very bad. The Auditor General concluded that he did not engage in enough oversight over what was going on in the fund. The minister, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, keeps saying that he intervened as soon as he found out. I, a Conservative MP, am not the one saying that he did not do his job properly. The Auditor General is the one who found that he did not keep a close enough eye on what was going on. We are talking about \$390 million. The sponsorship scandal was \$42 million. That is a snapshot of the report's harsh condemnation of how poorly the fund was managed to the benefit of Liberal government cronies.

The Auditor General's investigation focused on management, not on potential criminal activity. As I referenced earlier, the whistle-blower was very clear during the meeting with the Auditor General. The Auditor General's job is to investigate management. It is up to the RCMP to determine whether criminal activities were involved. These are two completely different things. The whistle-blower was very clear that if the RCMP poked around a little, they would uncover criminal situations.

• (1730)

On June 10, the House adopted a motion so that documents could be sent to the RCMP. That is what we asked for and, unfortunately, that did not happen. Accordingly, when the House resumed its work, an order of the House was issued by the Chair requiring the government to produce the documents. That is what we want and that is why we need to get to the bottom of things.

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A fund to protect the environment worked for 15-or-so years without any problem. When a new government arrived under the partisan auspices of the Liberal Party, things went off the rails. Four out of five projects were not processed correctly. What is more, \$390 million of taxpayers' money was mismanaged. What is the result? The big losers are the companies that were counting on this money to do their work and truly serve this country by making investments in sustainable development technologies, as the name of this fund suggests. Ill-intentioned people across the way made sure this went completely off the rails. The first victims are the companies that want to invest in sustainable development technologies, in the environment.

In that regard, I would like to remind the House that, unlike what the Liberals have been saying ad nauseam, we, the Conservatives, are determined to tackle the challenges of climate change, which we recognize is real.

Just over a year ago, at the much-talked-about Conservative national convention in Quebec City, our leader, the member for Carleton, gave an important speech that is going to go down in Canadian history. In what we call the Quebec City speech, the member for Carleton described our vision for the environment, while recognizing that climate change is real and that we need to adapt to the effects of climate change. The ultimate objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. This government believes that it can achieve that objective by imposing taxes. We will achieve that objective by taking direct and meaningful action to reduce pollution and create a better environment. That is the Conservative approach. It has four pillars.

The first pillar involves tax incentives for new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Companies emit greenhouse gases. They know why they are doing that, how they are doing it and how to reduce those emissions. The government will give them tax incentives to invest where they need to and where the problem is so that they can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The second pillar is giving a green light to green energy. Now more than ever, Canada needs wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, nuclear and solar power. We need to give these projects the green light, not put the brakes on them, which is exactly what Bill C-69 does by requiring hydroelectric projects to undergo two environmental assessments. With us, it will be one project, one assessment. We need to speed up the process of implementing green energies.

The third pillar is the Canadian advantage. In Canada, we have all kinds of energy and all kinds of natural resources. To tackle climate change, we need to develop our Canadian potential. As long as we need fossil fuels, we will fight for Canadian fossil fuels. Some spout the fantasy that Canada will no longer produce oil; however, that will not reduce consumption, it will simply transfer production. Therefore, the big winner, if by some misfortune we stop producing oil in Canada, will not be Canada or the environment, it will be Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The fourth pillar is obviously working hand in hand with first nations for development.

In closing, we are here today because the government refuses to comply with an order of the House. We are calling on the govern-

ment to do the right thing, which is to comply with the House's order. Then we can find out what really went on. I began my remarks by talking about the \$42-million sponsorship scandal. I would remind the House that we are now talking about a \$390-million scandal. Speaking of the sponsorship scandal, we are still waiting for the Liberal Party to reimburse its dirty money.

• (1735)

[*English*]

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a privilege it is to hear my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent share his point of view. My question is about the privilege. Many of the people who were appointed to the arm's-length board, in my opinion, should have thought it was a privilege, but the culture they are part of and that they have enjoyed in order to be able to line their pockets has to start somewhere. In my opinion, it starts at the top: a poisonous culture where there is no accountability.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that, and how do the people of his constituency of Louis-Saint-Laurent feel about the culture that the Liberal Party is part of?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it starts at the top. When the Prime Minister, who has absolutely no respect for public money, spends without any control; when he has a problem with ethics issues, travelling all around the world without any problem with that and going to Christmas parties with some friends; when there is the WE Charity scandal, the ArriveCAN scandal and the SNC-Lavalin and Jody Wilson-Raybould scandal; and when coming from the top there is no respect for the rules of ethics, obviously there is impact elsewhere.

This is exactly what has happened since June 2019, when the hon. Navdeep Bains appointed someone who was directly in conflict of interest. During all his mandates over the next five years, nine people were directly implicated in a conflict of interest. One must not appoint someone who could have an issue of conflict of interest. The result was that 82%, four projects out of five, were not treated correctly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I really enjoy listening to my colleague when he rises to address the House. He is a great speaker.

On the main issue, what concerns me as a parliamentarian and a Canadian is that, with this request for documents, we run the risk of violating an extremely important principle, namely the separation between law enforcement and the government. In a democracy, that is an extremely important principle, a founding principle.

For the first time in history, what the Conservatives are asking for with this request for documents is access to documents, not only for parliamentarians to see, but also so that parliamentarians can hand them over to a third party, in this case the police. Does my colleague think this could set a dangerous precedent? Does this run counter to a fundamental principle of parliamentary democracy?

• (1740)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to pay tribute the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. I really enjoy working with him. In fact, he chairs the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and twice a week we have a lot of fun working together. I would like to commend his contribution to public debate and what he has accomplished as a parliamentarian for a good 20 years, if I remember correctly.

As for the member's question, let me be clear with him. This is an order of the House. Is it setting a precedent? Yes, it is setting a precedent, but let us look at that precedent. It is hard to believe that, when three out of four parties think the same thing, there is a mistake. We do believe in moving forward. We are talking about a third party, but that is not a private company or someone who would profit from this. We are talking about the RCMP, which is run by serious people.

I want to remind my colleague that, yes, there was a time, unfortunately, when politics interfered with and intruded directly into the judicial process. It was not us or the House that did that. It was the Prime Minister himself, when he directly interfered in the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

The former justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, had made her decision, and he called her into his office, not to the Liberal Party's office, but to the Prime Minister's Office. He told her that there was an election in Quebec and the Liberals had to win it. An assistant told her that the Liberals had to be re-elected.

Never before in history have we heard testimony with such serious consequences. We saw one person interfere directly in the judicial process. It was the Prime Minister. He should have immediately put a stop to it. He should have said that enough was enough, that they were in the office of the Prime Minister of Canada, not in the office of the leader of the Liberal Party, and he should have kicked them out, but no, he added insult to injury by saying unabashedly:

[English]

“We need to get re-elected.” Shame on the Prime Minister.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to ask my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent a question. A while ago, he criticized the Liberal government for being incapable of saying yes. I am going to give him a chance to say yes to a question that I think will come as no surprise to him.

To help seniors who are often struggling, living in poverty or grappling with inflation and the rising cost of living, we forced the Liberal government to introduce a new program that provides access to dental care and saves people money. Not only is it improv-

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ing peoples' health, it is also helping them save more on their bills. We decided to let seniors be the first to benefit from the program because they need it the most.

Already, 240,622 Quebeckers have used the program. I am sure that many come from my colleague's riding. Can he commit today to keeping this program, which is important for seniors, if his party wins the next election?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to correct something I said just a minute ago. I said the following:

[English]

“We need to get re-elected.”

[Translation]

I attributed that statement to the Prime Minister, but it was one of the Prime Minister's staffers who said it. Anyone can see that is appalling.

Having said that, I would respond to the member that we very clearly have the best interests of seniors at heart, always. We will continue to demonstrate that.

Something important happened in our parliamentary work today. The Bloc Québécois, which has been naively playing along for five weeks, finally realized that the Liberal government has absolutely no interest in advancing their files. Now, all Canadians are wondering if the New Democratic Party will follow through on the statement it made in August when it tore up its partnership agreement with the Liberal government. Will the NDP continue to be the Liberal Party's doormat, or will it stand up for all Canadians?

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the Bloc Québécois's ultimatum. It is October 29. When the leader of the Bloc Québécois mentioned this in question period earlier, my colleague's leader looked very happy. All the Conservative Party has to do is move a motion of non-confidence in this government and the Bloc Québécois will support it.

However, Parliament is paralyzed because of this question of privilege. The Conservative Party is preventing itself from moving a non-confidence motion. I am wondering what the Conservatives' strategy really is. Are they really prepared to trigger a carbon tax election, as they say every day here in the House? Why do they not do so by putting an end to this question of privilege?

• (1745)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, it is the government, not the official opposition, that sets the agenda of the House. The government can put an opposition day on the agenda and allow a debate on the question. That is the reality.

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Another thing that needs to be made clear is that, for five weeks, the Bloc Québécois believed in the Liberal government, believed in the Prime Minister. It placed its trust in this government twice during votes in the House. After nine years of Liberal governance, how could the Bloc place so much trust in this government? I say this with all due respect. It was naive and not very clever, because it did not lead to anything. Absolutely nothing was gained.

Of course, we are happy to see that the Bloc Québécois is now going to do its job as an opposition party, but again, we have to ask: Will the NDP stand by its decision to tear up the agreement in August?

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member who spoke has done a lot of great work on the environment file. I know he cares very much about the environment. When we look at this fund that we are debating here today, it operated smoothly across multiple governments up until the current government got elected and started meddling with it. Then we started to see conflicts of interest and to see Liberal insiders getting huge amounts of taxpayers' dollars funnelled into their companies, based on their own involvement on this board.

I am wondering just what level of shame these people would feel. I am wondering if my colleague has any thoughts on these people stealing from the taxpayers and also ruining a program that actually had done some fantastic work before.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, the point is that when it is rotten at the top, obviously there will be an impact everywhere in the government's pyramid.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to the subamendment on the privilege motion moved by Conservatives to try to force the government to finally be transparent about the corruption it has allowed to run rampant, corruption which just happened to benefit its friends who it appointed to the board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

Time after time, we have seen the Liberal government fleecing taxpayers so it can enrich itself and its friends. It seems the only people in this country benefiting from the government's radical policies are Liberal insiders, who get to abuse Canadian taxpayer dollars without any oversight.

Every time we bring up the scandalous actions of these Liberal insiders, the government resists any attempts at holding them accountable or enacting any sort of consequences against them. Additionally, there is no initiative undertaken by the Liberal government to try to make up for these failures. There is no attempt to recoup the money these corrupt board members at SDTC funnelled to their own companies. In fact, all of the government's effort has been put into blocking Canadians from knowing the truth. It appears as though the whole purpose of SDTC was to just get as much money as possible out the door and into the businesses of well-connected Liberal insiders.

Yesterday, we saw the disdain these Liberal insiders hold for Canadians. When Conservatives have the audacity to hold them accountable and demand answers, they completely lose it. Yesterday

at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the lawyer for Andrée-Lise Méthot, who is the founder and managing partner of Cycle Capital Management, actually began yelling at a Conservative member who was asking questions of his client. He seemed to think that to question her actions was unacceptable, despite her involvement in directing millions of dollars to businesses she had a vested interest in.

In fact, the meeting had to be suspended due to the disgusting behaviour and utter disrespect the lawyer showed to the committee. Even after being admonished by the chair during the suspension, he continued, if members can believe it, to make faces and wave his hands at another Conservative member while that member was asking questions. It is unsurprising that this is what it has come to with Liberal insiders treating parliamentary committees with such disdain when the government itself treats the House the exact same way.

What should Canadians think when they see these Liberal insiders can treat Parliament in such a way and still face no consequences from the corrupt government? It is obvious that Liberals and their friends believe that they supersede Parliament, that their abuse of taxpayers' dollars should not be questioned and that their actions are above reproach.

In fact, I am sure these Liberal insiders are confident in their actions because they used to employ the current radical Liberal environment minister, who was their lobbyist before becoming a Liberal MP and now minister. In fact, it came out through the course of this scandal that the environment minister still holds shares in a company that had special insider access to direct funding to businesses that it was invested in, a company that more than tripled in value since its co-founder was appointed to the SDTC board.

I suppose we should not be surprised that these connections have come to light, as it seems every other week a minister is connected to some scandal. This very minister is under scrutiny right now for his abject failure in his own department to manage the grants and contributions program at ECCC. Since 2018, over \$4 billion has been given to Environment Canada for its grants and contributions funding. Now the department has failed an audit. The auditors found that there was a lack of documentation, a lack of oversight and an inability to show value for money or that what was paid for was actually received. Does that sound familiar? There was a lack of oversight of and a lack of value for money for over \$4 billion, and in some instances, there was an inability to show that what was paid for was actually received.

● (1750)

This has become the common practice of the Liberal government. A lack of documentation, a lack of oversight and an inability to show value for money or that what was paid for was actually received have become synonymous with Liberal corruption. Suffice it to say that the department performed so poorly, the auditors warned that the management of funds was so sloppy that it represented “potential legal and reputational damage”.

The environment minister is happy to let the potential abuse of hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars within his department go unaddressed with no consequences. This is the sort of behaviour that is permissible by the government, by the cabinet. When his friends and former employees appear before committee, it is obvious that they feel they are entitled to treat Parliament with contempt. They know that their minister friend will do all that he can to stop Conservatives from holding them to account.

The attempted cover-up of the SDTC scandal, the refusal to hand over unredacted documents to the House and the insistence by the government that it should dictate to the House what information it can receive are indicative of the arrogance it governs with. Canadians are tired of this holier-than-thou attitude. They are tired of the Liberal corruption and are tired of the cover-ups. They are calling on the government to be transparent and to come clean about what it let happen at SDTC. Canadians are paying attention and want the documents to be turned over unredacted. As the Speaker has ruled, the government must do so.

Instead, the Liberals are desperately trying to cover up their corruption. Perhaps we will see them take this Speaker to court, just as they did with the last Speaker. However, if they really want to avoid turning over these documents, they could just call an election and see what Canadians think, but I digress.

With the subamendment, which was put forward by my colleague, the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, and was seconded by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, we are seeking to add more witnesses to the amendment to appear at the procedure and House affairs committee. The subamendment seeks to add the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the former deputy secretary to the cabinet, Paul MacKinnon.

It should be noted that the Privacy Commissioner of Canada complied with the order from the House and did deposit all of the documents requested in an unredacted format. To all the Liberals who have been repeating the same talking point that the documents must be redacted to protect privacy, they may want to discuss this with the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who sees no issue with turning over unredacted documents to the House.

The Liberals keep throwing up roadblocks to keep these documents secret so they can avoid any semblance of accountability. The real question here is this: What are they hiding? It is important that we hear from these witnesses to get the full picture of the extent of the cover-up the government is trying to orchestrate. This subamendment would change the amendment to read:

“provided that it be an instruction to the committee:

(a) that the following witnesses be ordered to appear before the committee separately for two hours each:

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(i) the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry,

(ii) the Clerk of the Privy Council,

(iii) the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who respected the Order of the House and deposited unredacted documents,

(iv) Paul MacKinnon, the former Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Governance),

(v) the Auditor General of Canada,

(vi) the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police,

(vii) the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada,

(viii) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons,

(ix) the Acting President of Sustainable Development Technology Canada,

(x) a panel consisting of the Board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada; and

(b) that it report back to the House no later than Friday, November 22, 2024.

The subamendment is important, as it would allow the amendment to prescribe a list of witnesses the committee on procedure and House affairs should hear from to learn the full scope of the issue at hand. The importance of witness testimony in this matter cannot be overstated.

● (1755)

The scandal broke with the testimony of an SDTC whistle-blower. Looking back at that testimony, it is clear there is plenty more to uncover with the scandal. The whistle-blower said:

I think the Auditor General's investigation was more of a cursory review. I don't think the goal and mandate of the Auditor General's office is to actually look into criminality, so I'm not surprised by the fact that they haven't found anything criminal. They're not looking at intent. If their investigation was focused on intent, of course they would find the criminality.

The whistle-blower went on to say:

Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization.

It is clear that the investigation must continue and that the government must be forced to comply with the investigation and to turn over the unredacted documents. In fact, the whistle-blower even made a comment about the Minister of Industry's claim that there was no criminality. He said:

I know that the federal government, like the minister, has continued saying that there was no criminal intent and nothing was found, but I think the committee would agree that they're not to be trusted on this situation. I would happily agree to whatever the findings are by the RCMP, but I would say that I wouldn't trust that there isn't any criminality unless the RCMP is given full authority to investigate.

Privilege

The Minister of Industry may see no issues with SDTC board members' awarding millions of dollars to their own companies or to companies that they had investments in, but Canadians do. Canadians are outraged that at a time when two million people are using food banks every month and a time when people are struggling to afford housing, the government is letting its Liberal insider friends gorge themselves on taxpayer dollars. It allows them to enrich themselves on the back of Canadians, and then it shields the insiders from any consequences.

The Auditor General found that nearly \$400 million was involved in cases of conflict of interest. We have heard that, but the minister would like everyone to just move on and to stop looking into the issue because he has moved the program under the responsibility of the National Research Council, which means there is nothing more to see here and there is nothing to be done.

The money the minister allowed Liberal insiders to take from Canadians is lost forever. Instead of trying to recoup the money, which was clearly awarded in instances of conflicts of interest, the Liberals just want to move on and forget that the issue ever happened. In fact, the minister does not even want an investigation to happen.

We would think that one of the first steps one would take in response to hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money being abused in this way would be for the RCMP to investigate what took place and assess whether a crime has been committed. However, the minister did not do that, because he does not want to throw his friends under the bus, especially at a time when he is likely to be looking for new employment in the next year.

This is not the first time Liberals have chosen their friends over Canadians, and we can assume it will not be the last. Whether we are talking about SDTC, ArriveCAN, McKinsey or any one of the other Liberal procurement scandals, there are clear patterns. In every one of them, there is always a severe lack of documentation. In fact the Auditor General said that the lack of documentation around ArriveCAN was the worst she had ever seen.

ArriveCAN is an application that started out with a price tag of \$80,000, which then ballooned to \$60 million that we actually know of. It is an application that, according to the Auditor General, we will never actually know the true cost of, given the lack of information available for her to do a proper audit.

• (1800)

It is deeply concerning to know that the Auditor General cannot even do her work. There is a complete lack of documentation, a lack of information available, as she is trying to demonstrate that taxpayers did in fact get good value for the money that was spent.

We also saw in these cases, many times, that there were specific companies that received special treatment because they just happened to have connections to the government or its top officials. In each case, we saw a similar reaction from the government. First, its members denied that there were any issues. Then, they tried to block any investigation from happening. Then, they refused to comply with the investigations by not turning over documents. When we finally got some answers and revealed their corruption, they wanted to move past it, chalk it up to lessons learned and

move on. We are not willing to allow that to happen while taxpayers foot the bill for enriching Liberal insiders.

We believe that Canadians deserve answers, and they deserve a fulsome investigation into what has happened at SDTC. This is why we are here today. We continue to argue on behalf of Canadians and argue for their right to have their questions answered. That is why we continue to call on the Liberal government to hand over the unredacted documents and to pass this subamendment and the main motion, once it has been properly amended. We can then get to the bottom of this issue so that Parliament can move on to other work.

• (1805)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am actually confused about something after listening to the member's speech.

The member talked about the subamendment that we are currently on, which is to add more witnesses. She explained why the Conservatives wanted to add more witnesses, which is why we have a subamendment. However, other Conservatives have fully admitted that they do not want to vote for this motion at all, and they are refusing to vote for the motion until their demands are met. At that point, the motion would be moot.

I just do not understand why they would openly admit that they are against the motion and will refuse to let it go to committee but, at the same time, put forward a motion to add more witnesses when it gets to committee. Why even put forward a subamendment to add more witnesses if the Conservatives never even really had the intention of voting on anything? Is it just because a subamendment gave them the opportunity to reset the speaking order so that everybody could speak again? That is the way it looks to me.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I do not think anybody on this side of the House has said that they are against the motion we put forward.

Conservatives are looking for transparency and accountability from the government, which continues to defy orders from committees, from the House and from the Speaker himself. The government refuses to hand over the documents, and we see how that went with the Winnipeg lab documents: It took the Speaker to court in order to avoid accountability.

The whole point of this debate is to highlight the government's infringement on the privilege of the House. Until the government rectifies this, we will have no resolution in this place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent called the Bloc Québécois naive. I wonder who is really naive.

The Conservatives are like an army of Gollums, obsessed with seizing their precious power. They are forcing the government to table documents, which we agreed on. However, unlike the Conservatives, who are not unanimous, we are unanimous on the fact that we are not going to sacrifice supply management or seniors. Our ultimatum, which was perfectly respectable and appropriate at the time, was our final attempt to save supply management and achieve something for seniors.

We are entering the third week of debate. The member claims that the government controls the agenda. Right now, the Conservatives are controlling the agenda. If they really want us to trigger an election, then they need to stop obstructing the House.

The Conservatives are the ones who are being naive if they do not realize that it suits the Liberals if they are not forced to prorogue, because they do not want an election. They are not being forced to take the blame for a prorogation.

I listened to the member who seemed to want the Liberals to call an election themselves. I am sorry, but in order for an election to be triggered, the opposition parties are going to have to force the government to call an election through a confidence vote.

Who is really being naive? Who is currently blocking the opportunity to trigger an election?

It is the Conservatives, who are filibustering their own question of privilege.

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, if my colleague really wants me to say who I believe is naive, I am going to say it is the member and his party. They had two opportunities to join us in voting non-confidence in the government.

I think it is pretty naive of them to think as they do about reaching the deadline they set, which looks like it will pass with none of the resolutions they were looking for. They are naive in believing that once we get through the business at hand, we will suddenly be able to go to an election. What he should be doing is talking to the NDP to find out whether it is going to join us and the Bloc in defeating the government.

• (1810)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague opened her speech by telling us a story about what happened in committee with a witness when a lawyer who represented that person lost it on a Conservative member of the committee for simply asking some very basic questions. It is pretty clear what is happening here: Liberal insiders got caught with their hands in the cookie jar and the lid got slammed on them.

How many more Liberal insiders will have to get their hands slammed in the cookie jar before they learn that they cannot have open season on taxpayers' dollars?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. I do not think any of us could have imagined the number of scandals that one government would be involved in and that we would see a government working so hard to obstruct not only the work of the House but the work of committees.

Privilege

The Liberal government has a pattern of trying to obstruct our work and of not handing over documents when committees are asking for them in order to do the important work that committees are supposed to do. The Liberals are also regularly supported by the NDP in this effort. We have seen it time and time again in the government operations committee. If we put this together with the government's continued refusal to comply with parliamentary orders, it shows the Liberals' complete lack of respect for this institution, parliamentarians and Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for starters, to my colleagues in the Bloc who are now suddenly trying to suggest that the Conservatives are playing games and that the Bloc does not want to be debating this forever, I would suggest that we are open to negotiations around how to put an end to this. If the member would like to talk to his whip and have his whip talk to our whip, we certainly would be open to that idea. It is a bit rich for the Bloc members to somehow suggest it is completely the Conservatives' fault that we are in week four or five of this now, when they have just as much responsibility in this.

I am going to go back to the first question I had for the member, which she did not answer. She said, in answer to my question, that nobody on her side seems to be against the motion. With respect, that is not what I asked. I realize everybody is in favour of it.

My question, and I will put it very clearly, was this: Why put forward a subamendment to invite more people to PROC when the Conservatives know full well they are not interested in passing the motion to start with? Other Conservatives have said they would not vote in favour of it because there is only one thing they want, which is for us to comply with their demands.

The member has to answer my question. Why put forward this subamendment when the Conservatives are contradicting this by suggesting they have no interest in passing it in the first place?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, it is really hard to follow the logic of this member. I find that often in this place.

We on this side of the House believe it is very important for Canadians to understand what is happening in this place when it comes to the Liberals' absolute disregard for parliamentary process, parliamentary privilege and complying with a parliamentary order. When we stand in this place and say, "No, you have to comply with the orders of the Speaker that have been put forward," they just do not get it. They want to continue to do what they do without being held accountable or being transparent.

We are here to make sure the government is held accountable and is transparent. We will debate this until it does what it has been ordered to do, which is to provide the unredacted documents.

Privilege

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that the current situation suits the Liberals, who do not have to take the blame for proroguing or for postponing opposition days, which would allow for a non-confidence motion to be moved. Yes, it is a disgrace that they have been refusing to table documents for three weeks. After three weeks, it is clear that they will not be tabling them. It is up to the people to decide what is right and what they want, and that will happen in an election, period.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I will simply point out that the member and his caucus had an opportunity to vote non-confidence in the government and did not. Now they are saying, three weeks later, that suddenly they have seen the light and really want the opportunity to vote non-confidence in the government. I would encourage him to talk to the members of the NDP caucus. We are ready. We are willing. He has a willing partner here. He should talk to the NDP.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take to my feet today to talk about one, maybe two Liberal scandals that have happened over the last nine years. Actually, there are probably 68 Liberal scandals that have happened over the past nine years under the government. In 2015, I remember a young, bright-eyed, beautiful-haired person running to be Prime Minister, and that person promised to lead the most open and accountable government in Canadian history. How far and how quickly we have fallen.

Today, we are debating the subamendment to the privilege motion concerning Sustainable Development Technology Canada, which was supposed to help people become more sustainable. A greener Canada is what this fund was supposed to be for. My colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle said it very well and very succinctly. He said that Liberals are going to liberal. I will unpack that. It means that it does not matter which generation it is or what iteration of Liberal people are, they are always going to enrich their friends. Liberal years are tough years for Canadians, but they are great years for Liberals.

I will go through a couple of examples. SDTC was a \$380-million fund, and when it was audited by the Auditor General, she found 186 conflicts of interest. That is \$380 million that the Liberals used to pork barrel and give to their friends and families.

I will have a few examples of this as I go through my presentation, but I would be remiss if I did not congratulate Premier Scott Moe and the Saskatchewan Party for once again returning a common-sense government to Saskatchewan. This is the fifth term for the Saskatchewan Party under premiers Wall and Moe. This has been done only two other times. It was done when Saskatchewan was first formed and had a Liberal premier for six terms and, when there used to be an NDP that stood for something, Tommy Douglas won five terms in Saskatchewan. Premier Moe and Premier Wall have tied Tommy Douglas in how many terms they have won consecutively. It is a great thing for my province.

I know lots of people put their names forward, and I will congratulate everyone who put their name on a lawn sign or a ballot. It

is never an easy thing to do. There were candidates for the NDP, the Saskatchewan Party, the Sask United Party and the Buffalo Party. I congratulate everyone who put their name forward to take part in the election process. Some lose the election, but they always gain some experience and learn a few things.

Some friends of mine sought re-election. I want to congratulate Ken Cheveldayoff, who won in Saskatoon, and Blaine McLeod, who won in Lumsden-Morse. He is a great MLA as well. Lots of people have been returned to the legislature for the Saskatchewan Party, and I once again congratulate Premier Moe and his team for delivering a fifth term for the Saskatchewan Party.

We talk about scandals here, but in Saskatchewan, in 1982, Grant Devine ran against Allan Blakeney. History tends to repeat itself. There is a wonderful quote from Grant Devine when they were debating that sounds similar to the answers we sometimes get from some of the Liberal ministers. They were debating, and Allan Blakeney kept saying how great the government had it and how everything was going well for the government. There is one line in one particular debate when Grant Devine said that, if the province was so well off, why did they not have more money in their pockets? That is an interesting comment. Do members not feel that is happening right now in Canada?

The NDP-Liberals continue to say that Canadians have never had it so good, that Canadians are doing so well and that we have all these wonderful programs that they are paying for, which boggles my mind. The government does not pay for anything. The government does not have any money unless it takes it through taxes from businesses or people's paycheques. Therefore, it is not paying for anything.

• (1820)

Canadians, through their tax dollars, are paying for all the programs the NDP and the Liberals are foisting upon the people. They do not have a choice to pay their taxes, but when it comes to tax dollars, I say that a dollar in the pocket of the person who earned it is always better spent by them than by a government. That is something I will always believe.

I want to talk about the SDTC motion, some of the things that have gone on and where the money has gone.

Whenever we scratch the surface of Liberal-NDP spending, it seems like there is always a connection to, perhaps, a minister, like the Minister of International Trade. There are a lot of other examples, including the foreign affairs minister, whose spouse got quite a few grants from a few economic development funds. It is weird how there is always a familial connection to the people who are receiving grants from the government.

Privilege

There have been a couple of other scandals over the last nine long years. We all remember the Aga Khan vacation scandal, the prison needle exchange program and the pressure put on the former justice minister to get Liberal donor SNC-Lavalin off the hook, with her being fired for not helping. I think we all remember Jody Wilson-Raybould and that she stood up for what was right, but the Prime Minister threw her right under the bus. We also remember Jane Philpott, who stood side by side with Jody Wilson-Raybould. She was also thrown under the bus by the feminist Prime Minister.

We also remember the WE Charity scandal, which is interesting because it caused the 2021 election. There was a prorogation too, which may be a bit of foreshadowing for the current scandal. With the WE Charity, the Liberals were once again caught giving money to well-connected friends. I think they used some of that money to help the Prime Minister's family with some travelling and a couple of grants to some brothers.

To get themselves out of that situation so that the House of Commons and committee could not dig deeper, there was a prorogation. Then what happened after the prorogation? The 2021 election was called. Around how many millions was that? It was about \$600 million. The current scandal is only \$380 million, so not quite as expensive as the WE Charity scandal, but the Liberals prorogued and called an election. Let us hope they follow that pattern, because I think Canadians are ready for a carbon tax election.

The list is so long that I might have lost my spot. Another scandal was giving hundreds of thousands of dollars in ventilator contracts to Liberal Party insider Frank Baylis. I think Frank got \$25 million for that contract, which is interesting because he never even produced ventilators.

That leads me to another point about the SDTC scandal and the way Liberals spend money. During COVID, over \$600 billion was spent, but \$300 billion of that was not spent on any of the COVID programs. We would love to know at some point in time where the other \$300 billion went that was supposed to help Canadians.

Here is another great line by the Prime Minister. Do members remember when he went on TV for a big, national press conference and said that the government will go into debt so Canadians do not have to? Does everyone remember that line? I wonder if the Prime Minister understands how government debt gets repaid.

An hon. member: Tell us.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, we have to do it by taking more tax dollars from Canadians.

One of my Liberal friends said, "Tell us." In an earlier part of my speech, which I will repeat, I said the government does not actually have any money; it only has the money it takes from Canadians. The government has never made a dollar ever, so if it is going to pay back debt, it has to take more money away from Canadians, which will not allow them to fill their cars with gas, take their kids to hockey or put groceries on the table to feed their families. That is what we are talking about. The Prime Minister can go on national TV and say the government will take on debt so Canadians will not have to, but that is an absolute fallacy.

• (1825)

There are a few more scandals I can get through before my time is done. I remember the next one very well, because we were here on the floor of the House, which was illegally invoking the Emergencies Act in February 2022. This is another scandal that will continue to grow as we get further down the road. There was a commission, and it was ruled that the government of the day, and I think it was a former public safety minister who did it, invoked the Emergencies Act illegally in order to take the rights and everyday freedoms away from Canadians.

I know my Liberal colleagues do enjoy a speech, and they are going to hear more and more about some of the scandals they have been involved with throughout the years. I know the backbenchers are feeling their oats, because they had another caucus meeting. I hope a few of them threw their names on another list. Perhaps they will be on the speaking list tomorrow morning and can share some of the wisdom that they have gained over the years with the Prime Minister. I do not know if Katie allows them to speak or how that works, but hopefully members sent their emails so they can get on the speaking list in their caucus meeting tomorrow. To be a fly on that wall; that would be an interesting meeting to be part of.

I hope no one's hand is too sore from writing their name so many times on a piece of paper asking for the Prime Minister to resign. To be fair, we do understand how that works. We are hoping those members do get a few more signatures on that paper over the next few weeks. I think members would really appreciate that. Canadians would appreciate these members standing up for them and making sure the government knows how Canadians feel about the current leader.

I just saw some approval ratings for the Prime Minister, actually. In Saskatchewan, he is running at an approval rating of -51%. That is tough. Winter is actually ahead of him right now. It is pretty hard to be that unpopular in Saskatchewan.

I would like to get back to the issues at hand, especially when it comes to SDTC and the privilege motion. I for sure can bring it back to another Liberal scandal, such as the scandal of 380 million taxpayers' dollars that were given to Liberal insiders and the fact that the Auditor General found 186 conflicts of interest in the grants that were delivered.

Privilege

I believe the board members were all appointed by the Prime Minister and by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. The fact that board members were voting in a board meeting to give their own companies taxpayers' dollars is really the central issue. The fact is these people, who were put on the board by the Prime Minister, voted in a board meeting to give themselves money.

The Auditor General found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that on occasion could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or the development of green technology. There was \$334 million over 186 cases given to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest. We have said that a few times. As well, \$58 million was given to projects without ensuring contribution terms were met.

How, when there is a board, do its members not realize that \$58 million was given out and there were no performance metrics? Board members had no idea if these projects were actually going to do what they were supposed to do. I know this is uncomfortable for some of our colleagues across the way. This is going to be like the Paul Martin-Chrétien ad scam. We all know there have been comparisons, but the whistle-blower said that ad scam would pale in comparison to how corrupt this is.

As the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle said, Liberals got a Liberal. It is just in their DNA.

• (1830)

As a young lad, when I was at the University of Regina, I took Canadian politics. I graduated with a political science degree. I wrote a paper called “Have the Liberals Lost Legitimacy to Govern?” It was about the Afghan issue, but there are so many similarities to this. I know some members across the way will remember the name Jack Wiebe. He was my neighbour back where I grew up, in Rush Lake. Jack was a Liberal MLA. He was then a lieutenant-governor in Saskatchewan for 10 years and then he was appointed as a Liberal senator. He had a lot of connections.

When I interviewed Jack for my paper, he said yes, the Liberals had lost legitimacy to govern, because they had lost the trust of the Canadian public. It is amazing how history repeats itself if we do not learn from it. That is exactly what is happening to the current iteration of the Liberal Party. It is a far cry from Jack's party, I will admit, and from the Chrétien and Martin days, but the Liberals have repeated the same mistakes over and over again. They have become out of touch.

The current group of NDP-Liberals think the Canadian people are there for them to govern and should be working for them, instead of the other way around. That is when they start to think it is okay to give \$8 million to Frank Baylis, who did not even create ventilators; it is okay for the Prime Minister to have \$80,000 vacations given to him; it is okay for the Governor General to waste \$100,000 by throwing private jet parties; and it is okay to decriminalize hard drugs.

We have not gotten to some of the scandals. I am very thankful the people who work in my office could make a complete list of Liberal scandals. I might hand it over to some of my colleagues. My staff got up to 68 scandals the Liberals have been a part of over the last nine years. Not only have the Liberals have been a part of

68 scandals, but the New Democrats continue to prop up the most corrupt government in the history of Canada.

I am from Saskatchewan and the NDP has a long history there. Can members imagine propping up the most corrupt government in the history of Canada just because the leader wants his pension? It is unbelievable. We all know we are going to be here past February 2025 because that is when the member for Burnaby South's pension is vested. We know the NDP will not find the constitutional fortitude to vote the Liberals down at least until that is vested.

How do the New Democrats go back to the people they represent and say, day after day, they support a government that wasted \$380 million of taxpayers' money? They support a government that took away the rights and freedoms of Canadians because they wanted to have a conversation with the Prime Minister. They support a government that froze the bank accounts of Canadians who bought a T-shirt from people who were coming to have their voice heard.

The senior Trudeau, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, did the same thing and invoked the emergencies act, but the NDP was different then. Tommy Douglas said invoking the act was like “using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut.” He actually stood up for the rights and freedoms of Canadians, which were hard-fought. The current iteration of the NDP will bend over backward to make sure the leader gets his pension. The New Democrats have completely forgotten they are here to represent the people of Canada and not to prop up a corrupt government.

I wish I had a bit more time; maybe I will on another day. I know my colleagues immensely enjoyed hearing about some of the scandals, and I did not even get halfway through that list of 68. Well, maybe there are a few more I can get through.

This is interesting: sunlight is the best disinfectant, a transparent government. The Liberals have pushed through more than 72 secret orders in council. Here is another good one. The foreign affairs minister should listen to this one. Diplomats were sent to party with Russians while Russia invaded Ukraine. That was something I remember coming up, and she just said, “I do not know where my diplomats are.”

• (1835)

I will end by saying that the Saskatchewan people got it right last night in electing Premier Scott Moe's Saskatchewan Party government, and when we get a carbon tax election, Canadians will get it right in sending common-sense Conservatives to clean up the Liberals' mess once again.

Privilege

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said one thing that I was interested in. I do not know how he arrived at it, but it was that “winter is ahead” of the Prime Minister in the polls. If he could explain that to me, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, that is a tough but fair question. I will explain it to the hon. member. It is really cold in Saskatchewan. It gets down to about -40C, minus -50C, but not quite down to minus -51C, which is where the Prime Minister's approval rating is in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Regina—Lewvan. We are neighbours, and I am grateful for his service.

The member talked about money. Basically, his statement was that people do not pay taxes, but government takes taxes. He only had 20 minutes, and he tried to explain basic finances to our Liberal colleagues across the way, but I do not think he would have enough time in that 20-minute period. I would like to give him an opportunity to explain basic finances, how taxes work and how the people of Canada are getting robbed.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, that is a tough but fair question. We are neighbours by happenstance, but we are friends by choice, and so I appreciate the comments coming from my colleague for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

I think sometimes people do not remember, but I remember that the member for Burnaby South sometimes tries to compare potatoes and apples when he is trying to figure out his grocery bill, and so we need to know the difference between a potato and an apple for starters. Second, when we are taking in less money than we are giving out, that is called a deficit. Finally, we should never have the highest spending of our revenues on debt financing. In Canada, in the next couple of years, the highest line item that Canadians are going to have to pay for is debt financing, and that goes straight to the heart of the Prime Minister saying that the government will take on debt so that Canadians will not have to. What a farce.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were told earlier that the Liberal Party is the one that has the power to do more in terms of an election. The Bloc Québécois thinks that the Conservative Party is the one that is being rather contradictory here, because it is paralyzing the work of Parliament, while saying that all it wants is to trigger an election. I would like my colleague to explain which of these things he really wants to do.

Does he want to trigger an election or does he want to extend the question of privilege and paralyze the government?

Which of these two contradictory things does he want to do?

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague and friend from the Bloc is mistaken. The Liberals could end this today. They would not even have to hear my speech. Produce the documents, give them to the RCMP unredacted and the business of the House will carry on. This is completely in the NDP-Liberal government's court. If they produce the documents to the RCMP unredacted, we can move on. However, unfortunately for them, I think the

next thing on the agenda is the privilege motion regarding another one of their ministers, and so I guess we will be back talking about privilege regardless.

• (1840)

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member started his speech by talking a bit about the provincial elections, which gives me the opportunity to congratulate David Eby and the B.C. NDP on getting a third mandate. It also potentially gives him the opportunity to condemn the remarks of Conservative candidates in the B.C. election who were racist towards the Muslim community and indigenous communities. I would hope that everyone in the House, including that member, would condemn those comments.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what comment the member is talking about, but I will say to landslide Eby, congratulations to the Premier. I think he got a majority by a seat or two. Yes, there is an NDP government, and that gives me a chance to talk about NDP government scandals, which I never got to.

I am from Saskatchewan, and if we think that the list of 68 scandals is bad, I have a book here of 50 pages of NDP scandals of the provincial government in Saskatchewan. There are so many scandals that we are able to talk about. I am looking forward to having that conversation another day.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from what the party across the way talks about, Canadians have never had it so good. I know from my hon. colleague's background with his family and kids, he would understand the people he represents and how Canadians have not had it so good.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, this does come down to the heart of the issue, which is that Canadian families are struggling. It is getting harder and harder to make ends meet. No one in the House can disagree with that. Over two million people are going to food banks each month. It is harder, and it is harder than it has been for years.

When we talk about the families, when we do door knocking on the doorsteps in our community, the first thing that comes up is the affordability issue. My dad always said that, if we take care of the pennies, the dimes will look after themselves. The government has just spent way too much money, and it is coming out of the pockets of Canadians.

That is why we need to have a carbon tax election, so they can have their say, and see if they want to continue on the path they are on, or continue down a path with the common-sense Conservatives, who are going to put more money back in their pockets.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I see a good team from Saskatchewan celebrating yesterday's victory of the Saskatchewan Party. There is no link between us and the Saskatchewan Party. It does not have the word “conservative” in its name. Maybe it is in their attitude, which is good, by the way.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

Twenty years ago, the \$42-million sponsorship scandal made headlines. Today, we are talking about \$390 million in mismanaged funds. It is incredible to see how badly it was managed.

My question is this. Does my colleague think that this is this government's worst scandal? Is it WE Charity, ArriveCAN, the Prime Minister's trips, or SNC-Lavalin, and especially the expulsion of Jody Wilson-Raybould? Those are the other competitors contending for the title of this government's worst scandal.

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, that is a tough question. There are so many scandals the government has been a part of in such a short time. The WE Charity scandal was over \$600 million, and the Liberals actually prorogued Parliament and called an election to make sure that it did not get discovered how deep that went. There was the \$300 billion that was supposed to be spent on COVID. No one knows where that money went.

That is another gigantic scandal when it comes to spending Canadians' money, but I think the biggest scandal was, and I think it goes to the heart of the person that is in the chair as the Prime Minister, on the first day of national reconciliation, the Prime Minister was surfing instead of spending time with indigenous communities in our country.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed I did not hear all 68 of the scandals from the member in his great speech, so I think it would be great to give the member a little more opportunity to maybe pick out another scandal or two, or maybe three or four, because I would love to hear a bit more of the scandals he has uncovered.

● (1845)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, do members remember CERB and how many people collected CERB that were in jail? There were some who were dead who collected CERB. That would be another scandal. Another one would be the fact the CBC gave bonuses to their executive and fired hard-working employees. Another one would be the CBC's travel. Catherine Tait travelled expansively and spent taxpayers' dollars like they were her own. Well, probably not like they were her own because she would have spent less.

How about letting Thomson Reuters treat the Prime Minister's chief of staff to the White House press correspondents dinner? Another one would be the Prime Minister, like I said, skipping the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to go surfing in Tofino. That is a huge scandal. Eliminating mandatory minimums for gun offences while going after law-abiding firearms owners is another scandal.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, my office released a documentary about the addiction crisis. People who are interested in this issue can go to eliteaddiction.ca to find out more about that documentary. In it, we talk specifically about the role of two companies, Purdue Pharma and McKinsey. This is a follow-up to a question I asked earlier about McKinsey.

Here is the story. Purdue Pharma developed a new opioid product, which they overpromoted with false information. This basically caused the opioid crisis. They told people that there was minimal risk of addiction and that, if they had any kind of issue with physical pain, they could take this drug without worrying about addictions. That, of course, was not true. Many people became addicted. They developed an escalating tolerance and physical demand for this drug. That led them to seek higher and higher doses of it and, eventually, to go to street drugs. This is the story of the opioid addiction crisis, in which many people were prescribed dangerous opioids that were overmarketed and overpromoted by Purdue Pharma. These people thought there would not be an addiction risk associated with it. They became addicted. They eventually switched to street drugs, and their lives were destroyed as a result.

Along the way, when Purdue Pharma started to face criticism about this, it went to a company called McKinsey, a global consulting firm. McKinsey provided advice to Purdue on how to supercharge sales of their opioids in the midst of these criticisms. Effectively, it was trying to supercharge the addiction crisis, which had already destroyed many lives and many families at that point. It would go on to continue to destroy many lives, families and communities.

This is a great blight on our society that I think must rightly be laid at the feet of these companies, Purdue Pharma and McKinsey. In the United States, these companies have been compelled to pay massive amounts of compensation, which has been redirected towards treatment and recovery. However, here in Canada, rather than holding companies such as Purdue and McKinsey to account, the Liberal government has continued to pay them and to pursue policies that have provided great financial advantage for them. In the case of Purdue Pharma, it has pursued a safe supply program; this leads to Purdue Pharma being paid to produce more dangerous drugs, which are then provided to those who are struggling with addiction at taxpayer expense. In the case of McKinsey, the government has hired McKinsey directly to provide advice.

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Conservatives have said that we will sue those responsible for the opioid crisis for all the damages and redirect those funds to treatment and recovery. We would make the drug pushers pay, but the Liberals continue to pay the pushers. This is why we feel it is essential to challenge the government's close relationship with and massive spending on McKinsey. It is a choice to go to a company that is one of the actors responsible for the opioid crisis and ask it for advice on a whole range of issues to do with how to run the country. Why would we be paying McKinsey to provide advice instead of holding it to account for what it has done?

I specifically want to ask the government this: What is behind this close relationship with McKinsey? Will it stop paying the pushers and instead support our policy to make the pushers pay?

• (1850)

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government indeed takes its responsibility as the steward of public funds very seriously. We are committed to making sure that government spending stands up to the highest levels of scrutiny. We have said many times already that we welcome and accept the findings and recommendations of the Auditor General and others with regard to their most recent report on procurement and professional services.

The findings are very much in line with several previous internal and external reviews relating to similar matters. These reviews are the basis for the work we have been doing for months now to implement stronger measures to improve oversight and controls of federal procurement. Our government is committed to taking action against bad actors, whether they be federal contractors, anti-abortion activists or homophobic hecklers. I am sure the member across the way agrees with me on the importance of all three.

Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, is the federal government's central purchasing agent and is committed to conducting procurements in an open, fair and transparent manner. Of course, the Government of Canada already has solid regulations, procedures and guidelines in place to make sure that anything that happens in every department is maintained appropriately, but we are always looking for ways to continuously improve our processes, to make them more rigorous and to ensure that decisions and justifications are properly documented along the way.

To that end, PSPC has already instituted several changes. These include introducing a mandatory requirement for contracting authorities to retain all documents related to contractual decisions about professional services. We have also changed how the department administers non-competitive national master standing offers by ensuring that justifications are on file. In addition, PSPC has created a new position: chief of contract quality assurance and records compliance. This will also help to ensure that critical elements of decision-making throughout the procurement process are properly documented, that guidelines and tools are put in place and that quality is being actively monitored.

These efforts are consistent with PSPC's commitment to continuously improve government procurement practices. I can tell the House that officials will keep looking for ways to strengthen the integrity of government procurement. For example, regarding the Au-

ditor General's June 2024 report, we accept her recommendations to further strengthen measures to appropriately report and monitor potential conflicts of interest.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat now has a new mandatory procedure that provides the additional checks and balances for managers, to reinforce their responsibilities and accountabilities when undertaking professional services and procurement activities. Indeed, it is important to have proactive and rigorous processes in place to identify conflicts of interest and procurement processes. PSPC is supporting the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat in the implementation of this new mandatory procedure to ensure that standards across all agencies are met.

I want to thank the Auditor General and her team for undertaking the review and for their findings and valuable recommendations. They will help us continue to improve our processes and further strengthen the integrity of federal procurement of professional services. Our government will do all that is possible to ensure that the best value for Canadian taxpayers and government procurement is maintained throughout the wide degree of procurement that occurs in the Government of Canada.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, some members of the House are well-read, and some have read well the sheets that have been given to them.

Here is my core question: Why McKinsey? I have detailed the history of McKinsey and its involvement in the opioid crisis. We could talk about how it helped the Saudi government identify dissidents. We could talk about its support for Chinese state-run and state-affiliated companies, including those involved in military and quasi-military activity. We could talk about contracts it had or some of the work it did in Russia. The record of McKinsey is well known, especially as it relates to its support for Purdue Pharma.

If we look back at the \$200 million in contracts from the government, many of which did not meet the rules, it speaks to the fact that the government went out of its way to want to help the people at McKinsey. Why? What did it see in McKinsey? Why was it so keen to send taxpayer dollars to McKinsey?

• (1855)

Mr. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate the member's reinforcing the need for all of us, on all sides of the House, to take great care in the use of taxpayer monies for the purposes of providing services to Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

McKinsey is one of many contractors that are being applied and used, and it has been for many years. It is not the largest, by far; it is actually one of the smallest ones. Notwithstanding, we are committed to finding the best value for money in all aspects of procurement, and we have to make sure that we have a proper governing framework in place that we have applied to these very issues. We are always looking at ways to improve procurement processes, as we always do. I appreciate the members opposite for their concern as well.

LABOUR

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour tonight to stand and to be able to see whether I can get some further clarification around a question I recently asked in order to be able to provide some clarification for federal workers across the country. I recently stood to speak to whether the government will be repealing the “one size fits none”, which is what it is being called, return-to-office mandate.

We know that the arbitrary mandate to return to the office three days a week blindsided federal workers. Superficially, it does not sound like a problem. Why would it be a lot to ask to ask people to go back to work three days a week? I need to really clarify what the issues are.

The issue is that it happened without due consultation with the exact people who are impacted by the decision. Workers across Canada were being told that they needed to return to work now three days a week, and there was not a bigger plan put in place. There was not a bigger discussion on how this would impact the workers we rely on to provide essential services across Canada.

I have heard from hundreds of concerned workers across the country in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, there are so many who are impacted by the decision. One example I want to bring to the attention of the House is that of a worker in my riding who came up to me to talk about his experience since the mandate was put in place. He shared with me that he was hired with flexible work arrangements, his productivity was great and he was doing important work for our country, but the return-to-work mandate has now placed him in a position where he needs to share a cubicle with other workers.

The workers are rotating through the cubicle. He has to put his items into a locker at the end of the day. He has to go to a designated room in order to make phone calls. Of course, he is making phone calls all day long. His productivity has decreased. His morale has decreased in his work. It is just so inefficient to ask a worker to go back to work and to sit in a seat when there is not even a seat there for them.

That is not the only issue I am hearing about from workers across Canada. Others were hired under the agreement that they would have flexible work arrangements. If we truly want to have representation in our federal workplaces, we need to be having these conversations.

For example, people have talked to me about an indigenous woman who lives in a rural community. She has been doing great work in what she is doing, but now she has been told she has to return to work. However, it is not possible for her to return to the of-

ice because the travel takes too long. She was hired under the assumption that she would be working in a hybrid model, and she is now being told that that this is no longer the case.

Parents and parents-to-be were told that they would have flexible work arrangements, and now, with no notice, they are being told they have to return to work. We all know how long the child care lists are across Canada. It is unfair to ask parents to suddenly change their entire working conditions to accommodate child care when there is no child care available to them because they were not given the notice needed to make those arrangements.

Employee morale is low. We know that it has just been so disheartening for people who are working in positions with flexible arrangements to feel as if they are being monitored on a daily basis. It is just incredibly challenging for workers.

My question to which I wanted to hear the answer from the government when I previously rose in the House is this: Will the government be repealing the decision, working alongside federal employees to make sure that there are arrangements to keep people in vital roles?

● (1900)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our public service is composed of hard-working Canadians from across the country who are committed to providing the highest level of service to Canadians. Dedicated federal public servants serve Canadians day in and day out, from coast to coast to coast. The services they provide have a real and meaningful impact on Canadians every day.

While it is important to understand that each department and agency is unique, the experience of working in the federal public service, or receiving its services, should be the same across the country. That is why the public service implemented an updated common hybrid work model in September. The decision to make changes to the directive on hybrid work was an administrative one. It was made by the Treasury Board Secretariat, working with the Privy Council; this was not a political decision.

The updated model requires public servants to work on site for a minimum of three days a week when their tasks and functions allow. Executives are now required to be on site a minimum of four days a week so that they can best support their teams. To prepare for the implementation of the updated hybrid model, departments have been working closely with both PSPC and Shared Services Canada since May to ensure that there are enough well-equipped office spaces and technology for their employees.

While most organizations were ready to welcome all their employees to the office at least three days a week in September, we knew that some would require additional time because of renovations or the addition of extra workspaces. In these situations, implementation timelines were adjusted.

Adjournment Proceedings

Recognizing the importance of union engagement, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat held a series of meetings with bargaining agents to discuss issues, such as office space, technology and privacy. It is important to note that the direction on prescribed presence in the workplace and the directive on telework are distinct from each other; moreover, neither is a part of the collective agreements.

However, even with all this preparation, we expected and planned for challenges. This is the reality of any changes within an organization as large, diverse and distributed as the federal public service.

As noted, contingency plans were established. Departments continue to carefully monitor implementation and to actively seek employee feedback to support the updated hybrid work model in their organizations. The clerks and department heads will continue to monitor implementation and optimization of this directive, ensuring fairness, flexibility and a focus on a high-performing public service that is delivering for Canadians.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that answer does not actually coincide with what I hear from workers in the community.

There is clear evidence that, with flexible work arrangements for federal workers, we saw increased productivity. We are in a climate crisis. We saw a significant decrease in carbon emissions during the time that there were flexible work arrangements compared with when the same workers were working full time. Just here in Ottawa, this stat shows that emissions have been 25% lower. In addition, in terms of taxes, we know that more public funds will have to go into making these improvements to the buildings that we are hearing about. Currently, the infrastructure is not in place.

Productivity was high and people were happy when working in a flexible work arrangement. Why is this not continuing to happen, and will the government repeal this decision?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that the government is proud of the work of our public service. They work hard for Canadians every day, and the experience of working in the public service should be the same no matter where someone is in the country. We have adopted a common hybrid work model that aims to foster the kind of culture we need to best serve Canadians. While any transition of this scale has its challenges, I want to reassure the member in the House that federal departments and agencies continue to listen to employees' feedback to make sure they have the support they need.

This updated hybrid work model will build stronger teams and contribute to better service delivery for Canadians.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I asked a question about the steel industry. I talked about the brave steelworker who stood up to the Liberal Prime Minister when he was trying to justify the alleged work the Liberals are doing for the steel industry. The Prime Minister had an encounter with this brave steelworker, who, as far as I am concerned, spoke truth to power, which is a rare thing.

The Prime Minister was talking about how he is doing such great things by putting steel tariffs there, following the Conservatives, who called for steel tariffs, and he talked about some investment and said to the steelworker that \$400 million is going to keep his job. The steelworker said, "What about the 40 per cent taxes I am paying? And I don't have a doctor." The Prime Minister said, "The \$400 million invested means you are going to have a job."

This is where the steelworker got very interesting. He said, "I think you're only here for another year. We won't see you around probably in another year, I'm guessing." On this count, I think, this steelworker is where most Canadians are. The Prime Minister went on to try to convince him of the various things the government is doing that are so great. This is what the steelworker finished with. He said, "I don't believe you for a second."

I would agree with this brave steelworker who said that to the Prime Minister. Now, why would he say that? For one thing, the carbon tax is going to kill the steel industry.

About six months ago, I met with the CEOs and the union representatives for steel manufacturing in Canada. All of them said very directly to me that if the carbon tax continues to go up, there will be no steel industry in Canada. This was not just the steel CEOs. Representatives of the United Steelworkers were there and they said the same thing: The carbon tax is going to kill the steel industry in Canada. We can talk about how terrible the carbon tax is for a whole bunch of things, but this is a concrete example where there was unanimity. The steelworkers said the carbon tax is going to kill the steel industry. All of the steel companies said the carbon tax is going to kill the steel industry. Despite this, the Liberals just keep beating the drum that somehow the carbon tax is good for Canadians.

We have seen what the carbon tax has done to the price of food. We now have two million people going to food banks in Canada every month. If, when the Conservatives were in government, someone had said that in 10 years, every month two million Canadians would be going to food banks, we would have thought they were crazy. Little did we know how corrosive the carbon tax would be to the social fabric of this country.

Going back to the gist of my question, I got such a terrible answer from the minister, saying the Liberals are always going to be there to stand up for steelworkers. Those words and \$1.50 can get a double-double at Tim Hortons. Well, no, it would have gotten one before the Liberals took power; now it is more like \$2.50. The point is that they are hollow, empty words that fly in the face of what the steel industry is very clearly and directly saying: that the carbon tax will lead to the death of the steel industry in Canada if the Liberals go ahead with their plan to quadruple the carbon tax.

In the face of that overwhelming evidence, how can the Liberals justify quadrupling the carbon tax, to steelworkers in this country?

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1905)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be here for this adjournment debate. I would like to thank my colleague and neighbour from Dufferin—Caledon for entertaining the opportunity for it this evening.

I printed off an article for my friend, and I hope he chooses to read it. As I was telling him just a couple of minutes ago, I feel as though the art of thoughtful debate and real conversation in the House has suffered at the hands of the three-word slogan. I like the opportunity to talk about some of our measures to lower carbon emissions in Canada and help the steel industry and lots of other industries usher in a more sustainable future.

Before I go on, I would like to say that not only am I a big fan of Canada's steel industry, but I used to be a steelworker. I worked at Aldershot steel when I was in university. I came from a working-class family and grew up in community housing, so a \$20-an-hour job was really exciting for me when I was 19 or 20 years old. Kayaks, incidentally, are made out of carbon fibre and are expensive, so I needed a job and Aldershot steel was close to school. After my classes were done at McMaster University, I would often put in a few hours at the shop, so I know a lot of steelworkers. McMaster is in Steeltown too, which is Hamilton. I will give a shout-out to the Hamilton Ticats.

While the member was speaking, I looked up some of the initiatives the Canadian Steel Producers Association has undertaken. It is very committed to sustainable steel. In fact, ArcelorMittal Dofasco earned responsible steel certification, which recognizes the company's leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, noise emissions and effluents, as well as waste and waste-water stewardship and biodiversity. Canada's steel producers are leading the way. They are moving toward new electric arc reactors, which do not rely on coal to heat up iron ore and metals in order to make steel and steel products.

I looked at the ambitions of the Canadian Steel Producers Association, and I will read a couple of them:

Establish a Canadian steel climate council with key government departments to monitor and report on the progress of the sector's climate strategy, to share practices, to engage with other stakeholders, and to evolve the plan as new information and insights emerge;

Recycle all carbon pricing revenues from the steel sector back into the industry to support the development of low-emission technologies;

Expand access to abundant low/zero carbon energy supplies for domestic steel-making operations....

The CSPA recognizes the value in low-carbon steel. It wants to be a world leader in low-carbon steel and does not want to do things the way they were done 150 years ago during the Industrial Revolution, when it seemed natural to burn coal to create heat to produce steel.

It is 2024 and will be 2025 soon. It is important that we get with the times. It is critical that we encourage and support industry as it moves past high carbon-intensity production. Having an industrial carbon price and a consumer carbon price is the reason our emissions are 30% lower than they were under Stephen Harper's gov-

ernment. In fact, the last time they were this low, Kurt Cobain was still alive and I was 12 years old and listening to Nirvana.

It has been a really long time since Canada had a downward trajectory on emissions, and that is something to celebrate, particularly because interest rates are going down, inflation is going down and job numbers are getting even better. Our economy is solid in Canada, and it is solid with industrial and consumer carbon pricing. Canadians, in 2019 and 2021, when I was at their doors, demanded climate action, and that is one of the things our government has delivered on.

● (1910)

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, this is exhibit A of the problem. First of all, the member noted the use of electric arc to heat up and process iron ore. Electric arc cannot process iron ore. It only works with recycled steel. The member does not even know what he is talking about regarding the steel industry, which means the government probably does not know. That is problem number one.

Problem number two is that CEOs have converted some of their blast furnaces into electric arc and they still pay carbon taxes. They told me how much carbon tax the steel industry pays. It is a gigantic number. They said that as a result of that, if carbon pricing goes up, there will be no steel industry whether they convert to electric arc or not. I am trying to speak slowly and clearly so I can hopefully get an answer.

Everything the member just said is irrelevant to what the steel industry said. Whether they convert everything to electric arc or not, they are still paying carbon taxes on the other energy they use, and it will drive them out of business. There will be no steelworkers. Why will the Liberals not admit it and axe the carbon tax?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but highlight a little bit of the misinformation from the member. I was reading directly from the Steel Producers Association website. To suggest that it does not represent the views of the steel producers or the steel industry is straight up false. It is not fair to suggest that the Steel Producers Association does not have their best interests at heart, when I was reading directly from its website.

However, Canadians right across the country are concerned about climate change, and that includes people in the member's own riding. I have travelled around southwestern Ontario, I have friends in Shelburne and I am frequently in Orangeville. I know that the mayor of Caledon, Allan Thompson, has said that because of climate change, "Every year, we're seeing more storms, higher temperatures and changes to the flora and fauna around us."

Adjournment Proceedings

If we do not do something to fight climate change and lower our emissions, then we are really doing a huge disservice to future generations.

[*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 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:15 p.m.)

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