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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 1, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1000)
[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 31 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, happy birthday yesterday, plus one. It is always a happy day.

I normally would be pleased, and I am always pleased, to rise in this place, even when it concerns a \$400-million Liberal scandal. For those who are watching and just tuning in, perhaps I could recap. We are in the 66th hour of a Liberal filibuster on the refusal to provide documents to the House of Commons. This was demanded in June and voted on by a majority of members of Parliament, representing a majority of Canadians, in terms of the \$400-million scandal identified by the Auditor General with regard to the Liberal green slush fund. Hand-picked directors of the Prime Minister funnelled that money to companies they own.

Just to give us some perspective, the Liberal filibuster began at the end of September. It is the longest in parliamentary history. The previous one, over yet another Liberal scandal, was only 16 hours. This issue has seized the House simply because the Liberals are redacting, as it is called, documents ordered by the House. What is redaction? Redaction means that they are censoring them.

The House of Commons ordered the production of documents on this scandal. Over 10,000 pages were provided. Most of them went through a lot of black ink toner cartridge because there was so much blacked out in them. They had to bring in new photocopiers in the PMO. This was ordered by the PMO, by the Prime Minister's own department, to breach the rules.

The Speaker found what is called a prima facie case of privilege. What that means, for those watching, is that the ultimate authority above everything else is the House of Commons' ability to order

documents to be provided by government, to hold the Crown, the cabinet, to account for its actions. The cabinet is defying it.

What could we do with \$400 million instead of funneling it to Liberal insider companies as the Liberals have done? I will get into it. I am sure that it is not \$400 million. I may be mistaken. It may be closer to \$700 million, and I will explain that in a minute.

What we could do in my province of Nova Scotia with \$400 million is build a thousand homes. However, the priority of the Liberals was to funnel it to their own companies so that they could enrich themselves while Canadians line up in record numbers at food banks and while people in my riding have to live in trailers and campers in camping parks because they cannot find housing. Those thousand houses that could have been built with that \$400 million in Nova Scotia would be enormously helpful.

I will just tell us how extensive this cover-up is. We had the architect of the Liberal green slush fund, former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains, in the industry committee this week. Some may remember him. He was the industry minister for the Liberals from 2015 to 2021. He directly appointed all the corrupt Liberal insiders to this board, who then funnelled money to their companies. At committee, we asked him some pretty straightforward and simple questions. If I could, I will read from Hansard from the committee meeting this week.

I asked a simple question of former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains. I asked him where he worked. He said, "As I've indicated, the topic I was asked to speak on was Sustainable Development Technology Canada". Again, I asked where he worked. He said it was on the public record.

Indeed, it is on the public record. While he was industry minister, he was responsible for lowering cellphone fees. The Prime Minister gave him the mandate. We all know that we have the most expensive cellphone costs in the world, according to international studies. Can we guess who former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains works for? He was too embarrassed to say, or perhaps those at Rogers ordered him not to say it at committee because they were too embarrassed to have him mention their name and that he worked there. However, he works for Rogers, which is the most expensive cellphone company in the world. He just kept saying that it is on the public record.

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He was a good Liberal who always followed the talking points from the PMO. I suspect that he was following talking points from Rogers saying to please not associate Rogers, this most expensive cellphone company, with the Liberal corruption scandal that he was in charge of.

• (1005)

We had testimony from the former chair whom Navdeep Bains appointed, who he was warned had a conflict. He said to her, and to everyone in SDTC, that it was okay and they would manage the conflict. They managed the conflict of that money into their companies. The former minister himself said that was okay. That appointee, Annette Verschuren, said in committee that she never applied for any job in her life. She said Navdeep Bains called her twice to talk her into running, putting in an application and becoming the chair of the board. She said, even though he knew she was conflicted, he called her twice. I asked him if he called her twice, because that is what she testified to, and he said he did not remember.

Then I said the former CEO of the Liberal green slush fund testified before the committee that former minister Bains called her and told her to vet the candidate. She said they could not have this person as a candidate for chair because SDTC did business with her companies. If she were picked, she would be the first chair in the 20-year history of SDTC who had a conflict. Bains said it was okay and to ask her if she wanted to do it. He was warned again. Whether we believe it or not, there was actually somebody who worked in the Liberal Prime Minister's office, who was doing communications in a nice patronage job in the Liberal green slush fund. She warned the minister's office that he should not appoint this person because of the conflict. It was still ignored. This was not some mistake or some hands-off occurrence where they did not know what was going on because they are an incompetent minister who does not follow anything in their department.

I then asked Navdeep Bains if he remembered going to cabinet to get another \$750 million of taxpayer money for the Liberal green slush fund. He said it was in the budget. I said that the things in the budget have to have the minister's approval. I asked if it had his approval, but he did not remember. We have a Liberal who does not remember giving away \$750 million of taxpayer money. I guess that is just pocket change for the Liberals. It is either that or he was just unwilling to admit that he was part of this scheme.

We have asked, in those documents, for all the documents from the department that the former minister ran, the industry department. Can we guess which department has not complied with the whole order? It is the industry department. Can we guess which department has the most blacked-out and censored documents? It is the industry department. It is rivalled only by the Prime Minister's department, the Privy Council Office, which has also refused to give the truth about its documents. An incredible cover-up is going on.

The way to solve this and break the Liberal filibuster against giving up the documents is for them to give them up without redactions. It is the easiest way for the House to get back to dealing with the issues that Canadians are concerned about, such as the doubling of housing costs, with mortgages and rent, and the tripling of the

carbon tax to 61¢ a litre. Is everybody aware that the Liberals plan to increase the carbon tax? I can just see the Liberals' campaign slogan now: "Re-elect us and we will put taxes up to 61¢ a litre." I think it is a winner. We can just ask Joe Clark how that worked out for him in 1980.

We have a group of Liberals who are so desperate to cover up all the emails between former Liberal minister Navdeep Bains and the current industry minister, who has been responsible for the Liberal green slush fund for 45 months. They are trying to hide those documents. They have kept the House from getting to the business of actually dealing with issues for three months: September, October and into November as of today. We must hold the government to account for failing to deal with two million people a month going to food banks in Canada, for tripling the carbon tax, for increasing the cost of food and for its massively unsuccessful housing decelerator fund, in which it has spent billions of dollars to hire bureaucrats and not built a single house.

• (1010)

We could get to those things if the Liberals would stop filibustering and obey the House order of a democratically elected Parliament. As has been the case for over 400 years, when the House asks for something, the government is compelled to give it. It must really be bad for them to delay what they think is their priority legislation and to continue their filibuster on releasing the documents.

We all know that we would like the House to get on to the plan of fixing the budget. We have a Minister of Finance who has never met a target, nor did her predecessor, former minister "Bill no more". They have never met a target. She said that the government was going to keep it to a \$40-billion deficit, as if it were some sort of a challenge to spend only \$40 billion more than the taxes it takes in. She could not even do that. She is over by \$8 billion already, and we are not even through the year. We can imagine what it is going to be in the spring, when the final numbers come in about the incompetence of the government's financial ability. Maybe that is why it is delaying the release of the documents, so it cannot be held to account for its incompetence on fixing the budget.

Now let us talk about the government's inability to build homes. It brags about the billions of dollars in its housing accelerator fund, which has not built a house. That is why I call it the "decelerator" fund. My home province is Nova Scotia. The Minister of Housing is from Nova Scotia, but we would not know it. Maybe we would, because he gave \$30 million of housing decelerator money to the City of Halifax. How many houses did it build? It built zero. How many people did it hire? It hired 30 more urban planners to make sure it could slow the housing process down. That is why it is the housing decelerator fund. The government is refusing to release the documents on the green slush fund so that it cannot be held to account for its ineptitude on housing.

We know that crime has massively gone up. In the city of Toronto, in the large cities and even in Nova Scotia, we are seeing the massive thefts of cars. People are being told by the Toronto police to just leave their keys by the door so that thieves do not come in and maybe harm them. They are told to let them take their car because that would be easier than them enforcing the law. What would be easier to ensure that this does not happen is to not let people who are charged with the theft of automobiles, who have been convicted time after time, out on bail.

The other election slogan of the government, other than that it will raise the tax to 61¢ a litre, will be to re-elect it so it can allow more criminals on the streets. However, it does not want us discussing those issues in the House. That is why it is not releasing the documents. It needs to stop the crime.

Let us not forget about the tax that is putting the price of everything up: the carbon tax. We believe it should axe the tax, but the government does not want to be held to account for that. Here is what happens. For 20 years, I worked in retail. I can tell members that, when one buys a good from somebody who has to manufacture it, producing that good takes a lot of energy. When it takes a lot of energy, there is a carbon tax on that, which increases the price of buying that good. One of the biggest costs in retail is the cost to transport that good from where it was made to our stores. Can members guess what is used to transport it? It is diesel and gas, not sailboats or bicycles. We cannot use the Minister of Environment's bicycles to truck a container of rum to Nova Scotia; it has to come by truck or boat. That fuel gets taxed, which increases the price. Of course, when one operates 100 or 1,000 mass market retail stores across Canada, can we guess what one's number one cost is besides labour? It is not the rent; it is paying for the energy to operate that store. Because the energy costs are there, the carbon tax is put on that. When we tax the manufacturer or the grower, tax the transportation and tax the retailer, can we guess what happens? The price of everything goes up. According to Dalhousie University, 84% of Canadians say that food is the number one thing they have seen go up.

This Liberal filibuster could end and we could get on to dealing with these issues if the Liberals would stop covering up their green slush fund and release the unredacted documents.

• (1015)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned "filibuster" several times. I just looked it up and the definition of filibuster is "an action such as a prolonged speech that obstructs progress in a legislative assembly while not technically

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contravening the required procedures." The only people I see speaking here are the Conservatives, so it is the Conservatives who are filibustering.

The member also mentioned rents. A recent report showed that in Toronto, in August, rent was down 7% compared to the same month in 2023. Maybe the Conservatives do not want to discuss the Bloomberg-Nanos research that showed this week that the consumer confidence index in Canada is at a 30-month high. Maybe the Conservatives do not want to discuss the recent StatsCan report that showed inflation came down 1.6%. Maybe the Conservatives do not want to discuss the Bank of Canada cutting the interest rate for the fourth consecutive time, the first G7 country to do so, to 3.75%.

Maybe the Conservatives do not want to discuss all the positive reports coming out as they are filibustering here.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, the member for Nepean sits on the industry committee with me and does ask thoughtful questions at committee, but unfortunately that was not one of them.

The reason it was not one of them is that for things to go down, they have to have gone up. Under these Liberals, interest rates soared because they have doubled the debt of the country and because they put too much money into the economy through their deficit spending.

The member also mentioned that rent has gone down 7% in Toronto. Rent has gone up 100% in Toronto, but the Liberals are proud that it has gone down 7%. I am thrilled that the member for Nepean thinks that a 93% rent increase is some sort of great record to go to an election on. I am looking forward to the Toronto MP saying, "Re-elect us, rent only went up 93%."

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, have you observed if there is quorum in the House this morning?

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We do not have a quorum. We are suspended to the call of the Chair.

And the bells having rung:

• (1020)

The Deputy Speaker: We now have quorum.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech. We agree that the government should stop hiding and hand over the documents. We know that corruption is in the Liberals' DNA. That is nothing new. We all remember the sponsorship scandal.

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However, there is something else that Quebeckers remember. When the Conservative Party was in power, a question of privilege was raised regarding documents on the treatment of Afghan detainees. Do members know how long that question of privilege was before the House? It was before the House for five months. For five months, the Harper government at the time refused to turn over the documents.

I would like my colleague to explain that. He is trying to sell us on the merits of his party, but how can Quebeckers trust that party today when it broke their trust for five months by refusing to hand over documents? I am, of course, referring to the Conservative Party.

• (1025)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, it is a great question in the context of the early excuse that the Liberals used for not turning over the documents in the green slush fund. They came up with a fake charter argument, saying that the only way documents could be turned over to the RCMP was if the RCMP went to court, which is one way in a police investigation. However, the other way is when someone owns or runs a business and discovers that perhaps something has happened to the money, that an employee has taken money from their company. The individual who owns or runs a business not only can turn that information and the documents over to the police, but is morally bound to do so. In this case, we, the House of Commons, on behalf of the taxpayer, own the SDTC foundation. The government is the owner of that business and therefore has the obligation to turn the documents over to the police.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I know that you just did a count but I am wondering if you can see if we have quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the clerk to start another count of the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We now have quorum.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad you found the Conservatives hiding behind the curtains there.

I am always amazed at how Conservatives, during their speeches regarding the cost of living crisis, will ignore the elephant in the room. I have been on the agriculture committee, and if we look at the inputs that farmers are dealing with, we see that all of the major corporate sectors have seen record profits over the last number of years. Whether fertilizers, oil and gas, grocery retail, banking or real estate, all of those major corporate sectors have been doing very well. Where has that increase in net profits come from? It comes directly out of the wallets of the hard-working folks right across this country, including my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. Of course, when corporations unfairly raise those prices and increase those net profits, that is what leads to inflation.

Why is there this willful blindness to not talk about this particular issue? Is it because many of the corporate executives in those sectors making record profits somehow find themselves at Conservative leadership fundraisers?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford's raising the elephant in the room.

The elephant in the room is this: Why has the NDP voted 24 times to increase the carbon tax? Why did the NDP, for two and a half years, support every budget of the current government, which put up the cost of everything in this country? Why did the NDP do a fake rip-up of its coalition agreement and then still vote every single time to support the government? Why has the NDP decided, according to its leader this week, that it is in no hurry to go to an election? Might it be that his pension vests in February?

• (1030)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is something we do not want to be debating. It is the corruption of this government, and my colleague mentioned that 1,000 homes could be built in his riding. In Oshawa, people are suffering.

A supporter, Franco Terrazzano from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, sent me a note and I want my colleague's comment on this. Global Affairs is now spending \$51,000 a month on alcohol, so that is \$600,000 a year on booze. This seems to be business as usual for the Liberals and the government.

I want to ask my colleague this: Is it not about time that we axed the tax so we can build more homes, fix that budget finally, and of course, stop the horrible crime that this government is basically enabling around the country?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, prior to elected life, I was in the retail business of selling alcohol, so far be it for me to diminish the great benefit of anybody buying alcohol for their business, but in this case, it is on the taxpayer dime. There is no entitlement like a foreign diplomat's entitlement to have a good time on the taxpayer dime around the country, while Canadians suffer and are unable to afford to heat, eat and house themselves.

As such, I appreciate that Oshawa is suffering, and Oshawa is suffering because we have a failed auto policy by this government as well, which does not seem to care about auto workers, union workers or, quite frankly, any jobs in this country, other than their own and funnelling \$400 million to their own companies.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to reflect on some of his comments.

He calls this a Liberal filibuster, but I invite everybody at home looking at this to go back through ParlVU and see who has been doing all the talking for the last four weeks. As well, if we look at the cost of running this chamber at about \$60,000 an hour with all in, we are dealing with almost two million dollars' worth of taxpayers' funds that the Conservatives have basically talked down the sewer. Is the member ready to be straight with Canadians about what is really going on here?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, what is really going on here is the inability or unwillingness of the government to hand over documents that are uncensored because they are protecting their friends and trying to hide that the \$400-million corruption is really \$700 million, according to the Auditor General's math.

What is really incredible is that the Liberals claim they are not speaking. I think the Liberal member for Winnipeg North has spoken about 324 times on this issue. I am glad that this member finally got to speak once.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise here again and to talk about the SDTC scandal we have been seized with now for maybe three weeks.

I am here today in the House to discuss a shocking misuse of taxpayers' dollars. Four hundred million dollars has been wasted, while the cost of living is up, food bank usage is up, the carbon tax is up and the Liberal government has an \$8 billion budget overrun, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

As many Canadians are aware, the House has been seized with the issue for many weeks. There have been no debates of government bills and no debates on private members' bills because the issue is so important that it must take precedence over all other business and because the Liberal government has refused to comply with a lawful order of the House of Commons.

Many of my constituents may be wondering why I am speaking to the privilege motion for a second time. To explain, I am rising today to speak in support of an amendment to the privilege motion moved by the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle on the failure to produce documents pertaining to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada scandal.

For the benefit of other members and for people watching at home, I will read the motion and the amendments. The motion states:

That the government's failure of fully providing documents, as ordered by the House on June 10, 2024, be hereby referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs;

The amendment reads:

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,
- (ii) the Clerk of the Privy Council,
- (iii) the Auditor General of Canada,
- (iv) the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police,
- (v) the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada,

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(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.

The amendment really speaks to the heart of the issue, which is ministerial accountability. I feel that it is important for the benefit of members of this place to dig deep into what ministerial accountability is and why it is so important to the issue at hand.

When the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle raised his initial privilege motion, he referred to a document obtained from the Privy Council office, which states, "Public servants do not share in Ministers' constitutional accountability to Parliament but support Ministers in this accountability." It also states that the ultimate accountability for deciding what information to withhold from or release to parliamentarians resides with the responsible minister.

I agree with this; it really is the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry who is ultimately responsible for the scandal and for the violation of an order of the House. The minister must be held accountable, and that is why it is so important that he hand over the documents and appear at committee.

I will now discuss the origin of ministerial accountability and its relevance to today's debate at length.

To really dig into what ministerial accountability is and what it ought to mean, we can refer to the Prime Minister's own document released on November 27, 2015, when the Liberals formed government for the first time under the current Prime Minister. The document, or guide, is entitled "Open and Accountable Government". It supposedly sets out core principles regarding the roles and responsibilities of ministers in Canada's system of responsible parliamentary government. This includes the central tenet of ministerial responsibility, both individual and collective, as well as ministers' relations with the Prime Minister and cabinet, their portfolios and Parliament.

I think this is very fascinating. I will read from the Prime Minister's opening message to the ministers. He says:

In our system, the highest manifestation of democratic accountability is the forum of Parliament. You are accountable to Parliament for the exercise of the powers, duties and functions with which you have been entrusted. This requires you to be present in Parliament to answer honestly and accurately about your areas of responsibility, to take corrective action as appropriate to address problems that may arise in your portfolios, to correct any inadvertent errors in answering to Parliament at the earliest opportunity, and to work with parliamentary colleagues of all political persuasions in a respectful and constructive manner.

He goes on to say, and this is my favourite part:

You are responsible for ensuring that your departments are managed well and with complete integrity....

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● (1035)

The Prime Minister went on to detail what ministerial accountability meant to him. He states:

Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the exercise of the powers, duties and functions vested in them by statute or otherwise. Ministers must be present in Parliament to respond to questions on the discharge of their responsibilities, including the manner in which public monies were spent, as well as to account for that use. Whether a Minister has discharged responsibilities appropriately is a matter of political judgment by Parliament. The Prime Minister has the prerogative to reaffirm support for that Minister or to ask for his or her resignation.

It is critical to the principle of responsible government that all organizations within the executive be the responsibility of a Minister who is accountable to Parliament for the organization. A Minister is accountable to Parliament for the proper functioning of his or her department and all other organizations within his or her portfolio.

I rarely think or say this, but I completely agree with the Prime Minister: Ministers should be “accountable to Parliament” and “must be present in Parliament to respond to questions on the discharge of their responsibilities, including the manner in which public monies are spent, as well as to account for that use.” I will go on to discuss why this is relevant to the amendment and the issue at hand today.

I would like to remind members in this place exactly how much money was misappropriated by the board of the Sustainable Technology Development Canada Fund. When I speak to constituents, many of them draw comparisons to the sponsorship scandal. I have to remind them that the Liberal sponsorship scandal was a \$40-million scandal, one that led to the complete collapse of the Liberal Party because of how egregious the misuse of funds was.

My constituents are baffled when I inform them that the current one is a \$400-million scandal, \$400 million of taxpayer funds while rents are at an all-time high, mortgage payments have doubled and Canadians cannot even afford to feed their family. It is scandalous, and that is why Conservatives will keep pressing the government on the issue until the taxpayers' funds are repaid and the documents have been handed over.

It is unfortunate that hundreds of millions of wasted taxpayer dollars means nothing to the Liberal government. We saw the indifference that the Liberals displayed when it was revealed that \$56 million was wasted on the ArriveCAN app, an application that did not work. Conservatives had hoped that the Liberal government had learned its lesson when that scandal occurred, yet here we are again, embroiled in another costly scandal.

What got us to this point was the Auditor General's conclusion that SDTC board members and officials broke conflict of interest laws 186 times and funnelled \$400 million of taxpayers' money to their own companies. This unprecedented waste of taxpayer dollars and the Minister of Industry's refusal to be held to account for the issue are shocking.

The common-sense Conservative amendment we are discussing today explicitly demands that the minister attend committee for two hours and answer for the failure. I would hope that members on all sides of the House would like to see the minister take responsibility for the scandals and failures of his department. The Prime Minister's own document entitled “Open and Accountable Government”,

which I referred to earlier, would seem to indicate that is what he ought to do.

Now, for the benefit of my constituents and all Canadians who have been very curious about the issue, I will walk members through the timeline of this particular scandal. We know that Sustainable Development Technology Canada was a not-for-profit foundation that was established by the Government of Canada in 2001 through a special act of Parliament, the Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology Act.

SDTC was created to support and finance clean-technology start-ups, with the goal of delivering economic, environmental and health benefits to Canada. By all accounts, the fund ran well and had zero issues for 17 years, that is until Navdeep Bains, the former Liberal industry minister, decimated the fund and brought in an era of corruption. In late 2018, former minister Bains expressed concerns regarding the chair of SDTC, Jim Balsillie, given his public criticism of the Liberal government's privacy legislation.

Jim Balsillie is a widely respected Canadian businessman who is the former chair and CEO of BlackBerry. He was appointed as chair of SDTC in 2013, during the Harper government, for a term of five years. However, in 2018, the office of then Liberal minister of industry, Navdeep Bains, expressed discomfort about Balsillie's comments with the CEO of SDTC and requested that the chair stop criticizing government legislation. Minister Bains proposed two replacement chairs to the CEO of SDTC in a phone call. One of the candidates proposed was Annette Verschuren, an entrepreneur who was already receiving SDTC funding through one of her companies.

● (1040)

The minister, the PMO and the PCO were warned of the risks associated with appointing a conflicted chair, and they were told that up until that point the fund had never had a chair with interests in companies receiving funding from SDTC. In June 2019, Minister Bains decided to proceed with the appointment of Annette Verschuren despite repeated warnings expressed to his office. The new chair went on to create an environment where conflicts of interests were tolerated and “managed” by board members.

Board members went on to award SDTC funding to companies in which board members held stock or positions within the company receiving funding. Minister Bains went on to appoint two other controversial board members who engaged in unethical behaviour in breach of the Conflict of Interest Act by approving funding to companies in which they held ownership stakes. During this time, ISED officials sat in on the board meetings and witnessed 186 conflicts at the board but did not intervene.

That brings us to January 2021, when the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain became the new Minister of Industry, replacing Navdeep Bains after the latter decided not to run for re-election. In November 2022, whistle-blowers raised internal concerns with the Auditor General about unethical practices at SDTC. The Privy Council was briefed by the whistle-blowers about the allegations shortly after and commissioned two independent reports.

In September 2023, the whistle-blowers took the allegations public, and the Minister of Industry agreed to suspend SDTC funding. Finally, in June 2024, the Auditor General's report was released, finding severe governance failures at SDTC. The Auditor General found that there were 186 instances in which conflicts of interest occurred, meaning that the board of directors and the chair had hand-picked where funding was going. Some of that funding went to their own companies. The Auditor General took only a sampling of the funding and found that 82% of that sampling was in a conflict of interest, totalling \$330 million.

The Auditor General also found that SDTC did not follow conflict of interest policies in 90 cases, spent nearly \$76 million on projects connected to the Liberals' friends appointed to run the fund, spent \$59 million on projects that were not allowed to have been awarded any money, and spent \$12 million on projects that were both in conflict of interest and were ineligible for funding. In one instance, the hand-picked chair of the fund gave a shockingly \$217,000 to her own company.

In response to the damning findings, in June, Conservatives put forward a motion calling on the government to provide to the House documents pertaining to SDTC. The motion included provisions for the documents to then be provided to the RCMP so it could undertake a criminal investigation on whether criminal offences were committed. The Liberal government has refused to hand over the documents, and that is why we are still here discussing the motion today.

I would now like to share some of the testimony that the SDTC whistle-blower gave at committee. I find the testimony to be astounding and I commend the witness for their bravery. The whistle-blower stated:

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.

He went on to say:

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.

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Another quote I find astounding is:

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.

Finally, and this is the quote that really gets to the root of the issue:

...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.

● (1045)

It is because of brave whistle-blowers such as this individual that the public was able to see the corruption and rot that the Liberal government had allowed to fester at SDTC. Conservatives commend this individual and thank him for standing up for Canadians. As I just mentioned, this brave whistle-blower believes that criminal intent would be found if the documents the Conservatives have requested were to be handed over to the RCMP. That is why it is so important that the Liberal government comply with the House order and release the documents.

In closing, we are still here today discussing this issue after a month because the government refuses to comply with an order of the House. We are calling on the government to comply with the House's order and hand over the documents unredacted. Then we can find out what really went on and whether there was any criminality, which former employees at SDTC believe there was.

I will end by saying that, after nine years of the Liberal government, there has never been a better time to be a Liberal insider. Under the Liberal government, Liberal insiders feel it is perfectly acceptable to waste \$400 million of taxpayer funds while Canadians are struggling. This is a slap in the face to the people in my riding of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte who are struggling to make ends meet under the costly NDP-Liberal coalition.

Privilege

Just this week, Karen Shuh, the executive director of the Barrie Food Bank, stated that the food bank is now supporting upward of 7,000 people per month, 37% of whom are children. Ms. Shuh went on to say, “As demand continues to rise, we face increasing challenges in keeping up, often needing to make difficult choices about which foods to cut in order to stretch our donations further.”

Canadians in my community are visiting food banks in record numbers because the Liberal government's inflationary taxes and spending are driving up the cost of everything, and instead of providing Canadians with the relief they deserve, the Liberal government plans to hike the carbon tax again. This costly carbon tax is not only affecting families but also farmers in my community.

I was recently sent an Enbridge bill for almost \$10,000 from a farmer in my riding who runs a poultry operation. Their bill shows a carbon tax charge of \$2,700 on the cost of fuel to dry grain corn. Shockingly, the carbon tax is actually more than the value of the gas before delivery and global adjustments.

Moving to the poultry side of their operation, this farm pays a comparable tax on the cost to heat their barns. Every 24 weeks, they place over 3,000 day-old breeder chicks in their barns. These barns need to be heated to 32°C as the chicks are so small they cannot heat themselves. This temperature is slowly reduced as the chicks grow stronger. The cost to heat the barns during this placement is approximately \$7,000, with approximately a third of that cost being the carbon tax.

During this affordability crisis, one would think that the Liberals would think twice about allowing Liberal insiders to funnel \$400 million to their buddies. Unfortunately, they see no issue with this corruption.

I have heard from countless businesses in my riding that have suffered due to inflation, labour shortages, supply chain issues, increasing business debt and federal tax increases. It is devastating to see these businesses, which bring joy to so many members of my community, suffer under the Liberal government's punitive policies.

However, Canadians have something to look forward to. They can look forward to voting for a common-sense Conservative government as the costly NDP stops propping up its government partners and calls a carbon tax election. In this carbon tax election, Canadians would have the opportunity to vote for Conservatives, who would axe the tax, build the homes and fix the budget to bring down inflation and interest rates to make it affordable again for our seniors and all Canadians.

To those watching at home, I say that help is on the way. Once we have a carbon tax election, a common-sense Conservative government would axe the tax on everything, for everyone, everywhere, to bring home powerful paycheques and lower prices for all Canadians.

• (1050)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned inflation.

In 2022, due to the postpandemic period and global supply chain issues, inflation rose across the world, in every single country. Due to our actions during the last two years, the trend of inflation is

coming down so much. It has come down to 1.6% below the target range of the Bank of Canada. Every other country has had to raise interest rates to combat inflation, but we are the first G7 country to cut interest rates for the fourth consecutive time and have brought it down to 3.75%. Consequently, the Canadian consumer confidence index is at a 30-month high. I would like to hear the hon. member's comments on that.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, what I am hearing in my riding of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte is not good news. Yes, interest rates have come down, but they were way high. What I am hearing is that people are having a tough time surviving and living right now.

I had a call just a couple of weeks ago from a lady who has a child with special needs. This lady has now stopped eating lunch because she has to help feed and support her special needs child. If the member thinks I can go back to her and say the Liberals think everything is all rosy, that interest rates are down and that is why she not eating lunch, it will just not cut it with her. People are suffering out there. My constituents are suffering, and there is a lot more to it than just interest rates coming down.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Parliament is paralyzed right now. Our rights as legislators are being violated by the Conservative Party, which is filibustering on a question of privilege. We must be accountable to the public.

What do people think?

In my colleague's riding, are people happy about the fact that the government has been paralyzed for weeks?

[*English*]

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I am astounded to hear that the member thinks that Conservatives are holding up Parliament. Conservatives are not holding up Parliament. There was a ruling to produce documents, and the Liberals can smile all they want, but I do not know what is funny about this. I have constituents who are struggling, who cannot feed their families, and \$400 million has been wasted.

There is a ruling that the documents must be produced. The Speaker of the House of Commons has sided with that ruling. This will stop once the documents are brought forward. It is my second time standing up and speaking to this for 20 minutes.

There are lots of things we could be discussing as there are many important issues, but this is an important issue. Until we get the documents, until Canadians get the documents, we will continue to press this serious issue.

• (1055)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Ontario, we did not have the carbon tax. We got the carbon tax because the Conservatives, under Doug Ford, ditched the cap-and-trade and cost us \$2 billion to get out of that, which gave us the carbon tax, just like the Conservatives gave us the GST and the HST. Also, when they added the HST, they added things that had been exempt before, such as parking at hospitals.

What other hidden taxes are the Conservatives going to bring in that they do not campaign on but that they would actually deliver for Canadians?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to indulge in conspiracy theories. The facts are facts.

Queen's Park in Toronto runs provincial issues. We are here, in Ottawa, running federal issues. I know that, once there is an election, and hopefully it will be soon, as do all my constituents, Conservatives will be in power under Pierre Poilievre. We will cut—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I should have said the Leader of the Opposition. I am sorry. That was a slip. It is Friday morning.

We will continue to cut the taxes, and we will make life more affordable for Canadians.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the chamber's indulgence on my comment this morning. I woke up happy, I guess, as I do not even know what the right word would be, to see that the Royal Canadian Legion has chosen Maureen Anderson as this year's National Silver Cross Mother. Her family and she, personally, have made more sacrifices for this country than most people understand. She, herself, served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, and her late husband, Peter, started his military career right here on Parliament Hill in the regiment of The Canadian Guards, before joining The Royal Canadian Regiment.

She was selected as this year's National Silver Cross Mother because both her sons, Ron and Ryan, are gone, with PTSD being at fault. I had the honour and pleasure of serving with both Ron and Ryan in Afghanistan. There were no two finer soldiers or Canadians one could find in this whole country. I want to commend the Royal Canadian Legion on selecting such a worthy recipient to represent all those Silver Cross Mothers out there. I just wanted to get that on the record.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add something to that. The member mentioned some great people who have served this country. I would like to give a big round of applause for the gentleman in our ranks who served our country for many years, himself. He is shaking his head. He is not happy that I brought that up because he is a very humble man. I thank him for his many years of service. We all appreciate it.

Statements by Members

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of all the things that might be attributed to higher food costs, there are three things the hon. member did not mention, and I would like for him to comment on those. First, there is shrinkflation, which is when they cut the size of things but charge the same, if not a little more. The second is skimflation, which is when they use cheaper products in the things that we buy, and they charge a little more. The third is profit, which big grocery has rung up right through the pandemic, and it is still doing that today.

Why is the member not commenting on those as contributing factors to the cost of food?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, as someone who has been in business for over 25 years, I am very familiar with what causes inflation. I am also very familiar that there is a very key point that the member opposite did not bring up about what is causing inflation and prices to rise, and that is the Liberal government.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is interesting. We found out this morning that Brookfield Asset Management, which is led by carbon tax Carney as its chair, has just moved its headquarters to New York. This is a guy who is advising the Prime Minister on economic issues, yet, seemingly, he does not have any confidence in our Canadian economy, so he is actually moving his head office to New York.

I wonder if the hon. member has some comments on that.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I will be very quick, but it is a shame to hear that, and I will actually add to it.

Speaking of residents moving to the States, I recently, just a few weeks ago, had a doctor from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte come to my office for a meeting. He informed me that he and many of doctors are looking at moving to the States due to the increase in taxes, especially the capital gains tax. He came into my office and said that. This was a doctor. I told him to please stay and to hang in there for a few more months. Once the Conservatives come into place, we will make sure life is more affordable.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

LIGHT THE NIGHT

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of my constituent Josephine Crone. At just 20 years old, Josephine received the life-changing diagnosis of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Statements by Members

Josephine, like so many, is a warrior, a quiet hero whose strength shines through even the darkest days. Her journey mirrors that of thousands of Canadians battling blood cancers. In 2024 alone, an estimated 6,600 Canadians will hear this difficult diagnosis. Last Saturday, I attended the Light the Night walk, where Josephine and others brought faces and stories to these numbers, showing us the courage, hope and heart behind each statistic.

I am committed to a future where the golden lights honouring those we have lost continue to inspire unwavering support for patients, survivors and the loved ones who walk beside them in this fight, and where more white lights of survival shine brightly.

* * *

ALL SAINTS' DAY

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is All Saints' Day, a tradition shared by many European cultures and various churches, especially the Catholic, Orthodox and Apostolic traditions. Central to this holy day is remembering all the saints and any believer who has accepted the Christian faith through Jesus Christ. Tradition calls us to visit cemeteries at sundown, to light candles and lay flowers, and to pray and share memories of those departed. For some Polish Canadians, we will share small loaves of bread called *powalki*.

In our overly busy and distracting digital world, it is about taking a moment to stop and remember and cherish our ancestors. This year, as in the past, my family will remember our daughter Lucy-Rose, who passed in 2018, and join the many families across Canada who continue to grieve for their lost children.

I wish every Canadian marking All Saints' Day a solemn and devout observance.

* * *

1984 ANTI-SIKH RIOTS

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 1984 is a year ingrained in the psyche of Sikhs across the world. Forty years ago this week, Sikhs were hunted across India by government-orchestrated mobs in a week-long genocidal campaign of violence.

The streets of Delhi saw Sikh families being identified by the use of voter lists, resulting in families being burned alive and women facing horrific forms of violence. The world saw Indian politicians and celebrities openly supporting and celebrating the massacre of Sikhs. This was followed by forced disappearances at the hands of the state and law enforcement, and the continued persecution and targeting of India's Sikh community. Unfortunately, 40 years later, justice for the survivors and victims continues to be denied. Instead, those officials who took part have been protected and awarded medals of honour for their roles.

We remember not only the thousands of Sikh families and children who were victims, but also the humanity of those who gave shelter to protect their Sikh friends during this horrific time. We will never forget 1984.

GERARD JANSSEN

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Gerard Janssen, who we lost in July of this year. Gerard served with distinction as a member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia for 13 years.

For more than 20 years after, as a member of the Port Alberni Toy Run charity, he dressed as Santa and led a procession of motorcycles through the streets of Port Alberni that fundraised for many. For many, myself included, he was a friend and a mentor. One of the beneficiaries of his counsel was my friend the honourable Josie Osborne, who remembers his advice to her: "Work hard, don't take yourself too seriously, listen to the people who elected you, take care of your friendships and relationships." That was Gerard. He spoke from the heart, and his plain-spoken words of wisdom will be forever with us.

I thank Flo and the Janssen family for sharing Gerard with us all of these years.

* * *

● (1105)

MISSISSAUGA-ERIN MILLS WOMEN'S COUNCIL

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the statistics on human trafficking in Canada are truly alarming. About 93% of victims are Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and the greatest risk factor is being a woman. Between 2010 and 2020, 65% of police-reported human trafficking incidents occurred in Ontario.

Last week, the Mississauga-Erin Mills Women's Council held a panel discussion to address this issue. It brought together key stakeholders and raised awareness about what we can do in our daily lives, including recognizing the signs of trafficking and how to support victims.

The time for action is now. I call on all members of the House to work tirelessly to protect the most vulnerable among us. I would like to thank the Mississauga-Erin Mills Women's Council for organizing this insightful event and for all the work that it does in our community.

*Statements by Members***ROBERT SOPUCK**

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a great Canadian, Robert Sopuck, who left us far too soon. This Saturday, we will come together to celebrate his extraordinary life, alongside his beloved wife Caroline, his family, his hunting partners and his many friends. Bob was a brilliant communicator. He was authentic, thoughtful and honest. He was a fierce defender of the rural way of life and the greatest champion hunters, anglers and trappers perhaps have ever known. He believed that all those who live, work and play on our natural landscapes are our best conservationists and the true environmentalists.

As an MP, he developed the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, and I believe it is safe to say that Bob saved more fish in this country than anybody else, ever. He was loved and admired by his family, his friends and all those he mentored.

Bob lived life to the fullest and we were privileged to be a part of it. We will miss him dearly and we will honour his legacy by carrying on his work in conservation, protecting the natural world and defending the rural way of life.

* * *

MEDIA LITERACY WEEK

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was Media Literacy Week, dedicated to showcasing the power of digital literacy across Canada. In my riding of Ottawa Centre, MediaSmarts led an inspiring effort with its outstanding Break the Fake campaign, reviving the iconic house hippo to confront the rise of AI-generated deepfakes. This playful yet powerful symbol reminds us all to stay vigilant online.

Supported by the federal government, this campaign rolled out exciting new resources, including AI literacy guides, lesson plans and videos, all crafted to help Canadians identify and combat misinformation. The response was nothing short of remarkable.

Media Literacy Week made around four million social media impressions, with 170 partner organizations hosting interactive workshops and events in classrooms, libraries and community centres across the nation. Let us continue to work together to ensure we provide digital media literacy to all Canadians, to protect them from misinformation and disinformation.

* * *

[Translation]

ORAL HEALTH

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a good day because we reached a milestone. One million Canadians have received dental care from an oral health professional.

More than 22,340 oral and dental care professionals, or nearly 90% of them, have signed up for the program nationwide. Every year, many seniors end up in hospital because of untreated infections that could have been prevented if they had received treatment.

Thousands of seniors in Quebec and in my riding are benefiting from this program. At the same time as we were announcing our

success, the leader of the Bloc Québécois called the dental plan “poison”. Bloc members voted against the dental plan.

Seniors save \$731 a year. More than 8,420 seniors in Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation are benefiting from that. This incredible program helps Canadians stay healthy without having to pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket. I invite the Bloc Québécois members to share my message with Quebeckers.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's record on violent crime is abysmal. The situation has become so bad that police officials across the country are fact-checking the Prime Minister's fake news.

The Peel chief of police said, “Approximately 90 per cent of (the) firearms that we seize are directly traced back to the U.S. And I can say in reality the remaining 10 per cent are likely also from the U.S.” In Surrey, the police union sounded the alarm, saying, “The federal [government's] handgun freeze fails to address the real issue: the surge of illegal firearms coming across our borders and ending up in the hands of violent criminals”.

The only people impacted by the government's failed gun policies have been law-abiding hunters and sport shooters. Meanwhile, violent criminals and organized crime are benefiting from the government's “bail, not jail” policies. Canadians deserve a government that will bring home safe streets.

Only common-sense Conservatives have a plan to support our police, secure our borders, lock up the violent criminals and stop the crime.

* * *

● (1110)

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over a million Canadians across this country have now visited a dental care services provider through the Canada dental care plan. I am delighted to share with my constituents in Newmarket—Aurora that the number of people receiving care under this plan will continue to rise, with over 977,000 people approved for the Canadian dental care plan in Ontario. This is phenomenal news. My constituents can now access dental care, many for the first time, putting their health first.

Statements by Members

I have seen first-hand that the Canadian dental care plan is making a huge difference in the lives of Canadians who need it the most. I am proud that our government is delivering that.

* * *

FOOD SECURITY

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, life has never been more expensive for Canadians.

This week, Food Banks Canada released its annual hunger report. It found that visits to food banks are up 90% since 2019 and that over two million Canadians used food banks in a single month this year.

Just this week, Karen Shuh, the executive director of the Barrie Food Bank, stated that the food bank is now supporting upwards of 7,000 people per month, 37% of whom are children. Ms. Shuh went on to say, “As demand continues to rise, we face increasing challenges in keeping up, often needing to make difficult choices about which foods to cut in order to stretch our donations further.”

Despite record-smashing food bank use, the NDP-Liberals decided to hike their carbon tax by 23% earlier this spring, as part of their plan to quadruple the carbon tax. The Prime Minister must call a carbon tax election so a common-sense Conservative government can axe the tax on everything for everyone, everywhere, and bring home powerful paycheques and lower prices for all Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives would cut the GST on new homes. The reviews are in and the plan is a blockbuster. Members should listen to this.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association says, “Today’s announcement by the Conservative Party...will make a big difference”. The West End Home Builders Association says, “Removing the GST for new homes purchased for under \$1 million may be the most significant housing policy...in the past two decades.” The Canadian Real Estate Association says, “This proposed step is a positive move toward lowering building costs, increasing housing supply, and making homeownership more attainable”.

Mike Moffatt, the Prime Minister's housing adviser, says, “WOW... I admire the boldness here. This will get more housing built.” Max Fawcett, a columnist, says, “Big announcement. [The Conservative] team understands how to reach and activate young voters way better than the Liberals or the NDP right now.”

Indeed, the NDP-Liberals are going to increase taxes. We will axe the tax and build the homes.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, Canadians were shocked to learn that agents of the Indian government were involved in serious crimes on

Canadian soil, including the murder of Canadian citizens. These actions by a foreign government are a clear violation of Canada's sovereignty and an attack on the safety of Canadians, particularly those in the Sikh and South Asian community.

Yesterday the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard from leaders in the Sikh community who urged the Conservative Party leader to get his security clearance so he can learn of current and former politicians and party members who may have collaborated with hostile foreign powers.

We know the leader of the Conservative Party will not listen to the countless national security experts who have called on him to get his security clearance, but maybe he will listen to the leaders of a community that has been the target of foreign interference and finally get his security clearance so he can help protect Canada's national security.

* * *

RECOGNIZING CANADIANS IN UNIFORM

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize veterans, a community I hold in very high regard.

At the end of summer, I participated in the third annual Vancouver Island Run for Homeless Veterans, for the men and women who faithfully served our country in uniform and now find themselves on the street.

Last week, the annual vigil was held at the Cobble Hill cenotaph to honour Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and all those who have lost their lives on Canadian soil in non-combat situations. I introduced Bill C-333 to formally recognize October 22 as peacetime service and sacrifice memorial day in their memory. I urge the government to adopt this legislation.

Veterans Week will commence next week. We will honour Indigenous Veterans Day on November 8. I will be joining my community for Remembrance Day at the Duncan cenotaph, with representatives laying wreaths for me at the other four ceremonies in my riding.

As we wear our poppies in honour of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, let us also commit to standing with those who remain.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

BEST CHEESE IN QUEBEC

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with immense pride today that we celebrate the triumph of Grey Owl cheese, produced by Le Détour cheese factory in Témiscouata-sur-le-Lac.

This culinary gem was recently crowned the best cheese in Quebec by the jury of the prestigious Sélection Caseus competition, which recognizes the most remarkable creations in Quebec.

In direct competition with 197 other exceptional products from every region in Quebec, Grey Owl, with its creamy, refined and distinctive taste won over the taste buds of a jury made up of 25 experts.

This recognition highlights the excellence of the craftsmanship in the Lower St. Lawrence, as well as the expertise and know-how of the people of Témiscouata, who are the pride of our region.

Congratulations to Ginette Bégin, Mario Quirion and the entire team at Le Détour cheese factory for this culinary masterpiece that showcases the entire Lower St. Lawrence region.

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[*English*]

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is one person responsible for propping up the costly and corrupt Prime Minister, and that is the leader of the NDP. I remember when he ripped up his coalition agreement with the Prime Minister. It turns out it was nothing more than a stunt to scam voters right before a by-election.

This week, the leader of the NDP officially taped back together that agreement, but who can be surprised? After all, the leader of the NDP supports all of the disastrous policies of the Prime Minister, from the carbon tax and inflationary deficits to flooding our streets with hard drugs. He is nothing more than a sellout.

Call a carbon tax election.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign interference is an issue that is detrimental to our national security and to the safety of all Canadians. National security experts, like former directors of CSIS Richard Fadden and Ward Elcock, have already urged all party leaders to get their national security clearance so they can view and act on intelligence.

Yesterday, the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard from prominent leaders in the Sikh community who urged the Conservative Party leader to follow the example of all other party leaders and get his national security clearance so he can protect Canadians from foreign interference in his own party. However, on this issue, the leader of the Conservative Party has

Oral Questions

chosen wilful blindness. In doing so, he continues to put Canada's national security at risk. That is not leadership.

Canadians expect and deserve better. Once again, I guess the rumours are true.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

HOUSING

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost of housing. A Conservative government will axe the federal GST on new homes sold. On an \$800,000 home, this is a saving of \$40,000. The CEO of the West End Home Builders Association said that this is the most significant housing policy in two decades. It means more young people will get to buy a home.

Will the Liberal-NDP government axe the federal GST on housing sales so more young people can finally purchase a home?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately with the Conservatives, the proof is always in the pudding and the details are in the fine print. It really comes down to what they are going to cut to pay for that GST cut. In this case, it is the housing accelerator fund, which dozens of Conservative MPs have written to our Minister of Housing about, pleading with him for money for their towns and cities.

I would pose a question back to the member: Do the Conservatives really care about the housing accelerator fund? Do the dozen members who have written to our Minister of Housing want the housing accelerator fund for their towns and cities? It is not just up for renewal; there is another round coming.

• (1120)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Conservatives will do is end the failed Liberal housing programs that have led to the doubling of rents, mortgages and down payments.

The president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario commended the leader of the official opposition for putting forward this program and hoped the provinces would do the same. The founder of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness said that it is “smart”.

Will the Prime Minister make the same commitment to help young Canadians who desperately want to purchase a home and commit to axing the federal GST on new home sales?

Oral Questions

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, I am glad the Conservative member confirmed that the Conservatives' plan is to cancel the housing accelerator fund. I wonder how that makes the dozen or so Conservative members who have been pleading with our housing minister for the funding for their towns and cities feel.

Speaking of feelings, we saw how the Conservatives felt about people who are underhoused and unhoused yesterday at committee. The member for Peterborough—Kawartha, in a really disgusting display of how she feels about people who are homeless, underhoused and unhoused, said that they are the reason we have poverty and crime in Canada. Stigmatizing people who are underhoused is not compassionate.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will tell members what is disgusting. Carbon tax conflict of interest Carney is moving his headquarters out of Canada. This is the individual who is using his position as an adviser to lobby government. He is pocketing profits as a member of the board of Stripe. He is reaping the benefits of amortization rules through his role at Brookfield.

Why is the Prime Minister exempting conflict of interest carbon tax Carney from conflict of interest laws? That is disgusting.

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we see is that as soon as somebody does not support what the Conservatives do, they are slandered and attacked.

Incendiary language has been used about an individual in this instance who has served his country in so many different capacities, both as a governor of the Bank of Canada and as a governor of the Bank of England. He is recognized internationally as making incredible contributions to the world and its thinking about finance, and what we get from the party opposite is ad hominem attacks and personal insults, all because they do not share his opinion. That is concerning.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Halloween is over. It is time for the “Liberal Bloc” to remove their disguise and take off their rose-coloured glasses. Nearly three million requests for food help are made every month in Quebec. That is a 13% increase over last year. Families are suffering under the weight of Liberal-Bloc taxes.

When will this government finally admit that it has failed and call an election for the good of Canadians?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week,

we heard something truly scary from the leader of the Conservatives. He said that he would cut two programs and more beyond that.

There is no doubt in my mind that Conservative cuts would hurt families. For the 400,000 kids across Canada who are able to get a healthy meal at school so they can focus on learning, the Conservatives would take that away, literally taking food out of the mouths of hungry kids. That is truly frightening. How is cutting a national school food program going to help families pay their grocery bills?

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the reality. While this government boasts about investing in the fight against food insecurity, the Moisson Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean food bank is struggling.

Although this organization is unable to rely on any financial support to help it distribute food, it receives 76,000 requests a month from 15,000 people. The Bloc-Liberal government created this situation. Why does the government prefer to feed the bureaucracy in Ottawa instead of people going hungry in Quebec and Canada?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ability to feed our children is a priority in Quebec and in Canada.

The Conservatives and the Bloc voted against the best possible plan for young people in school. I defy my opposition colleagues to say the same thing to our Quebecers and to look teachers in the eye and tell them that feeding our school children is unnecessary.

* * *

● (1125)

SENIORS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are refusing to increase pensions for seniors aged 65 to 74 on the pretext that they are too wealthy. It is despicable.

According to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, of the supposedly wealthy seniors the Liberals are talking about, one in five lives in housing they cannot afford. They have a median after-tax income of \$28,000 a year, based on 2020 data. That is below what the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économique considers a livable income.

Why are the Liberals turning their backs on one million Quebec pensioners as though they were ultrawealthy?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has done more for seniors than any other government.

Where was the Bloc Québécois when we lowered the age of eligibility from 67 to 65? Where was the Bloc Québécois when we increased OAS by 10% for the most vulnerable seniors? My colleague is a woman herself, and we are here to protect older women, who are often the most vulnerable. Many seniors are unable to work.

Oral Questions

Quebec voted against all these measures.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, seniors are not asking for a handout, they are asking for fair treatment after breaking their backs to build Quebec. They are asking for an end to Liberal discrimination, which deprives seniors aged 65 to 74 of a 10% increase in their pension. In a Quebec where the price of rent for available housing has risen by 50% since 2020 in cities like Trois-Rivières or Rimouski, a 10% pension increase is not too much to ask.

Why are the Liberals fighting to keep discriminating against seniors?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, taking care of seniors also means taking care of their oral health.

As my Bloc colleague well knows, there are hundreds and hundreds of seniors who have benefited from dental insurance in her riding, yet she voted against this measure. The reality is that the dental plan enables us to give \$731 to each senior in her riding to help them take care of their oral health.

Then there is the GIS, which we have increased. If anyone is making great strides for seniors, it is the Liberals.

* * *

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, B.C. food banks are struggling. More people than ever visit them and donations are down, and all the while, greedy grocery CEOs line their pockets. For three years, food prices have skyrocketed while the Liberals have refused to stand up to greedy CEOs to lower prices. Meanwhile, the Conservatives point their fingers at everything else except those CEOs, who are gouging people.

These CEOs need to be put on notice: lower prices or face a price cap on essential foods. The only question that remains is, will the Liberals have the courage to do it, yes or no?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that the best way to get food prices down is to increase competition in the market. That is why we have worked with every party in the House to advance competition laws in this country. We have also injected new cash and capital into addressing food insecurity.

The top ask of Food Banks Canada and many other food security organizations for years was to fund a national school food program. That is real support for Canadians at the food bank. It is essentially taking 400,000 kids out of food bank lineups. That is real progress.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are ignoring rising food insecurity, something Manitobans know all too well. Over 50,000 people in Manitoba now rely on food banks, and Harvest Manitoba's president says that we are moving in the wrong direction. Obviously, the Liberals' backdoor

talks with grocer CEOs are going nowhere, and the Conservatives are listening to lobbyists and staying silent on price gouging.

Will the Liberals adopt the NDP's strategy of capping food prices and ending hunger?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been committed to making life more affordable for Canadians. We have done a number of things that have reduced household expenses for Canadians. There is the 50% reduction in child care fees, which is \$800 a month in savings for the average family. It is a significant savings, which families can use to pay for groceries. We have offered a grocery rebate, a 50% reduction in child care fees, pharmacare and a national school food program. All of these measures make life more affordable for Canadians.

* * *

● (1130)

HOUSING

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of these NDP-Liberals, they are not worth the cost of housing. As just reported by Scotiabank, young Canadians are abandoning the dream of ever owning a home. Over half said that they must delay homebuying plans due to the current economic situation, and more are living with parents or family than just three years ago.

Conservatives will axe the federal sales tax on new homes sold. On an \$800,000 house, this is a savings of \$40,000 or \$2,200 a year in mortgage payments. Will the NDP-Liberals axe the federal GST on housing so that more young Canadians can finally buy a home?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the details are really important. This week, the leader of the Conservative Party admitted that he was going to pay for that tax cut by axing the national housing accelerator fund and other important programs that are supporting Canadians. In response to that, Saskatoon's mayor said that the recent pledge from the federal Conservative Party leader to cancel the national housing accelerator fund would put hundreds of already approved housing units in peril.

This is true affordable housing, not million-dollar condos, as my colleague opposite was talking about. Affordable housing for people in need in Saskatoon is in peril with this Conservative leader's plan.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing minister himself said that the program does not actually lead to the construction of specific homes.

Conservatives will end failed Liberal housing programs that led to the doubling of rent, mortgages and down payment costs. The Canadian Real Estate Association said that the Conservative plan to axe the sales tax on homes is a positive move forward, lowering building costs, increasing housing supply and making home ownership “more attainable for Canadians.”

Will the NDP-Liberals axe the federal GST on housing so that more young Canadians can finally buy a home?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a bait and switch in classic form. The Conservatives say it is a cut, and they are right. They are going to cut the housing accelerator fund. They are going to cut out the ability of tens of thousands of Canadians to access affordable housing. They are going to undercut their own MPs who want the housing accelerator fund to continue. This is absolutely a mis-characterization of what they are trying to do. I do not know how any Canadian can take these guys seriously.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, this NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing. He has single-handedly destroyed the dreams of Canadians who now believe that they will never be able to afford a home, but hope is on the horizon. Our common-sense plan will axe the federal sales tax on new homes, saving Canadians up to \$50,000.

Will the Prime Minister axe the federal GST on housing so that young Canadians can finally afford a home?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are, finally, glad that the Conservative leader is being honest with Canadians. This week he finally admitted that he will cut two programs and many more. One of those programs is a program that we fought for tooth and nail on this side of the House, which was to get the housing accelerator fund over the finish line. Why? It is because municipalities, for many years, have been saying that they need more capacity to speed up the process of homebuilding. In Richmond Hill, Ontario, that is \$31 million for 41,000 new homes. What does the member opposite say to Mayor David West?

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have seen the hon. colleague's polls. He should be more interested in dusting off his résumé and updating his LinkedIn profile.

Mr. Speaker, our common-sense Conservative plan will axe the GST on new homes, saving Canadians up to \$50,000. Under the Prime Minister, the cost of housing has skyrocketed. His housing plan has only doubled the bureaucracy and red tape. It has not even built a single home.

Will the Prime Minister axe the tax on housing so that Canadians can finally afford to put a roof over their head?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are catching a glimpse of what those members would do if they were ever fortunate enough to sit on this side of the House. The Conservatives would gut the programs that municipalities have been asking us to deliver to help them speed up the process of building more affordable homes for Canadians, which is truly appalling. What would the member opposite say to Mayor David West when he says that it would be a shame to put that funding into jeopardy?

How can the Conservatives stand up in this House and claim that they have a better solution to the affordable housing crisis than us? We have the most comprehensive plan in Canadian history.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, the cost of housing has skyrocketed. He broke the Canadian promise that if a young person worked hard, they would earn a good paycheque, be able to put food on the table and buy a home in which to raise their family.

We have learned from Mouvement Desjardins that, today, young people have to wait 10 to 15 years longer than their parents before they can become homeowners.

Will the Prime Minister, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, accept our proposal to help these young people by eliminating the GST on new houses and condos?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, affordable housing is a priority for our government. The Conservative Party has no plan for affordable housing.

[English]

It is very clear what the Conservatives want to do. They want to cut tax on million-dollar condos and then put in jeopardy truly affordable housing. We want to make sure everybody can afford a home, whether they are buying a condo, renting in a co-operative or needing to access shelter space. Once again, the Conservatives are making it abundantly clear to Canadians who they are. They do not care about people who are struggling to pay their bills. They do not care about people who are renting their homes or living in co-operatives or shelter spaces. They just want to help the wealthy.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the result of what the “Liberal Bloc” has done is clear to see. It doubled rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled the amount needed for a down payment. The Prime Minister is proposing to add even more red tape, even more costs.

What the Conservative leader is proposing is to eliminate the GST on any affordable housing that costs from zero to one million dollars. All of those homes would be GST-free. According to the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec this initiative is a step in the right direction.

Will the Prime Minister put an end to his photo-op programs that are not building homes and also take a step in the right direction?

[English]

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we already know the leader of the opposition does not know how to build affordable housing. When he was the minister of housing, he only built six affordable houses. The Conservatives do not even know the definition of affordable homes. They do not know that people actually need a place to rent before they buy. They do not know there are programs like rent-to-buy, or rent geared to income, that actually exist.

Our government has invested billions in new co-operative housing. The other thing is that Conservative premiers have not had a housing plan. The Conservative leader of Ontario, for example, has cut funding for affordable housing. Truly affordable housing is not million-dollar condos.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will mark 500 days since the House adopted Bill C-282, which seeks to protect supply management in trade agreements. People are wondering why two Liberal-appointed senators, Peter Boehm and Peter Harder, are filibustering so hard.

We may have gotten a clue yesterday, when former Liberal minister John Manley, a prominent member of Jean Chrétien's government, compared our farmers to the NRA gun lobby. He said that we should ignore them and that passing Bill C-282 would turn Canada into North Korea.

Did he basically say aloud what the Liberals are thinking?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is fully aware that just over 50 years ago, the Liberal government established the supply management program. My hon. colleague is well aware that over the last 50 years, we have fully supported the supply management program. We have supported and will continue to support the supply management program, and push our colleagues in the other place to pass Bill C-282.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after 500 days of filibustering, we have to wonder whether Peter Boehm and Peter Harder are part

Oral Questions

of a Liberal anti-supply-management movement, along with John Manley.

Comparing our farmers to the deadliest lobby in the United States is insulting. Comparing the protection of our human-scale agriculture sector to totalitarianism is outrageous beyond words. All of this comes from a key figure in the government of Jean Chrétien, who arguably had quite an influence on the Liberal Party.

Will the Liberals unequivocally condemn John Manley's comments and call on the Senate to pass Bill C-282?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague I am well aware of the importance of the supply management program. I milked cows for half of my life. I am well aware what supply management means to the agricultural sector and to this country. I can assure my hon. colleague we will continue to support supply management, and we will continue to push the Senate to pass Bill C-282.

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● (1140)

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, news is breaking today that Brookfield Asset Management, a multitenanted everything corporation chaired by Mark "carbon tax" Carney, will be moving its head office out of Canada. This news comes after reports that for several years, Brookfield's effective tax rate will be well below the new global minimum tax rate of 15%. Carney is the Liberals' senior economic adviser.

Why are the Liberals letting Canada's economy be run by a man who puts profit over people?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here it is again. If someone is not a Conservative, they are on a hit list. They are going to be identified, attacked and vilified. It does not matter what their contributions were to their country or the world, their character will be maligned and attacked. That is exactly what this is: an ad hominem, baseless attack to try to intimidate and scare people from providing commentary and ideas to this government. That is what Mark Carney is doing. He is providing his thoughts and ideas on a voluntary basis to this government. What Conservatives are trying to do is intimidate anybody from giving good advice.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Mark "carbon tax" Carney is moving Brookfield's headquarters to Wall Street to avoid paying Canadian tax. The reality is that Mark "carbon tax" Carney gets paid more if Brookfield pays less tax. The reality is that while he is helping his company pay less corporate tax, he wants every Canadian to pay more carbon tax.

Why are the Liberals letting Canada's economy again be run by a man who clearly puts profit over people?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting, the Conservatives were not attacking this individual before he offered to help and give ideas on a voluntary basis. As soon as he identified he wants to support the country by offering economic advice, they want to attack him, because anybody who has ideas who does not support them becomes a villain, becomes somebody to attack. That is the kind of country they want to create, where either a person is a friend or is an enemy. Either they agree with Conservatives or they attack Conservatives. Mark Carney has made incredible contributions to this country and to this world. They should be ashamed of the way they are behaving.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, carbon tax Carney is the Prime Minister's top economic adviser, and he is moving his trillion-dollar international investment firm out of Canada and to another country. Carbon tax Carney will now be advising the Liberal Prime Minister from Wall Street. These two economic vandals have quadrupled the carbon tax on Canadians, while carbon tax Carney is jet-setting off to New York City. It is profits over people, while the Prime Minister exempts carbon tax Carney from Canada's conflict of interest laws.

Why is the Prime Minister exempting now conflict of interest Carney from ethics laws while he operates his company from Wall Street?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that member, from reading his statement, has spent his day trying to malign the character of a good Canadian. I can tell members I am not reading notes right now, because I spent my morning working on pharmacare and dental care and trying to connect care to people. I wonder if he would go and say to his constituents, “You know what I did today? I attacked the character of a wonderful Canadian. I spent my morning thinking of ways to come up with slogans and attack lines for somebody who served his country and the world.” That is not how I spent my morning. I spent my morning thinking about Canadians.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that minister and his government spent their morning making life more unaffordable for Canadians, sending record numbers of Canadians to line up at food banks, doubling mortgages and doubling rents. That is the record of the Liberal government and the failure of a health minister, with a record number of Canadians who do not have a doctor. As for this exemplary Canadian they claim in conflict of interest, carbon tax Carney, let us talk about what he did since he got that job. He got Brookfield into negotiations for \$10 billion Canadian tax dollars. His credit card company, Stripe, is now gouging Canadian small businesses and he has been exposed for lobbying illegally U.K. ministers in the heat pump hustle. It is unacceptable.

When can we have a carbon tax election?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are used to that member playing politics in this House and attacking

and maligning the character of great Canadians, but let me reference a member that these individuals on the Conservative benches like to quote over and over again. Yesterday, the “food professor”, Sylvain Charlebois, at the INDU committee, said that climate change is the agri-food sector's “greatest challenge” and that we need to address it, which is very interesting, because as we listen to the Conservatives every day complain and holler about food prices in this country, we would think they had a plan or some form of solution, but they do not have a plan to—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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● (1145)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot find a family doctor, and labour shortages in construction are driving up the cost of housing. The Liberals betrayed migrant workers with their empty promises that they would give them full status, including those in construction and health care. To add insult to injury, the Liberals are allocating a pathetic 50 spots for regularization in their 2025 levels plan. It is literally not worth the paper it is written on.

Just what sort of sick joke is this?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, coming out of the pandemic, health workforce issues around the globe were incredibly serious. A CIHI report just came out, which showed that Canada is leading the world coming out of the pandemic. When it comes to surgical wait times and surgical wait-lists returning to the levels of before the pandemic, the CIHI report also showed that almost every jurisdiction in the country has more doctors and more nurses. We also were able to—

An hon. member: Not true.

Hon. Mark Holland: That is 100% true.

Mr. Speaker, what else is true is that this is before we signed a deal with every province and every territory to put in \$200 billion. That data is before the dollars that we have actioned to move forward on health care.

*Oral Questions***POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with a health care worker in Terrace, whose job as a psychiatric occupational therapist is critical in addressing the toxic drug and mental health crises in our communities. She is the only graduate from her class who is working in a northern rural community, but here is the thing: The government's student loan forgiveness program excludes occupational therapists. This is clearly an oversight.

Very simply, will the government correct its error and ensure that people like this person in Terrace, B.C., get the loan forgiveness that they so deserve?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was with the member in Terrace, and he is absolutely right that there are very significant challenges in rural and remote communities. I am absolutely looking forward to talking to him on that issue. Our loan forgiveness program for doctors and nurses and hygienists and physiotherapists has been a tremendous success in helping with workforce issues. I want to expand that, but I would call on him to work with us on health data because it is one of the main things that can help us in rural and remote communities.

Right now, the Conservatives have taken Parliament hostage. They will not allow a data bill to move forward, which will save lives, is critically needed and is non-partisan. Let us get to work and pass that bill.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign interference is on the rise, and so is the spread of misinformation. In fact, there have been disturbing allegations this past week that parliamentarians are collaborating with foreign actors.

Can the government please set the record straight for all Canadians?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign interference is serious, and our government is firmly addressing it. This is why it is essential that we get the facts right.

Unlike the member for Spadina—Fort York, who has been spreading false claims, I want to be clear: I have undergone full security screening, and I do have security clearance as a minister of the Crown.

My question for the House is why the Conservative leader will not get his security clearance so that he can protect Canadians in this country.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the “Liberal Bloc” is not worth the cost of housing. This week, our

leader announced that, once elected, we will eliminate the GST on homes under \$1 million.

This announcement was welcomed by many stakeholders, including the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec, the Quebec landlords' association, which said the Conservative leader's proposal was one more idea for reducing costs related to housing and called it a step in the right direction.

Will the Liberals, supported by the Bloc Québécois, axe the federal tax on housing, or are they going to just keep funding programs that look good in photo ops?

[English]

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, on the topic of the housing accelerator fund, which the Conservatives have committed to cut if they form government, I wonder if the member has had a conversation with his colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex or the member for Simcoe North or the member for Fundy Royal or the member for St. Albert—Edmonton or perhaps the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. All those Conservative members have written letters to the Minister of Housing, asking him for the housing accelerator fund to help their towns build more units. We are talking about real affordable housing.

● (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the “Liberal Bloc” doubled the cost of housing, doubled the amount needed for a down payment, doubled mortgage payments and doubled the debt.

The Conservatives will scrap the federal tax on new homes under \$1 million, potentially allowing Canadians to save up to \$50,000. That is what we call common sense.

Will the “Liberal Bloc” wake up at long last and implement our idea so Canadians and Quebecers can finally catch their breath?

[English]

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, do we know who else used to say “common sense” a lot? It was Premier Mike Harris from Ontario, in the early nineties. From that common sense, we got Walkerton. We got deaths from dirty water. We got dangerous cuts to community housing that put in peril my mom's job and where we lived at Chautauqua Co-op, when I was growing up.

However, it is not just Conservative MPs asking the Minister of Housing to keep the housing accelerator fund and make sure their towns and cities get it; it is also dozens of mayors across the country, including Saskatoon's mayor, the mayor of Richmond Hill and the mayors of Kingston, Thunder Bay, St. John's, Surrey, Cambridge and Barrie.

Oral Questions

I could go on. Everybody needs the housing accelerator fund—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil has the floor.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost of housing. Common-sense Conservatives have announced a plan that would axe the federal sales tax on new homes, which has universally been seen as a game-changer. On an \$800,000 house, this tax cut would save homebuyers \$40,000 and \$2,200 a year in mortgage payments.

After nine years, the NDP-Liberals have doubled rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled down payments. Will the NDP-Liberals axe the federal GST on housing so that more Canadians, young Canadians, can afford to buy a home?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the housing accelerator fund, I just named five or six Conservative members of Parliament who have written to the Minister of Housing to ask for the housing accelerator fund, but I did not mention a former Conservative member of Parliament who is now the mayor of Barrie. In that member's constituency, former Conservative member of Parliament Alex Nuttall has actually written to the Minister of Housing and asked him not to cancel the housing accelerator fund. Barrie needs the housing accelerator fund. It costs money to build affordable housing, and the federal government needs to be at the table. He has asked us to continue to help building the affordable housing and not to cut the HST.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the member is still on a sugar high from Halloween. I have actually spoken to the City of Barrie's mayor. I spoke to him yesterday, in fact. Mayor Nuttall and council—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil has the floor.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, it takes a Conservative to get the job done, and Barrie did that before the national housing accelerator fund was announced. It has set the standard on building permits and processing, and the fact is that the City of Barrie, its mayor and its council stand to gain more from our building homes, not bureaucracy plan because we are going to be in it for the long term, just not for another couple of years.

As such, why will the NDP-Liberals' costly coalition not support our GST tax cut, so more young Canadians can afford to buy a home?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could not have said it better myself. The member opposite is right. Barrie has cut red tape. It has improved wait times for approvals. It has done all those things because it received the housing accelerator fund.

I want to congratulate the mayor of Barrie, the former Conservative member for Barrie, that member's predecessor. Alex Nuttall

has been a great mayor to the people of Barrie, and he has worked with the housing accelerator fund. It actually took a Conservative with Liberal policies to solve affordable housing crises across the country, and that includes Alex Nuttall in Barrie. I thank him for being a champion of the housing accelerator fund.

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[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, advance requests for medical assistance in dying are now permitted in Quebec. This is a major victory for patients like Sandra Demontigny, who was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. However, the battle is not yet won in terms of legal protection for doctors. The Collège des médecins du Québec reminded doctors on Wednesday that advance requests are still illegal under the Criminal Code. This means that some doctors will refuse their patients' requests for fear of prosecution.

Will the government finally show some compassion and amend the Criminal Code to allow advance requests?

● (1155)

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, advance requests have always been illegal in Canada. Now, we have launched a national conversation about advance requests, a conversation that is absolutely critical. When making such a major change, it is really important to have a conversation with all the provinces and territories, as well as with the families of people making such requests. I lost my grandmother to Alzheimer's, and it was really sad. Such a sensitive issue requires a conversation.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a House committee has already worked very hard on the issue of advance requests. It heard from all of the experts. Quebec itself held extensive consultations before amending its legislation. It consulted the Collège des médecins du Québec, the Barreau du Québec, patient associations and the Quebec National Assembly. I wonder exactly who the Liberals intend to consult. Will they consult the religious right, which supports the Conservatives?

While the Liberal government drags its feet, doctors and sick people are worrying. When is it going to amend the Criminal Code?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked a good question. It would be interesting to know the Conservative Party's position. The Conservative Party has nothing to say on the subject. I wonder what the Conservative Party's position is.

For the rest, it is absolutely essential to ensure that our system is ready for change. A change as big and as delicate as this one takes time and conversations, but not over a long period of time. There will be a report next March.

We will continue the national conversation.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada confirmed this week that, under the NDP-Liberals, Canadians are getting poorer. Statistics Canada tracks the prosperity of Canadians, and for eight of the last nine quarters, it reports that Canadians are getting poorer. What is worse, the Royal Bank predicts that the Liberal legacy will continue. This is why more than half of Canadians are struggling to pay for their everyday essentials. Meanwhile, U.S. prosperity grew by 2.8%.

Will the Prime Minister reverse the Liberal recession and axe the taxes that are making Canadians poorer?

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is time for a history lesson for my colleague. Since 2015, our government has invested in Canadians, the Canadian economy, the business world and community organizations. When the Conservatives were in power in 2014, they made major budget cuts on the backs of the men and women who serve. Does everyone remember? They closed nine veterans offices right across the country, one of which was in Nova Scotia. However, there is good news: Yesterday was the eighth anniversary of the reopening of the veterans office in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a typical NDP-Liberal Nova Scotian, who thinks that Canadians have never had it so good. He thinks that quadrupling the carbon tax, which he wants to do, is good for Canadians, that increasing housing taxes and job-killing capital gains taxes is also good for Canadians. I will tell the member what The Economist says. It says that Canada is “poorer than Alabama”, which is the “fourth-poorest” state in the U.S. The Economist also says that, over the last five years, U.S. economic growth has doubled Canada's. The Financial Post says that the Canadian standard of living decline is the “worst...in 40 years”.

Will the Prime Minister axe the taxes that are making Canadians poorer?

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what are the Conservatives talking about right now? They are talking about making cuts. The question is, what cuts is he going to be making with his leader and his government? They want to make cuts to child care. They want to make cuts to \$10-a-day day care. They want to make cuts to dental care. They want to make cuts to pharmacare. I even heard that they are going to move the retirement age from 65 to 67. No, I heard 67, 68, 69. What is it?

Oral Questions

Let us have the real truth. They should share it with Canadians: How many cuts are they going to make? Where are they making the cuts? We are ready; we want to hear. Canadians want to know where they are going to make those cuts.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling with skyrocketing costs on everything from groceries to gas, and now we see the toll it has taken on our economy. Statistics Canada confirms what families already know: The NDP-Liberal coalition is not worth the cost. GDP per person has dropped in eight out of the last nine quarters. Meanwhile, in the U.S., GDP grew by nearly 3% last quarter. Why is this? It is because NDP-Liberals keep taxing Canadians into the ground with their hikes on the carbon tax, the housing tax and the job-killing capital gains tax.

Will the Prime Minister finally axe the tax hikes that are driving Canadians into poverty?

• (1200)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, time and time again, we hear in the House Conservatives speaking up for vulnerable people, but what do they say when they are in committee? We can listen to this: The member for Peterborough—Kawartha said, “Guess what happens when you don't have a house? You go commit crime because you're in poverty.” It is shameful that, as we stand to lift Canadians up, Conservatives use vulnerable people as props and then demonize them and blame them for crime in this country. It is truly shameful, and Canadians should see through their rhetoric.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over one million Canadians have now accessed care through the Canadian dental care plan; with close to 363,000 British Columbians who were approved to receive care, that number will continue to soar. Despite this success, Conservatives are quick to say that they will gut the programs that are helping Canadians. One out of four Canadians said they skipped a dental visit because they could not afford it.

Can the Minister of Health please inform the House of how the CDCP is helping Canadians with affordability and putting their health first?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member, who is such an advocate for health. I know he is a Canucks fan. I am taking a guess, but he is nodding. Imagine filling the stadium 50 times with Canucks fans. That is how many Canadians we are talking about; it is a million people.

Yesterday, when I was in Scarborough, I talked to Manjit. Manjit let me know that he had a tooth extraction that cost him \$700 a bunch of years ago. He was terrified to go to the dentist again. He had pain in his mouth. He said he would not go. Now he is going because he has a plan; he has coverage. That is what this plan is about.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal government is just not worth it.

Just this week, the Calgary Food Bank reported more people needed it than ever before. It has had a 200% increase since 2019 and 30% increase in the last year. Nearly 40% of them were employed, higher than the national average. Constituents like Kim write me to say that the coalition will cost them their house, mode of transportation and any semblance of quality of life that they have left.

Will the Prime Minister give Canadians relief and call a carbon tax election?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have one word: hypocritical. That is what we call it when people say they care about something and then do the exact opposite.

It is like when Conservatives say they care about people who have to use a food bank, but then want to cut a program that is going to feed 400,000 more kids per year. It is like when Conservatives say they care about violent crime, but then want to make it easier for criminals to get guns. It is like when Conservatives say they care about foreign interference, but their leader will not even step up to get a security clearance to protect Canadians.

We cannot believe anything the Conservatives say in the House.

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, it is clear the NDP-Liberal government is simply not worth the cost.

Food Banks Canada now states that the need for its services is spiralling out of control. In Manitoba, use of food banks has increased 122% since the pandemic, with over 50,000 people relying on them each month. The CEO of Harvest Manitoba said that this is “absolutely unprecedented”, yet the NDP-Liberal government plans to raise the cost of food further by quadrupling the carbon tax.

When will the Prime Minister simply end the pain and let Canadians vote in a carbon tax election?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hunger report from Food Banks Canada is an important document,

and I hope my colleague opposite actually reads it, because it made four recommendations: rebuild the social safety net, invest in truly affordable housing, support lower-income workers and address the northern and remote food insecurity issue. It is 108 pages, but it does not mention the carbon tax once. Why? It is because Food Banks Canada knows that the Canada carbon rebate achieves those four things. It invests in lower-income Canadians. It makes sure that food insecurity is addressed for communities.

If the member opposite wants to quote the food banks, he ought to read the report and make the same recommendations the poverty elimination experts do.

* * *

● (1205)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' indigenous contracting scandal is the biggest Liberal scandal yet. The Liberal government used the indigenous contracting program to send money to well-connected, non-indigenous insiders using shell companies, shady joint ventures and outright fabrication. Indigenous leaders say that most of those who benefited from this program are shell companies.

Will these fraudsters and their Liberal enablers be held accountable, and will they pay back the money they took from taxpayers and real indigenous businesses?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indigenous partners have been absolutely clear on this point: Indigenous procurement programs have been essential to supporting indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs and creating jobs at indigenous-led businesses. Initial reports show that the government is exceeding the 5% targets. We are already speaking with first nation, Inuit and Métis partners, business leaders and financial institutions to figure out what is working, what is not working and how we can make it even better.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one million Canadians are now receiving care under the Canadian dental care plan. This plan is changing the lives of Canadians and helping them get access to the dental care they need. Conservatives voted against this.

Routine Proceedings

Can the minister share with the House what he is hearing from Canadians about the Canadian dental care plan and why this plan is here to stay?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is one million in six months, which is fantastic. It is connecting people to care all across the country. I want to thank the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity for his incredible advocacy.

We were in Clarenville together and were able to talk on the ground about what this meant for people in his riding. By connecting them to care, they get the dignity of a smile they can be proud of and get preventative care. Afterward, I went to Gander. We talked to Dr. Redmond, who found three oral cancers in the last number of months that would not have been found.

This is saving lives. This is giving people dignity.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the longest coastline in the world, but the Liberals have abandoned our coasts and coastal communities, just as the Conservatives did. Recently, the Liberals cut the ghost and derelict fishing gear cleanup fund, closed lighthouses, cut funding to deal with invasive green crab and are still allowing a massive ship to be dismantled in a sensitive ecosystem. This is only a snapshot of all their failures for coastal communities.

When is the minister going to stop letting coastal communities down?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members will not be surprised that I have the opposite view on that. In fact, if we look at coastal communities in British Columbia, we are putting forward a transition for farmed salmon in B.C. We are taking things seriously. We are not pontificating on what is wrong and making judgments. We are curious about what British Columbians need. What they need are good paying jobs. They need a government that takes safety seriously. That is so important.

There is a lot in the question that I would like to unpack. I wish I had 10 more minutes because I would have 10 more minutes of answers on what the government is doing well.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, last fall, the government gave an HST exemption to for-profit developers of rental units to help address the housing crisis but left out non-profit affordable home ownership builders like Habitat for Humanity. In my community, Habitat's Kehl Street build would have had an extra million for affordable units had this been in place. The federal government could pay for it by ending tax exemptions for large corporate investors that buy up existing units and raise rents.

Will the government include this important measure in the fall economic statement?

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, I would like to thank the member for his advocacy for Habitat for Humanity. I recently had a meeting with them as well because they opened a new ReStore in Milton. I congratulate Habitat for Humanity and thank them for building thousands and thousands of homes for Canadians. I would also like to thank the member from the Green Party for his advocacy on co-operative housing.

Since this is the last question, I would like to congratulate my mom on 30 years of co-operative housing work in Mississauga. She is retiring on Sunday. We need more co-op housing in Canada. We need more co-op housing workers. We need more community coordinators like my mom Beata. I congratulate my mom on 35 years.

• (1210)

The Deputy Speaker: I congratulate the hon. member's mom as well.

I see the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre standing on a point of order.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, during my question in question period, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, while his Conservative bro's giggled around him, heckled me in this chamber. I have had to remind this member before to calm down on his toxic masculinity. I am asking for him to control his inner macho man and apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: While I appreciate the help, I will remind everyone to maintain decorum in the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to six petitions.

These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY**

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, entitled "Potential anti-competitive behaviour in Canada's e-Transfer ecosystem".

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PETITIONS

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table today.

The first petition is on medical assistance in dying or euthanasia and is from constituents in my riding. The petitioners are asking for the Government of Canada to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying or euthanasia to those whose only underlying condition is mental illness.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from folks in my riding, made at the time of the Stampede. I am tabling it a little late on their behalf.

The petitioners are asking for the House to hold another non-confidence vote and, should that vote be successful, to hold an election within 45 days.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition draws the attention of the House to the continued practice by the CCP to persecute Falun Gong practitioners with transnational repression, including in Canada.

The petitioners are drawing the attention of the House to the fact that the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning organ harvesting abuses in the PRC and has called on the Government of China to immediately end the practice of harvesting organs from prisoners of conscience. I will also draw the attention of the House to the fact that a Canadian, Zuo Li, has been targeted by the CCP with continued repression.

The petitioners are asking Canadian Parliament to do the following: pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the CCP regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in the People's Republic of China.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition from a group of concerned citizens who are raising an issue related to foreign interference and the plight of Hong Kongers in Canada.

The petitioners note that the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Canada enjoys diplomatic and immunity privileges. This is largely a result of the "one country, two systems" rule. Under the national security law in Hong Kong, basic rights and basic laws in Hong Kong no longer exists.

The petitioners note that a senior employee of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in the U.K. was charged with assisting a foreign intelligence service in foreign interference matters contrary to various sections of the National Security Act. The petitioners further note that evidence was presented that the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in the U.K. was directly involved in paying defendants to conduct hostile activities targeted at the Hong

Kong diaspora in the U.K., which included hostile surveillance, acts of deception and forcing entry into a residential address.

Canada has been a safe haven for Hong Kongers fleeing political oppression since 2019, including Canadian-born pro-democracy lawmaker Dennis Kwok, who had been issued bounties by Hong Kong police for violating widely condemned Hong Kong national security laws. To that end, the petitioners are calling for the Canadian government to end the diplomatic privileges and immunity of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Canada.

● (1215)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually today because I am hovering near where my new granddaughter was just born. That is not part of the petition.

I am very pleased to present a petition that does relate to motherhood. It is from an unusual group of petitioners; they are all physicians who are also mothers. The petitioners, as physicians and as mothers, ask the House to pay attention to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report about 1.5°C. It was actually issued in the fall of 2018 and set out the parameters that the world will have to meet to avoid going over dangerous tipping points that put the future of our children and grandchildren at risk.

Petitioners ask the government to be cognizant of the imperatives to meet the Paris Agreement targets to reduce emissions dramatically and quickly, to avoid going over a 1.5°C global average temperature increase, which puts the future of human civilization at risk.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition. Petitioners note that the government's planned expansion of MAID in cases of mental illness where that is the sole underlying condition would put vulnerable Canadians at risk because it is impossible to determine irremediability, as well as to distinguish between suicidality and a rational request for MAID.

Accordingly, petitioners call on the House to stand with vulnerable persons and permanently scrap the reckless expansion of MAID to those with mental illness as the sole underlying medical condition.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan.

I present a petition today in regard to Canadians who are concerned about the Communist government in Beijing and its targeting of the people of the Falun Gong community, specifically for human forced organ harvesting, which is an incredibly disgusting practice. I think that, as Canadians, we would all agree that someone should not be targeted for their faith, but as this gruesome practice is being done, petitioners would like a variety of things accomplished. I will simply say that they would like their parliamentarians to amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting.

As well, petitioners call, obviously, for the end of persecution of people of faith like the Falun Gong group.

SALMON FISHERY

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of coastal people and Vancouver Islanders. The petitioners are concerned about migrating juvenile wild salmon stocks, which are under serious threat from pathogens, pollutants, and sea lice originating from open-net fish farms. This was highlighted in the Cohen commission.

Petitioners cite that wild salmon support first nations cultural traditions and complex ecosystems, including contributing to coastal forests, which produce the oxygen we breathe. In spite of the serious risk of PRV that it poses to the migrating juvenile wild salmon stocks, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans refuses to screen for domestic PRV and stop the transfer of farmed salmon known to be infected with PRV. Last, the Pacific salmon runs on the British Columbia coast are in a state of emergency.

Petitioners are calling for the government to immediately stop the transfer of PRV-infected smolts into open-net salmon farms, complete the transitioning of open-net salmon farms to be land-based closed containment by 2025 and, last, to develop a transition plan that supports communities, workers, suppliers and all who are impacted by the open-net salmon farm industry.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table a petition from Canadians who have expressed very serious concerns about serious proposals to expand the medical assistance in dying regime in Canada to infants under the age of one. They are very concerned about recommendations relating to the expansion of MAID for infants with severe deformities or a very serious syndrome.

The proposal is very concerning to the Canadians who have signed the petition. They feel that the government must take action to block any attempts to expand medical assistance in dying for children. The petitioners feel very strongly that infanticide is always wrong.

• (1220)

FALUN GONG

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to rise to table a petition from Canadians who are concerned about the practice of forced organ harvesting that has been taking place in China. Members of the Falun Gong community have been disproportionately targeted by the government for forced organ harvesting. Petitioners are calling on the

Routine Proceedings

Canadian Parliament to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese government regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs.

Petitioners are calling on the government to amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting, and they are publicly calling on the government to call for an end to the persecution of the Falun Gong in China.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to table a number of petitions on behalf of my constituents. I hope there will not be too much heckling. Although heckling is allowed, we certainly would not want to throw out the baby with the bathwater in that regard.

The first petition I am tabling is in support of Bill C-257, which is an excellent private member's bill I have tabled in the House. It would add political belief and activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination within the Canadian Human Rights Act. Petitioners note that currently there is no prohibition against discriminating against someone on the basis of their political beliefs, and that adding that prohibition would align well with prohibitions on discrimination on the basis of other characteristics already protected in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Petitioners note in particular that it is in the best interests of democracy to protect public debate and the free exchange of ideas. Political discrimination can deter individuals from participating and limit their ability to participate freely in public debate. Bill C-257 would protect the free exchange of ideas that helps to advance the common good through substantial exchanges among free people.

Petitioners therefore want the House to pass Bill C-257 and to take other measures to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

ERITREA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next I am tabling a petition highlighting a variety of concerns regarding human rights and abuses by the Government of Eritrea. Petitioners want the House to note first of all that Eritrea has been ruled by an authoritarian, brutal dictator under a totalitarian system for the last 30 years, with no constitution, no election, no parliament, no freedom of the press, and no freedom of movement and association. Although Eritrea gets less attention, it is generally known, as a result of this reality, as being the North Korea of Africa in terms of governance.

Routine Proceedings

Eritreans continue to flee indefinite military conscription, religious persecution and political repression. Eritreans who have sought asylum around the world, including here in Canada, continue to be concerned about foreign interference, about how the Eritrean government through its embassies tries to undermine the human rights of people who have fled and interfere in the affairs of other sovereign countries. Various instances of this are highlighted in the petition.

In addition, petitioners want to draw the attention of the House to how the Eritrean dictator collaborates with Vladimir Putin and other adversaries, other authoritarian regimes around the world. Petitioners call on the House to take a number of steps to engage more with Eritrean human rights activists and pro-democracy groups, to take a leadership stand against the Eritrean dictator's malicious conspiracy with Vladimir Putin and to investigate instances of foreign interference in Canada involving the Eritrean regime, to ensure that people who are agents of the regime are not able to misuse our asylum system to come to Canada.

Petitioners want stronger sanctions against human rights abusers who are associated with the Eritrean regime, and they also are calling for the release of various political prisoners, including imprisoned journalist Dawit Isaak, who is the longest-imprisoned journalist in the world, as well as various imprisoned Eritrean former parliamentarians: Petros Solomon, Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo, Haile Woldetsanae, Ogbe Abraha, Hamad Hamid Hamad, Saleh Kekiya, Estifanos Seyoum, Berhane Gebregziabher, Aster Fissehatsion, Germano Nati and Beraki Gebreslassie.

I commend the important petition to the consideration of my colleagues.

• (1225)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling raises concern about another proposal for the expansion of euthanasia. While there have been so many abuses already, with Canadians who are struggling with the cost of living, for example, being pushed toward considering this option, the focus of the government, rather than being on alleviating the suffering of Canadians, has been on trying to propose further expansion of the already most liberal euthanasia regime in the world.

Petitioners are raising concern about a proposal to expand euthanasia to include “babies from birth to one year of age”. The proposal for the legalized killing of infants, obviously without their consent, is deeply disturbing to many Canadians. It was a proposal made by Louis Roy of the Quebec college of physicians before a parliamentary committee. The petitioners would like to see the House soundly reject the proposal.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will table one more petition, highlighting the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. The petitioners are very concerned about how Falun Gong practitioners have faced a decades-long campaign of violence by the CCP in China. That campaign of violence has included various forms of persecution, including forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners who have signed the petition would like to see the House take stronger measures to combat the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in the People's Republic of China and to seek the release of various political prisoners currently in prison, especially those with close connections to Canada.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2950 and 2956.

[Text]

Question No. 2950—**Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to the allegations outlined in the forensic audit conducted for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) by PricewaterhouseCoopers related to the Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation: what are the details of the report, broken down by each allegation in the report, including (i) a summary of the allegation, (ii) the audit's finding or conclusion, (iii) the amount of ineligible expenses involved, (iv) the amount of questionable expenses involved, (v) the total amount of expenses involved, (vi) ISC's response to the finding?

Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Indigenous Services Canada cannot disclose the full results of forensic audits for privacy and security reasons. The department is in the process of preparing summary reports that will provide details of the findings, which will be posted on the department's website within 120 days.

Question No. 2956—**Mr. Mike Lake:**

With regard to the Federal Lands Initiative, since the program launched in February 2019: how many homes (i) have been built, (ii) are currently under development?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the federal lands initiative, as of June 30, 2024, 23 commitments were signed representing 3,744 units. Currently, 1,880 new units are under construction.

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2947 to 2949, 2951 to 2955 and 2957 to 2962 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 2947—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the government's announcement on February 21, 2022, that it would provide up to \$136 million to connect rural households in Newfoundland and Labrador to high-speed internet: (a) what are the details of all projects approved through this funding, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) location, (iii) project description, (iv) number of households that will receive new broadband service, (v) number of households that will receive upgraded broadband service, (vi) amount of funding, (vii) project start and completion dates, (viii) date the project application was received, (ix) date the project was approved, (x) funding breakdown between federal and provincial governments; (b) what is the total amount of funding provided to projects, to date, under the funding; (c) what was the eligibility and performance criteria used to determine if an applicant qualified for funding; and (d) what were the penalties for recipients that did not meet (i) the performance metrics, (ii) the timeline, (iii) all other requirements, outlined in the funding agreement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2948—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the government's participation in the United Nations' 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) in Dubai: (a) what are the total expenditures incurred by the government to date related to the conference, broken down by type of expense; (b) what are the details of all delegates sent to COP 28, including the (i) total number of delegates that the government paid for, (ii) official title and department or organization of each individual, (iii) total expenditures incurred by each individual, broken down by type of expense; (c) what are the details of the delegates' accommodations in Dubai, including (i) which hotels were used, (ii) how much was spent at each hotel, (iii) how many rooms were rented at each hotel and for how many nights, (iv) what were the room rates paid at each hotel and the number of rooms rented at each rate, (v) who stayed in each room in (c)(iv), broken down by room rate; (d) what were the details of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's accommodation expenditures, including the (i) daily rate, (ii) accommodation venue; (e) what are the details of the total hospitality expenditures, broken down by (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) location, (iv) name of any commercial establishment or vendor involved in the hospitality activity, (v) number of attendees, (vi) description of the event, (vii) description of the goods and services; (f) what are the details of all ground transportation expenditures, including, for each, (i) the date, (ii) the amount, (iii) the vendor, (iv) the origin, (v) the destination, (vi) the make and model of each vehicle used, (vii) the type of vehicle (gas, electric, hybrid), (viii) whether a chauffeur or driver was included, (ix) the names and titles of passengers or individuals who incurred the expense; and (g) what are the details of all expenditures on gifts related to the conference, including, for each, the (i) value, (ii) description, (iii) vendor from whom it was purchased, (iv) recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2949—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the containment curtain installed in Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park: (a) what are the total costs incurred from the containment curtain, broken down by expense; (b) who installed the containment curtain; (c) what is the total cost of installation for the containment curtain; (d) what is the total amount, if any, that will be refunded to the federal government by the suppliers following the damage that resulted in the removal of the containment curtain; (e) on what date did Parks Canada initially find out that the containment curtain was damaged; (f) who did Parks Canada directly inform about the containment curtain's damage, and when were each of them notified; (g) for each notice in (f), what is the name and title of the Parks Canada official who provided the notice and what method of communication was used; (h) what are the details of how Parks Canada informed the public of the containment curtain's damage prior to the removal, including the date of public notice, and the method of communication used; (i) what elected officials were informed by Parks Canada of the containment curtain's (i) damage, (ii) removal, if any; (j) were any of the elected officials in (i) a (i) mayor, (ii) reeve, (iii) councillor, (iv) member of the Legislative Assembly, or (v) member of Parliament, and, if so, what was their name and title; (k) who will be financially responsible for the damage incurred to the containment curtain, broken down by (i) entity, (ii) cost; and (l) will the containment curtain be re-installed in Clear Lake in 2025?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2951—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to RCMP surplus vehicles, since January 1, 2021: (a) how many vehicles have been (i) sold, (ii) junked or crushed; (b) of the vehicles that were sold,

what was the (i) make and model, (ii) year, (iii) sale price, (iv) date sold, (v) reason for the surplus (too many miles, damage, etc.); (c) of the vehicles that were junked, what was the (i) make and model, (ii) year, (iii) date sold, (iv) reason for being junked (too many miles, damage, etc.), (v) cost incurred by the RCMP related to the junking or crushing, (vi) revenue received by the RCMP for scrap; (d) how many surplus vehicles are currently sitting in storage awaiting sale or junking; and (e) what is the breakdown of (d) by make, model and year of the vehicle?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2952—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the \$254,746 in construction and renovation costs incurred by the government at 80 Wellington Street, since 2015, related to general upgrades of meeting facilities and collaborative spaces: what is the detailed breakdown of the costs, including, for each expenditure, the (i) amount, (ii) description of the goods or services, (iii) vendor, (iv) date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2953—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to government policies that prohibit working with certain vendors or contractors: (a) what are the names of all vendors and contractors who are either currently, or have at some point since November 4, 2015, been prohibited, banned, or otherwise deemed ineligible from doing work with (i) the Department of National Defence, (ii) the Canadian Armed Forces, (iii) NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic, (iv) the Government of Canada or all other departments and agencies; and (b) for each vendor or contractor in (a), what is the (i) date on which the entity was prohibited or banned, (ii) date on which the ban ends or is scheduled to end, (iii) reason for the ban, (iv) location where the vendor or contractor is based, including the city, province or territory, and country?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2954—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to privacy breaches that occurred since March 1, 2023, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) how many breaches have occurred; and (b) what are the details of each breach, including (i) the date, (ii) the number of individuals whose information was involved, (iii) the summary or description of the incident, (iv) the government program or service that was impacted by the breach, (v) whether or not the individuals whose information was involved were contacted, (vi) the date and method of how the individuals were contacted, (vii) whether or not the Privacy Commissioner was notified, (viii) the description of any measures provided to individuals impacted, such as free credit monitoring services, (ix) the estimated cost to fix the problem or vulnerability that led to the breach, (x) the cost to compensate those whose information was impacted, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2955—Mr. Mike Lake:

With regard to funding provided through the Housing Accelerator Fund: (a) how much funding has been provided to date, broken down by city or municipality and by province or territory; and (b) what are the key milestones that must be achieved before the federal government provides the next Housing Accelerator Fund payment, broken down by city or municipality?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2957—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to the disposal of federal land for housing: (a) how many properties are currently in the disposal process; (b) how many properties have been declared surplus; (c) how many homes are expected to be built on these surplus properties; and (d) what is the breakdown of (a) through (c) by province or territory and by municipality?

(Return tabled)

*Points of Order***Question No. 2958—Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's report titled "Progress on the National Housing Strategy, June 2024" and the figures listed on page 4 related to the Federal Lands Initiative: (a) what is the number of new units under the Federal Lands Initiative, in total, and broken down by current status, including (i) unconditionally committed, but not yet under construction, (ii) conditionally committed, but not yet under construction, (iii) under construction, (iv) built; and (b) what is the number of renewal or renovation units under the Federal Lands Initiative, in total, and broken down by current status, including (i) unconditionally committed, but not yet under construction, (ii) conditionally committed, but not yet under construction, (iii) under construction, (iv) built?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2959—Mr. Chris d'Entremont:

With regard to government funding for housing related programs: how much has the government budgeted for the future, broken down by program, year, and department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2960—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the government's announcement on September 13, 2024 to provide Telesat with a \$2.14 billion loan: (a) how many households has Telesat committed to connecting with high-speed internet, service specifically as a result of the \$2.14 billion, and by what date will the households be connected; (b) what are the complete details of financial penalties, if any, for not connecting the number of households agreed to in the funding agreement; (c) of the households that will receive high-speed internet in (a), what is the number of households that will receive (i) upgraded broadband services, (ii) new broadband services; (d) of the households in (a), what is the breakdown in each province and territory; (e) what is the government's current equity stake in Telesat in terms of value, percentage of equity, and number of shares, as well as the details of each equity transaction since 2015, including the (i) date, (ii) total price or amount, (iii) type of transaction (bought or sold), (iv) number of shares or percentage of equity, (v) share price, if applicable; (f) what specific communities will Telesat Lightspeed "expand Internet and 5G networks" to, as stated in the press release released by the prime minister's office; (g) of the jobs that will be created from the agreement, how many are (i) direct, (ii) indirect; (h) of the jobs in (g), how many are (i) full-time, (ii) part-time, (iii) temporary, (iv) contract; (i) what are the terms and conditions of the loan repayment, including the (i) amount to be repaid, (ii) maturity rate, (iii) interest rate, (iv) amortization rate, (v) repayment schedule; (j) what was the equity valuation of Telesat LEO determined by the government (i) at the time the loan agreement was signed, (ii) on September 13, 2024; (k) what was the equity valuation of Telesat Corporation determined by the government (i) at the time the loan agreement was signed, (ii) on September 13, 2024; and (l) was the Minister of Rural Economic Development present at the announcement, and, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2961—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to Canada Border Services Agency tracking of travellers exiting Canada, broken down by year and by quarter: (a) what is the total number of people who have exited Canada by commercial air travel since June 25, 2020, broken down by (i) country of citizenship, (ii) country travelling to, (iii) age, broken down as follows (I) 0-18, (II) 18-65, (III) 65+; and (b) what is the total number of people who have exited Canada by land travel since July 11, 2019, broken down by (i) country of citizenship, (ii) age, broken down as follows (I) 0-18, (II) 18-65, (III) 65+?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2962—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to family reunification measures for Yazidis who have been resettled to Canada, broken down by year: (a) what is the total number of applications that (i) have been received, (ii) have been accepted, (iii) have been rejected, (iv) have been withdrawn, (v) are still in process; (b) how many dependents are associated with these applications in each of the categories in (a); (c) what is the average processing time for applications in each of the categories in (a); (d) what were the primary reasons for rejection; (e) what is the geographical distribution of accepted applicants within Canada; (f) has the government set a cap on the number of applications for Yazidi family reunification, and, if so, what is that cap and how was it determined; and (g) what are the government's plans for future intakes under this program, including any changes to the cap or eligibility criteria?

(Return tabled)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, do we have quorum?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We will check for quorum.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We do not have quorum. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We have quorum now.

• (1230)

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just ask that the next time you are doing a quorum count, you also count the Conservative MPs who are hiding behind the curtains.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I would ask members on both sides of the House to maintain decorum. I do not want to have to name members because they are talking in the House and preventing us from moving on to orders of the day.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER**DECORUM**

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is the second occasion where I have seen the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, who is heckling me right now, threaten physical violence against members.

Mr. Michael Barrett: So wrong.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I think it was two weeks ago that the member was doing this to a woman, the member for Edmonton Strathcona. Now he is doing it to Liberal members across the way.

I just want to remind the member, as he heckles me in the House, that this is not the WWE. We are in the House of Commons; he should show a bit more respect and refrain from his violent behaviour.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, not only is that absolutely false, but also, number one, I have never threatened anyone with violence in this place, and number two, in this instance, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell made a homophobic comment in the House mere minutes ago. I encouraged him, in raising my hands, to stand up and make the same comment again. Now, should NDP members be okay with that type of conduct in here, I will leave it to their own conscience and for them to explain it to their constituents. I can tell members that I find it reprehensible and unacceptable.

The member for Winnipeg Centre should withdraw her statement and apologize because the claim she has made is unsubstantiated. It has not been captured in Hansard, and it certainly has not been adjudicated on by the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you invite that member to apologize for saying something that is demonstrably not true.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford had said that Conservative members were hiding behind the curtain. I said that there is nothing wrong with coming from behind the curtain.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that the member for Winnipeg Centre has, today and on many occasions, made comments that are clearly unparliamentary in making accusations against members. Regardless of whether we couch them in whatever kind of framing around demographics, there are clear rules on parliamentary language, and this member from Winnipeg consistently uses unparliamentary language, as we have heard on multiple occasions today. She should be called to order by the Chair, consistent with how any other member would be treated, and she should be told she has to apologize.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, this is really entertaining coming from the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, who was heckling me during QP.

On the toxic masculinity, I will not take it back, as it is including the toxic masculinity that I have seen from the other member. I have seen it physically with my own eyes. We cannot capture physical actions made toward members, including toward female members. I have had it with their toxic masculinity, and I will not apologize. However, I do expect apologies in the House for demonstrations of toxic masculinity.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the accusations about what I allegedly said during question period, as I recall, I honestly was not even paying attention to the member's question during question period. However, the point is, holding one's arms out is not an act of violence.

This member is repeatedly using unparliamentary language in the House. One cannot say in the House the things that this member has said. This member thinks that she can get away with ignoring the rules. I think it is important that there be one standard of adherence to parliamentary rules. The name-calling and the insults are unparliamentary, and this member needs to be brought to order.

Privilege

• (1235)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I wish members a happy Friday. I would just ask that we could perhaps have peace and unity in this place and carry on with debate.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank all hon. members for their contributions to this point of order. Obviously, the Chair would like to remind everyone of the importance of decorum in the House. We need to have speeches and constructive debate.

The Chair will check the blues and get back to the House on all of the issues that were raised, if necessary.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Calgary Midnapore. This is the second time I am rising in the House to speak to the privilege motion before us today. I have already given a speech, but since an amendment to the amendment was presented, I will give another.

This time I will speak a bit more in French because the last time, I did my entire speech in English. I will say a few words in French to start since I have 20 minutes for my speech.

The last time I spoke to this issue, I noted the fact that it is unfortunately not the first time that the government is refusing to submit documents to the House. If only this were the first time, but no, unfortunately, we have many examples where the government decided to hold on to documents rather than submit them.

The first example is when we asked the government to release the data that it provided to the Parliamentary Budget Officer that proves that carbon pricing has a negative economic impact. We requested the documents, but unfortunately the government decided not to submit them.

Privilege

The second example is when the government refused to hand over documents related to foreign interference. We found ourselves in a similar situation, because on this side of the House, we just wanted to get the names of those being targeted by foreign interference. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister decided not to give us or our leader the documents. Although we asked him several times in the House, he decided that he did not want to share the names. He only shares the information he wants to share. It is important to understand that as soon as our leader, the member for Carleton, receives this information, he can no longer talk about the matter. This is another example where we did not receive the documents.

Another example is ArriveCAN. We asked for documents about ArriveCAN, but we did not get anything. We heard from witnesses in committee, including Kristian Firth, who refused to co-operate with the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. For that reason, he was brought before the bar of the House of Commons. Of course, Kristian Firth was a problem, but so was the government because it refused to hand over the documents. Unfortunately, many people have suffered because of this government's actions, which include refusing to hand over the documents. Obviously, Kristian Firth acted improperly when he chose to omit information, but one could argue that he was also a victim of the current government.

● (1240)

The government also refused to give us the relevant documents about the Winnipeg laboratory. That is another example of a case involving external affairs where we have not received the documents. We have not received the documents related to the two scientists. In this situation, it was a deputy minister, I believe, who had to appear in the House, where he was admonished by the House.

In all these situations, there are people who bear some of the responsibility, but ultimately, the government is always responsible. It was the government that failed to hand over the relevant documents.

The next example is the WE Charity scandal. We had requested the documents related to WE Charity. That is something I find really interesting. Most of the other scandals I have mentioned happened during this Parliament, with the exception of the Winnipeg lab scandal, which I believe happened in the last Parliament. As for the WE Charity scandal, I think that happened three Parliaments earlier.

The last example that I am going to give relates to the Governor General. We did not receive the documents in that regard. Unfortunately, there are a lot of examples of situations where the House did not receive the documents it requested. Even when all of the parties in the House adopt a motion to demand documents, unfortunately, we do not always get them, since we have a government that wants to stay in power, with the NDP, who wants the same thing.

What I find the most difficult is not just the fact that we have not received the documents related to several different issues and situations. It is also the fact that the NDP continues to support this government when many Canadians are suffering and many Canadians want a carbon tax election to be called.

This is a really difficult time for the House, but also for Canada. Obviously, Canadians do not want to continue on the road that we are on. That includes Quebeckers. Everyone in Canada wants an election now, given the situation that they find themselves in. Canadians are no longer able to buy food since it is a lot more expensive than it was nine years ago. Unfortunately, we have heard many sad stories in the House about people who cannot put food on the table because of the interest rates under this government.

● (1245)

Think about young people who want to buy their first home. Right now, they are unable to buy a house because house prices are really high and they cannot afford the mortgage. Mortgages are unbelievable, both because of house prices and because of the rise in interest rates caused by the current government. Clearly, there are a lot of sad reasons and a lot of good reasons why Canadians want a chance to vote in a carbon-tax election.

There is also the issue of how much it costs to fill up one's car or truck. That is more expensive now, because of this NDP-Liberal government's carbon tax. These are truly expensive times for Canadians. The government says it is an expensive time for Canadians, but in fact, the government has created this particular period in time in Canadian history. Right now, a lot of things, almost all things, in fact, have become very expensive.

It seems that the government is incapable of handing over the documents or creating a good environment for Canadians, one they can live in. As I said before, everything—food, gas, home heating and house prices—is more expensive, too expensive, under the Liberal government.

Unfortunately, the economy is not the only thing that the government is incapable of managing. I have lots of other examples of things that the government is incapable of managing, including passports. We were once in a situation where the government House leader was incapable of managing passport production. It was a really tough time, right after the pandemic. A lot of Canadians wanted to travel but were grounded because they had not received their passports. This is another example of the government's lack of competence.

The same thing happened with forest fire management. The Jasper fires were a tragedy, especially because the government chose to ignore advice from scientists about the forest fire threat looming over Jasper. Unfortunately, this led to horrific, terrible forest fires. Once again, the government was at fault.

I remember another situation when the former minister of transport said that Canadians were to blame for their inability to travel. He refused to take any responsibility for an air transportation system that he decimated during the pandemic. Instead of taking—

• (1250)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I have to interrupt the hon. member. The interpreters are saying that the microphones are picking up quite a bit of noise from the member's notes. Could that be minimized? The hon. member has five minutes remaining for her speech.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I will do my best to stop moving my notes. Unfortunately, I have many files with lots examples of how this government has failed.

The next example I want to share of how the government has failed to assume its responsibilities involves the Governor General. As I mentioned, we had not received certain documents related to nearly \$300,000 in expenses. I now have more information on that, but nothing specific about those costs. We therefore asked for a list of costs related to the Governor General, but we did not get anything. I also now have more information about WE Charity. These briefing documents were prepared by public servants. Actually, the government is responsible for public servants, and it could ask them not to prepare the documents we are supposed to receive in committee and in the House.

The Liberals have also failed to give us the invoices related to the cost of contractors at the CBSA. It is important that we have the correct information to determine whether problems stem from processes or something else. It is really important that we get the documents. Another example that I gave earlier had to do with foreign interference. According to one article, the Liberals have decided not to give us over 1,000 documents, which is really a lot. Finally, there is the carbon tax. The Liberal government has decided not to give us its analysis of the economic impact of the carbon tax and it will not tell us why it decided to keep those documents from us.

In closing, we have seen how, on many occasions, the government has been unwilling to share information with the House, the Conservatives and the Conservative Party. I think that it is really important for the House to get the documents that it has already requested and for Canadians to have access to those documents so that we can review them and identify any problems in order to improve systems and processes. Unfortunately, I think that there is more to the story and that the governing party does not have good intentions.

• (1255)

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member brought up housing and I have a couple of questions with respect to the proposal by the Conservatives to take the GST off the price of new houses. First, would that cut apply to the first \$1 million of a home that is, say, bought for \$1.5 million? Second, would that tax break apply to people who are buying a property as an investment?

Privilege

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the official opposition has decided to take action and make this important policy announcement, which has been called “the most significant housing policy...in the last two decades.” The fact that he alone has taken the step to do that is more than the government has done.

As always, the particulars of new legislation have yet to be determined, but clearly, as always, the leader is one step ahead of the Prime Minister in having announced this important policy piece.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech in support of transparency and information sharing. I think it is important and commendable and something we should see from every government. That got me thinking. If the Conservative Party comes to power, can we assume that it will be committed to greater transparency and better government accountability? We know that during the Harper years, things were tough in that regard.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I think that a government always strives to be more transparent. I think that the next Conservative government and our leader will strive to do so. Of course, with any party, government and leader there is always room for improvement. I think that transparency is truly a priority for the member for Carleton. We could have a more transparent Quebec and Canada with a Conservative government and our leader, the member for Carleton.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to circle back to an issue that was brought up earlier, which involves the Prime Minister's key economic adviser, carbon tax Carney. We found out this morning that in fact he is moving the headquarters of Brookfield Asset Management, of which he is the chair of the board, from Toronto to New York. This is the key economic adviser to the Prime Minister, who has, seemingly, zero confidence in the Canadian economy and the Canadian tax system as well. There obviously have to be some advantages for him in doing that or else he would not.

I am wondering if the hon. member can comment on carbon tax Carney's decision to take his company out of Canada and move it to the United States.

• (1300)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I certainly enjoy French exchanges with my colleagues, but I will respond in English this time.

Privilege

This is an example of a disturbing trend we are seeing beyond carbon tax Carney, or conflict of interest Carney. It is not only the lack of foreign investment in Canada but also the fleeing of dollars out of Canada. Another example I would cite is the brain drain. I believe Canadians and Quebecers want to stay in Canada and in their home province of Quebec and work, but it is getting more difficult because of a government that does not support business or good jobs and that, in fact, works with individuals who are defying conflict of interest laws to help them leave the country.

This, unfortunately, is a trend we are seeing. In this case, it is an individual who has broken conflict of interest laws, but outside of that, investment is leaving Canada and young people are leaving Canada. We need to keep business and jobs here in Canada.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad we are all talking about the cost of living and the impact it is having on people across our country. However, we have yet to hear the Conservatives talk about corporate greed and excess profits, despite the fact that oil and gas, big grocery, the big banks and web giants are all having record profits. We saw grocery store margins go from 1.5% on average, pre-COVID, to 3.2% today.

Why has a single Conservative not gotten up and raised the concern about corporate greed and its impact on everyday Canadians?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I will always support business. I will always support small business, coming from a small business family. That is something, of course, that the government does not do, as we saw with its attempt to implement those tax changes, as far back as 2017.

Before we even talk about business, let us talk about the waste of money in government procurement. My goodness, if there is a place to start saving for Canadians so they have to pay less in taxes and have a more affordable life and a better cost of living, that would be with procurement on the government side. I am very proud to be on the government operations committee and to do that good work. The individual who asked the question is a previous member of this committee, which looks into that waste. Certainly, while I hear his concerns, I will always stand for business, small business in particular.

Let us continue our good work on the operations committee. If we want to continue that good work further, let us bring down the government so we can have a carbon tax election, but let us look for the waste in government first.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the last comment by the member opposite. She was talking about procurement and making sure Canadian taxpayers' money is being used efficiently, yet we brought forward legislation for pharmacare that would reduce the cost of medications, especially with respect to reproductive medications and medications for diabetes. The Conservatives voted against that. This is a program that would allow Canadians to have access to medication but also for the Government of Canada to be able to bulk buy.

Would she not agree this is something that, normally, Conservatives would have supported?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I believe two things. Programs are excellent if we can figure out how to fund them. The government is just incapable of even funding the programs it puts forward to Canadians, with a \$42-billion deficit this year alone. We really must think about how we are going to fund something before we present it and implement it. This has been a fault of the current government, unfortunately. With the NDP propping up the government, it continues to be a problem. It is very important that we sincerely consider how to fund these things.

The greatest thing we can give Canadians is a lower cost of living through less government expenditure, which will lead to tax breaks. That is what a government would do under our leader, the hon. member for Carleton. We cannot wait to do that for Canadians.

• (1305)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member of Parliament for Courtenay—Alberni mentioned corporations not operating with Canadians in mind. I raised, in my intervention previously, how the Liberals, through their process, gave funds, through SDTC, to companies that were not eligible to receive it. My constituents who were found to be ineligible for CERB had to pay it back.

Does this member believe that they should pay it back?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I have to ask the hon. member to provide a very brief response.

[*English*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of serving with the member on the human resources committee during the pandemic and I think that was a very special time, as we worked together to find solutions for Canadians. Perhaps we can expand upon that answer in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House. When we do, we do so on behalf of Canadians, of course, but we rise especially for the people who have placed their trust in us and asked us to represent them in the House of Commons. It is always an honour.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the spectacular performance of my colleague from Calgary Midnapore, who delivered a terrific speech entirely in French. Earlier, my francophone colleagues and I were saying how much we appreciated it. Our congratulations go out to her. She also gave us a really detailed list of the current government's failures, of all the transparency we need here in the House to do our job properly.

It is always a pleasure to rise here in the House, but when I have to do so to speak to subjects like the one before us today, it is always a bit unfortunate. It paints an unfortunate picture of our Parliament, an institution where democracy guides us and where representatives of the people are here to manage their constituents' affairs, in particular their money. This is no small feat.

What exactly is the subject of today's debate? I think it is important to remember what is happening here in Ottawa. There is a green fund called Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, containing hundreds of thousands of dollars. In fact, its fund amounts to \$1 billion. Its goal is to support businesses that promote or develop technologies and solutions designed to combat the rise in greenhouse gases.

I think that everyone here accepts that the climate is changing. Everyone acknowledges that we are in a climate emergency. We may not all agree on how to respond, but the idea behind the development of these technologies is to address the environmental problems we face.

What bothers us is not the program, but what is being done with it. We need to keep one important fact in mind: The executives responsible for this \$1-billion fund are currently appointed by the Liberal government.

Why, then, has Parliament been paralyzed? Why is nothing moving forward here?

It is because, following an investigation by the Auditor General, as well as audits by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, those offices discovered some rather troubling things. For one thing, it has been proven that the people who administer this fund acted to ensure that money from this fund would be funnelled to their own companies. That was clear. Administrators of the \$1-billion green fund funnelled money into the coffers of their own companies.

The second thing that is very troubling has to do with the whole process of awarding grants to companies that apply, because a bunch of companies received money when they were not eligible. This means there is a flaw in the process in terms of the interpretation of who should or should not get funding.

What were the results at the end of the day? A total of \$59 million was awarded to projects that never should have received money. There is also \$390 million that was paid in some 180 cases where there was a real or potential conflict of interest. All in, we are getting to close to \$500 million or half a billion dollars.

• (1310)

Knowing that, how can anyone think that parliamentarians would not ask to see these documents or ask for accountability, especially when we consider what the Auditor General discovered? The Audi-

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tor General is the watchdog. She is appointed by the House to ensure that the work that is done here is done with the greatest integrity because we are managing taxpayer money. The House demanded that the government hand over its documents to the RCMP, our police force that conducts investigations. I believe that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner would agree.

What did the government do? It did exactly what my colleague described earlier. It said that this was out of the question, that the government was not going to hand these documents over to the House. In its wisdom, the House of Commons, with all its members, decided to lodge a protest. That is what I will call it. The House said that that was not how things would go, that the House needs these documents and the RCMP needs to see these documents. The Auditor General has already taken a critical look at the situation, and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has raised ethical concerns. Now we want to know whether any criminal acts were committed. It is as simple as that, and to do that, the RCMP needs to have these documents.

The House was dissatisfied with the government's decision not to provide those documents and so it raised a question of privilege. It did not act on a whim. We do not do this every day or every week. We do it when the rights of members of Parliament are violated. In his great wisdom, the Speaker of the House of Commons agreed with the Conservatives and with those who are rising in the House to say that things cannot work like this.

Unfortunately, the end result is that we are unable to work. We are unable to study legislation. We are not able to move bills forward. We are unable to move motions because the government is paralyzed, given that the question of privilege that we raised is a priority. It is a good thing that is the case, because we would not have the opportunity to rise as we are doing to defend our point of view, which has been largely supported by the Speaker of the House.

The only thing that is missing here today is a little goodwill on the part of the Liberal government. The government needs to agree to forward the documents, to hand them over to the appropriate people so that we can get back to work. One has to wonder whether it suits the Liberal government that Parliament is paralyzed like this. One has to wonder whether it suits the Liberal government that we cannot work on bills that could improve our constituents' quality of life.

That is a crass and dangerous denial of democracy. Information is power. When we do not have information and we cannot make sound decisions because we do not have information, then that is a denial of democracy.

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• (1315)

The best country in the world, as Jean Chrétien called it, is not shining among the best right now because we are unable to make decisions that would truly reflect our role.

Our real role is to pass legislation, represent the people and oversee the government. Those are the three roles of MPs. I am just reminding them of that in case they have forgotten. Overseeing the government also includes cabinet members. The Liberal MPs should ask them questions. They rise in the House and ask what are called planted questions. I know all about it because I came here from another parliament. I know a planted question when I see one. They are softball questions that do not hurt the ministers. It always makes us laugh a bit.

Will any of them have the courage to stand up during the next question period, ask questions about the Liberal green slush fund and demand that their boss and cabinet agree to hand over the documents we need to do our job, so they can be sent to the RCMP? If they have the courage to question their boss's leadership, do any of these 24 Liberal members have the courage to demand that the documents be tabled?

This is an affront to democracy, unfortunately—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I believe in democracy, and I would like you to confirm that we have quorum before we continue.

The Deputy Speaker: We will count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: There is quorum.

The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, they are coming; the Liberals are coming back. They missed quite a lot.

I was just saying that members of Parliament, no matter who they are, even government members, are responsible for keeping tabs on the government. We cannot understand why government members lacked the courage to hold their cabinet to account concerning the green fund scandal and ask that the documents requested by the House be sent to the RCMP to allow us to move on from this question of privilege, which has brought our work to a standstill.

The most basic precautionary approach would have been to require the board of directors, the administrators of this \$1-million green fund, to refrain from authorizing funding for their own businesses. That is elementary. At some point, did it not occur to anyone that something was wrong? After all, we are talking about nearly \$400 million involving 180 real or potential conflicts of interest. How is it that no one in the organization wondered if they were off track, considering the large amount of money involved? We are not dealing with one or two cases, an isolated case, or a mistake. It looks like a system to me, and that is not good.

When it comes to the Liberals, it is one scandal after another. Whether through the Auditor General of Canada auditing what took

place, especially at the highest levels, or through the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, we are discovering one scandal after another. As I said before, will the 24 members who are challenging the leadership of their own leader show a bit more courage and demand accountability at their cabinet meetings?

Unfortunately, all of this undermines Canadians' confidence in their highest institution. We are talking about people who get up every day and take the bus or their car to go to work. They pay the carbon tax and taxes on groceries, which continue to rise in price. These people get up and go to work. Then, they find out on the evening news that there are some shrewd people who lined their pockets with nearly \$500 million or who mismanaged that money, money that is entrusted to members of Parliament who are the trustees of that money. What do the Canadians who are watching at home think of us?

We Conservatives do not accept that. Transparency is a cornerstone of our democracy. Otherwise, this is all a sham or wishful thinking. I refuse to sit in a Parliament where the rights of Canadians and Quebecers who entrust us with their money are flouted, where no one looks too closely at what is happening, where people turn a blind eye, where redacted documents are sent to the House with information missing. They are laughing at us. The Liberals take us for fools. They take the members of the House for fools.

We will continue our efforts until we receive the documents and they have been sent to the RCMP, period. For us, there can be no compromise on transparency.

Citizens are watching us today. Afterwards, some people will wonder why we are being judged so harshly.

• (1320)

Our constituents have never been so cynical about public institutions. People are disengaged. They no longer believe in our institutions because there have been too many scandals caused by the Liberals over the past nine years. There is complete disinterest.

There is an expression in Quebec that talks about budgeting like a good father. It is an expression from another time and these days we might talk about budgeting like a good mother. It means not spending more than we earn. What have the Liberals done for the past nine years? Money flowed like water. It was smooth sailing. They created programs that already existed in the provinces, like pharmacare. Pharmacare is nice, it is good, and it makes the government look good. However, Canadians are covered. The government is duplicating programs that already exist in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. People are watching us and the government is spending and cannot even balance the budget.

When someone wants to get a bank loan they need to have a good credit history, they have to have paid their debts. They cannot spend more than they earn. They have to show that they are able to stay on track. That is what that means. However, that is not what has been happening these past nine years.

I will add another layer to that. I wish I had more time, because I have a lot to say. Housing costs have doubled, and people cannot take it anymore. HungerCount 2024 has been released, and it shows that three million Quebeckers are now turning to food banks. It is unprecedented. People can no longer find a place to live. Housing costs are one expense that cannot be cut back. When people do manage find a place to live, the only expense they can cut back on is groceries. With no money left to buy food, they are turning to food banks, which cannot keep up with the demand.

I will conclude my speech with this: I urge the government to do the only thing left to do, which is to hand over the documents to the RCMP.

• (1325)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke a bit about the carbon tax. I want to ask her a question.

She was the minister in the National Assembly when Quebec introduced its system to fight climate change. Where does she stand on that today? Quebec currently has its own system, which works very well. She talked about the carbon tax, which does not apply in Quebec.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, when people say that the carbon tax does not apply, it is not true.

Quebec's current system is undergoing a deep overhaul. The system has been in place for 10 years, if not more. When people say that the carbon tax does not apply, it is not true. It does not take a degree in quantum physics to figure out which butter or other products are going to cost more when a truck leaves Ontario for Quebec to make a delivery to a grocery store. This may not apply to butter, because our butter is domestic, but it does apply to any other product that comes from outside the province. It does not take a genius to figure out that everyone is bound to pay more. In fact, the carrier is paying more for gas, because the carbon tax they pay has increased exponentially.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. She talked about Quebec expressions. I would remind her that Quebec's motto is "Je me souviens" or "I remember".

I remember being here in Parliament in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 crisis. We had set up an emergency wage subsidy program. I remember how the Conservative Party dug into the candy dish with both hands and took nearly \$1 million. The Conservatives later told us that they were sorry, that their coffers were full. However, they had no qualms about taking taxpayer money that was supposed to be used to save companies and organizations on the verge of bankruptcy. Today, they are still spouting the same Conser-

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vative rhetoric about how they are good stewards of public funds and are transparent.

The question I want to ask my colleague is pretty simple. Have they repaid that taxpayer money? Is that what it means to budget like a good father, as my colleague mentioned?

• (1330)

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, it does not bother me to talk about the Conservative Party with my colleague, who is from Quebec and defends Quebec's interests.

The Conservative Party is still the party that recognized Quebec as a distinct society under Prime Minister Harper. On top of that, we gave Quebec a seat at the UN and signed an asymmetrical health agreement with the Quebec government. That was a first. People need to be careful about the stones they throw at the Conservative Party.

What we are talking about today is how the party in power is managing things. We are talking about the Liberal Party's mismanagement, as it spends recklessly, cannot balance the budget and is plunging Canadians into poverty. I simply do not understand how a colleague whose party has supported this government nearly 200 times could ask me such a thing.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's talking about the cost of living, but right now, for the first time ever, we are seeing corporatization and corporate ownership exceed over 30% of residential housing. We have seen record profits for the big banks and big grocery. We are seeing it with the big web giants, yet we have never heard a Conservative get up in the House to call out the corporate greed.

This is not about small business. It is about a handful of corporations that are having record profits. Their margins are through the roof. The Liberals are not doing anything to rein it in, except having round tables and talking. We have not seen them do anything. The Conservatives, who are sitting in official opposition, have been absolutely silent. Even in Britain, the Conservatives there brought in an excess profit tax on oil and gas. We cannot even get Liberals to do that in Canada.

I am not talking about small businesses, because the corporatization and concentration of wealth also have an impact on them. Could my colleague speak about the impact that corporate profits and corporate greed are having on people in her riding?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, what I think is important and urgent to do today is to talk about the Liberals' greed. They have lost all common sense. After nine years in power, their arrogance is astounding. That is what we need to discuss. That is what we are talking about here today.

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I want to remind my colleague that his political party's support for the government gives it the majority it needs to stay in power. Despite all the posturing by Bloc members, they support what this government does every day, including on ethical matters. That is unfortunate.

My colleague should ask this government some questions. That is what he should do. He needs to stop supporting the government so that we can have an election. It is urgent.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for providing such a clear explanation throughout her speech on why this parliamentary privilege motion is so important for Canadians, especially when it comes to fighting climate change.

In my riding, a green hydrogen company was affected by this Liberal scandal that practically ended this federal program. Can my colleague elaborate on the negative impacts of Liberal corruption on green technology companies in Canada?

• (1335)

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, I did not see it coming, but that is an excellent question.

As I said in my introduction, we have nothing against the program. We believe that climate change is real and has to be addressed, because there is definitely a problem when it comes to climate. I think that everyone agrees on that, but we do not agree on how to address it. In our view, the right approach is to tell businesses to develop solutions, new ways of doing things and new technologies so that we can deal with the situation and combat climate change. We do not think that punishing people is the right way to get there.

Unfortunately, almost half a billion dollars has been granted to the wrong companies, companies that had no right to that money or that were owned by board members. This has prevented organizations and companies in our ridings from accessing the program, although they are entirely capable of revolutionizing our approach to climate change.

The program is not necessarily the problem. It is the people who manage it.

[English]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the cost of living. Let us talk specifics here. A Bloomberg-Nanos poll showed that the Canadian consumer confidence index is at a 30-month high. Due to the actions and programs of our government, a severe recession and global inflation, which was a big problem for Canadians too, have been managed well in Canada now that the inflation rate has come down to 1.6%. Interest rates have also been cut for a fourth consecutive time to 3.75%.

Canada is the best performing in all these parameters compared to any other G7 country, and so much so that the IMF has predicted that next year, Canada will be leading in GDP growth among all G7 countries. I would like the member to tell us which other G7 countries have done better and under what parameters.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, I have one for him. It is a G7 parameter involving the size of our country. Canada has the lowest number of housing units of any G7 country. We have compiled a few horror stories like that one that we could share.

What the member is forgetting to mention is the news that came out this week about poverty levels among Canadians compared to Americans. That news was nothing short of tragic.

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here today is something that should be seizing the House of Commons, and it has been for some time. On the bottom of the screen, when we speak, it simply says, “Privilege—Subamendment”. That sounds pretty boring or dry until we get into the reason we are debating this issue today.

We are talking about a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons. On the face of it, on a prima facie case, the Speaker has determined that the collective privileges of members of Parliament have been violated, and that is a serious matter. It is so serious that all other business that would normally be before the House is suspended until such time as this matter is dealt with. I think that Canadians need to be reminded of that and of some of the privileges the House of Commons has and its collective members have, and that if we don't protect them, the current government and future governments will continue to roll over them, and continue to ignore the will of elected members of Parliament.

It comes right down to what our role is, as members of Parliament. Our role is to hold the government to account. This is true not just for members of the opposition or of opposition parties. It is supposed to be true for every member of Parliament who is not a member of the government. I think there is a lack of knowledge, or over time, every member who is, in this case, a Liberal, believes that they are a member of the government. However, they are most certainly not. The cabinet is the government of Canada, and the rest of us have an obligation to hold the government to account. That certainly used to be the way it was, when it did not matter what party a member was. What mattered was their position in the House. If a member was not in the cabinet, they held the government to account.

Now we have Liberal members of Parliament, who are not members of the government, who nonetheless believe that it is the role of the House of Commons to support the government. In this case, a vote was held in the House where members of Parliament exercised our rights to demand the production of papers, where it is a key privilege of members of Parliament to demand the production of papers. We exercised that right. We held a vote in the House of Commons, and the majority of the members of the House of Commons demanded that papers be produced, that the government provide papers on the Sustainable Development Technology Canada slush fund and that those papers be given to the RCMP and the Auditor General so that they could do with them what they would. It does not compel them to conduct an investigation or take any particular action, but it does compel the government to obey the order to produce the papers, as was demanded by the House of Commons.

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Why is this so important? It is because, if the government is allowed to ignore a key privilege of the House of Commons, there is no accountability. There is no ability for members of Parliament to hold the government to account if there is an ability to ignore democratic votes in the House of Commons.

We know that the government has no problem doing that. We saw it when the House of Commons voted to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. It took the government years, and the only reason the Liberals actually did it was that they hoped it would help them save their failing candidate in a Toronto by-election. The narrator would say, "It did not work." They still lost that by-election, even though they tried at the last minute to finally list the IRGC, as Parliament had demanded many years previously.

Now we are seeing it again with the government denying a request. They believe they know better. We have requested that unredacted documents be sent to the RCMP and the Auditor General, and the government has said no.

● (1340)

The Liberals have redacted those documents. They have determined, in their infinite wisdom, that they know better than the majority of the members of the House of Commons. Even though it is a core privilege for members of Parliament to be able to demand the production of papers, the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office have said they know better than the elected representatives of this House of Commons who have exercised their rights in a democratic vote.

That is why we are here today. It is because the government refuses to accept that Parliament is supreme, that Parliament, not the government, has the right, in this case, to demand the production of these documents and demand that they be turned over unredacted, without any edits and without parts blacked out. It all needs to go to the RCMP and the Auditor General for their use as they see fit. This is a complete and total Liberal scandal. It is another example of why the Liberals are not worth the corruption.

There was \$400 million in SDTC funds given out under questionable circumstances. There was \$58 million for 10 ineligible projects altogether. There were over 180 conflicts of interest where members of the board of directors were able to vote on whether funds should go to companies that they were affiliated with. It is almost unbelievable if we were not talking about the Liberal government and its record. We have 186 cases where the board members held a conflict of interest.

The worst part of all this is that the then-minister of industry, Navdeep Bains, was told that this would be the result of him appointing a partisan board chair. SDTC had operated at arm's length from government, without conflicts of interest, right up until the Liberal government took over, and then decided to stack it with Liberals who had conflicts of interest and who took advantage of government money to line the pockets of companies they were engaged with. The minister was told this would happen and he ignored the advice that he received. This is not new for the Liberal government, but it certainly was something that he was warned about and ignored.

The Liberals have wasted 400 million tax dollars at a time when two million Canadians a month are lining up at food banks. They are just frittering away \$400 million while two million Canadians are lining up at food banks, many for the first time and a quarter of them children.

I heard a question from a Liberal member just prior to my speech. Basically, his question was about how Canadians have never had it so good and he asked why that was not agreed with. It is so outrageous and out of touch, when we have two million Canadians a month at food banks, when people's rents have doubled, mortgage payments have doubled, and the cost of housing has doubled, to have Liberal members asking why others are not praising the government for its amazing work. I can say that no one who lines up at the food bank for the first time is praising the government or thinks that things are going well.

People are losing their homes or at risk of homelessness. We do not have to go very far in Ottawa to see that. In my neck of the woods in Chilliwack, over the last number of years, my hometown has had numerous permanent homelessness encampments and they move around from time to time. This is in spite of record investments from the city in housing solutions and trying to help people. We have a very generous community. However, the highway rest areas between Chilliwack and Langley are full of people in mostly dilapidated RVs because that is where they live now. So, the idea that things are great and talking about the IMF at a time when people are living in a broken-down RV or lining up at the food bank is just completely out of touch.

● (1345)

We know that the government has continued to drive up the cost of living. Whether it is on home heating, groceries or the price of gas, the Liberals continue to jack up the carbon tax. This makes it even harder for Canadians to make ends meet. They have no problem raising the cost for Canadians, but they will not raise the ethical bar on something such as SDTC; there, they can hand out money willy-nilly to their friends, to the tune of \$400 million.

The government cannot manage a budget. It already has a higher deficit by \$8 billion than what the Liberals predicted just in the last budget alone. It now spends more on interest payments than it does on health care transfers to the provinces, which is an outrageous scandal in and of itself. The Liberal government gives more money away in interest payments than it spends on the necessary health care funding that we so desperately need.

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We have seen, in my province, that the B.C. NDP has managed our health care system into the ground. It is at the point where, every weekend now, numerous emergency rooms are closed because of the mismanagement of the B.C. NDP. It could definitely use some of the funding that the government in Ottawa is spending on interest. I am not convinced that the B.C. NDP could actually manage it any better, but we have certainly seen, in our province, how our health care system has been mismanaged and is in need of an injection of funds. It would be nice if the government in Ottawa were not running up the deficit to such an extent that the interest payments were more than the health care payments in this country.

However, it is a priority of the government to not only continue to withhold documents that the House of Commons has demanded but also to continue to support SDTC and its mismanagement. That is a very difficult thing. We have now been speaking about this for many days, many weeks, and the government continues to dig in its heels and hold the House up by refusing to address this issue, refusing to give the documents to the RCMP and to the Auditor General that have been demanded. If the Liberals did that, we would be back to such things as important business from private members and important work that could be done here. However, the Liberals are holding the House under their thumb because they refuse to respect the ruling of the Speaker and the vote in the House of Commons.

Once again, we get back to whom the Liberals think they serve. Do they believe they serve their constituents, or do they serve the Prime Minister's Office? We know that many of them had the most inept coup in the history of democracy. I believe it was 24 at the latest count. They meekly sent a letter to the Prime Minister, who promptly shredded it, ignored it and told them what he thought of it the very next day. However, even in the Liberal caucus, there are those who no longer wish to take their marching orders from the current Prime Minister and from his PMO.

Certainly, in the Conservative Party, we will not allow the PMO and the Prime Minister to run roughshod over the will of the House of Commons. This was expressed in a vote that demanded the production of these papers. Again, we can dress it up any way we want, but this is a matter that goes to the core of what we do here.

● (1350)

For too long, for a government that was supposed to be the most transparent government in history, and sunlight was going to be the best disinfectant, all of that boilerplate nonsense, it did not believe any of it. The government has proven that time and time again.

We have this situation here where the House of Commons has acted within its bounds, within its authority, to demand the production of papers. Again, if we look at the documents that outline how we govern ourselves, that is listed as a core privilege. It is not a nice-to-have. If we do not protect this, we do not have the ability to exercise our rights as members of Parliament in the chamber.

That is why Conservatives will continue to stand up and fight for that right and for our privilege. It is not because we feel privileged as individuals; it is because we need to stand up and defend our democratic institutions. This is an attack on our democratic institutions. When members do not respect the authority of Parliament, or when members believe the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Min-

ister or the cabinet can override the will of the House of Commons, they are undermining the democratic process. There are no two ways about it.

We have seen the Liberals do this before. We saw it with the Winnipeg lab documents issue, where there was another vote in the House of Commons. The Liberal government took the outrageous step of taking the Speaker to court. Their own Speaker, a Liberal Speaker, was taken to court because the House of Commons dared to use its authority to demand the production of papers and to demand information on what had happened at the Winnipeg labs with the breach of security there.

We have seen that the government has no problem kicking the slats out from under Parliament, taking it as a bit of advice that it will take or ignore, when in fact it is an order. That is exactly what we, as Conservatives, are standing up against. It is something if the government can take a Speaker to court and can ignore votes of the House of Commons when it comes to privilege. This is not an opposition motion where members pontificate on a policy issue.

We are aware that the government has some latitude to determine whether or not it will implement that. However, when we are talking about a core right, the production of papers being one of them, we have to stand up for ourselves. We have to encourage members to be aware, again, of their core function, which is to serve their constituents and to hold the government to account, no matter which side of the House they are on. It is not to simply act as mouthpieces for an unelected Prime Minister's Office or the Prime Minister himself.

The Prime Minister is supposed to be a servant of the House, not its master. As long as we allow the government to flout the rules, to deny the production of papers, as has been demanded by the House, we will be voluntarily giving up our privileges and voluntarily undermining a democratic institution.

Conservatives will not stand for it. Conservatives will continue to stand up for the House of Commons being supreme, for our votes to be respected, and for the government, when we demand the production of papers, no longer treating that as a suggestion.

● (1355)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the member of Parliament for Chilliwack—Hope that the Auditor General actually found that a number of ineligible firms received money from SDTC. That was a big issue. I know that, when people in my riding of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola were found to be ineligible for CERB payments, they had to pay that money back to the CRA.

Does the member for Chilliwack—Hope believe that it is not just the Liberal government that should be accountable but that those companies should also pay the money back to taxpayers?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, to me, that is just common sense. If someone receives money that they were not entitled to, the government should make an effort to get it back.

Certainly, any taxpayer in my riding knows what happens, even if they make a mistake on their tax forms. The taxman is very quick to come back and demand that the money be repaid, oftentimes with penalties and interest. The idea that, just because these firms are connected to the Liberal Party, they should not be held accountable when they were ineligible to receive funds is outrageous. They absolutely should pay it back, and I believe that this is one of the reasons that the RCMP and the Auditor General should be given these documents. They can then determine what, if any, next steps should be taken as well.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the same question that I have asked many of our colleagues throughout this debate. We are talking about the theft of over \$400 million by Liberal insiders, who then funnelled the money to their own companies; the Auditor General found over 186 conflicts of interest with respect to that money.

The Liberals would say that there is nothing to see here; let us just get it to committee where we will study it, and everything will be fine. However, if somebody steals from my hon. colleague, does he go to the RCMP or does he go to a committee?

• (1400)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, again, that is another good, common-sense question from my friend there.

It is absolutely up to the RCMP to determine what it does with the information that is forwarded to it. Certainly, I expect the RCMP to take a great interest in the fact that nearly \$400 million in funds went to well-connected Liberal companies.

As has been indicated, \$58 million went to companies that were ineligible to receive the funding. When we talk about this sort of corruption, the RCMP should be given all the information, not just the information that the government deigns that it should be able to receive. That is at the core of what we are talking about here.

The House of Commons has demanded that certain documents be turned over to the RCMP. The RCMP will determine what it does with that information. However, it is not up to the government, after a vote in the House of Commons, to make its own determination as to which documents should be turned over to the RCMP. All the documents that the House has demanded must be turned over to the RCMP.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how does the member feel about the fact that the RCMP does not want the documents?

This is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I hear my colleagues heckling and saying “not true”. However, I will read an excerpt from an

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actual letter from the commissioner; he said, “Any information obtained through the Motion or other compulsory authorities would need to be segregated from an RCMP investigation. There is a significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections.”

The RCMP wrote the House a letter and said it does not want the information through the manner in which we would be trying to give it to the RCMP. The RCMP said it has the ability to get the information when and how it wants it. I have a simple question for the member. I am sure he can provide me a simple, common-sense answer to it.

Why is he so insistent on this method of handing over information when the authority he wants to give it to is telling us not to give it like this?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I realize the Liberal member believes he is a member of the Liberal government. However, he is not in cabinet. He has never been in cabinet and I do not believe he will be in cabinet. His job, like the rest of us, is to hold the government to account.

The RCMP can do with the documents what it pleases, but the House of Commons has the right and the privilege to demand the production of papers. That is what the government does not understand. The Liberals say maybe the RCMP does not want the information in that format, maybe the RCMP would prefer the documents to come in a different way, or the RCMP could do something else if it wanted to.

Parliament is supreme. It has the ability to demand the production of papers. That has been done. That bridge has been crossed. Now it is up to the government to obey the lawful order of the House of Commons. The Liberal government wants to break that rule. That is why we are having this debate, because the government has broken faith with Parliament. It has decided it does not need to listen to Parliament, although the Speaker has said that, yes, it does.

Until such time as the government turns over the documents, as has been demanded by this Parliament through a lawful vote, we will continue to stand up for our democratic institutions, for members of Parliament and for our rights. We will not be distracted by the comments of a Liberal backbencher.

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is the same old refrain with the Conservatives. According to them, they are good fiscal stewards and transparent people. I think that they are forgetting some of what happened in the past, but I will be very pleased to remind them of it today.

Privilege

When the Conservatives were in office under the Harper regime, they, too, had to deal with a question of privilege. Do members know how long that lasted? It was not just three weeks. Parliament was paralyzed for five months because the Harper government refused to hand over documents on the treatment of Afghan detainees. In the end, the matter was sent to committee. There was an agreement. They managed to cover up some of the information here and there. Today, we are once again hearing them trot out the Conservative rhetoric about transparency and sound management of public funds.

I would remind my colleague from Chilliwack—Hope that, when Tony Clement was a minister, he funnelled \$50 million to his own riding. Does my colleague think that is good governance? Does he think that shows respect for our institutions and democracy? I would like my colleague to explain to me today how Quebeckers can trust the Conservative Party, which hopes to govern, when it has such a disastrous track record.

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, that was difficult to follow.

I do not know how many members the Bloc had at that time. When Stephen Harper was prime minister, the Bloc Québécois was down to, I think, four seats. The Bloc only seems to thrive in this country when there are Liberal governments. Separatism and the Bloc seem to do much better when there is a Liberal government. I do not think it even had party status at that time.

However, there was an election fought on that. The Liberal Party, in its wisdom under Michael Ignatieff, brought down the Stephen Harper minority government over the issue that the hon. member talked about. I believe that was when we had a strong, stable, national Conservative majority government under Stephen Harper.

If he wants, like I do, to have a carbon tax election right now, we would welcome his support to defeat the corrupt government and go to the polls to let Canadians have their say.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the reality. The RCMP is actually criminally investigating SDTC. It has received some documents, but we also know the justice department has 11,000 documents that have not been submitted to this point, as per the parliamentary order, to the law clerk.

Does the hon. member think the RCMP should have all of the documentation that was ordered by Parliament, so the RCMP can do a proper and thorough investigation into just how deep this rot, this corruption, goes within the government?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, we know the rot goes all the way to the top of the government. Liberal ministers were responsible for appointing Liberals to key positions that put them in conflicts of interest. The RCMP absolutely should be given these documents. The House of Commons has demanded that the RCMP be given the documents and that should be the end of the story.

We have the right and the privilege to demand that those documents be produced. We have exercised that right. If the government refuses to recognize that right, we will continue to stand up for our democratic institutions here in the House of Commons.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we have an opportunity in this Parliament to reflect on the different priorities of the parties. In the Conservative Party, our priorities are clear. We want to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The Conservatives will axe the carbon tax everywhere for good. The carbon tax is a failed NDP-Liberal policy that has driven up the cost of everything. It has failed to achieve the alleged environmental objectives that are behind it. It has made gas more expensive and emissions have continued to go up under the government. Many Canadians are suffering as the price of basic things Canadians buy goes up as a result of the carbon tax. That is why the Conservatives, rather than tinkering around the edges, would axe the tax everywhere for everyone and for good. We want a carbon tax election now so we can deliver the removal of the carbon tax for Canadians.

The Conservatives will axe the tax and build the homes. We announced a critical new policy this week that would make a significant difference by making homes available for Canadians. The Liberals' own advisers have praised the Conservative plan for building homes. In the last nine years, the Liberals have failed to build homes, and rent has doubled under the Liberals. As we have heard many times, costs are up, crime is up and rent is up, and that is why time is up for the government. Canadians want a new government that will deliver on a real plan to build homes.

The Conservatives will require municipalities to meet critical targets for the construction of new homes. Municipalities that meet those targets will be rewarded; municipalities that do not meet those targets will lose federal funding. This is the kind of real leadership for results that the Conservatives believe in. The Liberals signal that they care without actually doing the hard work of achieving results, and we can measure the outcomes of their policies in the results.

The Liberals think it is all about how much money is spent. They profess that we should look at how much money they have spent on this and that. The real test of a housing policy is not how much money the government has spent; it is how much money Canadians have to spend every month when they pay their rent. A housing policy is working if Canadians are not being forced to pay more and more every month for rent, yet the Liberals want to trumpet their own spending rather than look at the realities of the costs for Canadians.

Costs are up, crime is up and, for the government, time is up. Canadians want a government that is going to build the homes. Therefore, the Conservatives' priorities are to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

How would we fix the budget? It is very simple. We would bring in a dollar-for-dollar rule requiring that when there is a new dollar of government spending, that dollar is identified as coming from somewhere. We cannot continually increase spending without ever reviewing and looking at where those dollars are going to come from. The Liberals have been living in an economic fantasy world for the last nine years, where they can spend and spend without considering where the money is going to come from. Canadians know that is not the reality. That is not the reality that small businesses face in this country, nor the reality that families face in this country. Eventually, that reality catches up with government as well.

In nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, the national debt has more than doubled. Debt servicing costs have soared. Canadians are paying more because of the carbon tax, but also because of the inflation tax. The increase in government spending is driving up the costs that Canadians face by reducing the value of the dollar in their pocket. If we have more dollars chasing the same number of goods, that is not going to make anyone richer. It simply means that everything is going to cost more in dollar terms.

We need a government that is going to replace this incontinent fiscal policy with a focused, disciplined fiscal policy that includes a dollar-for-dollar rule. If we are going to propose a new spending program, we have to be able to explain where the money is coming from. The Liberals have run massive deficits in every single year they have been in power. In reality, this is not what Canadians have traditionally associated with the Liberal Party. It is more of a radical NDP fiscal policy. This is an NDP-Liberal government we see. As we can identify in today's discussion on the corruption motion, effectively, with this reconstituted coalition between the NDP and the Liberals, we have the worst of both worlds.

• (1410)

We have NDP fiscal and economic policy and we have Liberal ethics. That is what we have with the NDP-Liberal government, the radical far-left NDP approach to the economy applied to government, along with the Liberals' disregard for our institutions, for the rule of law and for proper accountability in government. This, again, is why Canadians are looking at the situation and they are saying that time is up for the NDP-Liberal government. Time is up for the Liberal government. We need a new government with new priorities, priorities that involve axing the tax, building the homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime.

On the issue of crime, it is very clear in the last nine years that, under the NDP-Liberals, violent crime has gotten so much worse in Canada. The government should be judged not by their words but by the results. It will be judged by the results of what it has done. Costs are up for Canadians and crime is up dramatically because of policy choices that they made.

Liberals would always like to present themselves as victims of circumstance. They would like people to believe that as soon as they got into office, things started going wrong but that it had nothing to do with them. That is the story that they would like to tell, yet we can see, with criminal justice policy in particular, that they made specific decisions around sentencing and enforcement that changed the rates of violent crime in this country.

Privilege

Conservatives would restore common sense when it comes to criminal justice policy. That includes jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders. That includes support for treatment and recovery for those who are struggling with addictions. Liberals have pursued a failed drug policy, which is paying the pushers of drugs. Their policy of safe supply is leading more money to go back into the pockets of bad corporate actors like Purdue Pharma that make dangerous drugs that are then given away for free, at taxpayers' expense, to those who are struggling.

Conservatives would sue those bad corporate actors like Purdue Pharma and McKinsey that are responsible for the opioid crisis. We would put that money into treatment and recovery. This emphasis on treatment and recovery would help address the challenges we face with crime.

For those who commit violent offences in this country, they are going to face serious consequences under a common-sense Conservative government. Our priorities are to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, to restore the country that we know and love, to bring it home, to bring home the country that Canadians remember.

It was not this way before Justin Trudeau. Pardon me. It was not this way before the Prime Minister—

• (1415)

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

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the member opposite. I know he really likes him, but he is not allowed to use his name.

The Deputy Speaker: I know the hon. member will retract that and continue on.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House do not allow us to say the name of a current member of Parliament, but they do allow us to say the name of a former member of Parliament, so I think I was getting a bit ahead of myself by using his name.

The time will come. The time is soon coming. They cannot put it off forever. As one former British parliamentarian said, “even these turkeys won't be able to prevent Christmas.” We will have an election, and when we have an election, Canadians will have an opportunity to be heard on the record of the failing government.

I was referring to a quotation saying that even turkeys cannot keep Christmas from coming forever. Canadians will have affordable food, including turkey, once again. These are our priorities on this side of the House.

Privilege

What are the priorities of the Liberals across the way? They are willing to paralyze Parliament to protect themselves from the proper investigation of their corruption scandals. Conservatives have put forward a motion, a motion that was adopted because all opposition parties voted in favour of it, to order the production of certain documents regarding the government's SDTC scandal.

Let us just break down what this scandal is. For Canadians who are less familiar, what is the green slush fund scandal? This is hard to believe, but we had a group of insiders, appointed by the Liberal government to a panel, and they were responsible for handing out money, taxpayers' money, to various companies. They decided to give those funds to their own companies.

It is like a group of us were sitting around the table saying, "We will first vote some money for my company, then we will vote some money for your company, and then we will vote some money for your company." In some cases, the person, while their company was being voted on, would step out of the room, but in other cases, they did not. We have instances of people actually voting in favour of giving money to the company they owned. They said they were in favour of that.

This is the essence of the SDTC scandal. There was \$400 million. We had people sitting around a table, who were appointed by these Liberals, charged with handing this money out, and deciding to give that money to themselves. It is outrageous.

In times past, this would have been the major decisive story. Today, there are so many scandals, it is almost like it is a strategy. These Liberals thought, if they were to be the cause of as many scandals as possible, maybe there could be dispersed attention on them. With this alone, this green slush fund scandal, it is incredible what these Liberals and their elite insider friends thought they could get away with.

It is part of a culture of corruption that we have seen under the NDP-Liberal government. The members think they can get away with anything. Having tried to buy off the media with subsidies, they think they can do anything and not be held accountable for it. However, Canadians are waking up. Canadians are hearing about these stories, and I know Canadians are demanding accountability and change because cost is up, crime is up, corruption is up and time is up. It is time for an election to throw out these carbon tax, conflict of interest Liberals and replace them with a common-sense Conservative government.

Let us talk about a few of the other scandals that are going on. I want to share a few comments about the indigenous procurement problem, the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal. This really is one of the biggest scandals we have seen yet from a Liberal government. We have a situation with government contracting and the policy in place that says there is a 5% target, meaning that 5% of government contracts should be going to indigenous companies.

The problem is that these Liberals have allowed many non-indigenous companies to take advantage of that program by pretending to be indigenous. We have various arrangements that have allowed this to happen. We have some some who are outright pretending to be indigenous. We also have instances of abuse of a joint venture, and then we have instances of shell companies. An exam-

ple of abuse of a joint venture might be a company with 200 people in it, which is a fully non-indigenous company, and then that company being in a joint venture with a company that has one person, and that company is considered an indigenous company.

● (1420)

Therefore there is a joint venture in which the vast majority of the work, the benefit and the profit are going to the obviously much larger partner, but it is entering into a so-called joint venture, which allows it to officially be labelled as part of an indigenous joint venture even though virtually all of the work and the benefit are going to the non-indigenous part of the partnership. This is the abuse of joint ventures that we are seeing, which effectively allows non-indigenous companies to take advantage of the program.

There was an instance reported in *The Globe and Mail* with a private company called the Canadian Health Care Agency, which was in a so-called joint venture with an individual who was actually one of its employees, so the person was an employee at the larger company. By all indications, it was not a real joint venture. The employee was being taken advantage of by being identified as having a separate company in a joint venture, and that allowed the non-indigenous company to take contracts that were supposed to be part of the 5%.

There is also the use of shell companies. An example of a shell company would be having one company that has been identified as indigenous that is getting government contracts then subcontracting the work to non-indigenous companies. There is a rule that is supposed to prevent this; a subcontracting rule requires that one-third of the subcontract be to indigenous companies if it has been received as part of the indigenous procurement set-aside.

However, we have asked for documents on the verification of the subcontracting rule, and it is pretty clear that nobody is actually enforcing it. There is a bit of the Spider-Man meme going on, with the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and the Minister of Indigenous Services saying, respectively, "I am not doing this; this is indigenous" and "I am not doing this; this is procurement". Then nobody seems to be enforcing the subcontracting rules.

Privilege

There are various structures: abuse of joint ventures, outright pretending and shell companies. As a result, the AFN appeared before the government operations committee on the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal, and AFN representatives testified that most of the contracts within the indigenous procurement set-aside are actually going to shell companies. Therefore, before Liberals get up and say that it is just Conservatives saying this, I point out that indigenous leaders said it. It is not just the AFN; leaders from first nations, Inuit and Métis communities have repeatedly highlighted how non-indigenous, elite insiders are taking advantage of the program that is supposed to benefit indigenous businesses.

It is a crying shame, but it is typical of the Liberals. They did not care about the results for indigenous peoples; they cared only about being able to look like they were checking a box to say that they cared. They want to say to look at the number, at the target and at the box they are checking, but in reality, when the government operations committee started going into it and started inviting indigenous leaders to speak before the committee, we found that according to the testimony, most of what the Liberals are saying is part of the 5% target is not going to indigenous communities at all. It isn't even going to indigenous businesses.

In fact, when we challenged the Minister of Indigenous Services on the issue the first time, in March, she said that the purpose of the program is just to identify indigeneity. It is not about economic development, effectively. She completely changed her tune six months later. However, when the program is allowing shell companies, elite non-indigenous insiders, abusive joint ventures and outright pretenders to take advantage of the program, clearly the benefits are not going back to indigenous peoples, and the Liberals do not seem to care. They want to trumpet the box-checking exercise rather than answer clear, necessary questions about the impacts of the program on communities.

I speak to indigenous leaders across the country, and they talk very much about the importance of economic development, of autonomy, of giving back control over resources and over opportunities and of putting in place policies that allow indigenous communities to survive and prosper. One key piece of feedback we have heard is that there are various policies in procurement that actually make it very difficult for new entrants, including indigenous- and minority-owned businesses, to get contracts. The Liberals have so constrained the procurement system as to protect the privileged access of elite insiders.

• (1425)

We saw this with the arrive scam scandal as well. According to the Auditor General's report, we had an instance where GC Strategies sat down with people inside government to discuss the terms of the contract. According to the procurement ombudsman, there were overly restrictive requirements that said, for instance, one could only bid on a federal government contract if one had done a certain number of federal government contracts before. How does

that make any sense? If one has a business that can do the work, maybe a new business or a business based somewhere else in the country, started by someone who does not have the same insider access or history with the federal government but can actually do the work, or maybe it has done work with other levels of government and has been successful in procurement processes across the country, but wants to bid on a project here in Ottawa, the government could say that it is sorry, but because it has not done business with the federal government it is out. It is an entrenched protection of privilege for elite Liberal-connected insiders.

These are huge amounts of money we are talking about. In the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal there are a number of players. Dalian Enterprises received over \$100 million in contracts. The Canadian Health Care Agency received over \$100 million in contracts. A majority of those who got contracts under this set-aside were shell companies according to the AFN. We are talking about massive amounts of money that the Liberals are finding ways to funnel to their friends and to other well-connected insiders.

That is the Liberals' priority, getting money to elite insider NDP-Liberal friends. Our priorities are restoring common sense, bringing it home, axing the tax, building the homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime. When the carbon tax election comes, Canadians will be able to decide between our priorities and theirs.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was fascinating to watch the member opposite, who is a smart guy, drowning in a sea of pointless slogans for the better part of his speech. However, he did say something that I found interesting. He said that the Conservatives were going to fix the budget by cutting one dollar for every new dollar in spending.

His leader was in my riding saying that he would finance a third link in Quebec City that is estimated to cost \$10 billion. Usually, the federal government is up for 40%, which is \$4 billion at least. That is what the Canadian dental care program costs per year for a million Canadians. How are the Conservatives going to finance these promises that he is making, which make absolutely no sense?

• (1430)

The Deputy Speaker: Having reached the time of expiry for today's debate, the House will resume consideration of the privilege motion at 11 a.m. on Monday, November 4.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 94, I wish to inform hon. members that Private Members' Business will be suspended on that day.

[*English*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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