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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 18, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1105)
[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 8 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of all the great residents of Simcoe—Grey.

I just want to give a quick thanks. Last week was Remembrance Day, and I was invited to 15 ceremonies. I attended two of them on Remembrance Day, the only two I could go to during that time period since I was driving. I just want to thank the volunteers in my EDA for helping out to make sure that a wreath was placed at each event. I also had many volunteers out this weekend, as we had two parades, one in Angus and one in Collingwood. We have many parades. I thank them for their support.

For those who were not here the last time I spoke, I was talking about seeing scandal after scandal, whether it is WE Charity, SNC-Lavalin or, probably the largest one, the green slush fund, and about our frustration. I was talking about some of my residents, like Stephanie, who started a new poultry farm in my riding. She was due a GST rebate in April but had not received it by June, so she reached out to my office. In July she was told it was under audit and to follow up in three months. Already frustrated after the three months, she said that the GST refund could really help keep her new business going. However, it is government, so we waited until October 3, and guess what we were told. There was no audit noted on her file at all and no one was sure what was holding up the refund.

A week later, the CRA said there was no agent on her file at all. For nine months, this brand new business waited for a much-needed rebate cheque, but the CRA had no one on the file, could not say why the refund had not been processed and could not tell her when

it might be. It is another incredibly frustrating experience for a Canadian just trying to get ahead.

As I have said here before, all of this is while the Liberals directed \$338 million to projects in which board members of the green slush fund had a direct conflict of interest. For anyone who is paying attention right now, that is why so many people are frustrated with the Prime Minister and want him to go. Even some members of the Liberal Party are starting to understand that as well.

I am going to end my speech with the words of one of the courageous whistle-blowers who helped bring the Auditor General's attention to the corruption at the green slush fund:

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.

I want to take this opportunity to thank that whistle-blower, who brought this to light. We do not need it, but it is why we are seeing frustration.

It is time to axe the tax. It is time for us to build the homes. It is time to fix the budget. It is time to stop the crime. Frustrated Canadians have had enough. They are worried about another budget and what the government will do to all Canadians and how it is going to affect their lives. It is time for us to call a carbon tax election and let them decide what the right thing to do is. It is time to bring it home.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the multi-million dollar game continues as members of the Conservative Party want to send a very strong message to Canadians: They are more interested in the interests of the leader of the Conservative Party than anyone else's. They are not listening to what Canadians are saying and continue to play a multi-million dollar game. I say shame on the Conservatives.

Privilege

If they wanted to contribute something positive and change the dial, one thing they could consider doing is recognizing that the leader of the official opposition still refuses to get a security clearance to deal with the issue of international foreign interference. My constituents still want to know why the leader of the Conservative Party does not want to get a security clearance. What is he hiding? Is there something in his past that he does not want to tell Canadians?

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Mr. Speaker, I find it quite comical to get that type of question. Last week, we had a week in our ridings, and I hope the member opposite spent a lot of time visiting his constituents. No one talked about anything other than the scandal and corruption of the government at every event I attended. From veterans to those at birthday celebrations to new Canadians, they all wanted to know when the election was going to happen. The emails I receive in my office are consistently about the frustration that Canadians are feeling. They understand that the government does not seem to care, so it is time to have a carbon tax election.

• (1110)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member referenced Remembrance Day commemorations. This is very important. I want to underscore the incredible work that went into the Remembrance Day commemorations in New Westminster—Burnaby, including at New Westminster Secondary School, the remarkable ceremony at George Derby veterans hospital, at the New Westminster City Hall, at the South Burnaby Cenotaph, at Burnaby's Korean War Memorial and at the Royal Canadian Legion branch 83 in Burnaby and branch 2 in New Westminster. All of these commemorations were extremely important.

We know that our veterans gave their lives for democracy, and what they want to see is a functioning democracy. The NDP in this corner of the House was instrumental in getting to the bottom of the SNC-Lavalin scandal and the WE Charity scandal, as we are doing now with the SDTC scandal. We support the motion.

The Conservatives had over \$7 billion in scandals and have never apologized. Will the Conservatives apologize for their scandals, which they refused to let Parliament get to the bottom of?

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Mr. Speaker, once again, we are here to get the documents. That is the discussion and debate we are on. I do not know why other parties are deflecting questions instead of dealing with what really needs to be done.

It is a simple process. It is unfathomable that the House made a decision and we have a government that is not going along with it. What I am hearing in my riding is that people are frustrated. Why are we here? Why do I have the ability to vote and to make a difference when the government will not accept the vote on this issue? Once again, let us get the documents so we can move on.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a great way to start a week: listening to the great and insightful knowledge being shared by my neighbour and colleague from Simcoe—Grey.

Because he is from my area and his riding borders mine, I want to touch base with him. I hear day in and day out in my riding about how hard he works in his riding and how many events he goes to.

He is always out there. He has boots on the ground and does anything he can to listen to his constituents. I appreciate that from him.

Since you have heard so much information, I want to know if you are also hearing about this terrible loss of \$400 million, about how much your residents are suffering and about how the \$400 million from this fiasco scandal could have helped residents in your riding.

The Speaker: I am glad the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte heard great things about me and my riding, but I think he was talking about the member for Simcoe—Grey.

The hon. member for Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for those nice comments. Just so everyone here is aware, I drove last night to make sure I was in time, and I think the hon. member flew, so I brought his clothes with me. I think he is thanking me for bringing his clothes.

I hear all the time about wasted spending and have heard great thoughts about what we could do with that amount of money in my riding. For example, hospitals could be built. I know of two that need funding. We could lower taxes so there is more money in seniors' pockets. All the money going to scandals could, quite frankly, go to debt or to finding ways to save money. Right now people are struggling, whether it is with food, rent or mortgages, so any money the government is wasting is money that is not going to good causes.

• (1115)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the good people of the riding of Waterloo, especially the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 530. We had a tremendous ceremony in Waterloo, and it was really impressive to see the number of people who showed up. We need to appreciate and never take for granted the democracy we have.

A point that was raised was about the challenges Canadians are facing and the importance of housing. That is interesting. As we know, 18 members out of the entire Conservative Party care about and support their municipalities when it comes to ensuring that each individual has a safe and affordable place to call home. It is unfortunate that partisan politics is being played, and I commend those 18 Conservative members for stepping up and supporting their municipalities.

Was the member one of those 18 MPs? Does he know anybody in the House who is opposed to this question of privilege? I support it and support the Speaker's ruling to ensure that it goes to PROC and we get to the bottom of it.

Privilege

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Mr. Speaker, once again, this discussion is about releasing the documents. That is the first thing.

I come from a municipal background. I was a mayor for many years and was then on the two-tier county council. I can say that for a lot of programs, there are lots of announcements saying the Liberals are going to have all this funding and it is going to be fantastic, but it does not work. The rural areas do not get funding. Sometimes, not enough people can access funds from the programs; it is only great announcements. The Canada Infrastructure Bank, for example, was a flop that did not amount to anything. We just get empty promises at election time so the Liberals hope they can get some votes. Quite frankly, I think Canadians are frustrated and have had enough.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for all of his hard work.

He discussed in his speech that there was an issue with CRA and a small business, and it withheld funds for a really long time. I have the same thing happening in my riding with a small business owed \$90,000. For no reason, it has been withheld. The Liberals seem to have a lot of time to give their friends money and get into all these corrupt situations, but do not have enough time to help Canadians. I wonder if the member can comment on that.

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Mr. Speaker, we could put our hands up and ask certain questions of members, not just on this side but across the whole House: Are services better today than when they were elected? Are their staff more frustrated today when dealing with these bureaucracies than when they were elected? I am sure the answer would be yes, and I think that would be true right across the board if people were to give a true answer.

For me, there has been frustration in getting information, getting through on the lines and getting money back, and all the while, the only thing that is better is the number of employees. Way more employees have been added, yet we have a lot fewer services. The frustration from individuals coming into my office is unbelievable. They will wait all day sometimes to get something with no phone calls back. It has never been like this before, so it is frustrating.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on the subamendment.

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

• (1120)

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

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

REQUEST FOR WITNESS TO ATTEND AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE

The House resumed from November 5 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is it going to take for the Prime Minister to fire the minister from Edmonton, the Minister of Employment? It seems that every day there are new revelations surrounding this scandal-plagued minister. With each of these new revelations, it is crystal clear, to seemingly everyone but the minister and the Prime Minister, that the minister is about the last person in the House who should be sitting around the cabinet table.

Let us look at the facts. The Minister of Employment was a partner with one Stephen Anderson in a shady PPE company called Global Health Imports. This is a company that has been sued by multiple clients and has been ordered by Alberta courts to pay back \$7.8 million for ripping off clients. Not only that, the minister almost certainly violated the Conflict of Interest Act. More specifically, the Conflict of Interest Act states clearly that a minister of the Crown shall not be involved in the operations of business.

Text messages reveal that someone named Randy from Global Health Imports was intricately involved in business during the very same time that the Minister of Employment sat in cabinet. More specifically, those text messages reveal that this Randy from Global Health Imports was involved in a half-a-million dollar shakedown of a California based client that had ordered PPE equipment. At the behest of this Randy, the client, the Ghaoui Group, transferred half-a-million dollars to Global Health Imports, the PPE was never delivered and the Ghaoui Group has commenced legal action, claiming wire fraud, among other things.

The Minister of Employment says he is not that Randy, except for the fact that, at all material times, the Ghaoui Group believed that the Randy in the text messages was the Minister of Employment. The minister's business partner, Stephen Anderson, has admitted there is no one from Global Health Imports named Randy other than the minister. The text messages reference Randy as a partner. We know the minister had been a partner. The text messages place this Randy in Vancouver. It turns out that the Minister of Employment was in Vancouver at the same time, and no one can find this other Randy. There is no plausible explanation as to who this other Randy could be. The only reasonable inference that can be drawn is that the Randy in the text messages is the Minister of Employment.

Therefore, the Minister of Employment broke the law and violated the Conflict of Interest Act. On that basis alone, he should be removed from cabinet.

Privilege

However, there is more. Recently, we learned that Global Health Imports, while the minister was an active partner in the company, made two bids for federal contracts in which the company held itself out as a wholly owned indigenous company. The problem with that is that it is not a wholly owned indigenous company, because neither Anderson nor the minister are indigenous. What the minister and his business partner Anderson did is clear. They tried to take advantage of the government's indigenous procurement program to obtain government contracts. In short, they tried to steal contracts that should be awarded to legitimate indigenous businesses. This is cultural appropriation that is completely disgusting, and it is something else. It is called fraud, and it raises questions of potential criminality involving the minister.

● (1125)

The minister says that he had no idea, that it was all Anderson who did this behind his back. I wish to re-emphasize that the minister was a 50% shareholder and was one of two business partners. For the minister to claim that he had no idea that they were trying to rig the system to steal government contracts is not believable. It is even less believable in the face of what has come to light, which is that the minister has a long-standing track record of misrepresenting his indigenous status. In that regard, I would note that this is a minister, according to news reports, who, as far back as the 2012 Liberal convention when he was seeking a party nomination, represented himself to be Métis.

In 2015, after he was elected, in a social media post, the Liberal Party listed the minister as one of 10 indigenous Liberal MPs elected. The minister said that he was Métis back in 2012, but then, when he was elected to this place, between 2016 and 2018 he repeatedly characterized himself as a non-status adopted Cree, referencing his adopted great-grandmother, who he claimed had Cree roots. He even touted that he had a Cree name called “strong eagle man”.

When confronted about his status and the fact that he was falsely representing this, the minister has seen fit to now change his story to say that he is not a non-status adopted Cree. In fact, he is now alleging that his mother is Métis and his brother is Métis. The bottom line is that this is a minister who continually changes his story. He misrepresents who he is. He misrepresents who he is not. The minister is a cultural appropriator. He has tried to appropriate and represent himself as being indigenous for political gain as well as financial gain.

Today, it is reported in the National Post, if that is not enough, that the minister's company, Global Health Imports, while the minister was a partner, was sharing a PO box with none other than an individual involved in cocaine trafficking, someone who was busted by the Edmonton police in 2013 and busted again in the Dominican Republic, caught with 200 kilograms of cocaine. This is who the minister is associated with, who the minister is doing business with or who he is at least connected to in terms of sharing a post office box. It really begs this question. Whose company are ministers in the government keeping?

Between the \$7.8 million in judgments against his company, the fact that he violated the Conflict of Interest Act, the fact that he has misrepresented himself as indigenous for political and financial

gain and his ties, now, to someone connected to cocaine, it begs the question, again. What is it going to take for the Prime Minister to fire the minister from Edmonton, the Minister of Employment?

We have before us a question of privilege to bring in Anderson, who defied a parliamentary committee when he refused to disclose who Randy was, and we know why. Because it is the Minister of Employment. When he comes before the House at the bar, we need to ensure that the process is an orderly one.

● (1130)

With that, I would like to move the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by replacing paragraph (f) with the following:

“(f) during Mr. Anderson's appearance at the Bar for the purpose of responding to questions, which shall be asked by Members, with questions and answers being addressed through the Speaker:

(i) during the first round of questioning, ten minutes shall be allocated to a Member from each recognized party in the following order: the Official Opposition, the Bloc Québécois, the New Democratic Party and the government party,

(ii) during the second round of questioning, there shall be 13 periods of five minutes each for Members from the recognized parties, who shall be recognized consistent with the proportions observed during Oral Questions, namely, and in the following order, five members of the Official Opposition, two members of the Bloc Québécois, two members of the New Democratic Party, one member of the government party, and three members of the Official Opposition, provided that the same Member may be recognized more than once,

(iii) during either round, Members may be permitted to share their time with one or more Members by so indicating to the Speaker,

(iv) each of Mr. Anderson's answers shall approximately reflect the time taken by the question which preceded it, and

(v) the Speaker may, at his discretion, suspend the sitting briefly during the questioning.

(g) at the expiry of the time provided for questioning, and after Mr. Anderson has been excused from further attendance, the House shall resume consideration of the usual business of the House for a Wednesday; and”.

The Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Question and comments, the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton, like myself as chair of the ethics committee, has had a front-row seat to what I would call a charade, a mockery and contempt of this institution. Mr. Anderson came to the committee. He would not answer questions directly and this is why we are in this situation.

I want to ask the member about the minister. We have seen text messages. We have seen WhatsApp messages. We know that the minister was a director in this company and that he received payments from this company. We also have seen, lately, a sworn affidavit that identifies the minister by his name.

Who does the member think Randy is?

● (1135)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question, as to who is Randy, is obvious. It is the minister. The member is quite right in his characterization. What has happened before the ethics committee has been a charade, not just on the part of Mr. Anderson but on the part of the minister.

Privilege

The minister first came to committee and said that he could not be the Randy in the text messages because he was in Vancouver at a cabinet meeting. Then text messages came out that showed that the Randy in the text messages was in Vancouver and the minister was in Vancouver. He came to committee and suddenly admitted, after claiming he had no association with Anderson other than he was a partner, that he had spoken to Anderson at the material time in question. Frankly, he has not been forthcoming all along and we need answers.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member a question based on the amendment he has put forward.

Members are duly elected to this place, and even though we recognize the parties that have more than 12 seats as officially recognized parties, there are members of the Green Party who contribute in this chamber and have been duly elected. I wonder if the member would be interested in providing space to the leader, or at least one of the members, of the Green Party to be able to ask questions. Within his amendment, he suggested people could share time. Acknowledging those individuals who have been duly elected, would he have any interest in ensuring that all people represented in this chamber are able to ask questions, as he is suggesting we should do?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there is something of significance in obtaining official party status. Official party status should mean something. The Green Party does not have official party status. It has two members of Parliament who are the equivalent of independent members of Parliament. If the Green Party wishes to participate in debate and committee, then what it should go about doing is to convince Canadians to vote for it and elect more Green MPs.

With respect to the debate and the questioning that will take place about Mr. Anderson, if the Liberals want to cede their time to the Green Party, I invite them to do so.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I very much join with the member and share his deep concern about the need for absolute probity and respect for ethics in any cabinet, whether of the current government or any other government.

My question for him is this. I find myself still confused. There was reference to “Randy” being involved in business decisions. The defence from the minister thus far is that it was not him, that there was a different Randy. Has another Randy been identified in any of the documents or before the committee, which might plausibly back up that contention by the minister? Is there another Randy in that company that this could be referring to or not?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no, no other Randy has been identified. His business partner, Anderson, said the only Randy at the company was the Minister of Employment but then, implausibly, claimed the Randy in the text messages was not the minister because of nine autocorrects, which simply is not credible. The minister himself can identify no other Randy. When Global News embarked upon finding out who that other Randy is, the only Randy it was able to come up with is the minister.

• (1140)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton for his great speech and the work the committee has been doing on this matter. It is very important. I appreciate the words he spoke this morning.

One of the things that struck me repeatedly was when he said the Prime Minister has an obligation to Canadians and to the credibility of this House to deal with those who have been found in contempt, dealing in corruption or any sort of thing that would bring the government into disrepute.

I would like to ask the member if he can identify a reason in his mind as to why the Prime Minister has been hesitant, reluctant or just negligent in dealing with the minister.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I would submit that perhaps the reason the Prime Minister has been reluctant to deal with the minister is that he has engaged in similar conduct as the minister. The minister violated the Conflict of Interest Act; the Prime Minister violated the Conflict of Interest Act not once, but twice. In fact, he has the dubious distinction of being the first Prime Minister to be found guilty of violating the Conflict of Interest Act. That may shed light on his reluctance to fire this corrupt minister.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know from evidence that Mr. Anderson and the Minister of Employment have both denied having any communication with each other since the minister's election in 2019.

How does the member reconcile those points with the story that broke that confirmed the minister reached out to Mr. Anderson with respect to an outstanding Purolator bill?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, we learned about that because the minister got caught as a result of additional text messages.

The minister represented, as the member pointed out, that he had had no communication with Mr. Anderson. Then text messages revealed that the Randy in question was in Vancouver while the minister was in Vancouver. He was asked to explain that. He tried to explain he had communicated with Mr. Anderson about a Purolator bill but not about the half-million dollar shakedown.

Was this a coincidence? I think not. By the way, calling or making inquiries to Anderson about paying a bill pertains to the operations of a business, so it raises even more questions about this minister violating the Conflict of Interest Act.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just to put things into a bit of context here, ever since day one, even when the Prime Minister was leader of the third party, the Conservative Party has been focused on character assassination.

Now let us fast-forward to what we have today. The Ethics Commissioner has cleared the minister in question not once, not twice, but on three occasions. Why should any Canadian believe the Conservative character assassination we have witnessed in the last 10-plus years over what the Ethics Commissioner is saying?

Privilege

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, it is simply not accurate to say the Ethics Commissioner has cleared the minister.

In fact, the minister has not been forthcoming with the Ethics Commissioner, just as he has not been forthcoming with the committee. He was supposed to turn over his phone devices to the Ethics Commissioner. He did not do that. He only turned over one phone, and then when he got caught, he turned over another phone. He does not appear to have advised the Ethics Commissioner that he had been in contact with Anderson at the time in question.

There are a lot of questions that have not been answered. We need to get to the bottom of this.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it should not come as a surprise to anyone that the Conservative Party wants to keep playing this multi-million dollar game, and that is what it is. It is all about the self-interest of the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party of Canada, which wants to prevent the House of Commons from being able to debate issues that Canadians are genuinely concerned about and a number of pieces of legislation that are before us.

I would repeat the question I had asked the member opposite, and I think members opposite should listen very carefully. This is the tactic of the Conservatives, even when they were in government, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister and their current leader was a member of the cabinet and the parliamentary secretary to the prime minister. The way they attempt to win an election is to label things as corrupt and to attack personalities, and no personality has been harder hit by the Conservative Party than the Prime Minister's. They do it not only inside the chamber but also outside the chamber, and they have no reservations whatsoever in terms of misleading Canadians.

We can look at the question I asked the member opposite. Not once, not twice, but three times the independent office of the Ethics Commissioner has cleared the minister in question, yet the Conservative Party does not recognize that. It does not recognize the independence of the office, because what trumps the commissioner is the political, self-serving agenda of the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party in general. That is why we have seen individual former prime ministers reflect very negatively on the Conservative Party. The late Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell and others have been critical of the Conservative Party of Canada today because it has lost its moral compass in dealing with issues of a progressive nature as it focuses solely on misleading through social media, and virtually attempting to paralyze the House of Commons.

There are no opposition days, no government business, legislation or private members' bills being discussed, because the Conservative Party is completely preoccupied with this multi-million dollar game. This is a continuation, just like another privilege issue we are debating. The Conservatives brought forward another privilege issue, which we have before us today. They said to stop the debate on the amendment to the amendment to a motion that they introduced, which all of us wanted to support, but it did not fit their agenda because they did not want it to come to an actual vote. They did not want the debate to go to the standing committee. Instead,

they want to use the motion as a way to blackmail members of Parliament and to filibuster what should be taking place on the floor of the House of Commons.

It is disrespectful to Canadians. It is absolutely a waste of tax dollars, and I would suggest that, ironically, it is borderline in contempt of Parliament, the manner in which the Conservatives continue to play this multi-million dollar game. The best way to describe it, in terms of the abuse, is to look at the motion we are debating today. The essence of it is that a member of the community is called to the bar and has to answer questions. Is there anyone opposing that?

• (1145)

However, like the other motion of privilege, which is still going to be debated this afternoon, it stops the government from bringing anything else forward.

An hon. member: Yay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one member across the way said "yay", but there are other issues, and not just government issues.

The Conservatives have opposition day motions, and when they bring them forward, they like to say the motions are confidence motions. However, I think Canadians would love to see an opposition day motion that deals with the housing accelerator fund. We have 17 Conservative members across the way who are scared because the leader of the Conservative Party is saying the party opposes it. The party is going to kill that particular fund. Therefore, we have Conservative MPs who are having a difficult time trying to justify their very existence on such an important issue. We should have a vote on that particular issue, but we cannot do so. The Conservatives know full well that all they have to do is continue to put up speaker after speaker on matters of privilege, and then nothing else can take place on the floor for debate.

The housing accelerator fund is providing thousands of housing units, or homes, in every region of our country, but we have the official opposition opposing it. Actually, that is not fair to say. We have the leader of the official opposition saying that the program is bad and needs to be cut. However, a dozen or more Conservative members are saying they like the program. They are writing to the Minister of Housing to say that they want this program to be applied in our communities. We have mayors in different areas of the country saying that this is a good program. However, there is this division within the Conservative Party. In order to avoid that sort of a division, why not continue to talk about privilege? It is a privilege motion for which everyone is saying yes to having the member come before the bar, but the Conservatives have no interest in voting on it. As I have indicated very clearly, it is a fairly straightforward motion that Mr. Anderson be called before the bar to answer questions. If everyone believes that, fine, we will accept that and allow it to come to a vote. However, what is the purpose of the Conservative Party not only continuing to debate the motion but now also actually moving an amendment to the motion, which means that we could see dozens speak to it?

What happened on the previous motion? We saw over 100 Conservatives speak to it. Weeks and weeks of potential debate on other issues were left to the wayside and never dealt with, such as Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act; Bill C-66, which would transfer issues related to sexual abuse from military courts to civil courts; Bill C-33, strengthening the port system and railway safety in Canada act, which deals with our supply lines; and Bill C-63, the proposed online harms act to protect children on the Internet. This is not to mention the fall economic statement or the many opposition days that are being lost because the Conservatives are filling the time on issues of privilege, even though the very motions they are bringing forward are ones that we are okay with actually seeing pass. The reason, as I started off by saying, is that it is a multi-million dollar game, and it is all about character assassination. This is why I posed the question to the member opposite: What is the issue?

• (1150)

The issue is that we have a minister representing an Edmonton riding, and there have been concerns in regard to some text messaging and how that could have had an impact on the issue at hand. As I have pointed out, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has looked at this issue not once, not twice, but three times and cleared the minister responsible each time.

When I posed that particular question to the member, his response was that it is not true. It is true. Members of the Conservative Party know it is true, but they continue to push. Why is that? It is because, as I pointed out in my question, even when the Prime Minister was the leader of the Liberal Party in third party, the Conservative Party continued to attack the individual. Nothing has changed. The wonderful thing about Hansard is that everything said inside the chamber is actually recorded and there for people to read. People do not have to believe me; they can just read the Hansards. We can go back to the time when the leader of the Liberal Party was in third party. We will find personal attacks on the leader, especially in member statements.

We have witnessed it of other ministers inside the chamber. It is the type of thing where I could enter into that same field, talk about personalities and start to look at the leader of the Conservative Party. I referred to an interesting document. By the way, the relevance of this is in regard to the issue of attacking the character of an individual. It is some sort of a report that was published. The title is "Stephen Harper, Serial Abuser of Power: The Evidence Compiled". Actually, not all the evidence is compiled, because there are a number of things I am aware of that are not actually included in this document. However, it is about abuse of power, scandals and corruption.

There are 70 of them listed, for anyone who is interested, but one of them that is really interesting is that Stephen Harper was actually found in contempt of Parliament. We can think about that. He is the only prime minister in the British Commonwealth, which includes Canada, to ever be found in contempt of Parliament. Can we guess who his parliamentary secretary was? It was the leader of the Conservative Party.

That is one, but I am a little off topic there. I go through this article, and the leader of the Conservative Party's name comes up on

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more than one occasion. Let us go to page 9, to something called the vanity video; the article reads, "The Globe and Mail revealed that Harper's chosen Minister for Democratic Reform [the now leader of the Conservative Party] commissioned a team of public servants for overtime work on a Sunday to film him glad-handing constituents."

It goes on, but he was promoting using civil servants and wearing his Conservative Party uniform, and of course, we cannot do that. If the Ethics Commissioner was to look into that, I suspect maybe they would have found some sort of fine or a penalty, or he would have been found offside.

• (1155)

However, one of the ones Harper is really well known for is the "Elections bill [that] strips power from Elections Canada". The story says, "The Fair Elections Act also makes it harder for Canadians to vote as more ID is required. Nationwide protests in which more than 400 academics took part forced [the leader of the Conservative Party] to withdraw some measures in the bill because of their alleged anti-democratic bent."

Anti-democratic: I think there could be some relevancy here. It goes on to say, the "Democratic Reform Minister [the leader of the Conservative Party] accused the Elections Canada CEO Marc Mayrand of being a power monger and wearing a team jersey."

Here we have the Conservative Party now calling into question the Ethics Commissioner, but when the leader of the Conservative Party was the minister responsible for democratic reform, he labelled the chief of our electoral system, Elections Canada. That is why I do not say it lightly. We have a leader of the Conservative Party who is in borderline contempt, in terms of what we are witnessing in Parliament today. He has no qualms doing that. It is demonstrated.

Not only that, but if we take a look at the issue of security clearance, I do not know how many times I have asked the question of Conservative MP after Conservative MP: Why does the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada not get the security clearance so that he can better understand foreign interference? That is a very real issue. We have all sorts of things that are taking place in our community. An individual has been murdered; individuals are being held in many different ways for financial purposes. We have all sorts of interference in political parties, in the leader of the Conservative Party's own leadership.

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When he was elected as leader, there were issues related to foreign interference and how that influenced the leadership that he ultimately won. The Bloc, the Green, the NDP and the Prime Minister all have the security clearance. He is the only leader who does not. Why will the leader of the Conservative Party not do likewise? The arguments he uses are bogus. He knows that. We have experts clearly indicating that the leader of the Conservative Party has nothing to worry about in terms of being able to get the security clearance, from a perspective of being able to listen and talk about the issue of the day. That is not the concern. However, it does raise an issue. What is in the background of the leader of the Conservative Party regarding which, ultimately, he is scared to get that security clearance? I believe there is something there.

There is something that the leader of the Conservative Party does not want Canadians to know. I think we should find that out. That is why, whether it is me or other members of the government, we will continue to call upon the leader of the Conservative Party to get that security clearance.

Instead of playing this multi-million dollar game, let us start dealing with the issues that are important to Canadians. Let us talk about the fall economic statement and the legislation before the House that the Conservatives do not want to have discussions on. Let us have opposition days and private members' bills. We should allow the chamber to do the work that Canadians want us to do.

As the Conservative Party, and the leader of the Conservative Party in particular, is so focused on them, I can assure people following the debate that the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister will always continue to be focused on Canadians first and foremost. Unfortunately, we have to participate in this game; however, at the end of the day, we will continue to push a Canadian agenda, an agenda that reflects what we believe Canadians want.

That is something we will continue to advocate for. I would ask that, if Conservatives across the way understand the cost of the game they are playing, they stop with the character assassination they began back in 2011. Let us get down to business and do some good things for Canadians. We can do so much more if we start working together. Not only were all the other parties given a responsibility to do some good things inside the chamber, but the Conservative Party was too.

• (1200)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader spends most of the time in his speeches casting aspersions on this side of the aisle and pointing fingers.

However, on his side of the aisle there is the cabinet Minister of Public Safety, who was involved in a \$25-million clam scam; the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, who has had two ethics breaches in giving money to her friends; the Minister of Environment and Climate Change giving money to a company that he is invested in; and, of course, the Minister of Innovation, who did not meet the contract obligations to get the money back in the green slush fund scandal.

Is the member not concerned about the corruption in the cabinet members on the Liberal side?

• (1205)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when I was in third party status inside the House of Commons not that long ago, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, I was more concerned about the corruption, abuse of power and so many other things within that particular government.

I can tell the member opposite that, as she would know, the sole purpose of the Conservative Party under the current leadership is nothing more than character assassination. That continues to be the case. She tries to say that the Liberal government is corrupt; under that definition, I would hate to think how she would classify Stephen Harper and his government.

As I have said, there is a document that, if I had the leave of the House, I would be happy to table. There are 70 things in which Stephen Harper was a serial abuser of power, and all sorts of scandal, corruption and abuse of power. I can tell members that there is even more, because there is stuff that I am aware of that is not in the booklet.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy hearing my colleague.

Of course the NDP wants to get to the bottom of the issue. We do believe in supporting the original motion and in calling the gentleman in question before the bar to answer questions. Canadians deserve to have answers.

I am a bit perplexed, though, and I want to ask my colleague for his reaction. There has been a principle, when Parliament calls people before the bar, that there is a fair distribution among the recognized parties in the House. That is certainly how it was when Mr. Firth appeared before the bar.

The Conservatives have just tabled a motion in which, after paying lip service in the first round to the equality in Parliament's calling the individual before the bar, they are now proposing to take two-thirds of all of the subsequent questions. That is unbelievable to me, particularly given the Conservatives' history of cover-ups during the Harper regime. There was unbelievable corruption and scandals, all of which were covered up by Conservatives.

Does the parliamentary secretary think it is appropriate that Conservatives try to take two-thirds of the questions, when the process should involve all members of Parliament?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one would think that there would be a higher sense of fairness within the amendment, and one only needs to take a look at what took place the last time someone was called to the bar or at what happens in our standing committees. Am I surprised? No.

However, I can tell the member opposite that I am anticipating that there will be an amendment to the amendment before us. The Conservatives have demonstrated that their true intentions are not necessarily to see tangible results on their motions but rather to continue to prevent the House from being able to deal with concerns that Canadians have. Conservatives are more preoccupied with the self-interest of the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party in general than they are with providing any sort of movement forward in getting legislation passed and debating opposition motions and private members' bills.

We have seen that clearly demonstrated over the last five weeks or so.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to just build upon some of the comments the member shared on the question of privilege, the amendment and the subamendment that we are debating. I am sure there will be more to come.

The member mentioned something with regard to the history of former prime minister Stephen Harper. I would ask him to correct me if I am wrong. I believe that there has been only one prime minister in the history of Canada since Confederation to be found in contempt of Parliament, and I believe it was former prime minister Stephen Harper. I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

Additionally, the member referred to the housing accelerator fund. It is no secret that the leader of the official opposition would get rid of the program. The program helps constituents within the riding of Waterloo. The region of Waterloo has also done really well. We know that each Canadian should have a safe and affordable place to call home.

Fewer than 15% of Conservative members, 18 of them, actually took the time to support their municipalities when it came to housing. I believe the member said the number was 17, but I think it is now 18. They are no longer allowed to speak about it. They are Conservatives but they should fight for Canadians. I am a Canadian first. I chose my political party, but I will always fight for my constituents and for my community of Waterloo.

I would like to hear the member's comments, first of all in regard to whether a Canadian prime minister has ever been found in contempt of Parliament, and second as to what the role of members of Parliament is. Should they be supporting their communities or should they have to have blind trust in their leader?

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I appreciate the two-part question. On the first part, as I have indicated, Stephen Harper was actually the only prime minister in the history of Canada, and even beyond Canada, throughout the British Commonwealth, who has actually been found in contempt of Parliament. An interesting fact is that the current leader of the Conservative Party of Canada was actually Harper's parliamentary secretary at the time.

In regard to the housing issue, I believe that if we could stop debating the multi-million dollar game that the Conservatives are playing, maybe we could have an opposition day on the accelerator fund and see whether it would pass the floor of the House of Com-

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mons. I believe it would. Rather than talking about the members who still support the program, the real question is about the 18 members who have written to the government saying they indirectly support it. That would be an interesting vote. There is no way the leader of the Conservative Party would allow it to take place.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the stuff is really flying around the room today. It is an interesting debate.

The current government has had more ethics violations and more scandals than any other government in the history of our country. It has spent more than all other governments combined and padded its pockets and Liberal friends' pockets with more taxpayer funds than all other governments combined.

The Prime Minister has worn blackface more times than he can remember, yet the member stands up and still backs him up time and again. The scandals have gone on and on, with "elbowgate", the Aga Khan scandal and blackface scandals, but the member for Winnipeg North stands up and defends him time and time again.

A simple question to our hon. colleague is this: Who is the other Randy? Who is Randy? I do not think that even Randy knows who he is nowadays. Does the hon. member know who the real Randy is?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there should be a little bit of a warning given on TV when there is a bar going across the screen that says that a Conservative is speaking. There should be something in brackets saying that all comments being made are not necessarily true or accurate. At the end of the day, the Conservatives call the current government the most scandalous government in the history of Canada. What a bunch of crap.

I am sorry. I withdraw that word—

The Deputy Speaker: I do want the hon. member to retract that word.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was thinking of the acronym of the former Conservative Party. I apologize.

The bottom line is that the Conservative members' just saying something in the chamber does not make it true. People must understand that members of the Conservative Party, whether inside the chamber or on social media, has no qualms in terms of misrepresenting the reality of life and of factual information at times.

• (1215)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Liberal minister from Alberta has said a lot of things, but we know he is a fake and a fraud. He said that he was not the Randy involved in the company in question in hundreds of thousands of dollars in fraud cases that are now before the courts. He said he was not involved with the company while he was in cabinet, but of course now there is evidence that is not true. He also said that he was indigenous, in order to profit from contracts, effectively stealing from members of first nations communities. He should resign.

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Here we are today, again dealing with more revelations about the Liberal Prime Minister's minister from Edmonton. There are lots of proud Albertans who serve on this side of the House. I know it is a real challenge for them to have to hear over and over again about the member whom the Liberal Prime Minister has elevated to cabinet to represent that province, because the minister does not represent the people and the values of the great Canadian province of Alberta, nor does he represent the values of the hard-working Canadians from across our country.

We have heard today in debate from representatives of the Prime Minister that there is some kind of Conservative fiction, but they are telling on themselves. After nine years, the facts have become really inconvenient for the NDP-Liberal coalition.

The National Post says, "It's just shocking: Liberal cabinet minister's shifting Indigenous identity scorned". Global News says, "Ethics Committee reopens...inquiry in wake of new 'Randy' texts". Here is another from the National Post: "Multiple texts about 'other Randy' blamed on 'auto-correct' by [the minister's] former business partner".

Le Devoir says that the minister from Edmonton's past is being questioned. I want to zero in on this for a quick second because there has been a lot of talk about the other Randy. How many other Randys are there? Let us start with fake journalist Randy because the article in Le Devoir, from June 27, lays out the disproved claim by the Liberal minister at the heart of the scandal that Randy was a journalist, so journalist Randy is reported in Le Devoir.

There is also across the Canadian media spectrum, including in CBC, the minister's fake claims about being indigenous, so there is that other Randy. In committee, Liberal members have said that the other Randy might not even be Randy; it might be Randeep, so there is the cover-up Randy. Today in the news, there is cocaine Randy.

There is a cocaine connection with a Liberal cabinet minister. It is not like he owned a 1% share in a company; 50% of the business was owned by the Liberal minister. What was the business? It was a pandemic profiteering enterprise, to be clear, that is now at the centre of more than a half-dozen fraud allegations that are before the courts and that is the subject of an unresolved investigation by the Edmonton police about a suspicious fire in the warehouse of the Liberal minister from Edmonton.

• (1220)

That is what we are talking about, and his 50% business partner came before committee and lied. That is why we find ourselves before the House with a prima facie case of privilege and why he needs to come before the House. Questions need to be put to him about that because he lied.

We know there are rules in this place about parliamentary language, so let us quickly rewind. The Liberal minister has said that he was a journalist. It is printed in the media. It was looked into, and it is not true. He has said that he is indigenous. We have seen it in media reports, and again, what he said was not true. He has said that he was not involved in the ongoing operation of his business, but then, in the media and in court filings, we see more about the

fraud that his business has perpetrated. We see that his claim is not true.

The Liberal minister claimed that it could not have been him who was communicating with Mr. Anderson, his 50% business partner, because he was at a cabinet retreat in Vancouver. There were text messages in which his business partner said that he was talking to Randy in Vancouver, but he claimed that "Randy" was an autocorrect, and that the dozens of messages including it were all autocorrects, but that is exactly where he was. When we brought him back before the committee, like in so many other examples in this Liberal scandal, he changed his story.

The Liberals talk about the Ethics Commissioner having cleared him. Only these guys would come in here to say that he has been investigated a bunch of times, but they have not been able to nail him yet, when that is because he keeps hiding the evidence. The first time, he said, "Oh, I turned over the phone records," but it was not all of the phone records.

This Liberal minister from Edmonton was just asked over the last couple of days at a press conference whether the Edmonton police should investigate what has been revealed, and he did not say yes. Why would this Liberal not want the police to investigate if he has nothing to hide? He said that the Ethics Commissioner said that he is clear, but the Ethics Commissioner is not able to go to court to get a warrant and seize the bank records and the phone records that would demonstrate that this minister was doing the exact opposite of what he said he was doing. He was directly involved in the operation of his business, which, by the way, was bidding on and winning federal government contracts while he was sitting at the cabinet table. That is a fact, but he said that it did not happen. We cannot believe anything he says.

If it is not astonishing for Canadians that this Liberal minister and his business partner are sharing resources and their business is co-located with cocaine traffickers with hundreds of kilos of cocaine being involved in their trafficking enterprise, it might be astonishing that the Prime Minister and that Liberal parliamentary secretary will stand up and go to the barricades for him because they do not think he did anything wrong. That is how rotten the Liberal government has become. The corruption we have seen includes hundreds of millions of dollars from the green slush fund going to Liberal insiders, with 186 conflicts of interest, and \$60 million for arrive scam, which was two jokers in a basement getting paid \$20 million to do no IT work on that IT program. While one in four Canadians in this city and across the country are lining up at food banks, which are record numbers, they are lining the pockets of Liberal insiders.

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The Prime Minister said in 2015 that there would be sunny ways. It sure is sunny for Liberal insiders and their well-connected friends, but for everybody else, it is stormy skies and a rocky ride. They do not know how they are going to feed themselves. They do not know how they are going to heat their homes this winter. Small business insolvencies are up 40% this year, to say nothing of the businesses that are just not opening because business owners cannot survive in this anti-competitive, inflationary environment with the Prime Minister raising his carbon tax on absolutely everything.

● (1225)

The Liberals are punishing Canadians for just living their lives, and it is all to finance their reckless spending, but all the money they take from Canadians is not enough. They have still devalued our currency with their money printing to pay for their schemes and pad the pockets of their friends.

The Prime Minister was twice found guilty of breaking Canada's ethics laws. His public safety minister broke the law. The Liberal Speaker, the former parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, broke the law. The trade minister broke the law. Those are all Liberals, and they all broke the law. It is a cabinet and caucus made up of serial lawbreakers, so it is no wonder that we learned today about the cocaine connection of that Liberal minister from Edmonton, a right hand of the Prime Minister, who is at the centre of more than a half-dozen fraud cases before the courts, and his business partner came before committee and lied. That minister said he had no communication with his business partner while he was serving in cabinet, but he was doing it from a cabinet retreat.

If we want the answers, and if we want the truth from these guys, we cannot believe that we are going to get it on the first crack. That is why this is so far beyond the Ethics Commissioner. There was a pointed question from a journalist who said that this Liberal minister was too much of a chicken to agree that the police should investigate and the police should take a look. These are who these Liberals, and the Liberal Prime Minister, after nine years, have in charge: fraudsters and scammers, fakes and phonies. They are disenfranchising the very people they claimed they would be the best at protecting.

That Liberal minister from Edmonton spent his weekend on an apology tour, now that he has been caught for claiming to be indigenous to win contracts for indigenous-run businesses, but he is only sorry that he got caught. That in and of itself should have every one of them over there standing up and calling for his resignation, but where are they on that? They are too blinded by their hope that, in the dying days, as crew members of the Titanic, they might be called up to the bridge to serve in the cabinet. They are thinking that could be them, so they better not say anything. They better not stand up for Canadians.

That is their legacy. That is that death rattle that we hear from the Liberal government. It is the sound of complicity from self-interested Liberals who are literally trying to change the law so that the election can be a week later, knowing that they are going to lose their seats, so they can get their pensions. Their preoccupation is looking after themselves and not looking after Canadians. It is a government of apologies and photo ops. That is what it has done for nine years, and Canadians are paying the price.

What have the Liberals not broken? They broke housing in our country. They broke our immigration system. It is unbelievable. They also broke our food banks. Food bank use has doubled. Food banks are running out of food. They have had to extend their hours. When 25% of Canadians are depending on food banks, and the unemployment rate is under 6.5%, that is an awful lot of people who are working and who have to rely on the food bank to feed themselves.

However, it is worse than that. I am hearing from food banks about folks who have to get to the food bank between shifts at their two jobs, which are not enough to pay the bills. People have to go from their first job to the food bank, get enough food to feed themselves and their families, and then go back to work at their next job. That is the legacy of the government after nine years.

● (1230)

Who is the government looking out for? It is not Canadians. It is not looking out for the Canadians who are struggling to afford a meal, heat their homes or buy their first home. The government is abandoning Canadians in their time of need. When we put forward common-sense solutions, such as taking the GST off of new home constructions under a million dollars, the government will not do it. Why is that? First of all, it would increase housing supply by about 30,000 homes a year and would save Canadians tens of thousands of dollars on the purchase of those homes. That is not what it is interested in.

It is a government of photo ops and apology, but man, does it have a lot to be sorry for. The government should not be telling Canadians that they should be sorry, which is what it likes to do. It should stand up to apologize because what we have seen is shameful. There is a minister of the Crown serving in the Liberal government whose business is connected to cocaine traffickers, and that connection has been while he was in cabinet. We are not talking about something from 20 years ago. He is currently involved. The only reason he is not an owner of the business anymore is that he collapsed his shares on the eve of his appearance at committee to testify about his involvement with these fraudsters and hucksters. It is obscene what goes on with the Liberals and the Liberal Prime Minister after nine years.

However, I have great news for Canadians. There is scandal, mismanagement and corruption, which we are seeing over there today, that Canadians have become used to and that has been normalized. It has them feeling as though there is no hope. Life was not like this before the Liberal Prime Minister and the NDP-Liberal government, and it will not be like it after them. There is no political opportunity that the Liberals would not take to help advantage themselves. It does not seem to faze them if it disenfranchises or disadvantages Canadians in the process.

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We really have to wonder why, without having to drill down into any of the waste in the government programs they have put out, which just build more bureaucracy but do nothing to help Canadians, such as their supposed solutions for housing that have driven down housing starts and driven up bureaucracy, or the tens of millions of dollars on their failed confiscation with compensation scheme, their so-called gun buyback, to give people money for things the government never owned.

Meanwhile, we have police unions across the country, including the Toronto Police Association today, calling out the government and red circling the Liberals for the chaos and disorder on the streets. The Liberals will say that they are all Conservatives and Conservative lobby groups. The largest police association, the largest police union in the country, is calling them out, but they are so blinded by their own self-interest that they just cannot get out of their own way. How can they stand up today to defend the indefensible? The Liberal minister from Edmonton, who refuses to resign, will not stand up today to offer his resignation or an apology on the floor of the House of Commons, although Canadians deserve a lot more than that. He should have been fired. It seems like the Liberals do not have the moral clarity or the intestinal fortitude to do the right thing and make sure that the Liberal minister from Edmonton does not continue to serve in cabinet and represent their party and their Prime Minister.

The Liberals are going to have a rude awakening when Canadians get that carbon tax election because common-sense Conservatives will demonstrate our plan to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, especially the crimes of the criminals on the front bench and backbenches across the way.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people will notice something at the very end of the member's speech, which I think speaks volumes. The member gets the gold star because he carried the four election platform issues. He knows the slogans. The Conservatives know the slogans. They have the bumper stickers. They are all ready to go. There is no doubt about that. The member gets the gold star for that and that is the premise as to why they want to speak.

No matter what the member tries to say, he wants to go back to the economy. I would love to debate the issue of the economy. I would love to talk about the issue of housing. It would be nice to talk about the fall economic statement or legislation, not to mention the opposition days. Instead of doing that, the Conservatives want to play this multi-million dollar game. The motion is very simple. It is to call an individual before the bar. The Conservatives moved an amendment. They will talk and talk. They will put up 100 speakers. The Liberals might put up two or three.

Why is the Conservative Party, besides wanting to get its gold stars, putting up so many speakers? Is it in order to prevent Canadians from being able to witness a House of Commons that is more functional? Are opposition members using their weight to demonstrate that they can paralyze the House of Commons?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, why does the Liberal member keep standing up and defending the indefensible? He is defend-

ing a member of his caucus, a member of cabinet, who came before committee and said one thing when the other thing was actually true. He said he was indigenous in order to win government contracts, but it was not true. His business is sharing business resources with cocaine traffickers. That is who the Liberal MP is standing up and defending. The member says they will have three people stand up. We know he is going to get up as often as he can to defend the indefensible.

I have to say the impact of the government's economic vandalism and mismanagement is directly related to the type of people it has put into these senior positions. When the experience is coming from cocaine trafficker-adjacent ministers, maybe the Liberals should take a good look in the mirror and have the Prime Minister fire that failure of a minister, or better yet, call a carbon tax election.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we just spent a week in our ridings, which is very good for us as elected officials. Our constituents are asking us what is happening in the House. My answer is simple: Nothing is happening.

The reason nothing is happening is not that the things we are debating here are unimportant. It is that members are using a parliamentary power to drag out a debate that is paralyzing the government. The government is also accusing the opposition of paralyzing it, but it is not doing anything to get itself out of that situation. Basically, this situation is convenient for the government.

As an elected member who truly values our role in democracy, I want to ask my colleague a question. The accusations that have been made against Randy are serious.

We are talking about the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages. What other mechanism could we use to get to the bottom of this issue, which has already been addressed by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics? Why is this issue being addressed as a question of privilege that is going to keep paralyzing the House for who knows how long?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, this issue is incredibly important. This is why the ethics committee has called for that Liberal minister from Edmonton to come back before the ethics committee to see if we can get a third version of his truth, or maybe get to the facts of the matter. It is a real problem when we have a minister come before a parliamentary committee and we have to bring them back because we have learned that evidence demonstrates what they said at committee was not true.

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We have to hear from the minister at committee, and, of course, we need to have Mr. Anderson come before the House to answer questions and to answer for his contempt. This is a scandal that goes right to the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister is supporting that Liberal minister from Edmonton who has an ongoing involvement in this business venture. Today, the National Post wrote an article entitled, "Cabinet minister's firm shared mailing address with person named in cocaine busts".

While at the cabinet table, that same minister's business, which he owned a 50% share in, won government contracts. It won a contract with Elections Canada. What an advantage he gets. If claiming he was indigenous for indigenous-only contracts when he is not was not enough of an advantage to him, and a disadvantage to Canadians, he is also sitting at the cabinet table. I wonder if it weighs into anyone's decisions in government when they are deciding which vendor to pick, if one of the vendors sits around the cabinet table.

● (1240)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague opened up such a wide area of topics, but in particular with regard to sitting at the cabinet table, I want him to tell us the official Conservative policy, now, on his leader, and Stephen Harper before him, closing veterans' offices, including the one in Windsor, Ontario.

What is the official position on the cabinet decision that locked the doors, fired workers and threw veterans to the streets when they needed services? What can Windsor West residents expect in the future about closing veterans' offices after they recruited veterans off the streets to go to Afghanistan and all the other different wars before that? What is the official Conservative response to his current leader's responsibility in closing veterans' offices, while at the cabinet table?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, it is a real shame that, today, Canadians who voted for NDP members see those NDP members supporting a Liberal government and a Liberal Prime Minister that has attacked workers—

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I asked a very simple question to this member about closing veteran offices—

The Deputy Speaker: That is just falling into debate.

Order. I will just wait. Is the hon. member for Windsor West going to be continuing the debate? Thank you.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, Canadians are rightly disappointed, especially those who voted for the NDP, to see the NDP members supporting and voting for a Prime Minister and a Liberal Party that have attacked workers. It is really shameful and I understand why they are so upset. The NDP members must be taking marching orders from their leadership to support a Prime Minister, to support a Liberal Party that is attacking workers. They continue to give confidence to a government that has attacked workers at the two ports during labour disruptions there.

With respect to veterans, the Prime Minister has said veterans are asking for more than they can give. However, the NDP members continue to give the Prime Minister carte blanche. Canadians are upset with them and their failure to stand up for veterans and for workers. They should be ashamed.

The Deputy Speaker: Before going to our last question, I just want to make sure that when a person has the floor, the other folks keep comments to themselves. They can ask a question in the process later on.

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

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, we could not write a Hollywood script better than what this Parliament has been experiencing with this latest scandal that has been before the ethics committee and is now making an appearance before the House. We have had a former member of Parliament start a business with a character of suspect. They got government contracts. They defrauded companies and are facing civil actions right now. A fire happened at a warehouse, and now, with the latest bombshell, there is seemingly involvement with cocaine. We have seen Liberal members at committee filibuster this issue. We are seeing Liberal members defend this issue.

I know the hon. member spoke about defending the indefensible. What are Liberal members thinking in defending this minister?

● (1245)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to imagine how the Liberals and their NDP counterparts can defend the Prime Minister and the Liberal minister from Edmonton, when he had to come out and apologize now that he has been caught for misrepresenting himself as being indigenous when he is not, and for being involved in a business that is facing fraud allegations and is under investigation for arson. It is just unbelievable.

The Prime Minister should have fired him. The minister should resign. It is just unbelievable that he is getting cover from the back benches of the Liberal Party and the NDP.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for his outstanding work on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I thank him for helping Canadians learn more about this and, above all, for shining a light, day after day, on all those revelations in the newspapers about Canada's Minister of Official Languages. It takes dedication, and it is also a lot of work. Indeed, I doubt a day goes by without my colleague learning something new about the various ways in which the minister responsible for official languages has used his duties, his position, his name or his other name—I will talk about that later—for his personal gain.

Privilege

I also want to thank all the members who sit on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, especially my Conservative colleagues who have relentlessly asked questions. Thanks to those questions, we have learned a great deal about this whole affair that is currently before the House of Commons.

This is a very important issue. We are talking about a minister in the Prime Minister's cabinet who, well, is a fraud in many respects. He has demonstrated that, and now we have tangible proof. I will come back to that a little later.

Canadians are struggling right now. We live in a country where the cost of food is skyrocketing, where young people cannot even imagine ever owning a home because housing prices are so high, and where food banks are in crisis. Newspapers are reporting that food banks are in crisis. We live in a country where violent crime is on the rise, in big cities and in rural regions alike. Crime is up 256% since 2015. What matters most to this Prime Minister and this cabinet? Their top priority is to protect the Minister of Official Languages and make sure he keeps his job, despite all the evidence that has been presented against him, showing that he gleefully put his hands in the cookie jar.

When he was caught with his hands in the cookie jar, he rushed to eat them all up, to get rid of the evidence and to keep his hands free so he could go right back in for more. That is what is happening right now with this situation involving the Minister of Official Languages.

I have a little file on everything that has happened so far with the Minister of Official Languages, such as the story about the other Randy. Several people may have testified about that. It is rather startling to look at all the press coverage since June. I am only going to read the headlines, but I think it is important for Canadians to understand how the situation with the Minister of Official Languages has evolved. I will start with the francophone media, where there have been fewer articles. Those listening will see the correlation with the rest of my speech.

The first article reporting on this situation appeared on June 27. The headline read, "Minister's past questioned". On July 5, Radio-Canada published an article entitled "[Official languages minister] cleared by an ethics inquiry, but not by the opposition". There were no articles between July 5 and October 2. On October 2, *Le Droit* published an article under the headline, "[Official languages minister]'s business dealings again the subject of debate". On November 15, the following article appeared in Radio-Canada: "[Minister of Official Languages] apologizes for lack of clarity about his indigenious identity".

On the surface, for the francophones listening to us and for the people watching us who follow federal politics, this might seem like a trifle. People might wonder why the House of Commons is spending so much time talking about the Minister of Official Languages.

• (1250)

Let us look at what the English-language press said had to say about it. On June 4, Global News published the following article:

[English]

"Texts from 'Randy' raise questions about minister's role at company while in office, [the minister] denies."

• (1255)

[Translation]

It tells us about text messages concerning the "other Randy". That is what I will call him. As a rule, ministers are not to be called by their name in the House. However, another Randy is supposedly involved in this matter, but his identity has never been determined. Suffice it to say that this raises questions about the role of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages.

On July 16, Global News wrote the following:

[English]

"Liberal Cabinet Minister's...former partner in a medical supply company has ties to an Edmonton woman who was detained in a massive cocaine bust in the Dominican Republic in April 2022."

[Translation]

On July 17, the Toronto Star published an article under the following heading:

[English]

"In ethics hearing about Liberal minister, business exec admits he lied to a reporter."

[Translation]

Fully 50% of the Global Health Imports company is owned by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, together with Stephen Anderson, the individual who refused to hand over documents to the House of Commons. This, incidentally, is the focus of the privilege motion currently before us. His business partner therefore admitted to telling the reporter a lie.

On July 30, Global News reported as follows:

[English]

"Public records contradict [the minister's] business associate's testimony to ethics committee."

[Translation]

The article revealed that, essentially, what the minister told the committee was not entirely accurate, based on the facts that have emerged.

On August 8, Global News reported the following:

[English]

"New 'Randy' texts lead to 3rd ethics probe into [minister's] business dealings."

[Translation]

I should really say the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages. It is hard to get that right when a single person holds so many portfolios, especially since I cannot name that person.

Privilege

The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner conducted a third investigation. We have not heard much about that in French.

On August 15, Global News reported the following:

[*English*]

“[The minister's] former company, business partner face civil fraud allegation.”

[*Translation*]

Stephen Anderson, a 50% shareholder in Global Health Imports, is facing civil suits.

On August 21, Global News reported the following:

[*English*]

“[The minister's] former company awarded federal contract in potential conflict of interest.”

[*Translation*]

The company was apparently awarded contracts, and this was in violation of the Conflict of Interest Act.

On September 11, Global News reported the following:

[*English*]

“Why the contract won by [the minister's] former company went undisclosed for months”.

[*Translation*]

Is he hiding something? Why did he not disclose that a contract had been awarded?

On September 20, the National Post reported the following:

[*English*]

“[The Minister of Official Languages] admits he spoke to business partner in 2022 as MPs try to find the ‘other Randy’.”

[*Translation*]

Members will recall that at first, he was not there. That article was published on September 20. On June 4, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages testified at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. My colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, our ethics critic, asked him the following question.

Minister, there's fraud and there's another Randy in a “partner call” at your company. What is the other Randy's last name?

It was a simple question that he was asked on June 4, a long time ago, at the very start of all this.

The minister replied as follows:

[Hon. member], I do not know the name of that person, as I stated in my opening statements before at committee. I have no operational role with GHI. I do not know that person in question. That person is not me.

On September 20, the National Post wrote the following:

[*English*]

“[The Minister of Official Languages] admits he spoke to business partner in 2022 as MPs try to find the ‘other Randy’.”

[*Translation*]

Is that a contradiction or a lie? It is a fraud.

On October 8, the National Post reported the following:

[*English*]

“Liberal minister's former business associate could soon be found in contempt in ‘other Randy’ saga.”

[*Translation*]

That is why we are here today.

On November 9, the National Post wrote the following:

[*English*]

“One more firm alleges it was defrauded by Liberal cabinet minister's partner.”

[*Translation*]

On November 12 we read as follows:

[*English*]

“Ethics committee reopens [the Minister of Official Languages] inquiry in wake of new ‘Randy’ texts.”

[*Translation*]

More revelations and more texts were released.

On November 13, we read the following:

[*English*]

“[The Minister of Official Languages] won't say whether police should investigate claims of fraud against his former business partner.”

[*Translation*]

Fraud is fraud. When someone is a member of cabinet, they should support justice and want to get to the bottom of things. If, as he has claimed from the start, the Minister of Official Languages has nothing to do with any of this, he should open his books and let the police open an investigation into his former business partner's actions. However, when we open a can of worms, the worms do not always stay in one place. They move around. Perhaps that is why the Minister of Official Languages is afraid to ask the police to investigate his former business partner.

The story did not end there. On November 13, the National Post published an article under the following headline:

[*English*]

“‘It's just shocking’: Liberal cabinet minister's shifting Indigenous identity scorned.”

Privilege

[Translation]

First, it was another Randy. Then it was not another Randy, it was him. Now we learn that this company fraudulently claimed that one of the shareholders was indigenous. The Minister of Official Languages appeared in Liberal Party advertisements stating that he was a member of the Liberal Party of Canada's indigenous caucus, and he allegedly claimed indigenous identity so he could steal money from real indigenous people who were entitled to it. Why did he do it? As I said earlier, he did it to keep both hands in the cookie jar and put money into his own pockets. That is unacceptable.

I will continue. The story broke on November 14. The National Post reported:

[English]

“For years, Liberals said this MP was Indigenous. He's not.”

[Translation]

This is not coming from us.

On November 15, the National Post published an article stating:

[English]

“‘I apologize unequivocally’: [the Minister of Official Languages] says he was not ‘clear’ about his ties to Indigenous ancestry.”

[Translation]

I have a lot of information to share with the public about all the Minister of Official Languages' misrepresentations. I do not understand how—

• (1300)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. There is another conversation going on. I am hearing it quite readily as I try to listen to the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[Translation]

I need everyone to listen while the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable has the floor.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand—

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I apologize. That was me. I was just talking with some colleagues, reminding them that it was Stephen Harper and certain cabinet members who—

The Deputy Speaker: I will take the apology for what it is worth.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, once again, this is so obvious, we have come to expect it. Every time the Liberal government is attacked, a member of the NDP tries to cause a distraction to defend and protect it. It is almost a reflex. If we are where we are today—and all we have to do is think about the state of our public finances, about what is happening to Canadians standing in line at

the food bank, about the ever-rising crime rate, about the people who are living in tents because they do not have a home—it is because the NDP supports, has supported and will continue to support this ineffective Liberal government.

This ineffective Liberal government has a fake in its cabinet, a fake who admits it. However, he does not have the decency or the courage to hand in his resignation. He does not have the courage or the decency to respect ministerial responsibility and resign. Why does the Prime Minister keep him on? That is what Canadians should be asking.

In closing, that is not all. There is another fib on the Minister of Official Languages' resume that is very serious for an official languages minister. The Minister of Official Languages campaigned as a successful entrepreneur. We understand why he was successful, given his ties with the government. However, he also ran as a journalist. The Minister of Official Languages claimed to be a journalist. That is true. It is not a joke. Le Devoir questioned that and took an interest in this particular situation on June 27.

According to Global News, the Minister of Official Languages apparently

“remained listed as director” of a company that sold millions of dollars' worth of protective medical equipment to the Government of Quebec during the pandemic “for more than a year” after he began his second term in office.

According to the digital archives consulted by Le Devoir, the minister ran for office in 2015 and 2019 as a former journalist and political commentator for CBC/Radio-Canada and Les Affaires.

The Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec found this assertion questionable, since the Minister of Official Languages “never worked as a journalist for either of these venues”. “His name does not appear [in our system]”. That statement to Le Devoir was made by Radio-Canada spokesperson Guylaine O'Farrell.

As for the newspaper Les Affaires, its editor in chief, Marine Thomas said, “I did not know he had worked for us.” That is what the editor in chief, the person who approves all the articles, said. However, the archives contain opinion pieces signed by the Minister of Official Languages between 2005 and 2007, which he himself called columns.

In his collaborations with Les Affaires, he signed the pieces as president of Xennex Venture Catalysts and the Alberta Chambers of Commerce. He said we wanted to upend a few preconceived ideas about the province. He clearly did not want to comment on these statements either. I think it is worth quoting another statement by the president of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, Éric-Pierre Champagne, who said in an interview, “It is clear to me that he was not a journalist...Anyone can send an open letter to the media...That does not make them a journalist.”

• (1305)

For all of these reasons, that is, for the other Randy affair, for trying to assume an indigenous identity, for trying to pass himself off as a journalist and for misleading Canadians, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages has no choice. If he has any dignity or honour whatsoever, he will resign. If the Prime Minister has any sense of honour, respect and honesty, he will fire the minister as soon as possible, because no one can have a fake in cabinet.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us is to have Mr. Anderson come before the bar, just in case anyone is following the debate. I suspect all of us ultimately want to get to that vote and see that happen.

Since Conservative Party members are so hung up on this whole character assassination, which they have been doing since 2010, I wonder if maybe we should universally apply that and start talking about the leader of the Conservative Party and the numerous scandals he has directly been involved in. That would be an interesting subject for an opposition day type of motion.

Specifically, let me raise an issue that is out there and real. The only leader in the House of Commons who refuses to get the security clearance on foreign international interference is, in fact, the leader of the Conservative Party. Would the member not agree that the leader of the Conservative Party really needs to reflect on his motivation for not getting it? I believe it is because there is something in his personal background he does not want to share with Canadians. Would the member not agree that the leader of the Conservative Party should come clean and tell us what it is about his personal background that is preventing him from getting the security clearance?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, that is pretty ironic. However, we are not surprised to hear that from the member for Winnipeg North. He started his question by saying that he would like to remind the members that we are here to talk about a question of privilege concerning Stephen Anderson. Then he does not ask any questions about Stephen Anderson.

Let us try to take this seriously. This question of privilege is extremely serious. We are here today because Stephen Anderson refused to turn over to the House of Commons documents that will surely show the involvement of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages in the company while he was minister. These documents will confirm that he communicated with his business partner when he was not supposed to do so, in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Act.

That is not surprising, however, because the Liberals always do whatever they can to distract us and avoid talking about real issues in the House. I do not find that surprising, coming from the member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, has the member for Mégantic—L'Érable ever considered, if only for a second, that our Randy might simply have a split personality?

Privilege

Let us be a little more serious. The debate on the first question of privilege lasted a month, and this morning we started to debate a second question of privilege. I feel like asking my Conservative colleague when he intends to get back to serious parliamentary business.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely shameful that the Bloc Québécois supported this government for nearly \$500 billion in inflationary spending, that they voted almost 200 times to keep the government in power and that they twice voted against our non-confidence motions.

My colleague from the Bloc Québécois just told us that what we are doing now, that is, holding the fake that is this government minister to account, is not part of the work of parliamentarians. There is our answer. The Bloc Québécois does not understand what it is supposed to do in Ottawa, which is holding the Liberal government to account rather than supporting it in every vote.

• (1310)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since we are talking about some of the past practices that have taken place, this member knows that former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper talked about Atlantic Canada and Quebec being part of a cultural defeatism. Is that still the current position of the Conservative Party, a cultural defeatism for Atlantic Canada and for Quebec?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, once again the NDP has a unique opportunity to walk the talk. In a dramatic gesture, they tore up their agreement with the Liberals at the end of August, saying that the Liberals were no longer good for them and that they were not taking the country in the right direction.

However, every time they get a chance to defend this bad Liberal government, they do whatever they can to create distractions, change the subject or take the discussion in another direction. They do this so as to avoid taking responsibility, to avoid voting with Canadians and most of the opposition members to bring down this government so that we can finally trigger an election and put an end to the damage caused by the Liberal government. Of course, they know they are responsible because they voted with the Liberal government, so they find it hard to give themselves a rap on the knuckles.

I think that the NDP is not in a position to be lecturing anyone. If we are here today, it is because they supported this government many, many times.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for an excellent speech.

Privilege

We are in the House today discussing the fraudulent, dishonest behaviour of the Liberal employment minister pretending to be indigenous, his company claiming to be indigenous-owned, to try to get contracts that had been set aside for indigenous entrepreneurs. There is a context to this. The AFN has testified before the government operations committee that, actually, a majority of those companies benefiting from these indigenous procurement set-asides are shell companies. There is rampant abuse in this program, with elite, well-connected insiders trying to take advantage of this program, people who are not indigenous trying to take advantage of a program that was supposed to be about creating economic development for indigenous people.

The Conservative Party is committed to real solutions that will advance economic development for indigenous Canadians, whereas the Liberals, it is clear now, have been using this program to try to advantage not only their friends but themselves. I wonder if the member can comment on just what the abuse of this program by the Minister of Employment's company says about how the government likes to talk, on the one hand, about reconciliation, but it is clear now that the Liberals are just using that as an excuse to try to enrich their friends and themselves.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with my colleague that, for them, it is a question of opportunity and that they are trying to take advantage of the system as much as they can.

I have here an article from the National Post stating that “[f]or years, Liberals said this MP was Indigenous. He is not”. What is in the article, what I cannot show, is a red Liberal Party of Canada poster showing the indigenous Liberal caucus. Whose picture is on it? This article was published on November 14, 2024. It may be a picture of the other Randy, but I do not think so. It is a picture of the Minister of Official Languages. This minister is a fake and a fraud. He tried to defraud Canadians. He does not deserve to keep his place in the cabinet of any government. It is time for the Prime Minister to fire him.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North said that he agreed with this question of privilege. I think members want to know what is happening. This motion of privilege asks Mr. Anderson to appear here. We can make that happen with the support of all members.

I am therefore asking the member opposite whether there is a member, a party or anyone who disagrees. I agree. The member for Winnipeg North agrees, and I think that the Liberals agree. I think that the Conservatives agree. I heard members of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP say that they agree. Is there a member or a party that does not agree? I think that we can vote on the motion. We can find a solution to get the information that I think the House and all members want. That is my question.

• (1315)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question. There is a solution. It is very simple. It is readily available. It is within reach. This situation can be resolved very quickly. What is the solution? The Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages needs to step down because he is no longer worthy of his current office. We do not need to hear

Mr. Anderson's testimony if the minister steps down. If the minister does not want to step down, if he does not have the decency to do that, then an even simpler solution would be for the Prime Minister to fire him.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am please to rise on this subamendment that we are not supporting, which I will come back to in a moment, and the motion that we are supporting, on this issue of the question of privilege.

I would like to say that unlike the Conservatives, who are acting incredibly childishly and disingenuously in the House of Commons, we believe in transparency and getting to the bottom of things. That is why we have raised broad concerns about both the questions of privilege: the SDTC, which my colleague from Windsor West has raised repeatedly, and now this issue of calling before the bar Mr. Anderson, which the member for Hamilton Centre has raised in committee and in the House of Commons.

We have raised concerns because we want Canadians to get to the bottom of this Liberal scandal. I will submit as well that when it came to the SNC-Lavalin scandal, it was the NDP MPs who played the pivotal role in getting to the bottom and getting answers for Canadians. When it came to WE Charity, it was the member for Timmins—James Bay and I who got to the bottom of that issue, and when it comes to SDTC and the questions swirling around GHI, these are issues the NDP believes Canadians have the right to transparency on.

That is absolutely a fundamental principle in this democracy. It was abused horribly during the Harper regime. Conservative corruption, scandals and cover-ups were unbelievable. I will come back to that in just a moment. Every single Conservative MP should hang their head in shame when they speak to issues of transparency and accountability, when we had the worst government in Canadian history, without a doubt, over a number of years with a majority government, shutting down every single parliamentary inquiry and every single attempt at transparency.

We did not have people called to the bar during the Harper regime, because Conservatives refused it and shut it down. They refused any information going to Canadians. Conservative MPs stand up and postulate and do the play-acting they do so well, when they had the worst, most corrupt regime that engaged in the broadest cover-ups in Canadian history and have never apologized for it. They have never come forward and said they were sorry. They obviously have not learned the lessons. In fact, we know the four slogans the Conservatives would love to bring forward in the next election, and they are all to “bring back”: bring back Conservative cover-ups; bring back Conservative cuts, as we saw during the Conservative regime; bring back Conservative corporate tax havens; and bring back Conservative corruption.

Privilege

The reality is that Canadians deserve better. They deserve better than the Liberal scandals we are seeing now, and they deserve better than the unbelievably horrible years of the Harper regime and the cover-ups, scandals and misspending of billions of dollars that no Conservative MP has ever apologized for. No Conservative MP has ever stood up and said, “We really screwed up. We should not have covered up. We should not have had all of this corruption.” They have never done it, so Canadians cannot trust Conservatives to clean up Ottawa, and they obviously cannot trust Liberals either. That is why the NDP has stood up and said repeatedly that we need transparency. Regardless what the source of the scandal is, it is important to get to the bottom of things.

The National Post article today, published just a few minutes ago, is profoundly disturbing. I will read an excerpt into the record:

The medical-supply company co-owned by [the] Employment Minister...shared a post office box with a woman named in arrests in two major drug busts, according to corporate filings....

The mailbox, rented at an Edmonton UPS Store, appears on the April 2020 licence for the Edmonton MP's former enterprise, Global Health Imports Corporation (GHI), which National Post obtained from Health Canada through access-to-information legislation....

UPS Store spokesman Steve Moorman said that someone named Francheska Leblond has rented the mailbox since 2013. GHI's name is not on the rental agreement, he said, although GHI's mail sometimes arrived at the mailbox. He said people occasionally turned up at the store in the Edmonton strip mall looking for GHI.

[The member for Edmonton Centre] owned half of GHI at the time the mailbox was shared with her. The Liberal cabinet minister recently said he gave up his shares this year following public scrutiny of the business's dealings.

This summer, Global News revealed a link between [the member for Edmonton Centre's] former business partner, Stephen Anderson—

He is the object of the motion that is before us today, which we support, to call him before the bar.

—and Leblond. It reported that after [the member for Edmonton Centre] won the September 2021 election and was appointed to cabinet, Leblond and Anderson registered a business together called 13560449 Canada Ltd.

● (1320)

These are serious concerns and allegations. That is why we support the motion to bring Mr. Anderson before the bar to answer these important questions. I know the member for Hamilton Centre, who is our ethics critic, was forthright in pushing for answers that Canadians deserved to get to ensure that Canadians would understand what transpired. Because Mr. Anderson was not forthcoming at committee hearings when repeatedly asked questions to which Canadians demand answers, it is important that he be called before the bar and forced to answer those questions.

I have two points to make before I come back to the issues of how Parliament and the government should be run. From the NDP's standpoint, and from the member for Burnaby South's standpoint, it is time that we close off the decades of Conservative corruption and Liberal scandals and that we move to a Parliament and a government of which Canadians can be proud.

My first point is that these are serious allegations of connections, as Conservatives have pointed out in their statements as well, concerning the issue of illegal activity linked potentially to a post office box that was registered in the name of a company, which was at least 50% owned by a member of cabinet, and they need to be fully explored.

I want to remind the Canadian public of how bad things were under the Harper regime. We do not want a repetition of that. I will read into the record an article dated May 8, 2008, from the Toronto Star, which talks about concerns about a top cabinet minister in the Conservative government and a former girlfriend with past ties to the Hells Angels. The article states that Prime Minister Stephen Harper “dismiss[ed] security concerns over the relationship between a top cabinet minister and a former girlfriend with past ties to the Hells Angels.” Stephen Harper also brushed off the matter and instead accused the opposition of being “gossipy old busybodies”.

That was the reaction of Stephen Harper to a similar situation. This is why I say that New Democrats, as the adults in the House, are not going to take any lessons from the childish Conservatives. Their reaction to a similar set of circumstances being tied to a minister in the Conservative cabinet was to say that there was nothing to see. That is the Conservative record. That is the record of the member for Carleton. That is the record of every single Conservative MP, except for the member for Richmond—Arthabaska who resigned because he could not stand the hypocrisy of the difference between what Conservatives say and what they actually do.

This is something that Conservatives wear, and they will wear it forever until they stand and apologize to all Canadians for their misbehaviour, for their corruption, for their cover-ups and for their cuts that hurt so many people.

The member for Windsor West spoke earlier about the cuts to veteran services across the country. How mean do people have to be to finance these massive overseas tax havens with \$30 billion a year given to the corporate elite and the billionaires, but to finance it, they will cut health care, cut supports for seniors and cut veteran services? How irresponsible do they have to be?

It is an unbelievably mixed-up sense of priorities to say billionaires first and veterans get thrown out on the street. The member for Windsor West spoke very eloquently to that earlier. That is the Conservative record. It is cutting veteran services, forcing them out on the street and forcing them to be homeless. It is unbelievable.

Privilege

• (1325)

Not a single Conservative MP has ever stood up and apologized for the years of corruption and cuts, and all the hurt caused to so many Canadians. I think Canadians would be forgiving if one Conservative were willing to stand up and say that the Conservatives are sorry for all the damage they did to our country; that they are sorry for the \$300 billion that we gave to the rich, the well-connected and Conservative insiders, that they apologize for that; that they are sorry for slashing our health care system, the implications of which we still see today; that they are sorry for throwing veterans out on the street; and that they are sorry for cutting CBSA and RCMP officers, cutting the crime prevention centres, seeing crime go up. Crime is always higher under the Conservatives. We have seen this time and again.

In the United States, the Republican states have the highest crime rates. In Canada, Conservative provinces have the highest crime rates. Why? Because Conservatives cut all the infrastructure and the institutions that actually enhance public safety, including the cruel cutting of crime prevention centres. We know that a dollar invested in crime prevention saves \$6 in court costs, policing costs and prison costs. To cut the crime prevention centres is unbelievable hypocrisy. The Conservatives pretend that they have some credibility on public safety. They certainly do not; they were terrible.

The Liberals can be criticized, as we do in the NDP corner of the House, for not fixing what the Conservatives broke. They have not re-established the crime prevention centres. They have not sourced up CBSA and the RCMP to the extent that is needed. They have not corrected all the Conservatives' gaffes and irresponsible actions, and that is on them.

If the NDP wins in the next election, we will ensure that those investments take place. We have the Conservatives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I am having a hard time hearing the member speaking.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives laugh at their health care cuts that caused so many problems. They laugh at cutting all the public safety infrastructure. They laugh at the \$30 billion, according to the PBO, that they gave Mr. Harper and the entire Harper regime. Every single Conservative MP voted for the \$30 billion that went to offshore tax havens. Canadians are not laughing. Under the Conservative government, we saw a doubling of food bank lineups and housing costs. The Conservatives will say that the Liberals did the same thing.

That is why we have to stop this cycle of two inept parties, neither of which are able and capable of governing the way Canadians deserve to see. They want to see a government that does things like putting in place dental care and pharmacare, which was as a result of the NDP, anti-scab legislation and affordable housing. Finally, after decades of having affordable housing simply ignored under the Conservatives and the Liberals, the NDP forced investments in it.

These are all the things the NDP did with 25 members. Imagine what we would be able to do with 225 members. We would ensure that Canadians are taken care of and that seniors actually would receive the supports they need. We would not be throwing veterans out on the streets. The Conservatives laugh when we say they threw veterans out on the streets. Veterans with disabilities are being thrown out on the street and they laugh at that. They find that funny, yet they go to Remembrance Day ceremonies and pretend. They put their hand over their heart and they say that they stand for veterans. No, they do not. We saw what they did to veterans and we will not let them do it to them ever again. What they did was reprehensible.

The Conservative MPs should hang their head in shame for what they did to veterans, for what they did to seniors, forcing them to work longer and cutting their pensions. The Harper regime's primary goal was to ensure that the billionaires, the big banks and the wealthy CEOs had massive amounts of money. The Conservatives gave away \$30 billion a year to overseas tax havens for the rich and the privileged. They gave \$118 billion to the banks. They took that money from CMHC housing, which should have been a priority under the Harper regime. It was already in crisis, yet the Conservatives took that money from CMHC and gave it to the banks so they could get executive bonuses and dividends. They had an unbelievable track record. It was the worst government in Canadian history.

The Conservatives have offered up an amendment to their own motion. We are supporting the motion. We want to call Mr. Anderson before the bar. We want to do that because we were not able to do it during the Harper years. The Conservatives refused any sort of transparency. This is the second time that we will call a someone before the bar. We did the same thing for Mr. Firth. This is important for transparency. It is a tool that members of Parliament can use to ensure we get to the bottom of issues.

When we have unco-operative witnesses, then we can get the answers for which Canadians are asking. We supported the call to the bar for Kristian Firth. Because it is a parliamentary demand, the practice is, as the Speaker is well aware, to ensure that every recognized party, and in this case there was an allocation given to the Green Party, which is not a recognized party, as well, that all members of Parliament have an equitable distribution of questions. Therefore, we would think the Conservatives, if they were mature and not children, would approach this call to the bar in the same—

• (1330)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Certainly, parliamentary language is something about which the NDP pretends to care. The member has gone on a bit of a tirade with unparliamentary language. I wish he would get back to the subject at hand and proceed with parliamentary language, as he should.

Privilege

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the reminder. I will remind everyone to stick to what we are debating today.

Rising on the same point of order, the hon. member for Waterloo.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, we have heard many speeches today from the Conservatives as well. One of the Conservative members was referring to a cabinet minister in a very derogatory manner. Therefore, I would suggest that the member talk to his—

The Deputy Speaker: Again, I would remind hon. members to try to be as parliamentary as we possibly can, even though, sometimes, the debate that we are having is maybe difficult.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant is rising on a point of order.

• (1335)

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, for the last eight or nine minutes, I thought I was transported back to 2011—

The Deputy Speaker: We are falling into debate. I appreciate the relevance.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, obviously, the truth hurts for Conservatives, and they cannot ignore their record. They cannot hide from their record and they cannot cover up their record like they did the myriad scandals that took place during the Conservative reign.

We have talked about Liberal scandals. The Conservative corruption needs to be read into the record to be believed. The ETS scandal was \$400 million, stolen from seniors, veterans and people across the country who were just trying to make ends meet. The G8 scandal was \$1 billion. We will remember the gazebos and we will remember how the Harper regime shut down any inquiry into that. They did not care about taxpayers' money then. The Phoenix pay scandal was \$2.2 billion. The Liberals, ill-judged, continued on with the Phoenix pay scandal, and we see the results even today. That was \$2.2 billion and Conservatives wear that. We will remember the anti-terrorism funding. The paper trail of \$3.1 billion just disappeared.

If we put all those numbers together, that is \$7 billion misspent. No Conservative has ever apologized for it. No Conservatives have ever said that they were wrong to misspend billions and billions of dollars, that they were wrong to shut down Parliament so that we could not get to the bottom of it, and that this was something that they apologize for. I just want to hear one Conservative MP stand up and apologize for depriving veterans of basic services, forcing seniors to work years longer, slashing health care and slashing public safety funding so that, of course, criminals could prosper because there were no more crime prevention centres. The RCMP was cut back. CBSA was cut back. Conservatives have never apologized for that. Their record is absolutely deplorable and yet no Conservative MP is willing to stand up and say that they were wrong to do all that. Of course, how can we trust them today?

As for the subamendment, where they very clearly want to take two-thirds of the questions, basically to deprive the rest of Parliament, we are not going to be supporting it. My final point is this.

We do not want to go back to Conservative cover-ups, Conservative cuts, Conservative corruption and Conservative corporate tax cuts.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I almost feel like seeking unanimous consent to give the member more time to speak, because I think that there are a lot more Conservative scandals that we need to hear about.

I apologize. I got distracted. There is a lot of back-and-forth chatter in the chamber. First of all, I want to give the hon. member appreciation for reminding us what the previous government—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I will interrupt just for a second, because I see some secondary conversations going on again. I just want to make sure that we put those aside and that we can allow the hon. member for Waterloo to ask the question.

The hon. member for Waterloo.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to give appreciation for reminding Canadians of what took place under 10 years of former prime minister Stephen Harper. The hon. member referred to a precedent that was set not too long ago where parliamentarians were able to ask Mr. Firth to come to the bar, and the way that breakdown of questions happened. I recognize that, in the chamber, parties are recognized because they have 12 seats or more. The Green Party was given an opportunity to ask Mr. Firth questions. I would like to hear the member's comments on whether, having been duly elected, Green Party members should also have the opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, this is a Liberal scandal. We have to get to the bottom of it. Parliament is making the decision to call Mr. Anderson before the bar, but this wacky Conservative amendment basically says that the Conservatives will take two-thirds of all the questions. We know that their track record is absolutely dismal, that they, under their years in government, were the most corrupt and most dishonest government in Canadian history. They are now saying that they want to have two-thirds of the questions, that they do not want the questions to go to the opposition parties, like the Bloc or the NDP or the Green Party, that they do not want the government to have questions. It is a bit rich. It just shows how immature they are and how they can never form government. God help us if they do.

Privilege

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is like a nightmare. For a month, we were unable to debate issues, to fix the problems Canada is facing, including the housing crisis, the climate crisis and the language crisis. For a month, we did not talk about those things. Then, after spending a week in my riding, I drove back here thinking that now we would fix the problems in this country, that now we would get to debate. I must say that I am disappointed. One privilege motion has just ended, but another has been introduced. I agree that it is an important motion, but I sense that once again, we are going to waste hours and hours on it.

I would like to talk to my colleague about a very serious problem confronting us right now, namely encampments and homelessness. This is extremely important in Quebec. Before the last budget, the federal government announced a \$250-million fund to end encampments across the country. The Government of Quebec already has a plan to address homelessness in Quebec. Therefore, the federal government should give these funds to Quebec so that it can use them to end this major problem. However, the negotiations are getting bogged down. The federal government wants accountability. It wants to set conditions, and the negotiations are dragging on. Winter is around the corner. I would like to ask my colleague if he can put pressure on his friends in the Liberal government to bring the negotiations to a close and pay the money to Quebec so we can end the encampments before winter arrives.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague. As he knows, the reality is that all the funding for affordable housing and ending homelessness comes from the NDP. We pushed for this for years, and the result was that the spring budget offered tens of billions of dollars for this issue. The NDP has been working on this problem for years, and we were able to improve things. The member for Burnaby South fought to have funding go to Quebec, just as it does elsewhere in Canada, to ensure that there is affordable housing. We went through years of no investment under Liberal and Conservative governments, but the NDP finally managed to force the government to invest.

I would like to say one more thing. My colleague raised important questions. In Quebec, 600,000 Quebecers are already registered for the NDP's dental care plan. It is incredible. It is the highest registration rate in the country. Of course, nearly 100% of the dentists, denturists and dental hygienists in Quebec are participating in the NDP's dental care program. I hope my Bloc Québécois colleague will stop opposing this dental care plan, because it is making a huge difference in Quebecers' daily lives.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am really grateful to my colleague for his speech, but also for talking about the importance of supporting veterans. Here we are, all of us MPs, coming back from our ridings where we went and paid respect to those who served in the military and RCMP, put their lives on the line to protect us and served our country. I am glad he talked about the amnesia down the bench on the Conservative side: when the Leader of the Official Opposition was in cabinet, they cut a third of the employees at Veterans Affairs. It led to a backlog of tens of thousands of veterans with disabilities seeking disability benefits

and waiting for the support they needed. The Conservatives also closed nine veterans' offices and fought veterans in court.

I will correct my colleague, because the Phoenix pay system was not \$2.2 billion; it has now cost Canadian taxpayers over \$3 billion. The Conservatives promised that it would save us \$78 million a year. That is how the privatization scheme went for the Conservatives and how it has impacted Canadians.

Does my colleague agree that the Leader of the Official Opposition, who was in the Stephen Harper cabinet that caused so much harm to the Canadian military and RCMP veterans, should apologize for the harm and damage he created? The Liberals have failed to fix it, but the institutional damage runs so deep that it still causes harm to veterans today.

• (1345)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I want to praise the member for Courtenay—Alberni. I have been in his riding, right across the length and breadth of Courtenay—Alberni. He stands for his constituents and he stands up for veterans. He is one of the loudest, strongest and most passionate voices for veterans in our country. At a time when we are just coming out of Remembrance Day commemorative ceremonies, it is so important to have his voice as he has been so eloquent for so long with respect to supporting our nation's veterans.

We send people overseas to fight. Often they are wounded for life and then they have disabilities and they seek supports from Veterans Affairs, which they deserve from a grateful country. There is no Canadian who would stand up and say, "no, we are going to deprive veterans of those essential services and supports", and yet, the member for Carleton and all the Conservatives who were present in that despicable Harper regime slashed those services and forced people with disabilities to travel sometimes hundreds of kilometres to try to get the basic services that they deserved. People put their lives on the line for the country and Conservatives gave them the back of the hand. Every single Conservative MP should hang their head in shame.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened, in good part, to the member's speech and he was quick to throw darts at the Liberal Party, who were the government of the day; he was quick to throw darts at the former Conservative government, but he did not throw any darts at the NDP and we would not know but that it was squeaky clean. The New Democrats had the scandal of office rentals, which went to court and they all were ordered to pay back the money. Have the member and all the NDP members paid back the funds from that scandal?

Privilege

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals, unfortunately, are going to find themselves in another part of this House after the next election because they refuse to stand up. It will be an NDP government fixing things. I commit that one of the things that we would never do is use or misuse the Board of Internal Economy for partisan purposes. The member knows full well what was involved in that scandalous time under the Harper government where we saw basic parliamentary institutions slashed. The Auditor General's department was slashed, the PBO was slashed and the Board of Internal Economy was used for partisan purposes. It simply was a low time in our democracy. Fortunately, an NDP government would enhance our institutions not diminish them.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Brantford—Brant, but here we are, another day and yet another Liberal scandal. This time it is the member for Edmonton Centre, a cabinet minister, who finds himself embroiled in yet another scandal that seems to be growing legs. What a legacy the Prime Minister and members of the government will take with them when they are defeated in the next general election, a legacy of being the most corrupt, most unethical government Canada has ever seen.

This is not what the Prime Minister promised Canadians. In 2015, he talked quite a bit about sunny ways. In fact he followed that up with an open letter to Canadians dated November 4, 2015. I want to highlight certain passages of the letter:

Canadians need to have faith in their government's honesty and willingness to listen. That is why we committed to set a higher bar for openness and transparency in Ottawa....

But in order for you to trust your government, you need a government that will trust you. When we make a mistake—as all governments do—it is important that we acknowledge that mistake and learn from it. We know that you do not expect us to be perfect—but you expect us to work tirelessly, and to be honest, open, and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.

The Prime Minister finished the letter by saying:

I am committed to leading an open, honest government that is accountable to Canadians, lives up to the highest ethical standards, brings our country together, and applies the utmost care and prudence in the handling of public funds.

What an absolute joke that is, let alone a disgrace, to the Canadians who voted him into power in 2015, because we have seen nothing of an open, honest and ethical government.

To name a few of the scandals that we have discussed over the last nine years, we all remember “gropegate”. We remember “el-bowgate” and we remember blackface, with the Prime Minister not even remembering how many times he wore blackface. We all remember the disgraceful comment to an Indigenous Proud woman at a fundraiser: “Thank you for your donation.” We remember the “experienced it differently” scandal—

• (1350)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I think the member just misrepresented. The disgraceful comment was by the leader of the Conservatives, who said that indigenous people needed to learn how to work hard—

The Deputy Speaker: We are falling into debate again. I appreciate the help, but let us stick to points of order for the House.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant has the floor.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, when I was interrupted with not a point of order but one of debate, I was talking about our Prime Minister's experiencing things differently.

We of course know the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the WE Charity scandal and the ArriveCAN scandal, which continues to be debated in committee and in the House. There is the green slush fund scandal that is approaching a billion dollars of wasted taxpayer dollars. We remember foreign interference, which is still a problem with our democracy. We remember the Billionaires' Row condo scandal, and now there is the scandal of the other Randy.

For the past nine years, the Prime Minister has led the most ethically compromised government in Canadian history. It took him more than a year of foot-dragging to appoint an ethics commissioner, probably because without one, he, his government and his backbench would not be investigated for bad, unethical behaviour. From his frequent taxpayer-funded vacations to his protection of SNC-Lavalin, or granting a government contract to a company that gave money to his family members and handing out billions of dollars to well-connected Liberal insiders and consultants, the Prime Minister has a long track record of using government to benefit himself and his friends, and Liberal MPs are learning from the best.

The Trudeau government has been slapped with five ethics violations—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member cannot use the name of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been slapped with five ethics violations, the most in Canadian history. Time after time, the Prime Minister has shown total contempt for our ethics laws. He himself has been the subject of three ethics investigations and was found guilty of breaking ethics laws twice. The Liberal government allows the culture of law-breaking to persist, as six Liberals have been found guilty of breaking ethics laws.

Several ministers in the Prime Minister's government, as well as the Prime Minister himself, have been found guilty of violating numerous laws. In fact the Prime Minister, as I have indicated, has been found guilty on two occasions. The first was in 2016 for accepting a vacation on the Aga Khan's private island while the Aga Khan was lobbying the government. The second was for improperly pressuring the Attorney General during the SNC-Lavalin scandal to interfere in a prosecution.

Statements by Members

Similarly, the former finance minister breached ethics laws by failing to disclose ownership of a French villa held in a corporation and for overseeing federal dealings with WE Charity despite his family's financial ties to the organization. The former fisheries minister also violated conflict of interest rules by awarding a lucrative Arctic surf clam contract to a company linked to his wife's cousin. Additionally, the former minister of small business was found guilty of violating ethics laws for awarding a contract to a firm co-owned by her friend Amanda Alvaro.

These cases underscore persistent issues of ethical lapses within the government.

After nine years, it is now the member for Edmonton Centre, the employment minister, who is caught in yet another ethics scandal. I will give some background. While serving as minister, he co-owned Global Health Imports, GHI, a company that secured questionable government contracts. Despite his claiming to step away from the business, evidence leads to his continued involvement, ultimately violating ethics rules. His former business partner Stephen Anderson is now facing fraud charges, raising further questions about the misuse of taxpayer dollars.

The minister has also faced criticism for false claims about his indigenous heritage, which the government and he had to retract. This, combined with his ties to a lobbyist who secured \$110 million in federal contracts and his company's receipt of \$8 million in contracts, shows a pattern of misconduct. Canadians deserve accountability, but the Liberal government continues to protect its own instead of delivering solid, ethical leadership that Canadians expect.

Before I get into the crux of the speech, I want to share for those listening that the conflict of interest rules require cabinet ministers to divest their controlled interests either by selling them or by placing them in a blind trust within 100 days of their appointment. They also forbid them from having any management or control over the trust assets. A minister would then be found to be breaking the law if they were found to have either managed or controlled the trust assets or the day-to-day business of the company itself. I will get into that later on in my speech and on how it bodes very poorly for the Minister of Employment.

How did it all start? The mysterious Randy texts are at the heart of the probe in the employment minister's shady business dealings. A year after he joined the federal cabinet, revelations came about, questioning his involvement with GHI. When appearing at the ethics committee, the minister repeatedly denied that he was the Randy in question, and he stated that he never had any operational role in the company that he co-founded since his re-election in 2021, even though he still owns half the shares in a numbered company, which he in fact disclosed to the commissioner.

• (1355)

The first set of text messages obtained by Global News showed that Stephen Anderson, the co-founder of GHI, transferred an urgent message from a certain Randy to Malvina Ghaoui, principal of a PPE company in California, to send a wire transfer of half a million dollars to secure a large shipment of nitrile gloves. The text reads, "it literally takes 10 seconds to complete a transfer. I am telling you we are not allocating like this, please reach out and see what the reason is now, you assured me this morning this was done

first thing; and allowed you to hold the stock today; it's midday and nothing is completed".

The message ends by telling Anderson to be ready in 15 minutes for a partner call. Anderson followed up with Ghaoui 30 minutes later, telling her that he spoke with Randy and other GHI employees, who agreed to wait a little longer for the wire transfer. The exchanges were dated September 8, 2022, which is almost a year after the minister was first sworn in to cabinet as associate minister of finance.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

PRIVACY

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, doxing is the unauthorized and malicious release of private information to harm or intimidate. It infringes on Canadians' rights to privacy and free expression, leaving victims vulnerable to threats, harassment and harm. Canadians targeted by doxing may face unjust penalties from employers, professional associations or regulatory bodies based on reputational harm rather than verified misconduct.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of expression, yet these rights are compromised when individuals face threats from doxing and intimidation. Protective legislation is necessary to penalize doxing perpetrators and deter these abuses, ensuring Canadians' rights and security in the digital age.

I call on Canada to criminalize doxing and prevent individuals from facing penalties solely because of reputational harm caused by doxing.

* * *

JAKE LETKEMAN

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with bittersweet thankfulness that I stand and recognize the life and legacy of Dr. Jake Letkeman. A pillar of our communities, he was a once-in-a-lifetime, larger-than-life man who knew that his faith had called him to live a life in service to others. He did that joyfully and with abundant love.

Dr. Jake recognized the health care struggles in Saskatchewan's rural north. He delivered thousands of babies and spent decades travelling to provide ultrasounds and other maternal care to expectant mothers. Holidays for Jake, his wife Myrna and his family would often mean being overseas, helping in clinics in smaller communities or helping rebuild homes after a hurricane.

One of the most lasting legacies Jake left in the community of Meadow Lake was as a founder of Door of Hope, a food bank and life skills organization that serves the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our community.

He was a man who was known by some as father, papa or doctor, but known by all as friend. Today, I ask all to celebrate the life of Dr. Jake Letkeman with me.

* * *

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when we talk so much about division, I am going to share a wonderful story of what happens when we bring people together.

Last week, we literally moved the mouth of the Don River and reconnected it to Lake Ontario. I got to join with members from provincial, federal and municipal government, including the Mississaugas of the Credit as indigenous partners and hereditary owners of that land, to make a big splash about a big moment in urban renewal.

When we look at it, it is one of the largest infrastructure projects in all North America. It protects homes in my community of south Leslieville from floods and unlocks land for housing. In fact, when the project is done, it will be home to over 100,000 people, but in the first phase, there will be housing for 14,000 people, including affordable rental homes.

We are going to open a new park, and everyone can check it out next summer. It is a big moment. I thank Waterfront Toronto for all of its work to bring us together.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LENDEMAIN DE VEILLE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 24, the band Lendemain de Veille won “group of the year” at the Gala Country, which celebrates French-language country music.

This is a big deal. These musicians are as talented as they are high-spirited, and that is saying a lot. Lendemain de Veille won this honour for the third year in a row, but their fans will not be surprised to hear that they have won again. Anyone who has seen them perform live knows that their talent is unforgettable. With a mix of original songs and covers of the best classics in the Quebec canon, no one ever wants their show to end. I remember their very first appearance at the legendary Fête nationale party in Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois. The band members were so young and already so passionate.

Statements by Members

They have not stopped ever since. Life has not slowed them down or tamed their spirit, and thank goodness for that. I thank Lendemain de Veille for spreading joy throughout Quebec. I am so proud to say that these boys are from my neck of the woods.

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LE DIABLE À CINQ

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently learned that the folk music group Le Diable à cinq has been selected to represent Canada at World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan. This group is well known in Quebec and is originally from Ripon, which is in my riding.

This is one of the most prestigious events in the world, and it will be held in May 2025. What an honour. The group will be part of the National Arts Centre delegation alongside Pierre Lapointe, Lisa LeBlanc, Dominique Fils-Aimé and Elisapie, to name but a few. These artists will perform at the Canada Pavilion several times during the Expo.

Since it was formed, Le Diable à cinq has played nearly 150 concerts across Canada, the U.S. and Europe. I am proud of them. They are worthy ambassadors of our country and of the beautiful Petite Nation region in particular. I commend them for sharing their love of traditional music, and I hope they have a great time at Expo 2025.

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● (1405)

[*English*]

JOHN GLASS WILLIAMS

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great parliamentarian. Sadly, John Glass Williams passed away in July. A 15-year veteran of the House of Commons, John served the people of St. Albert with class and distinction. Born in Scotland, John immigrated to Canada as a young man to continue a career in finance, working for the Royal Bank before starting his own accounting business. In 1993, he answered the call to serve his country and was elected as a Reform Party member of Parliament.

John served as the chair of the public accounts committee for many years, exposing corruption in the sponsorship scandal and publishing his widely read “Waste Report”. After retiring, he continued in public service, leading the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption. John was a mentor to me from when I was very young, and I will always remember our get-togethers at his farm outside Morinville.

He will be dearly missed by all who knew him, particularly his wife Christine and his children, Allan, Munro and Vienna. John was also a man of deeply held Christian convictions, and his courageous stand for the truth, both secular and spiritual, will not be forgotten. He has served his country and his God well. May he rest in peace.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***MICHEL BREAU**

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Michel Breau, a man with a big heart, a proud Acadian, and an exceptional community builder in Ottawa—Vanier, who passed away on October 29 after a battle with cancer.

He was an entrepreneur at heart who owned his own car rental and maintenance franchise. A long-time volunteer with the Gloucester Cougars, Michel was dedicated to giving young people every opportunity to play hockey. As president of the Gloucester Centre Minor Hockey Association, he focused his efforts on making hockey accessible and inclusive for all. He even played an essential role in helping children from war zones in Syria discover hockey. To this day, many of them still play in the league. Michel was a true champion. He always gave generously to others and continued to work with great passion throughout his illness.

To his parents, the Hon. Herb Breau and Anne Breau, his son Matthew, his sister Hélène, his wife Ruthanne and his children, Sarah and Jackson, I offer my sincere condolences. Michel will be sorely missed. I thank him for inspiring us every day.

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*[English]***HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE**

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, media freedom advocate and newspaper publisher Jimmy Lai prepares to turn 77, yet he remains unjustly imprisoned in Hong Kong. By the end of this year, he will have endured four years in solitary confinement; by UN standards, this is a condition deemed torture when prolonged beyond 15 days. Mr. Lai has been an outspoken critic of human rights violations by the Chinese government, giving voice to those seeking a brighter future for Hong Kong. He now faces a life sentence, deprived of precious time with his family and enduring deteriorating health. In December 2023, the House unanimously called for Mr. Lai's release and an end to his prosecution. I continue to stand in solidarity with Mr. Lai and reaffirm this call.

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SPACE FLIGHT

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ever since the first Canadian travelled to space in 1984, our Canadian astronauts have held a special place in our hearts. Names such as Chris Hadfield and Roberta Bondar are synonymous with the values of courage, curiosity and hard work. Just 14 Canadian men and women have travelled to space, but that number will soon be 15 thanks to Henry Wolfond. On Friday, he will venture beyond the limits of this Earth as part of Blue Origin's New Shepard mission.

A successful businessman, lawyer, fierce community advocate and family man, Henry will soon be able to add astronaut to his already impressive CV. This is not the apex of his incredible story; it is just the beginning. I would tell him that the sky is the limit, but for someone as extraordinary as he is, even that is not enough. As Henry embarks on this mission, he will see the Earth from above, without any dividing lines or the conflicts that separate us, on his

journey of his own campaign to end the pervasive anti-Semitism on this planet. We stand with him, looking up. I say to Hank, good luck, Godspeed and may all parts of the mission be a resounding success.

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● (1410)

CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I was honoured to join senior leaders from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in celebrating the 10th year that this iconic building has been open to the public. The CMHR has played a profound role in helping us understand who we are, where we have been and where the road to progress lies for the future. Through beautifully crafted exhibits and world-class educational programming, visitors are introduced to powerful stories and narratives that shed light on our shared humanity.

In particular, the museum's advancement in helping us understand the history of Indian residential schools has played a major role in supporting the journey towards truth and reconciliation. The witness blanket, made from hundreds of items reclaimed from residential schools, churches and other cultural displays across Canada, is but one of the many moving displays that ground visitors in the importance of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Our history is not void of failures that have caused immense harm to generations, both past and present. The CMHR plays a critical role in helping us move forward with hope and conviction in pursuit of a better world for all. I congratulate the CMHR on 10 years of service to our beautiful country.

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ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the anti-Semitic violence threatening the lives of Jewish Canadians has now come to Parliament Hill. A homemade bomb had been built by ISIS terrorists, and the RCMP foiled a plot to detonate it during last December's rally for Israel. After nine years under the Prime Minister, hate crimes have increased by 251%, with 66% being directed towards Jews. Synagogues and Jewish schools are being firebombed.

Canada's Jewish community has implored the government to act against this rising tide of hate. The Conservative members of the public safety committee have asked for an emergency meeting to root out this evil. Every Jew has the right to live in safety and freedom from harm; shamefully, however, Liberal members are blocking the meeting. Frankly, it is disgusting.

Will the Liberal members of the public safety committee do their job and keep Canada's Jews safe before a bomb actually goes off?

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nine years with this Liberal government in power is nine years of housing failure.

The “Liberal Bloc” has doubled rents, mortgage payments and down payments. A recent Habitat for Humanity survey revealed that 88% of Canadian renters believe that home ownership is out of reach, and 75% of them are sacrificing basic needs like food and education to pay the rent. All this is happening in Canada.

We are in the middle of a housing crisis, and Quebeckers are no longer getting by. Last week, the Journal de Montréal reported on one Montreal man who is on the brink of homelessness after a 30-year career with a bank. His savings were swallowed up by exorbitant rents. A few days later, the newspaper shared the story of a young doctor. The headline read: “For this 29-year-old chiropractor, moving back in with his parents was a ‘smart move’”.

The Liberals have dropped the ball when it comes to housing. The Conservatives will fix the problem.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING ACCELERATOR FUND

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Christmas is still more than a month away; however, with great enthusiasm and hope, Conservative MPs have already written to the big guy. Their hope is for a stocking filled with the housing accelerator money that their communities will need to build new homes. Alas, these Conservative MPs, their mayors and their communities have been grinchy by the leader of the official opposition. Slinking down the chimney, the Grinch has removed all their hope. Not even Cindy Lou Who can change the Grinch's mind these days. “Only six affordable homes for Canada,” says the Grinch. However, the big guy is leading the chorus and delivering the homes that Canada needs, such as in Sault Ste. Marie, where we are building and refurbishing over 1,000 homes. With 175 agreements in place, Liberals are fast-tracking the construction of 750,000 more homes across Canada.

* * *

• (1415)

CANADA WATER AGENCY

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is home to some of the planet's most vital resources. Chief among them is our abundance of fresh water. Our Great Lakes, aquifers and rivers are a critical part of our ecosystem and economy. Managing our water sources sustainably is vital, particularly in the face of potentially unsustainable industrial usage.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

According to a Statistics Canada study, industrial water use accounts for 91.2% of our country's total water use, and it continues to rise.

[English]

While the federal government recently launched the Canada Water Agency, the agency's mandate must remain focused on keeping a close eye on the impact of climate change and industrial policy on our freshwater resources, particularly after the American president-elect commented on diverting Canadian water to the U.S. In Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, this work will have an impact on Lake Huron, Lake Superior and hundreds of lakes, rivers and aquifers. We must treat this issue with urgency in order to protect and manage this vital resource for generations.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, The Globe and Mail reported that Irwin Cotler, the former attorney general of Canada, was the target of an assassination plot by the Iranian regime.

For over a month, Mr. Cotler has been living under police protection because an authoritarian regime wants him dead. Mr. Cotler, a human rights activist and staunch opponent of racism and anti-Semitism, had provoked the wrath of the Iranian regime by calling for the IRGC to be listed as a terrorist entity in Canada and around the world. The IRGC assisted with preparations for the October 7 attack and is responsible for the deaths of young women in Iran, among others.

We will never stand by while people of whatever political stripe are threatened with death because of their opinions. We unreservedly condemn the death threats against Mr. Cotler, and we condemn the increasing willingness of foreign powers to commit political assassinations on Canadian and Quebec soil.

I want Mr. Cotler to know that he is not alone.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during his taxpayer-funded stay in South America, the Prime Minister attacked Canadians for not liking his costly carbon tax and even accused them of spreading misinformation. Meanwhile, his radical environment minister not only plans to quadruple the carbon tax, but also plans to introduce a brand new one, a global shipping tax. That is carbon tax number three. All the while, Canadians are lining up at food banks and struggling just to get by.

Oral Questions

Enough is enough. Canadians are fed up with the government's high-tax, high-spend and high-hypocrisy agenda. It is time to elect a common-sense Conservative government. It is time to restore the promise of Canada. It is time for a carbon tax election.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a bad idea. Members will know that the leader of the Conservative Party had another idea and this one is a real winner.

Let us talk about the housing accelerator fund. What is the leader of the Conservative Party is going to say? That he is going to kill it. He is going to get rid of that particular program. He needs to start listening to what the Conservatives are actually saying. Let me tell him what they are saying. One said, "If by any chance I attended a municipal housing announcement funded by a Liberal initiative, I would be in a lot of trouble". Another one said, "It's extremely frustrating". One Conservative source told Radio-Canada, "MPs are being stopped from helping their cities for partisan reasons."

The leader of the Conservative Party needs to free up his Conservatives, the Progressive Conservatives, to get behind the housing accelerator fund, or better yet do a flip-flop and support the program.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister is still acting like a pyromaniac firefighter, this time on immigration. He blames "bad actors", to use his own words, for decisions he made that destroyed our once great immigration system. He decided to open the door to 725% more asylum claims in nine years. He decided to approve a 211% increase in international students. He even allowed foreign workers to enter communities with high unemployment.

If he wants to find out who the bad actor is, could he just look in a mirror?

• (1420)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians expect a responsible government to take decisive action.

We saw the plan for immigration levels that I tabled two weeks ago. It proposes a 20% reduction in the number of permanent residents. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the plan would reduce housing needs by 50%. It is a responsible plan.

The member opposite wants to call an election. He has no plan, except maybe to do some math. He said he was going to build six housing units. As far as I know, that is as high as he can count.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is again a pyromaniac masquerading as a firefighter, this time on immigration. He blames bad actors for his decisions that destroyed our immigration system. He decided to open the door to 726% more asylum claims. He decided to approve 211% more international students. He decided to lift the ban on temporary foreign workers in communities with already high unemployment. If the Prime Minister is hunting for the "bad actors" who ruined the system, will he have a look in the mirror?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we will take any lessons from someone who has spent the last 20 years lighting fires in the House of Commons. We put forward a plan two weeks ago to reduce immigration levels by 20%. Canadians expect us to be responsible and to react to their needs. That is what we are doing with this plan. The parliamentary budget officer himself has said that this new plan will reduce housing needs by 50%. That is what Canadians want. It is responsible.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the employment minister first denied that he and his company were profiting off government business, and then text messages showed the contrary. They referred to a Randy. He claimed that it was another Randy. We now know there is no other Randy. We know he falsely claimed he was indigenous so that his company could steal resources that were meant for real indigenous people, and now, his company address matches the address of a place that was the location of two cocaine busts.

Any one of these things would be a resigning offence. Why would he not resign now?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know the person referred to in today's article. I have never met that person. I have had no dealings with her whatsoever. Those are the facts.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently the person he does not know is himself. He says that he is not the Randy in the text messages, but his own business associates say there is no other Randy. He says that he said that he was indigenous in order to get grants and contracts that were meant just for indigenous people. Now he admits he is not indigenous at all. Now, while his company has the same address as a place that has had two cocaine busts, he says he does not know the person involved in that address either. Does this minister even know who he is?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the article states—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Minister for Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages can take it from the top.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I do not know person referred to in the article today. I have never met her. I have had no dealings with her whatsoever. The article states that fact, and that is the fact.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister took his private jet, burned 105 tonnes of jet fuel and emitted 300 tonnes of greenhouse gases to go down to Brazil, he claimed that Canadians who are opposed to his carbon tax are just confused by disinformation. No, Canadians are not stupid. They know that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has calculated that 100% of middle-class Canadians pay more in the tax than they get back. The Prime Minister already also said, though, that this will be the subject of the next election.

I could not agree more, so why do we not have a carbon tax election now?

• (1425)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, it would be nice if the Leader of the Opposition was not spouting disinformation and misinformation in the House. At the end of the day, eight out of 10 Canadian families, the vast majority of Canadians, get more money back. It is those who actually live on the most modest incomes who are the best off as a result of the price on pollution. I would also say that it is a price on pollution. It is about addressing climate change, something that the organization across the way simply has no idea how to do and does not care.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the coming hours will be critical for our agriculture sector. Senators Peter Boehm and Peter Harder have literally sabotaged Bill C-282. They amended it to prevent supply management from being protected in existing trade agreements.

Just think. Donald Trump wants to reopen the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, and these two guys want to serve him up supply management on a silver platter.

The Senate could vote on this amendment as early as tomorrow, so every party leader must speak out, starting with the Prime Minister. Will he ask the two senators to reject the amendment and save supply management?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are asking senators to support Bill C-282 in its original form because we believe in supply management and our Canadian dairy farmers, poultry farmers and other farmers, to ensure their economic well-being.

Oral Questions

We agree with the Bloc Québécois and we are asking the Senate to pass this bill in its original form.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, their excuse is that senators are independent, but the Prime Minister is the one who appointed them, including the two who are sabotaging Bill C-282. One of the two even used to advise the Prime Minister. What is more, the two even argue over which of them will get to sponsor government bills. I would hardly call that independent.

Let us be serious. The Prime Minister can and must demand that the Senate pass Bill C-282 as it was passed here in the House. We are talking about the future of supply management. That is serious. Will all the party leaders in the House demand that senators vote against this amendment?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the entire House, Canadians and farmers are well aware that a Liberal government will vote in favour of the unaltered version of this bill.

My colleague's question is a good one. Will the leader of the Conservative Party ask the Conservative senators to vote in favour of the unaltered version of this bill?

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are struggling while CEOs are lining their pockets. Rents have doubled, and grocery prices are really out of control. It is clear that the Liberals have let Canadians down. The Conservatives want to cut everything, including the Canada child benefit and dental care. Who is going to pay the price? Quebeckers will.

We in the NDP will take the tax off basic necessities, like food, and electricity, Internet and cellphone bills.

Will the Liberals take the GST off the basic necessities?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague is absolutely right that it is important to support the middle class and all those working hard to join it. That is why it is so sad to see the Conservatives vote against the Canadian dental care plan, which the NDP also worked very hard to bring in.

One million Quebeckers now have their Canadian dental care plan card. We are looking forward to moving forward in 2025 to register more Canadians and Quebeckers between the ages of 18 and 64.

Oral Questions

● (1430)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, working and now middle-class families are cutting back on their groceries. They are getting less and getting gouged at the till by greedy CEOs. Liberals let this happen and are letting families down.

Conservatives will cut and cost families even more. They will take away important services like dental care, costing families thousands of dollars a year.

The NDP's tax-free essentials plan removes the GST from grocery items to bring families relief. Will the Liberals take the tax off grocery items so Canadians can get a break?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member that what we are going to see from the Conservatives is cuts. They are going to cut dental care. They are going to cut the Canada child benefit.

Canadians at home know that on this side of the House, we will always stand for the middle class. We will always stand for those who are working hard to join the middle class. We will fight for Canadians as we have done on groceries. We will build more homes. We will create economic opportunities. We will fight for workers. We will create jobs. We will create opportunities and possibilities for this country so the middle class can thrive.

The Speaker: On a couple of occasions, I have caught the voice of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. I am going to ask him to please not speak when he is not recognized by the House.

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ETHICS

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems like every time the employment minister finds rock bottom, it keeps getting worse.

First, he said he was not the Randy involved in his company, but we know there was only one Randy at his company. He said he was not involved with his company while in cabinet, and text messages reveal that he is. He said he was indigenous to profit from government contracts, stealing from first nations communities.

Now there is new news of coordinating business activities with drug smugglers and convicts. This is the behaviour of a low-life fraud, not a federal cabinet minister. Simple question: How does that guy still have his job?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite the innuendo, here are the facts. I do not know the person in question. I never met that person in question. Those are simply the

facts. The article even says that I have never met the person in question.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. He flaunts the ethics rules. He claims a false identity. He gets caught in a web of lies. That is what the Prime Minister rewards after nine years.

With each passing day, we find out more about the employment minister's scams and schemes. We learn that he is just a phony and a fraud. Canadians want to know, indigenous communities he stole from want to know, and Liberal backbenchers want to know when the Prime Minister is going to fire that cabinet minister.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know the person in the article from today. I have never met the person in the article from today. Those are the facts. The Conservatives may not like it, but it is actually in the article that I do not know the person in question. I never met them.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal minister from Alberta is a fake and a fraud.

He said he was not the Randy involved in his company, but we know that there is only one Randy. He said he was not involved in his company at the cabinet table—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, today we have been skating close to the line in terms of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Excuse me, colleagues. I will start my comment again, if members would give me the privilege of listening.

On several occasions today we have been skating close to the line in terms of what is acceptable language. I think the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville has skated over that line, directly accusing a member. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that comment and start his question from the top, please.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I will restart. The Liberal minister from Alberta has been implicated in fraud in media reports.

Today, we have seen that. It is very clear—

● (1435)

The Speaker: I was having trouble hearing the member. I do not think I heard the withdrawal. If the member could withdraw and start again, I would appreciate it.

If members would not take the floor while another member is being recognized, the Speaker could hear the member.

Oral Questions

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Withdrawing the previous words, Mr. Speaker, we will talk about the Liberal minister from Alberta who has been implicated, in media reports, in fraud. Some of them he has even apologized for. He misrepresented his identity, claiming to be indigenous, trying to steal contracts from people who are in fact indigenous. The same minister said that he was not the Randy at his own company. We know that there was only one Randy at that company. It is pandemic profiteering. We know that there are allegations of fraud.

Why will the Prime Minister not just fire the minister?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite just said is simply not true.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable that with the cocaine connections to the Liberal minister from Alberta, the Liberals and the Prime Minister want to allow him to continue to be in cabinet.

The minister said he was indigenous to try to steal contracts from individuals who are indigenous. That is okay as long as someone is a Liberal. The company is involved in more than half a dozen lawsuits because of fraud, and that is okay as long as someone is a Liberal. They came before committee and said things that we now know were not true, like, “It must have been some other Randy.”

If the minister will not resign, why will the Prime Minister not fire that fraudster?

The Speaker: Again, the member, at the last possible moment, used a word that would not be considered acceptable.

Can I just ask the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes to please withdraw that last word?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw the last word. He should be fired.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite said, once again, is not true.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's official languages minister is a fraud. He said he was not the Randy involved in his company, but we all know there is only one Randy at his company. He said he was not involved with his business while working as a minister, but text messages reveal that he is. He claimed to be indigenous in order to take advantage of government contracts and receive money intended for first nations communities. He claimed to be a journalist when in fact he was a lobbyist.

When will the Prime Minister fire this professional fraudster?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite the insinuations, I have never met the person referred to in today's article. I have had no dealings with her. I have never met her. These are the facts.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are so many Randys that he did not even understand the question I asked him.

The Minister for Official Languages campaigned twice under the guise of a successful entrepreneur and journalist. He falsely claimed to have worked for Radio-Canada and a newspaper called *Les Affaires*. Even the president of the *Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec* has stated, “It seems obvious to me that he wasn't a journalist.” This fraud of a minister has been flushed out and unmasked, despite all the Prime Minister's efforts to protect him.

When will the Prime Minister put an end to this charade and fire this fraudster?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this member's comments are untrue.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is incapable of acknowledging that he is to blame for the crises surrounding the all-too-rapid hike in immigration numbers. Even in yesterday's *mea culpa*, he was still looking for someone else to blame, be it the pandemic, businesses or schools. He, however, is the one who issued every permit. He is the one who accepted McKinsey's immigration targets despite our warnings. He is the one who raised immigration targets to 500,000 people a year despite warnings from his own officials.

Will he finally admit, today, that he is the one responsible?

● (1440)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the member may have spent too much time in Ottawa if he thinks that the federal government has total control over immigration. He knows full well that in Quebec, in particular, the provincial government controls over 50% of the volume.

We all share responsibility.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is not as though no one told him to be careful with the immigration targets.

His own officials warned him in 2022 that these immigration targets would aggravate the housing crisis and access to public services. The Bloc Québécois had been warning him for years that adopting the Century Initiative targets was totally irresponsible. Quebec has been warning him for two years that our integration capacity has been exceeded.

Does the Prime Minister now realize that we would not be dealing with these crises if he had listened and thought things through instead of insulting everyone?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about integration. If we had listened to the Bloc Québécois and the provincial governments, there might have been a significant increase because the last time the CAQ begged me to have more people, it was about welcoming people temporarily.

Quebec has its own challenges with international students right now. It is a shared problem.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): That is confusing, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister not only could have acted faster on immigration, he should have acted faster. First of all, he should have thought about integration capacity before drastically increasing the population as he did. Second, he should have listened to everyone warning him that it was not working, but he was too blinded by his multiculturalist fantasy to base his immigration policies on facts and reality.

Does he realize that yesterday's mea culpa is far too little, far too late, and far too easy after acting so irresponsibly?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us review the facts.

Since 2009, the Quebec government has tripled immigration to the temporary areas under its control. That is a fact. We will work together to bring that down.

The plan I presented last week proposes a 20% reduction. It is important and it is responsible. That is what Canadians and Quebecers are asking us to do.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister from Edmonton is a fake and a phony. He said that he was not the Randy—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: A couple of times I have asked the hon. members. I am going to ask the hon. members again to remember that when they speak directly to members they have to, of course, extend to them all the respect that each member, as members, is deserving of. Therefore, I am going to ask the hon. member to please rephrase his question and start from the top.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, this minister deserves to be criticized in the people's House, the House of Commons. He said he was not the Randy involved in this company, but we know there is only one Randy at the company. He said he was not involved in the operations of the company, but text messages reveal that he is. He said he was indigenous to profit from government contracts, trying to steal from first nations communities.

When will the Prime Minister fire this phony for making false claims to steal from first nations?

The Speaker: I want to invite all members to be very judicious in terms of their use of language in this place.

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has addressed this issue and stated that those claims are false. We addressed the fact that the business was never listed as an indigenous business on the procurement site and it in fact received no funding from the Government of Canada.

• (1445)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the company did actually receive funding from the Government of Canada.

The Minister of Employment's business partner claimed that their company was fully indigenous-owned. How would he have gotten that impression? Maybe it was because the Liberal Party repeatedly said that the minister was indigenous. Now, it is possible to get kicked out of the Liberals' indigenous caucus, not for corruption, but for refusing to participate in corruption, as Jody Wilson-Raybould found out.

After nine years, the Liberals have gone from firing the first indigenous attorney general to keeping the first fake-indigenous Minister of Employment. When will the Prime Minister fire this phony minister?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to encourage all members to be more judicious in their use of words when referring to other members.

The hon. Minister of Public Services and Procurement.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague is well aware that, in the House, members have to choose the right words to express things properly. If he would like to learn more about indigenous procurement, which is very important to the Canadian government, then he should ask respectfully and I will be more than happy to meet with him to explain how it works.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Lauré not to speak until he is recognized by the Chair.

[English]

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's only minister from Alberta is accused of being a fake and a fraud. The member for Edmonton Centre said that he was not the Randy involved in his company, yet we know he is the only Randy involved in that company. He said that he was not involved with his company while in cabinet, yet text messages clearly show that he was. He pretended to be indigenous to profit from government contracts, effectively stealing from first nations businesses.

Enough is enough. When will the Prime Minister do his job and fire that minister?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, my colleague has addressed those issues that my colleague raises and he has clarified that they are false. We have stated that business was not listed as an indigenous business and it did not receive funding through that program.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, families are getting gouged on essentials by greedy CEOs. The Liberals have let families down, and all the Conservatives are planning to do is cut programs like the national school food program, making kids go hungry. However, there is good news. The NDP's plan to remove the GST on life essentials like kids' clothing and diapers will bring relief to so many families.

Will the Liberals follow the NDP's lead and cut the GST so that families can get ahead?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member has rightly pointed out, on this side of the House, we are moving forward with a national school food program, which we have heard, again and again, the leader of the Conservative Party call bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is not what is happening. We are seeing thousands of children already this school year receive food at school because of this investment in our children.

We will continue to work with the provinces to see this roll out across the country.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are getting gouged on essentials, while the biggest corporations are posting massive profits. The Liberals could have prevented this, but, instead, they have let Canadians down. Conservative cuts would make matters far worse. In fact, cutting child care alone would cost Canadian families up to \$13,000 per child.

The NDP has a plan to take the GST off essentials like home heat, phone and Internet bills, kids' clothing. Will the Liberals do it?

• (1450)

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to hear the member speak about the importance of the investments that we have made in child care. We have been able to help almost a million families,

Oral Questions

real people we have been able to support, to get them into affordable, high-quality child care, saving them thousands of dollars each and every year.

The Conservatives have made it clear that they do not support affordable child care. They will do everything they can to take this away from the families that need it.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we found out that the Conservative leader is silencing his own caucus, barring them from promoting federal housing funds in their own constituencies. One Conservative MP told CBC that MPs were being stopped from helping their cities “for partisan reasons”.

Conservative MPs, like the member for Kelowna—Lake Country, whose community is receiving over \$31 million in federal funding through the housing accelerator fund, have had a pretty rough time back in their riding.

Could the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities tell us about the impact the Conservative leader's cuts would have on Kelowna?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): You may have seen the news, Mr. Speaker, but last week the Conservatives had a very bad week. First their leader went out in public to announce that he was cutting billions of dollars in funding directly to communities to build more homes, but later it was revealed that his MPs were advocating for that fund and were since banned from advocating on behalf of their communities.

I do not know about you, Mr. Speaker, but my constituents want to make sure that they are the boss, not the leader of our party up here. It seems that is not true. However, when we look at the example in Kelowna, let us take a look at what the mayor said. To replace this funding, he would need to look at other options like “borrowing, reserves or tax increases.” Tax increases on the Conservative side; money for communities.

The Speaker: It is very clear to the Speaker that everybody got a lot of rest during this last week. I am going to ask members once again to please to not take the floor unless they are being addressed.

The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, it is clear that the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost or the corruption. Now we have a Minister of Employment who says he sees nothing, he hears nothing and he knows nothing, but there is too much here to pass up.

Oral Questions

First he claimed he was not the other Randy implicated in his business partner's text messages. We now know that he was. Then he claimed that he had no active role in his company's operations while he served in cabinet. We now know that he did. We also now know that he claimed indigenous heritage and status and it was a complete fabrication. These attempts to steal funds earmarked for indigenous companies is fraudulent.

When will enough be enough for the Prime Minister? When will he fire the minister?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two things to say. The first is that what the member just said is false. The second is that the minister has explained himself several times. What we have not heard today is the reason why, after several hundred days, the Conservative leader is still refusing to get his security clearance, not only to protect himself but also to protect his members.

His only priority is to trigger an election. How can he expect to hold an election when he cannot protect the safety of his MPs and candidates?

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps explaining himself, but the answers are not coming. The minister is facing multiple scandals. We know that his company has been charged with fraud. We know that he was illegally involved while he served in cabinet. We know that the minister for years claimed he had indigenous heritage, and we now know that that is a complete fabrication. Today, we learned that the minister's company shared a post office box with a known international cocaine dealer. At best, the minister has shown abhorrent judgment and at worst, he is completely corrupt.

The fact that the Prime Minister continues to have confidence in him demonstrates exactly why he is not fit to lead the country. When will the Prime Minister fire the minister?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has stated that those are all false and he did not know this person in question. However, if he wants to talk about fit for leadership, he should be asking his own leader why he has not yet gotten a security clearance. If that is someone who wants to lead the country, they should probably know what risks are facing Canadians.

Canadians are wondering why the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada has not gotten a security clearance.

* * *

● (1455)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost. The Prime Minister is jetting around the globe promoting his failed carbon tax, while Canadians line up at the food banks.

According to the Prime Minister, the carbon tax is the best tool out there and anyone who disagrees is using “propaganda”. However,

Canada's environment commissioner disagrees. He revealed that the Liberals would not meet their own emission targets despite quadrupling the carbon tax.

It is all pain and no gain, so will the Prime Minister call 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, it is disingenuous for the Conservatives to continually link the food bank situation in Canada with carbon pricing. A 108-page report produced by Food Banks Canada made four recommendations around Canada's social safety net. Not once in that 108-page report did it mention the carbon tax or carbon pricing, because it knows that Canada's carbon rebate, which comes out four times a year, supports Canadians, particularly lower and middle-income Canadians.

The Conservatives should cut out the misinformation and stop being so disingenuous, particularly on the backs of lower-income Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. After nine years of this sanctimonious Liberal government, Canada has the worst environmental record in the G7. That is according to the commissioner of the environment, who concluded in a recently tabled report that the drop in emissions was not due to climate actions taken by the government, but was instead because of revisions to the data or methods used.

The first carbon tax is not working, and the second one is not working either. What is the government's newest idea? Create a third carbon tax. What is it called? It will be a global export tax.

If the Liberals love it so much and are so sure of themselves, why do they not just call an 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, I would like to thank my colleague for his very important question. The climate change performance of Canada and Canadian industries is important.

[*English*]

It is also really important to recognize that the oil and gas sector is the one that is continually increasing its emissions, and we are challenging the oil and gas industry with a pollution cap. We are asking it to invest some of its astonishing \$66 billion in profit in making its products more efficient and lowering the carbon intensity of its oil. That is a good challenge.

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the media recently reported that scammers are taking full advantage of the Canada Revenue Agency's complacency to get their hands on bogus tax refunds. Radio-Canada, however, reports that the CRA has no idea how badly it needs to clean up its act.

Instead of tackling fraud and bad practices, the CRA is going on a witch hunt to find out who is talking to reporters. Managers are going so far as to spy on the contents of their employees' computers. Instead of addressing the problem, they are shooting the messengers.

Will the minister ask the CRA to go hunt down the scammers, not the whistle-blowers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some things need to be called out. In fact, that is why we are supporting a Bloc Québécois bill.

If I were to publicly share information subject to the Income Tax Act, I would be liable to seven years in prison. It is serious. Considering that CRA employees also have a professional obligation to protect the integrity of the tax system, it is important to remind them of their obligations.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, scammers made off with millions of dollars in bogus refunds because the Canada Revenue Agency did not bother to check before paying out the money. The CRA then communicated with its employees not to ask them to tighten up their auditing processes, but to ask them to stay quiet.

CRA leadership thinks that their main problem is not fraud, but the media. What we need is accountability, and accountability begins with protecting whistle-blowers, not scammers.

Will the minister address the total lack of ethics at the Canada Revenue Agency?

• (1500)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is confusing things. There are two very different issues here. I can, however, assure the member that at the CRA, we take this mistake very seriously. We have very professional teams who are working on this. We have different strategies. We are working with the RCMP, with the financial institutions, with our international partners. There are several safety nets to catch them.

The CRA is a target of choice, obviously, with the information we have, the benefits we pay out and the credits we process, but I can assure the House that we are still doing good work.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost. The Prime Minister got on his taxpayer-funded, carbon-emitting jet,

Oral Questions

flew to Brazil and bragged about how great his punitive carbon tax was. His carbon tax has done nothing for the environment, while literally making life's basic necessities unaffordable. The Prime Minister called it the best tool out there, but the only tool that Canadians want is a ballot box.

Will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election?

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, Canada's emissions are lower now than they have been for all of Connor McDavid's life. The last time they were this low was in 1997. Our emissions are down because of industrial carbon pricing, the pricing on consumer fuels and the over 100 measures the government has undertaken to lower our emissions and protect the environment. What have the Conservatives done over that same time? They have voted against every single measure.

It is not just us who think carbon pricing is effective. It is also William Nordhaus, who has a Nobel Prize to prove it. If even one Conservative economist, if they could find one, said that they have a solution for fighting climate change, we would love to hear it.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Prime Minister's carbon tax regime, grocery prices have skyrocketed to the point that scurvy is now a serious health concern in Canada, with 27 cases of scurvy having been identified in northern Saskatchewan.

The Prime Minister wants to blame "propaganda, misinformation...and flat-out lies" for opposition to his carbon tax. Unlike him, Canadians do not get to turn a blind eye to the affordability challenges they face.

Will the Prime Minister show some compassion and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is second in the G7 on health span, second only to Japan. We have one year longer than both France and Italy in the number of years we live in good health. Ours is two years longer than that of the United Kingdom and six years longer than that of the United States.

When we are talking about things that have been gone for a long time, let us talk about what is happening with measles. Let us talk about what is happening with misinformation generally. The approach to attacking public health that the Conservatives are taking and the attack on information put lives at risk and fundamentally endanger our health system.

Oral Questions

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Liberal Prime Minister is out of touch. First, he got on a gas-guzzling jet. Then, he glorified the punishing carbon tax that Canadians pay. To everyone who disagrees, he says they are using “propaganda, misinformation...and flat-out lies.” Meanwhile, more than one in 10 people in Toronto are using food banks, and 87% of them are living in unaffordable housing. Enough is enough.

Why will the Prime Minister not treat Canadians like adults, let them decide, and call a carbon tax election now?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that 300 economists in this country have all said that a price on pollution is an effective way to reduce emissions, and the majority of Canadians actually get more money back in rebates. It is a fact that the Parliamentary Budget Officer said exactly the same thing.

On this side of the House, we have a plan that is about addressing affordability issues. It is about growing a clean economy for the future, and it is about fighting climate change. My goodness, it is time that some of those folks across the way at least accept the reality of climate change and have something positive to say.

* * *

• (1505)

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Conservative leader has had a difficult week due to the scandal around his plans to end the housing agreement with Quebec.

Today, the government announced a significant new investment under this agreement that adds thousands of social and affordable housing units.

Can the Minister of Public Services and Procurement inform the House of the positive impact of today's announcement and the potential consequences the Conservative leader's cuts would have on Quebecers?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is, this morning, we announced an additional \$92 million for the historic agreement with the Government of Quebec, which is now building 3,000 new affordable housing units.

This is a big problem for the Conservative leader, who says those homes do not exist.

Where is the Conservative leader going to hide his members for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, Mégantic—L'Érable and Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, as over 300 of those affordable housing units are now being built in their ridings?

Where will he hide them and for how long?

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost

of housing. The failing Liberal housing plan is not building more homes. Housing starts are down last month compared to 2023. They are down 11% in Canada, 30% in B.C. and 87% in Kelowna. I have talked to home builders and residents in my community, who all support the common-sense Conservative plan to axe the GST on new homes sold for under a million dollars.

Will the NDP-Liberals agree with home builders and families and axe the GST on new homes sold?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to correct the record that my Conservative colleague has put on the floor of the House of Commons. Housing starts are actually up 8% compared to last month, and year over year, are trending in a positive direction, near the all-time record homebuilding pace that Canada has ever seen.

It is interesting that this question would come from this particular member, who represents the city of Kelowna, which received \$31.5 million to build thousands and thousands more homes. Not only is she opposed to that investment, but also her leader has barred her and every one of her colleagues from advocating on behalf of their communities. I came here to represent my community in Ottawa, not to take my leader's words back home.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Police associations nationwide are demanding urgent bail legislation to keep our communities safe, yet just this morning, a stolen BMW crashed into a Toronto bus, injuring nine people, two critically. Two of the four accused were, surprise, surprise, out on bail, including one for a violent robbery.

If the safety and security of Canadians are no longer priorities for the Prime Minister, will he call an immediate election so that Conservatives can bring jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders?

Oral Questions

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the incident this morning in Toronto is a concern for all of us in the House, all of us who believe in prioritizing public safety and community safety. What is concerning, and what people need to understand, is that calls for bail reform echoed in this chamber 18 months ago. We responded, tabled legislation, and, with the co-operation of all parties, we got it passed. The ball now goes to the province's court.

What we need to ensure, regarding this very person who should have been detained, is whether the Crown contested that bail. Did the Crown decide to appeal the bail if the bail decision was made in error? Was there enough space in detention facilities run by the province to hold that person in detention? These are important questions. We need answers.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would invite the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, crime is rampant across Canada, and the Liberal government is willfully turning a blind eye. Even the leader of the Bloc Québécois has said that crime does not exist in the regions. We read something this morning about a mother who will have to pay \$7,000 a year in car insurance because she has been the victim of multiple car thefts. Canadians and Quebecers are always the ones who pay the price for this Liberal government's inaction.

When will this Liberal Bloc government get tough on crime, even in rural Canada?

• (1510)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague is falsely using the word “inaction”. He knows perfectly well that our government has been investing in law enforcement agencies like the RCMP, border services and our provincial and municipal partners for several years now to combat auto theft. We recognize that this situation is completely unacceptable for Canadians.

The good news is that the number of cars being stolen is going down, but it is not enough. We will continue to do whatever it takes to support law enforcement and put an end to this situation.

* * *

[*English*]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the rising cost of living to climate change, we know that young people today face unique challenges. Their mental health needs are complex. Our government is making sure that young Canadians get the care they need, when and where they need it. It is a promise we put forward in 2021 to build a stronger, more resilient

Canada. Today, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions announced the launch of the youth mental health fund.

Could the minister share details about this historic investment with the House?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for being such a tremendous, unwavering advocate for mental health in this country. Community organizations are the lifeline when it comes to mental health that is local and trusted. This fund, a \$500-million investment, is a once-in-a-generation investment to make a difference for our youth to make sure that they have access to the services that they trust the most, adding capacity, filling gaps and making sure that we meet them where they are at.

When we talk about the youth of today, we want to make sure that they have the tools they need to thrive, because when they thrive, Canada succeeds.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a UN report has found that Israel's warfare in Gaza is consistent with the characteristics of genocide. The Liberal government is legally obligated by the genocide convention to prevent and stop Netanyahu's attack on Palestinians. Turning a blind eye to mass casualties is not an option. Entire families have been decimated. Children are starving to death.

When will the Liberals live up to their obligations, sanction Netanyahu and his extreme cabinet, and finally put in place an actual arms embargo?

The Speaker: Before the hon. parliamentary secretary takes the floor, I would encourage and remind all members to be careful with what they wear in the House to ensure that it would not be considered a prop.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in the House realizes that the situation in Gaza is dire and that the situation faced by men, women and children in Gaza is horrendous. We will continue to seek every possible way to find peace with justice in this situation.

However, rhetoric does not help. Symbols do not help. Hard work, diplomacy and engagement will be what Canada needs to do on this every day. We will continue to do our part to bring peace in the world.

Points of Order

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the renewal applications of many closed work permit holders are being denied because they are missing an impact assessment, either because they did not know they needed one or because they applied in a hurry. These workers are only being given the necessary information on the date of the review process deadline and so their renewal applications are being denied.

Why does the department not take the simple step of informing workers by email that they are missing documents? That would help prevent interruptions of work, negative impacts on families and businesses and unnecessary fees and delays for businesses, immigrants and the government in order to restore the status of these workers.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important for us to be able to grant work permits to workers who need them when they need them. I will commit to personally working with the member to resolve this issue.

* * *

● (1515)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, at the conclusion of asking his question, as he was sitting down, called the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages “cocaine Randy”, which is extremely unparliamentary.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to ask him to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I was referring to the other Randy as cocaine Randy.

The Speaker: I will come back to the House on this after further reflection.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am deeply concerned as you raised the issue of my wearing a pin in the House of Commons.

I stand here proudly wearing a pin that shows that I stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and members within this place are wearing pins for various reasons. One of my colleagues is proudly wearing the moose hide pin to show his support for causes that are important. People wear poppies within the House. I have many times worn a flag for Ukraine-Canadian—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

Honourable members, it is important that the Chair be able to hear the point being raised by the hon. member for Edmonton

Strathcona. I could not hear much after the reference to the poppy. I am going to give the hon. member the opportunity to wrap up so that the Chair can hear her point of order to make a proper determination.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that when I cannot as a member of the House of Commons bring up a point of order without being heckled and shouted down by the Conservatives, that imposes on my privilege.

I have proudly worn many pins in the House. For example, tomorrow, to mark 1,000 days since Putin invaded Ukraine, I will wear the Ukrainian pin. I need to know whether the Conservatives will call this out as a prop.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona. The Chair will take that into consideration and will come back to the House if necessary.

The hon. President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to submit a message from Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada signed by her own hand—

The Speaker: We will get to that point, which is important, but that is not a point of order.

* * *

[Translation]

IRWIN COTLER

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the House:

(a) salute Mr. Irwin Cotler's contribution to the defence of human rights and the fight against racism and anti-Semitism;

(b) recall his political contribution as Attorney General and Minister of Justice from 2003 to 2006, and that it condemn the death threats against him orchestrated by agents of a foreign regime.

● (1520)

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to make a correction to an answer I gave earlier during oral question period.

If I disclosed information that is protected under the Income Tax Act, I could be sent to prison for 12 months.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on the point of order raised about pins that members wear in the House. In the past, different positions have been taken with respect—

The Speaker: The hon. member is trying to make a point that was raised earlier. I did indicate to the House that I had heard points on this matter and will come back to the House if necessary.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

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.

The Speaker: It being 3:22 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the subamendment of the member for Calgary Shepard in relation to the privilege motion.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: The question is as follows. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to the amendment to House]

• (1535)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 882)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blanchet	Blaney
Bloch	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe

Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dance	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Gallant
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Jivani	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Kelly	Khalid
Khanna	Khera
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lake	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Lantsman	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	Lawrence
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)

Privilege

Routine Proceedings

Maguire	Majumdar
Maloney	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
McLeod	McPherson
Melillo	Mendés
Michaud	Miller
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Muys
Naqvi	Nater
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rood
Rota	Ruff
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Sauvé
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schieffe
Schmale	Seeback
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Sousa	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zimmer
Zuberi— 319	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

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

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the recorded division, the time for Government Orders will be extended by 14 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

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

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2024-25

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (B) for the financial year ending March 31, 2025, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the supplementary estimates (B), 2024-25.

* * *

● (1540)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 37 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I move that the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, presented on Monday, April 25, 2022, be concurred in.

I thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton for being the seconder on this motion, as well as the member for Battle River—Crowfoot who was right there.

This is an important issue. The second report of Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs is entitled, “Barriers to Economic Development in Indigenous Communities” and it was tabled back in April 2022.

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The report's study highlights the ongoing challenges faced by indigenous peoples in Canada in achieving economic development, despite their right to self-determination. First nations, Inuit and Métis communities continue to experience significant socio-economic disparities when compared with non-indigenous people. This includes lower incomes, education levels, employment rates and property values.

The committee concluded that these disparities are largely the result of historical and systemic inequalities further exacerbated by federal policies and regulations.

In February 2022, the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs initiated a study aimed at identifying the barriers to indigenous economic development and exploring ways to eliminate them. Addressing these barriers could not only enhance outcomes for indigenous communities, but also contribute significantly to Canada's economy, potentially adding \$30 billion to the national GDP by closing the socio-economic gap between indigenous and non-indigenous populations.

Witnesses to the study identified several critical barriers to indigenous economic development, including limited access to capital, inadequate infrastructure and, in some cases, a lack of capacity. These challenges are deeply rooted in the history of colonialism and the ongoing failure to fully recognize indigenous jurisdiction. While many—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncás: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House for my vote to count. I was unable to vote the last time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the House agree to allow the hon. member's vote to count?

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, as I stated, several witnesses to this study identified several critical barriers to indigenous economic independence and development. We are talking about the issues of limited access to capital, inadequate infrastructure and, in some cases, lack of capacity. Of course, we go on to say that many indigenous communities are already working on their own solutions to these issues and they require further supports from the Government of Canada.

Indigenous peoples have long been excluded from key decision-making processes, which has hindered their ability to fully participate in economic development. Clarence T. Jules, otherwise known as Manny Jules to many, chief commissioner of the First Nations Tax Commission, pointed out that indigenous peoples have lost control over their fiscal powers and lands as a result of these historical exclusions. Infrastructure is essential for driving indigenous economic development, serving as a backbone of a functional economy.

Before I continue on with the reports, I would like to remind people that I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Experts such as Clint Davis from Nunasi Corporation and Ernie Daniels of the First Nations Finance Authority have underscored the importance of closing the significant infrastructure gap, estimated at about \$30 billion, between first nations and other Canadian communities. The Nunavut infrastructure gap report, for example, highlights critical shortages in water, housing, broadband and energy systems. The overall infrastructure gap for indigenous communities there could be as high as \$70 billion.

Housing, of course, is another urgent issue. Shannin Metatawabin from the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association has proposed the creation of an indigenous housing fund in partnership with aboriginal financial institutions. This fund would help secure financing for housing in indigenous communities.

Similarly, Grand Chief Jerry Daniels of the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. recommended offering long-term loan guarantees to support capital projects, including housing initiatives. To help bridge the infrastructure gap, Daniels has suggested exploring monetization as a funding approach. This method, commonly used by municipalities to finance projects, involves issuing debentures to raise capital for infrastructure and economic development. Daniels also proposed a pilot project to replace diesel generation in remote communities potentially funded through this model. This approach could not only reduce dependence on federal funding, but also provide a sustainable, clean energy solution while testing innovative financing strategies at a minimal cost to the government.

The committee was informed that administrative obstacles pose significant challenges to indigenous economic development, especially when it comes to accessing public funding. Witnesses highlighted issues such as time-consuming and repetitive processes of submitting applications, as well as confusion around program eligibility requirements. To address these challenges, Harold Calla from the First Nations Financial Management Board proposed a pilot project aimed at streamlining administrative functions for smaller communities. Some of those smaller communities can lack the resources to manage such tasks efficiently.

Furthermore, Tabatha Bull from the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business recommended the creation of a navigator position to assist indigenous businesses in navigating government programs and grant applications. This role would help entrepreneurs identify relevant funding opportunities and support a need that has been frequently emphasized by indigenous business owners.

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Witnesses also emphasized that the current funding for indigenous economic development is inadequate and often lacks the structure needed to foster long-term growth. Regional Chief Teegee called for a shift away from short-term program funding, advocating for more substantial and predictable financial support, particularly for areas like first nations policing. He stressed that this approach would also be extended to economic development initiatives.

Access to capital and equity was identified as another key barrier to indigenous economic progress.

• (1545)

Grand Chief Daniels of the Southern Chiefs' Organization highlighted that, without equity, indigenous communities face significant challenges in launching and sustaining wealth-building ventures. Securing capital, particularly for large-scale projects in sectors like energy, mining and agriculture, remains difficult due to historical disadvantages and bureaucratic obstacles. Chief Commissioner Manny Jules pointed out that indigenous peoples face a \$175-billion gap in access to capital. Several leaders also underscored the mutual benefits of improving access to capital.

Mr. Metatawabin announced that indigenous communities represent profitable investment opportunities. Although progress has been made, such as through impact benefit agreements, communities still encounter financial barriers that prevent full participation in major projects. Traditional lenders are unwilling to finance equity, leaving communities either unstable or unable to secure necessary funds or forced to accept costly, unfavourable terms.

Several witnesses emphasized the need to increase indigenous participation in public procurement and highlighted the ongoing barriers to achieving this very goal. In April 2022, the Minister of Indigenous Services announced that 32 federal departments would be required to allocate at least 5% of federal contracts to indigenous-owned, indigenous-led businesses.

However, since then, the program has faced significant shortcomings. There have been reports of companies and individuals exploiting the procurement strategy for indigenous businesses, falsely claiming indigenous status in order to secure contracts. Some have even gone so far as to submit fraudulent documents, such as a picture of a rabbit, to qualify for the program.

A particularly troubling issue involves the employment minister's past business dealings, specifically his connection to Global Health Imports. The company, co-owned by the employment minister, falsely represented itself as a wholly indigenous-owned business in order to obtain government contracts through Canada's indigenous procurement programs, programs designed to benefit indigenous communities. Such misrepresentation undermines the very purpose of the programs, which are intended to support indigenous peoples and businesses.

I could go on, but I will just wrap up by saying that there are many examples of indigenous entrepreneurship and initiative. Conservatives are inspired by their vision and their drive. A future Conservative government will partner with indigenous communities to realize their aspirations, and we will be laser-focused in fostering

economic growth and creating opportunities for indigenous communities.

• (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are many, many different reports, well over 100 reports that the member could actually call up for a concurrence debate. I would ultimately argue that this is just a carry-on of the multi-million dollar game that the Conservatives continue to play to prevent the House from being able to debate legislation, have opposition days and so forth.

Can the hon member identify why it is that they have decided, as I believe that it has been on the books for quite a while now, to call up this particular report?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I would not call indigenous entrepreneurship and the struggles indigenous people are having accessing government programs a game. I am simply reminding the government that indigenous peoples have long been excluded from key decision-making events. An indigenous procurement program, which is supposed to uplift and benefit indigenous businesses, is now being taken advantage of, or at least it seems that way, by the Liberal employment minister, who checked off a box claiming to be indigenous but with no real evidence to even back that up. In fact, even in his own words, he claims he is not indigenous.

Again, there is no shame on that side of the aisle, where the Liberals would rather push down indigenous-owned businesses and indigenous people in order to enrich themselves.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the issues we have dealt with in the northern Treaty 9 region is the incredible inequity faced in the communities themselves. In Attawapiskat, people are literally living almost on top of each other. There are no other communities up there except the Cree, yet the federal government and the provincial government of Doug Ford just refused to sit down to talk about a reserve extension.

However, when De Beers went up to open a diamond mine, all the permitting happened very quickly. What ended up happening was that there was within the community a sense that if the company was coming simply to extract the resources, the government was willing to come to the table. However, when there were basic issues like housing and the right to expand the reserves so we could build livable communities, neither the province, particularly Doug Ford, nor the federal government has come to the table. There are now lawsuits saying that they are going to stop economic development until they get those basic issues of inequity dealt with.

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• (1555)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay fails to recognize the fact that the chief and the band of Attawapiskat are asking for long-term funding commitments. I actually met with the chief of Attawapiskat not too long ago, and she was pointing out that with long-term predictable funding, they could use some of the programs like the First Nations Financial Management Board, the First Nations Finance Authority and others to address their infrastructure gap and the needs that the member opposite talked about, like housing. The list goes on.

Unfortunately, the member continues to forget that he is a member of a federal Parliament and that actually the federal Liberals are the government he continues to prop up, despite the fact that the long-term predictable funding, which Attawapiskat is asking for, is not being addressed. He should actually figure out where his priorities lie, in my opinion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, the discussion we are having this afternoon is very interesting.

At the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we carried out a study on women's economic empowerment. We are trying to find ways to help indigenous women take better control of their lives. However, we are seeing that there are many barriers related to this and other issues because of the Indian Act, which hinders some businesses.

To help lift indigenous women and girls out of poverty and violence, we need to empower them economically. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on this very specific aspect of the issue. How can we help more indigenous women become business owners and become economically empowered?

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I do agree that the Indian Act is a horrible piece of legislation, and I think we need to find ways to free up indigenous communities or first nations communities from the Indian Act.

I have talked about access to capital and getting the Ottawa-knows-best attitude out of the way so indigenous people can thrive and prosper without asking for money back, in some cases from Ottawa, money that is taken out of their community, so they can start or enhance programs like economic development or infrastructure. The list goes on.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, at this point there can be very little doubt that the Liberal Minister of Employment, who is the member for Edmonton Centre and Alberta's only member of the Liberal cabinet, willfully pretended to be indigenous. He should not be in cabinet. Of course, I know there are slim pickings among Alberta Liberals. They are either with the pretender or with the porch pirate, but the minister certainly should be out of cabinet.

As a consequence of his pretense, the company that he co-owned also pretended to be indigenous-owned, and this pretense was used to advance the minister's political image and potentially to advance his private commercial interests as well. Now that he has been found out, the minister should offer a more fulsome and sincere

apology than the one he offered on Friday, and he should resign or be removed from cabinet.

There is an Instagram post that the Liberal Party put out in 2016, one of many examples of things published at the time and since, that makes very clear how the minister was being positioned. The post in question proudly highlights that apparently the Liberals had elected the largest number of indigenous MPs ever and includes a picture that shows the indigenous Liberal caucus, photos of nine MPs, one of whom is the current Minister of Employment.

The minister has most recently claimed that he participated in the activities of the indigenous Liberal caucus but only as an ally. In other words, he says he never pretended to be indigenous; he just happened to be the one and only white guy who happened to be invited to an organization that identified as the indigenous Liberal caucus. Obviously, that does not pass a pretty basic smell test.

There is a post saying that the Liberals had elected a significant number of indigenous MPs. It is accompanied by a collection of photos of MPs. That would surely be designed to give the impression that those MPs are indigenous. Why in the world would the minister be the one white guy in an otherwise all-indigenous club that was repeatedly publicly identified as in an all-indigenous club, unless he was trying to create the impression that he was indigenous?

However, we do not even need Liberal Party social media posts in order to see the problem; let us look at the minister's own words in the House. In 2016, he described himself as an "adopted Cree". In 2018, he switched to calling himself a "non-status adopted Cree" and a "member of the indigenous caucus". As recently as a year ago, the minister told the House that his Cree name means "strong eagle man". There can surely be no doubt what this was supposed to convey, even as he was also talking about Métis family members and admitting, alternatively, that he was neither.

The thing is that in listening to the minister's damage control now, he sounds a lot like the Prime Minister. When pressed on the point of misidentification, at a press conference on Friday, he said that on the one hand, the Liberal Party had misunderstood, that he apologized if anyone was confused and that he is learning about his family history in real time. He did not at any point actually admit wrongdoing. He later said he was going to continue the journey and will share this journey with Canadians as he continues down that path.

The minister sounded much like a Prime Minister, who thought a groping scandal was just a matter of someone experiencing things differently and who thought his own repeated wearing of racist costumes was a learning opportunity for the rest of us. The minister says he is on a journey, but actually I think the journey that most people want the minister to take is first to the backbenches and then out of Parliament entirely.

• (1600)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 3003, 3010, 3019, 3024, 3026, 3031, 3033 and 3036.

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Also, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2999 to 3002, 3004 to 3009, 3011 to 3018, 3020 to 3023, 3025, 3027 to 3030, 3032, 3034, 3035, 3037 and 3038 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I think it is worth recalling that on March 1, 2018, the Minister of Employment told this House, "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story." He actually said that in the House of Commons. That is what is going on here. The minister from Edmonton did not want to let the truth get in the way of what he thought would be a good political story.

Why exactly were these claims made? Why did the Liberal Minister of Employment falsely claim to be indigenous? Perhaps this is another Liberal example of the Maryam Monsef method of selectively claiming to be unaware of key personal facts in order to help develop a more elaborate origin story.

Once upon a time, there were three brothers, Remus, Romulus and Randy, born of a union between the god Mars and a mortal, nursed in the woods by a wolf. After the brothers grew up, a lethal struggle for dominance ensued, and one of the brothers founded the great city of Rome. After founding Rome, he travelled halfway around the world to join the Liberal cabinet.

In other myths, he is identified as the son of Janus, the Roman god with two faces, although as more comes out, two faces may actually not be enough. He is the man, the myth, the minister: "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story."

However, efforts at exaggerated personal myth-making may not be all there is to this. At present we are prosecuting the Liberals' indigenous contracting scandal, a scandal in which many companies made false or misleading claims about indigenous identity or developed creative arrangements to position themselves as technically indigenous without actually providing substantive economic benefit or opportunity to indigenous people.

For those who have not been following, the scandal is that Liberals established a 5% target and set-aside. Five per cent of government contracts had to go to indigenous companies, so what necessarily flows from having this kind of target is the need to define what is an indigenous company. This kind of work defining indigenous companies is going on elsewhere, because it is not just governments that are looking to include indigenous businesses with procurement opportunities. Many private sector companies, especially in the energy sector, are looking to procure more from indigenous businesses and include indigenous businesses in their supply chains.

Private sector companies are not looking to just check a legal box. They are doing this voluntarily because it is good business and because it gives impacted communities a greater stake in the success of projects. Private sector proponents, though not perfect, have

sought ways to define in an authentic way what are indigenous businesses and the extent to which there are real positive economic impacts in the communities they want to work with.

There are currently various organizations, such as the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business, that work with the private sector to help identify and support indigenous businesses. I have also met with the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce in Winnipeg, which has a rigorous process of assessing whether a business is truly indigenous-owned before it is admitted to its membership roles.

However, bizarrely, the Liberal government chose not to work with existing organizations to draw on the various lists that have been created for indigenous businesses. Instead, it developed its own list, which suspiciously appears to include a number of actors as indigenous businesses that are not on anyone else's list. While many in the private sector want to do this for real, the Liberal government has sought to inflate the number of contracts going to indigenous businesses by including businesses on its list that are not actually indigenous and are not on anyone else's indigenous business list.

The Assembly of First Nations has said that a majority of those getting the 5% set-aside are shell companies. There is abuse of joint ventures and shell companies and outright pretending. In one example in the news recently, a company called the Canadian Health Care Agency, a large non-indigenous company, went into joint venture with one person who was also its employee. The Canadian Health Care Agency was able to get many contracts. It got all of the benefit associated with these so-called joint ventures as a non-indigenous company and was able to deceptively position itself as an indigenous company.

We have been prosecuting this scandal for a while, and the AFN and other indigenous leaders have been so clear that this is a grave problem, an abuse of this policy that the Liberals have turned a blind eye to. However, we did not know until recently that the employment minister's company was actually falsely trying to position itself as indigenous.

With this in mind, as we need to get to the bottom of what's happening, I move that the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs—"

● (1605)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order from the hon. member for Drummond. I think I know what it is about.

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[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I think the member probably knows that there are interpreters who need to be able to do their jobs. When someone tries to beat an Olympic record for speed talking, it makes it a little harder for them to work. If the member could slow down, it would allow the interpreters to carry out their work.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The issue is that there may be problems with interpretation because the hon. member is speeding through his amendment. There is still a minute and a half left. I am sure the hon. member can slow down to make sure that everybody in the House is able to hear the amendment.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on that point of order, if there is agreement of the House for me to finish the amendment, I am happy to take the time necessary.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): You will be able to finish the amendment, as you started your amendment before the time had ended. I would say slow down, but not to the point that it slows down the process.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, my only goal was to ensure we got it in.

I move:

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

“the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs presented on Monday, April 25, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, with a view to studying the economic and anti-reconciliatory barriers posed by fraudulent bids and applications for procurement opportunities set aside for Indigenous businesses, including those from non-Indigenous-owned companies, provided that, for the purposes of this study:

(a) the following be ordered to appear as witnesses, for at least two hours each, at dates and times to be fixed by the Chair of the committee, but no later than Tuesday, December 17, 2024,

- (i) the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages,
- (ii) the Minister of Indigenous Services,
- (iii) the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations,
- (iv) the Minister of Public Services and Procurement,
- (v) Arianne Reza, Deputy Minister of Public Services and Procurement,
- (vi) Catherine Poulin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Departmental Oversight Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services;

(b) Felix Papineau and Shawna Parker, individuals currently or formerly associated with Global Health Imports, shall each be ordered to appear as witnesses, separately, for at least one hour each, at dates and times to be fixed by the Chair of the committee, but no later than Tuesday, December 17, 2024; and

(c) it be an instruction that the committee,

- (i) hold at least four other meetings to receive evidence from Indigenous partners, stakeholders and experts, proposed by the members of the committee,
- (ii) report its findings to the House by Friday, January 31, 2025.”

• (1610)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt about the importance of this issue. What I call into question is the Conservatives' choice to continue to play a game of preventing debate inside the chamber, whether it is on opposition day motions, government legislation or private members' bills. Instead, they are focusing on privileges, and then to give themselves a break, they bring in concurrence reports.

Does my colleague across the way not feel any obligation whatsoever to question the leader of the Conservative Party and the self-serving tactic the Conservatives are using on the floor of the House of Commons? It seems to me they are more interested in the Conservative Party and the leader of the Conservative Party's ambitions than they are about the concerns of Canadians.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is actually this member in particular who seems to be very concerned with talking about the leader of the Conservative Party.

It is quite striking to hear him talk about self-serving tactics. We have a situation where a Liberal minister of the Crown pretended to be indigenous, and his company sought contracts with the government on the basis of falsely claiming to be indigenous-owned. That is incredibly inappropriate and self-serving, and it hurts indigenous entrepreneurs and indigenous communities, which are supposed to benefit. This is a critically important issue that the government used to describe as relating to the most important relationship it has, but clearly it is not important enough in the view of the parliamentary secretary.

I think this is an important discussion, and Conservatives will continue to work to get to the bottom of the abuses in the indigenous contracting program in general, and to hold the minister accountable for his despicable actions and abuses of the public trust.

• (1615)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it has been a dismal experience watching the member for Edmonton Centre. He has been like an ethical dumpster fire from the first day he walked in here. I say that because it has been one issue after another, one red flag after another, yet he was moved up into cabinet. I know there are some hard-working Liberals who will never get near cabinet, but he did.

There is something very egregious about this, because after hundreds of years of deeply racist policies that have tried to destroy indigenous life, culture and the ability to live on the land, we finally had one program that was going to be fair, and what did we see? We saw grifters taking advantage of what should have been a profound commitment to reconciliation. The fact that grifter number one may be sitting in cabinet calls on the Prime Minister to take action, yet he is still standing there refusing to explain how the minister got into this position in the first place.

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Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, for the first time in our parliamentary careers, I find myself agreeing with everything the member for Timmins—James Bay just said. I think it was a call from the member and from the NDP for the minister to be removed from cabinet. Of course he needs to be removed from cabinet.

We see such a contrast. On the one hand, the first indigenous attorney general was removed from the Liberal caucus for refusing to enable Liberal corruption in the SNC-Lavalin affair. Then we have an incredibly corrupt employment minister who was pretending to be indigenous elevated to cabinet.

I hope we will have the NDP's support to continue to fight to get to the bottom of this at every committee, and to send this back to the committee, ordering the minister himself to appear so we can hold him accountable.

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Madam Speaker, while the government was worrying about the exposure of its unethical behaviour, there was a blue wave sweeping across the country. The Toronto Argonauts were beating the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. I congratulate the Toronto Argonauts, their quarterback Nick Arbuckle and head coach Ryan Dinwiddie on this remarkable win.

My father was a football referee for 35 years. What would he say now? He would say, "I am throwing the flag on the government's accountability metrics, and assigning a 15-yard penalty and loss of downs for its absence of financial management." When the Liberals refuse to play by the rules, he would add another five yards for un-sportsmanlike conduct.

Is this ethical lapse another demonstration of a top-down lack of ethics in the Liberal government?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, there are actually early reports out that the Minister of Employment was trying to get into the game for free by pretending to be Prince William.

An hon. member: Prince Harry.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Prince Harry, or both actually.

Madam Speaker, kidding aside, this is a very serious issue and the minister needs to be held accountable. He needs to resign for his deplorable conduct. We need to continue to do the work at committee to get to the bottom of these outrageous abuses, taking advantage of these programs by elite, privileged insiders pretending to be indigenous, including right up to the cabinet.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and add some thoughts on an issue that has always been of great importance to the Government of Canada and, in particular, to the Prime Minister.

We have talked about the whole issue of reconciliation and how, as a government, we have ensured significant budget commitments over the years, but also legislative actions in a very tangible way. I am going to expand on that shortly. Before I do that, I do not want anyone who might be following this debate to believe that the Conservatives are genuinely concerned about the report itself at all. All one needs to do is take a look at the previous member's comments on the report and then reflect on what was being debated earlier to-

day. I would suggest that the whole concept of character assassination has something in common with this. This is more about a multi-million dollar game the Conservatives have played for many weeks, at a great cost.

Substantial legislation is waiting to be debated, both from the government's perspective and from the perspective of private members. However, instead of having that form of debate, the Conservatives continue to bring in concurrence reports to fill time because they are running out of things to say on their privilege motions. Here they have taken a particular issue that has always been important to the government. At the end of the day, I question their motivation for choosing to use this issue as a political game to add to the multi-million dollar filibuster that we have been witnessing for many weeks and, unfortunately, in all likelihood, for many days to come. I look at this from a perspective of lost opportunities and why we need to move on.

When I think of the issue at hand, I think of individuals like Cindy Woodhouse. I think of the passing of Mr. Sinclair, an individual, second to no other in Manitoba, who brought forward the debate on indigenous reconciliation for all Canadians and the important role we all have to play, including here in the House. I was at the funeral, as members from all political parties were.

When the TRC report came out, the leader of the Liberal Party at the time, because it was back in 2015, made the commitment to act on every one of those 94 calls for action. We have seen significant gains. Many have taken the form of legislation that has passed, such as a statutory holiday, indigenous languages and legislation dealing with children. We have also seen significant financial commitments, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$400-plus million toward indigenous entrepreneurs and others since 2015 to encourage partnerships. In the 2024 budget, in fact, we committed \$350 million to dealing with issues to increase access to capital.

● (1620)

I think of my home province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg, and the only way we can hit the potential that our province has in the federation is to see reconciliation work. A part of that is to recognize the entrepreneurs and the workers and how, as a national government, we can contribute to it. One of the first things we took initiative on, for example, was the issue of Freedom Road, something Shoal Lake 40 was asking for for many years. Stephen Harper, throughout those years when the leader of the Conservative Party was a cabinet minister with Stephen Harper, said, "No, the federal government does not support Freedom Road."

It took a change in government. It was not until the current Prime Minister formed the cabinet, and with the support of the national Liberal caucus, that we ultimately saw financing for Freedom Road. Freedom Road has had a profoundly positive impact for Shoal Lake 40. It is not because of Ottawa but more because of the leadership from within the Shoal Lake 40 reserve. These are the people who deserve the credit. What we did as government was recognize the potential and get behind the individual chief and council to ultimately enable it.

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We have seen other very successful projects at Shoal Lake 40. They are significant projects, all of which, I would suggest, are indigenous led, from the companies to the workers to the quality that we see, including the water treatment facility. For the community's size, it is a world-class facility, which is there today because of indigenous-led companies and the chief and council. We could also talk about the twinning of Highway 17.

I look at individuals like Sharon Redsky, who often affords me the opportunity to better understand indigenous issues, especially around children and social enterprises and the potential for charitable groups and indigenous organizations to contribute to reconciliation. These are individuals. I think of Chief Kevin Redsky and the leadership the chief and council provide, and how that is making a difference. We as a government have supported that leadership and those developments.

I would suggest that the Conservatives are introducing the report today not because the Conservatives care about the issue. It has more to do with the same sort of subject matter they are talking about with the privilege issue. Let us ask ourselves, have the Conservatives ever, in the last number of years, raised this issue in the form of an opposition day motion? The short answer is no, they have not.

● (1625)

The only reason the Conservatives are raising it today is that, in going through the 100-plus reports, they said it was an issue that they could politicize. They could stand up and continue on with the character assassination of a particular minister. That is their motivation. It is not because they are concerned about indigenous issues. I did not witness that in the last speech by the Conservative member.

Just last week, I had the opportunity to participate in an organization called Raising the Roof. I understand that it actually originated in the province of Ontario. It is a wonderful group. It ensures that it is building a number of homes for non-profits. It ventured into Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the very first time. There was a substantial federal contribution to it, and I had the opportunity to participate in the announcement.

What touched me most in regard to that was the fact that there was a company, Purpose Construction, which is responsible for doing the renovations of a particular home that happens to be in Winnipeg North. It is on Mountain Avenue in what I would classify as the core, traditional, heritage-rich north end of Winnipeg. What would have been a dilapidated two-storey-plus home has now been converted into a wonderful place to call home, not for one, but actually two families. From what I understand, it also has a third area; this is maybe not necessarily for a family, but it could be for someone who is coming in and studying or whatever it might be. We will see that it is for the homeless.

There is another organization, Siloam Mission; this is actually the group that is going to be responsible for, from what I can recall, ensuring that there are tenants going into the facility and managing the facility. They are indigenous tenants. However, I will get back to Purpose Construction because it is more than just the federal government that is increasing the number of homes.

Purpose Construction is an indigenous company that is taking indigenous workers and allowing them to learn a trade and supporting that. The benefits of this particular facility, or home, that is being built go far beyond just providing another home for a couple of families and others. It is touching the community in a very real way, and it is supporting indigenous-led companies and more.

We should keep in mind that the Conservative Party does not support housing initiatives. Most recently, we have seen that with the housing accelerator fund, wherein the federal government is working with other municipalities to ensure that we get more homes built. Many Conservatives are saying that they like that particular program. They are writing to ministers. If there are 18 of them writing, I can only imagine how many others actually support it but are not writing to the Minister of Housing here.

I suspect that the housing announcement by the leader of the Conservative Party, which I have labelled as a dud, demonstrates how it is that the Conservative Party treats supporting indigenous communities. I could talk at great length in regard to the housing issue.

● (1630)

Let us move on to the Canada Infrastructure Bank. Even today, I believe I have heard at least one Conservative member say they want to get rid of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. The Conservative Party's official position on the Canada Infrastructure Bank is to get rid of it. If we dig a little deeper, they will give misinformation. They will say that the Canada Infrastructure Bank does not do anything. There are billions of dollars of investments through the Canada Infrastructure Bank that have led to more billions of dollars of investments from other stakeholders. We are talking around \$30 billion. The last time I checked, it was getting close to \$30 billion.

If we check with the Canada Infrastructure Bank, we will see that the bank has an indigenous equity initiative that is enabling indigenous leaders to tap in and become partners on infrastructure development. There are projects there. How does the Conservative Party of Canada and its shiny new leader respond to that? They say that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is a bad idea and that they are going to cut it, just as they say they are going to cut the housing accelerator fund. Their policies are very much dictated by the far right in Canada. We know that.

The progressive nature that used to be in the Conservative Party has completely evaporated; it is more focused on cuts. If we were to broaden it out to expand beyond indigenous communities and just focus on cuts and why they are so relevant, the Conservative Party tries to give the false impression that it cares about indigenous communities; in fact, we know that it is going to cut indigenous funds that are now flowing.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member across the way says that will not happen. The Conservatives are going to cut the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which is helping fund some of these capital projects. They are going to cut it, yet they say they are not going to cut it. They are going to cut the housing accelerator fund. Are they trying to tell me that indigenous communities do not benefit through that fund, that there will not be social enterprises, such as Purpose Construction, that are going to participate in renovations and the building of homes?

The Conservative Party needs to reflect and hold its own far-right Conservative leader to account for the careless cuts that it continues to propose all the time, whether the ones I have talked about already or cuts to dental care, pharmacare or child care. That is the Conservative Party today, and it does need to be held to account for that.

The Conservatives bring forward motions for concurrence, not because they are interested in the subject matter but because they are trying to show that the House of Commons is dysfunctional. That is the real purpose of what they are doing.

If we read the motion, Conservatives want to extend it beyond the chamber to standing committees. This is the third one that I can think of right offhand where they want to send a report, and we have hundreds of them, back to the standing committee. They want to tell the standing committee what it has to do; by the way, they also want it to call *x*, *y* and *z*. Why is that? It is because they want to continue the multi-million dollar game at the expense of Canadians; they are more focused on the interests of the leader of the Conservative Party than they are on Canadians.

I say shame on them. They have a responsibility to behave in such a fashion that other agenda items can be debated and passed. I am not just talking government. There is Private Members' Business also. There is a fall economic statement. There is a lot to talk about on the floor of the House of Commons. It is time that the Conservative Party stops its political game and starts thinking about what is in the best interests of Canadians.

• (1635)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is clear from the member's anti-Conservative rant that the Leader of the Opposition lives rent-free in his head. That is about the only person in the whole country living rent-free at the moment.

On the very important subject of indigenous economic development, Conservatives have repeatedly put forward policies aimed at supporting economic development for indigenous peoples. The Liberals' approach has been to oppose efforts by indigenous peoples to prosper through, for instance, Canada's natural resource sectors, as well as to allow elite, non-indigenous fraudsters and phonies, well-connected Liberal insiders, to take advantage of a program that is supposed to benefit indigenous peoples.

We know that the Minister of Employment was misrepresenting his identity, and this amendment would order him to come to committee.

Does the member agree that the minister responsible should be ordered to come to committee and answer questions about his actions?

• (1640)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows that there is absolutely nothing that prevents the standing committee that he is calling for from asking the minister to come before committee. That is not what the issue is. The issue is a filibuster, a multi-million dollar political game in which the leader of the official opposition feels that it is more important to serve his political interests and the Conservative Party's interests than to serve the interests of Canadians. That is the issue.

Yes, I give a lot of attention to the leader of the Conservative Party because I do not trust him, nor do Canadians. The more Canadians understand who the far-right leader actually is, the more they are going to move away from him in droves. At the end of the day, this is a leader who believes in cuts. Those cuts are going to hurt. That is why I am concerned.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to bring us back to the matter at hand today.

In my first question, I pointed out that the Standing Committee on the Status of Women often realizes that indigenous women and girls face certain difficulties. The issue of infrastructure and housing has come up repeatedly in our studies.

My colleague, the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, and I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Yänonhchia' initiative. We are talking about housing in indigenous communities, so I will bring us back to that topic. The goal of this initiative is to build projects by and for indigenous peoples, in consultation with them to ensure that they have safe and affordable housing that meets their cultural needs. It is a nation-to-nation discussion. That is our perspective. They wrote a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance asking for the \$150 million needed to carry out this initiative.

I would like my colleague to talk about that. Is he familiar with that initiative? Is that the kind of initiative they can discuss among colleagues? Will they consider supporting it in the 2024 fall economic statement?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am very proud of the fact that I have had the opportunity to know National Chief Cindy Woodhouse for many years. I can say that she is a very outspoken, powerful advocate.

One issue she has talked to me about over the years is housing. I know it is a major concern. I believe that we will continue to work with indigenous people, whether it is through the Prime Minister or the Minister of Housing, because we know that the federal government has an important role to play. This is one reason that the current government, more than any other government, has been there from a financial point of view to support housing.

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Not that long ago, I was talking with David Chartrand, the president of the Red River Métis federation. His approach of wanting to see housing built is being achieved, at least in a small way. I believe he recognizes that the federal government is working with the Métis nation and indigenous people as a whole on the housing file.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, reconciliation is an issue because Canada attempted to perpetrate a genocide, and the first step of the genocide was to target the children. The second step was to bring in hunger and forced famine to force people off the land.

I think my colleague would agree that, many days, the House of Commons is like *The Jerry Springer Show*. However, we are not hearing any talk about the genocide in Gaza or of the fact that, two days ago, Human Rights Watch found that Israel is guilty of crimes against humanity for using famine and targeting children. About 70% of the deaths in Gaza are women and children. That is a targeting of a people to destroy them. We have seen nothing from the Prime Minister on the international stage.

Why do the Liberals continue to tiptoe around a genocide that is happening in real time as the world watches?

• (1645)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have full confidence in our Minister of Foreign Affairs and I appreciate her efforts in working with our allied countries and like-minded countries, whether they are one of the Five Eyes or others, in terms of making sure that we are speaking as one. I would suggest that for more details the member should sit down and talk to her or send her an email, whatever it is that he feels more comfortable with.

What I do know is that myself, the Minister of Northern Affairs, and a number of others were at the Murray Sinclair funeral services to recognize a man who has done so much not only for reconciliation in Manitoba but for our entire country. He has left a legacy that we can all reflect on. One of those things is to take a look at the 94 calls to action and how each and every one of us has a role to play, whether someone is an elected member of Parliament, an MLA or anyone else in society.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I come here, week in and week out, hoping we can get work done on behalf of Canadians. I had great hopes coming here today, but obviously I can see from the members opposite that that is not going to happen. All of us are elected here. We have the great privilege to be here, but that privilege needs to be taken seriously. I came here this week to talk about the wonderful initiatives we are bringing forward, like the housing accelerator fund that some Conservatives want, some do not, and others want but cannot get approval.

My question to my friend is the following. When are the Conservatives going to be ready to get back to work on behalf of all Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, one of the things I have learned over the years about the Atlantic caucus is that its members are a part of a powerful group as a caucus. One of the best examples I could use on the floor is the Atlantic accord. The Atlantic caucus held the Conservatives to account when the Conservatives refused to support the Atlantic accord, much to the disappoint-

ment of all Canadians, let alone individuals who live in Atlantic Canada and call it home.

True to form, the member raised another important issue about the housing accelerator fund. Remember, we now have the leader of the Conservative Party saying they are going to cut that fund. We also have at least 18 Conservatives saying, whoa, wait a minute. They will not say who they are, but they really like this fund. Can colleagues imagine how many have not written the Minister of Housing talking about the benefits of that program? I suspect we could have 50% or more of the Conservative caucus on this issue.

It was a bad idea to oppose the Atlantic accord; it is a bad idea to cut the housing accelerator fund.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is striking that the Liberals do not seem to think talking about economic development in indigenous communities is an important topic. It is unbelievable to hear that previous Liberal member characterize it as, in his view, a waste of time.

There was a sleight of hand in the member's previous response to me. The amendment we put forward is important because it is the only way to order the minister to appear. Various committees have asked the Minister of Indigenous Services and the Minister of Employment to come before a committee and provide an explanation. They have not done so. This motion would create a House order. It is the only way to do it.

Does the member appreciate that that is the only way to do this procedurally and therefore the amendment is important?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what I appreciate is the fact that the member does not understand. He is wrong. If the member came to the House saying that the standing committee put in the request and the standing committee was refused and that, as a result, Conservatives wanted to be able to push this forward, then he might have some merit to his argument.

It is time that he recognized that what they are trying to do is not about what is in the interest of indigenous communities or Canadians as a whole. It is all about a multi-million dollar filibuster because the Conservative leader is more interested in his personal side and the Conservative Party's than Canadians. That is what is so shameful about the tactics that the Conservatives continue to use every day.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment; the member for Victoria, Climate Change; the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, Carbon Pricing.

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Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are here today to talk about an issue that is fundamental for the future of Canada and Quebec, and that is economic development in indigenous communities. The report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs reminds us of the barriers that these communities face and that make it so that the desired outcomes are not always achieved as originally planned.

This is a critical issue, but it is also a mirror that reflects the systemic challenges that are deeply rooted in our society. Reconciliation will not be possible without eliminating the barriers that continue to prevent first nations, Métis and Inuit people from receiving a fair share of this country's wealth. This is not just a matter of social justice. It is also a matter of economic development for all.

Barriers to economic development in indigenous communities include the legacy of colonialism, the failure to recognize indigenous jurisdiction, inadequate infrastructure, administrative burdens, limited access to capital, and limited access to federal procurement opportunities. First nations, Inuit and Métis face similar barriers, but they are also confronted with challenges that are unique to their situation and their relationship with the federal government. Financial challenges are systemic barriers.

One of the major barriers we face is access to funding. Take, for example, the down payment required for any new project in an indigenous context. It is a minimum of 10%, a requirement that does not take into account the economic realities of these communities, where many people live below the poverty line. Under these conditions, how can anyone hope to undertake an economic development initiative, be it commercial or residential, if the down payment is an insurmountable barrier?

However, there is a solution in the Yānonhchia' program. This innovative solution is available in Quebec. Not only does it give the middle class on first nations lands access to home ownership, but it also stimulates a unique market for high-quality properties in various communities. We asked the Minister of Finance to provide funding at the earliest opportunity for this program, which helps members of communities in need finally get a roof over their heads. The message is clear: It is important to set the right priorities.

In addition, access to private capital continues to be a major challenge. With few exceptions, financial institutions continue to show clear mistrust toward indigenous businesses, making it extremely difficult for them to access credit. This situation is even more complex in remote communities, where transportation and material costs make projects considerably more expensive. These disadvantages mean that even the simplest construction project in indigenous communities like Wemotaci or Chisasibi will invariably be more expensive than in cities like Montreal or Quebec City. It is not just a difference in costs, it is a systemic inequality that hinders development projects from the outset.

Red tape is another factor hindering growth. The administrative burden created by governments, both federal and provincial, should not be underestimated. Funding programs are complex and poorly adapted to the realities of indigenous workers and entrepreneurs. In many cases, an application has to be submitted several times to different departments, resulting in lengthy delays and missed opportu-

nities. This cumbersome bureaucracy only slows down the development of indigenous initiatives.

We need a more flexible, responsive approach. Decisions need to be made faster. Most importantly, the reality of indigenous communities must be taken into account in the funding allocation process. Continuing to apply rigid processes designed in urban centres is not going to solve the issue of economic development for indigenous peoples. We need decentralization, a redistribution of decision-making powers and real political will to facilitate, not impede, first nations development for and by first nations.

Geographic isolation is also a factor in economic exclusion. As we know, indigenous communities face unique, often invisible, but deeply structural barriers. They do not all experience the same realities. Some are close to urban areas and are in a better position to meet program requirements. Others, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer wisely pointed out, have difficulties that are not taken into account, such as geographic isolation. This leads to exorbitant supplier costs and creates glaring inequalities between regions. These are known as remoteness costs.

● (1655)

Let us not forget that many of these communities are located in remote regions, where access to infrastructure and basic services is still a survival issue. This translates into extra supplier costs, but also a lack of access to economic opportunities, federal contracts, and sometimes even adequate banking or financial services. Indigenous populations are doubly penalized, both by their remoteness and by the systemic indifference of the government, which does not adapt its policies to meet their specific needs.

Economic reconciliation is a necessity for all. It is essential to remember that economic reconciliation is not possible without the active participation of indigenous peoples in the Canadian economy. Reconciliation is about more than symbolic statements or gestures. It requires meaningful action and financial commitments. Studies show that if indigenous communities had the same economic opportunities as the other Canadians, the Canadian economy as a whole would benefit considerably. Canada could increase its GDP significantly, by \$30 billion to \$100 billion annually, simply by allowing indigenous people to access equitable employment conditions, training and funding. It is in everyone's interest to remove barriers to indigenous economic inclusion. We are not asking for a favour here. We are offering an opportunity that must be seized for the good of all of Canada.

The proposed opportunities are a way forward. To overcome these barriers, we must work together. It is imperative that the Government of Canada implement policies and strategies that take the realities of indigenous peoples into account. Obviously, this entails implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, in collaboration with the communities, and formally recognizing indigenous legal frameworks for the management of their lands.

The government also needs to support the creation and expansion of indigenous financial institutions that can meet the specific needs of indigenous businesses. The aboriginal financial institution network needs to be strengthened and adequately funded to foster access to capital and support the growth of indigenous businesses. Finally, it is crucial to review federal funding and procurement mechanisms to allow for genuine and equitable participation by indigenous businesses in major infrastructure and development projects in Canada. Indigenous initiatives funds must be tailored to the specific needs of each community, taking geographic, social and economic aspects into consideration.

Economic reconciliation also requires solid land bases. The Bloc Québécois has long been calling on the federal government to commit to land reform, and we will continue to push for that as long as necessary. We suggest partnering with indigenous groups to undertake a vast nation-to-nation effort to sign agreements and treaties that are entered into freely and are mutually agreed upon, allowing for more self-determination for these communities.

We propose that the comprehensive land claims policy be completely overhauled, which would include creating an independent entity to manage and resolve these claims. Appointing a commissioner, as set out in Bill C-77, is a step in the right direction, because the federal government is not only slow, it is often a bad partner. Of course, the commissioner will be able to point all that out, but that should not stop the federal government from taking action now. Two weeks ago, when the ministers appeared before the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, none of these crucial issues were addressed.

It currently takes 18 years on average to settle a land claim, including two years seeking government approvals. This creates a significant financial burden for first nations. That is already excessively long, but for some nations, the process can take up to 30 years. We are talking about three decades. These barriers sometimes lead communities to give up and settle for the Indian Act as the lesser of two evils. This policy needs to be addressed urgently because it impedes true, equal partnerships between nations.

Since 2018, repealing the Indian Act has been one of the objectives of the relationship framework between the Government of Canada and indigenous peoples. However, the Liberal government is being too passive on this issue. In Quebec, only the Cree and Naskapi nations have been emancipated from this act, thanks to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the resulting legislation.

• (1700)

When it comes to land claims, the situation in Quebec is similar to the one in British Columbia, where a large part of the territory is still not covered by treaties. This is problematic because the com-

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prehensive land claim settlement process is excessively long and costly. It frustrates many first nations representatives without contributing toward improving living conditions in the communities. Furthermore, these negotiations create an extremely significant financial burden for indigenous communities. Currently, they are financed through a combination of repayable loans and non-repayable contributions. In 2013, the accrued debt, with interest, was \$817 million. This funding model acts as a disincentive for communities, prolongs negotiations and forces some nations to give up when they run out of money.

The problems with this policy do not stop there. The federal government is both judge and jury in these negotiations. The process is so long that negotiators frequently come and go, increasing delays even further, because each new negotiator has to get up to speed on the complex files. Furthermore, these negotiators have no flexibility and constantly have to ask the government to approve their decisions. In short, the existing process does not resolve disputes efficiently or help eliminate colonial structures such as the Indian Act.

With respect to the additions to reserve policy, it is important to have sufficient funds to enable the 20 or so communities recognized by the federal government to complete the process set out in the policy so they can finally receive the funding they need to ensure the well-being of their members with complete peace of mind. Can the government assure us that there will be enough money this year to enable them to take action? Three first nations in my riding, which is in Quebec, have been displaced. They still have no stable land base. This is unacceptable. I would like to see those communities get their fair share. Too often, they are overlooked. I want to name them.

[*English*]

They are Timiskaming First Nation, Winneway first nation and Hunter's Point first nation, now Wolf Lake.

[*Translation*]

In this context, I want to underscore the following. This means that there is money that is not going to areas such as health, childhood education or an indigenous police service. It takes too long. Every time there is a hiccup, it seems like everyone is fine with that. At some point there needs to be action. Everyone will need to sit down together and offer solutions. Far too often, first nations issues are put on ice. The government will use any excuse to walk away from the negotiations, and often the real reason is that it just is not listening. Finally, things are left to drag on. Generations have been waiting for answers and results. That is another way to promote self-determination for indigenous peoples, especially back home in Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

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The Inuit and Métis also deserve better representation within bodies that reflect on economic reconciliation. The Inuit of Nunavut or Nunavik, like the Red River Métis, are not subject to the Indian Act. However, these indigenous people have unique realities that deserve to be addressed by this government. They need to be better represented within the institutions and organizations set up by the federal government.

While the Red River Métis are now recognized as an indigenous people by the Government of Canada, they continue to face significant challenges in accessing financial resources and economic opportunities due to the delayed recognition of their rights and the federal government's broken promises. For a long time, they have been excluded from the funding and economic development programs available to other indigenous groups. While progress has been made in recent years, these commitments remain lacking.

Despite these barriers, Métis people have shown remarkable resilience and a great potential to develop their own economic initiatives and institutions. However, the lack of appropriate channels for distributing funds and delays in implementing supportive policies continue to impede their ability to build sustainable infrastructure.

The federal government absolutely must keep its promises and put in place funding mechanisms and institutions specifically designed to meet the unique needs of Métis people so that they can fully participate in the Canadian economy and ensure a prosperous future for their communities.

• (1705)

I will digress for a moment. On the weekend, we marked Louis Riel Day. If there is something that Canada should think about, it is how it treated one of its own. The case of Louis Riel is well documented, and we should think about and look back at that history. I think that we have erred for too long. I want to acknowledge president David Chartrand.

Since I only have a little time left, I want to take this opportunity to raise some issues that I think are problematic when it comes to the economic development of first nations. I want to talk about the much-touted 5%. I am talking about recommendation 8 of the report. It is all well and good to say that the government awards 5% of federal contracts to indigenous businesses. However, when it comes to things like GC Strategies or projects like the one in Chalk River that is going to have a major impact on nuclear safety in Quebec and Canada, the indigenous component is often being managed by people who are not really indigenous. They have access to government funds and they are the ones who communicate with the government. The government can then say that it consulted indigenous people in the context of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. However, these indigenous impersonators are not recognized by indigenous people. That is a problem.

“Pretendians” are people who self-identify as indigenous for economic or personal gain. In many cases, it may be a historical error. It is not necessarily a deliberately false claim. However, there are some serious problems at the moment. Fake indigenous claims are being used to gain access to contracts or to earn social licence. Think about the Chalk River project. An association known as the Algonquins of Ontario helped ensure social licence. Meanwhile, the Anishinabe in both Quebec and Ontario, plus 140 municipalities,

are opposed to the project. Those who speak for the indigenous people are not the indigenous people.

There is no shortage of examples when it comes to economic development. Bastien Industries produces moccasins that are made in Wendake. This is an example of an economic development project where products are made by hand, with knowledge being passed on from generation to generation. It is an economic driver and source of pride for the community. Unfortunately, the company has no access to government contracts, and yet if the indigenous people who work there want to sell their products in the United States, they will be asked for their Indian status card.

That is not possible in Canada. Those mechanisms do not exist and so identities can be claimed. These companies take second place when contracts are awarded. There is no obligation to do business with indigenous peoples. Actually, the law says there is in theory, but in practice, no mechanism exists. That is a fundamental problem. The Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates is particularly interested in this. I think we need to delve deeper into the issue of who is indigenous and who is not. At some point, this has a major impact on economic development.

I also want to take this opportunity to raise another issue. To me, it is one of the main solutions. The Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs examines it in this report, particularly in the first recommendations. In my opinion, the major solution, which is a philosophical one, is to trust the knowledge of the first nations and develop projects “by and for” indigenous nations. Right now, there are a lot of recommendations. However, I am shocked to see that the study is almost two years old. It is something we have thought about, but not a thing has changed.

This government is on its last legs. It had plenty of time to take action and develop investment funds by and for indigenous peoples. Yānonhchia' comes to mind, along with the initiatives of NACCA, the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association, and many others that will provide financial leverage. The government puts structures in place, but often this only creates obstacles and barriers. Basically, indigenous communities are given two years to build a house. However, it takes time to get an architect to approve things. It is much harder to find one in remote areas and in indigenous communities. By the time an architect is found, the deadlines have passed. That is how it works at the federal government. Perhaps only two houses a year per community end up being built. Indigenous populations are growing quickly, and the needs of communities are not currently being met. Some serious reflection is needed, and the solution involves projects by and for indigenous peoples.

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In conclusion, urgent action is essential. We have an historic opportunity before us. Removing barriers to economic development for indigenous peoples is not only a moral imperative, but also an economic one. We have a responsibility to right the wrongs of the past and to work together to build a prosperous future for all Canadian and Quebec communities, indigenous and otherwise. Indigenous peoples must be fully integrated into the economy of Canada and Quebec, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in everyone's best interest. If we want a prosperous, inclusive and truly reconciled Quebec and Canada, we need to invest in the prosperity of indigenous peoples.

● (1710)

Together, as equal partners, we can build a future based on justice, equality and economic reconciliation.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can appreciate the member opposite's comments, although I do not necessarily agree with all the things he has said. They have caused me to reflect on what we have been able to do to work toward reconciliation in a very tangible way, whether through budgetary measures or legislative measures.

Is the member aware of any other federal government that has invested as much as this particular government has? If he is, could he tell me which government has actually done that? I would love to make the contrast.

I have a question for the member: Is he at all concerned with the Conservative Party continuing to bring forward amendments to reports that, in essence, send the reports back to committee and provide a list of individuals? Does the member believe that the standing committees should have a little more independence from the Conservatives' outreach?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I have an excellent example of a government that was proactive for the first nations. It is an economic development success story, perhaps the best in Canada. In fact, this week I met with Ted Moses, given that the Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance gathered in Val-d'Or. It was a pleasure to talk to him. He was one of the key negotiators of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Yes, the Government of Quebec took action. There was the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Hydro-Québec development. This provided financial levers by and for the Cree, which is now obviously one of the most powerful nations in terms of its economic development. The peace of the braves, by the Parti Québécois, reinforced that. I want to commend Bernard Landry and Ted Moses for their lasting leadership that had a major impact on the generations and the Cree. We see towns like Chisasibi still developing. Other communities need to find inspiration in that. There need to be more modern treaties, more autonomy for the first nations.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are repeatedly taking issue

with our efforts to get ministers to come to committee to be held accountable for the Liberal indigenous contracting scandal. In fact, the indigenous affairs committee had ministers before it who simply refused to answer questions.

In committee, all opposition parties agreed to order ministers, in particular the Minister of Indigenous Services, back to committee to actually answer those questions. They asked her to be back within two weeks, and the minister is not honouring that request from the committee. Meanwhile, we have committees that need to hear from the Minister of Employment about his misrepresentation of his indigenous identity so that his company could benefit from these same set-asides.

It is clear why the government is complaining about this. It does not want its ministers to appear before committee to be held accountable. The ministers have been asked to appear within certain timelines, and they have not honoured that. This is why what we are putting forward today is necessary for ensuring that ministers will come to committee and answer those questions. Will we have the support of all opposition parties again to say that ministers have to be held accountable and answer questions at committee about what they did and what happened in their portfolio?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, the issue has been presented. A motion in that regard was also moved at the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. I am very sensitive to the principle, and I want to repeat what I said in my speech earlier.

When someone uses the names of indigenous people, but indigenous people are not the ones getting access to indigenous funding, authorizations or whatever, there is a big problem. Whether it is GC Strategies, this business with the Randys or whatever else, right now, for me, the issue is much broader and more complex. I think this is one area in my colleague's motion that is worth exploring to encourage greater support. I believe we have a responsibility to take an even closer look at the people who are being given power and money. This affects a huge number of people. If we want real truth and reconciliation, we also need the consent of a majority of genuine indigenous people.

● (1715)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his heartfelt interventions on this issue. The whole question of procurement and public contracts is a very sensitive one. We are talking about thousands of contracts and billions of dollars. These are often the places where a lot of corruption and cronyism happens, strangely enough, be it among the Liberals or the Conservatives.

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As for awarding 5% of contracts to indigenous companies, we obviously agree with that objective from a reconciliation perspective. That said, a Liberal minister is currently getting raked over the coals for several reasons. There are plenty of potential scandals related to this.

Last week, I attended a meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. One of the things that amazes me is that it is still the federal government that decides which businesses are indigenous. It is not the indigenous communities themselves. I would like my colleague to tell us more about this situation, which seems rather unusual to me.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is absolutely right.

In matters of truth and reconciliation, the concept of truth is fundamental. In a way, history needs to be rewritten, but it must be written by indigenous peoples. That way, we will be able to understand the mechanisms that landed us with non-indigenous people claiming to be indigenous, having access to government contracts and being in a position to approve projects that could be catastrophic, such as the Chalk River project.

The first step is to sit down with first nations, whether they are represented by the Assembly of First Nations or other regional groups. They must be given the power to determine who is first nations, who is indigenous and who is not.

With such a registry, we will be able to move forward, and it will transform this country's image.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech, which was very relevant to this afternoon's debate. He clearly demonstrated that the Indian Act is a systemic impediment to the emancipation of indigenous peoples and indigenous nations.

As I recall, the Liberals promised to change the despicable, offensive law known as the Indian Act nine years ago. They promised to scrap it and create a real law that takes the dignity of indigenous peoples into account.

Why does my colleague think the government has not done that yet?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, the Indian Act is a blot on Canada's history.

I agree that it needs to be repealed. However, I think that we need to be aware that the Indian Act provides a certain security for many first nations people. We will need to sit down with indigenous communities to give them the means, powers and economic tools for self-determination so that they can do even more than is possible under the Indian Act.

Truth and reconciliation is a matter of trust. In the past, Canada proved to first nations that it could not be trusted. We have to rebuild that trust, but unfortunately the Liberal government has failed in that respect. Relations with first nations is one of the first issues on which the Trudeau government lost Canadians' confidence.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member mentioned the Prime Minister's surname. I would remind him that he must not refer to members by name in the House.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, particularly for the comments that he made about the situation involving first nations, indigenous peoples and the nuclear industry.

Could he elaborate on the lack of respect for indigenous people when it comes to the nuclear industry?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, first I will mention one positive aspect of the recommendations. I hope my colleagues take the time to look at the 26 recommendations in this report. There are some positives.

There is a recommendation for the mining industry and the natural resources industry in general. It is to increase ways to support the participation of indigenous peoples in the natural resources industry. There is also the whole training aspect, which is fundamental. Many businesses back home in my region, such as Blais Industries, Moreau and Groupe Rouillier, will also use indigenous businesses to recruit workers and to share power and wealth. I see that as part of the solution.

That is absolutely not what was done at Chalk River. On the contrary, indigenous buy-in was given, which could have a major impact on people's health. Before giving my speech here, I met with the Minister of Natural Resources to discuss these issues. It is sad and cynical that indigenous people have to go to the Supreme Court to overturn a decision on which they were not consulted, because pretendians were consulted instead.

Should the law be strengthened in this regard to bring about change? Absolutely.

● (1720)

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank all my colleagues for this important discussion today on the economic barriers that are leading to detrimental impacts on indigenous communities to better serve themselves, their community and all Canadians.

It is not too far in our own history that we looked to indigenous innovation for immense solutions to everyday problems. For example, the baby jumper is something that was invented by an indigenous woman right here in Canada. It is a significant contribution that most indigenous and non-Indigenous children would have access to. Indigenous entrepreneurs and indigenous economic motivators are critical to the success of Canada. However, that being said, there are immense barriers to these kinds of achievements by indigenous people, which is why it is so often the case that they find themselves in difficult circumstances to keep their businesses and operations afloat.

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The indigenous and northern affairs committee was asked to study the barriers to indigenous economic development and highlighted a few key aspects of what that could mean within the report. However, I would like to focus today on what we find in the recommendations and speak to some of the challenges we are seeing here in Ottawa. For example, there is the infrastructure gap, and I will be touching on this important deficit, which is largely contributing to indigenous people having less access to our economy. Let me put it into perspective.

Within the immense supply chain in our country there are, for example, railroads, two bands of steel right across the country, but this kind of economic infrastructure in the supply chain is very difficult for indigenous people to participate in when they are so far from infrastructure inputs to get their product to market. Indigenous communities make up an immense part of the economies in northern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba and northern British Columbia, but they are still finding the lack of infrastructure a critical barrier. For example, the deficit for infrastructure is over \$350 billion for first nations communities and \$75 billion for Inuit.

There is a \$2.5-billion deficit for infrastructure, and indigenous people have been simply left behind for generations. It is time we catch up. We need a government that is willing to invest in infrastructure to see these communities truly flourish.

Another topic I would like to address is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is true that although economic development in Canada has largely taken place without the consent of indigenous people, we are now on a path that would see indigenous people participate better in the economic development drivers of our country. However, there are still immense barriers to this.

We see, time and time again, that when a first nations, Métis or Inuit community says no, the government ignores it. Indigenous people have fought tooth and nail to see the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples truly adhered to. This gives indigenous people the great ability not just to say yes to projects that benefit them, but to also say no. This is the biggest contrast and challenge that indigenous people have, particularly with Conservative and Liberal governments. Time and time again, indigenous issues and indigenous people are only important when it is convenient to them.

This particular case is another one of those instances where indigenous people have now taken the floor of the House of Commons to speak to the very interesting and deep challenges related to economic development. However, it is against the backdrop of an important moment in our House of Commons where we are being stalemated, because of several instances of concurrence in this place to slow down government legislation, which I understand completely. However, I also understand, and want to point out, that this debate today is critical and should not be taking place on the backs of other critical pieces of work and legislation. This is an important topic, and we have a moment now to speak to it. I would hope that the government representatives are listening.

We have a serious issue with the final topic I will address today, which is indigenous procurement. To back up a bit, procurement for

indigenous people is done through a federal program called PSIB, the indigenous business support program, which allows indigenous people to bid on procurement items. When the government is looking for talent acquisition, it would create an offer, have indigenous people bid, and then the successful indigenous company would administer that program. It sounds wonderful. It is a great thing for indigenous businesses, should they be allowed to fairly participate.

● (1725)

There is no framework today that would put the indigenous procurement strategy of the government to a higher standard, one that would not be forcing the Assembly of First Nations to call for real reform within procurement. It would not be that the victims of the lack of procurement are those indigenous businesses, which are the real victims here. It is the indigenous businesses that have done everything right, that played by the rules, that signed all the papers and that got the congratulations and a pat on the back for incorporating their company, only to be met by a system that is rigged by the government and that has benefited, in this particular case, someone named Randy.

This is an obvious instance that requires the government's immediate attention. We need to get directly to the bottom of what has been taking place in the indigenous procurement processes of the government. It is time for someone to be held accountable for the pretendianism that continues to propagate right across this country. Whether it is in social media, in traditional media, in businesses or right here in the House of Commons, there are people who are falsely claiming to be indigenous.

I had a conversation with my sister when the story came up, and she smiled at me and she said that if people want to be indigenous so badly, they should also suffer the consequences. What a thing to say. Today, the lack of access to indigenous business support is the consequence. Being disproportionately impacted by poverty is the condition indigenous people are in.

Can members imagine how much of a slap in the face it is when there is a member of the cabinet claiming to be indigenous for the purposes of accessing an indigenous procurement strategy? That is the issue pertaining to indigenous procurement today. It requires the immediate attention of the government. The AFN, indigenous leaders and, as someone made mention, Métis people are also calling for justice. How can anyone have faith in a system that allows for non-indigenous people's applications to even be heard, let alone eventually accepted and part of the government's procurement process? It is very serious indeed.

I want to speak to the important and critical aspects of the report as it pertains to indigenous self-determination. Indigenous people in Canada have always been subject to a unique relationship. Ever since the onset of colonization in North America, it has always been one of economic coercion. Economic coercion is the story and history of Canada.

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We do not even have to look all that far. In my own lifetime, I have heard stories from elders who remember the days of the crooked and greedy Hudson's Bay Company. It was a monopoly here in North America that took such great advantage of indigenous people that there are horrific stories, whether of the delivery of small pox blankets or whether of the fact that indigenous people had to trap so many furs, up to the height of a rifle. That was the cost of it. There was extreme greed by the companies.

What is a shame to hear today is the fact that companies continue in that tradition, whether they are huge, immense, giant natural resource companies that say they would rather sue the nation than work with it, like we have seen in northern Alberta, or whether it is governments getting in the direct way of indigenous people trying to get access to real economic benefit, like what is taking place in Alberta.

In southwest Calgary, Canada's largest first nation development, the Tsuut'ina Nation, is building a master-planned community on 1,200 acres of its land. The \$10-billion, mixed-use project will feature 17 million square feet of real estate, including more than 6,500 residential units. However, there are issues related to the ability to permit it by the provincial government.

• (1730)

Now the nation is waiting. It has been waiting and waiting for the government to give it the green light, when it is the nation of those lands. Original stewards have always built homes on their lands since time immemorial, and today a province is saying no. That is limiting economic business and economic opportunity for indigenous people, just as much as pretending to be indigenous for the purpose of trying to access capital. Over and over again we see instances of indigenous entrepreneurs being sidelined, whether in the case of provincial governments, as I just mentioned; in this case, with a federal government program that was meant to help indigenous entrepreneurs in procurement; or in the case of upholding indigenous people's rights.

We often talk about economic reconciliation, a buzzword from my Conservative colleagues, who most particularly want to talk about access to natural resources. I understand this very well, coming from a natural resource community myself, an area that I worked in for quite a long time. I know how these debates go with companies. When companies come in, they are hoping to get a \$3,000 barbecue so we do not have to talk about beneficial ownership. I know exactly what it means when a company comes in and says it is going to use our roads and not pay for any operations or maintenance. I know exactly what it means when a company says it is going to give us a sweetheart deal today and walk out 10 years later, leaving the community with a mess to clean up costing billions of dollars.

These are the real economic barriers facing indigenous people, and these are issues we do not talk about. We do not talk about them because of the deep desire to see a partisan benefit. Anytime we talk about indigenous issues in this place, with the Liberals and the Conservatives, it is always about how they can score one on indigenous people. We have to end this. We have to be critical of these issues. Hopefully, we can unite as a House toward a process that deals with indigenous people as the rightful and beneficial

owners of their lands and come to a real conclusion, a united conclusion, in the House saying that Canada must respect fundamental rights.

I would like to speak now for a moment about the importance of treaties. Canada undertook, in the 1870s and 1880s, until the late 1920s, a process of historic treaty-making. For the better knowledge of my colleagues, there are several eras of treaties we can delineate. For the topic of this discussion, we are talking about the numbered treaties. For the numbered treaties, one of which I am from, Treaty No. 6, benefits were allocated throughout treaty negotiations and for the treaties themselves. However, the government, as soon as it signed these treaties, walked away and said, no, it knows better and that since it had the land, it is going to legislate these people, put down the Indian Act and never hear of the treaties again.

Today, we are in the courts. The Liberal government and the federal Conservatives have had a whole lifetime of lawsuits against indigenous people based on this decision. There is the clean water legislation, for example. Having clean drinking water would fundamentally increase indigenous people's access to the economy. A federal piece of legislation on that was struck down by the courts when the Conservatives tried to defend it. A Conservative piece of legislation that was struck down for being unconstitutional is now being replaced with another piece of legislation by the Liberals that is barely an improvement.

These are the issues we are talking about. This incremental justice results in massive injustices for indigenous people while we wait and wait and children go by without anything. That is why it is so critical that we speak to the real challenges facing economic development for indigenous communities.

Part of the real issue is capital. The Indian Act, for example, delineates very small, postage stamp pieces of land. For indigenous people to truly be stewards of an economy that is for their own people, their land must grow. The fact that we have reserved them to small, postage stamp pieces of property is an abomination. We must end the apartheid that exists in Canada. We must end the racial legislation that exists under the Indian Act. We must empower indigenous people toward their own destiny.

For thousands of years, indigenous people have traded up and down the St. Lawrence, up and down North America, all the way from Mexico to Tuktoyaktuk, bringing goods and services to people right across this great place. However, the ugly horrors of racism and discrimination clamped down on Canada as the boats of Europe arrived.

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• (1735)

Europeans limited indigenous peoples' dignity by saying that they were savage. Today, we reject this term in the hope that we can see indigenous people like me, and like those right across this country, as the true stewards of this place. They are the ones who understand this land and who will hopefully save it from a climate crisis that continues to ravage the world and, most importantly, indigenous people, who are on the front lines of much of this.

There is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a meaningful framework, first ushered in by one of the greatest advocates in Canada, an Alberta first nations chief by the name of Dr. Wilton Littlechild, who is a fantastic and remarkable living giant from Alberta. The nations he serves are largely nations that are in the resource-rich provinces, including my home province.

We have never, at any point in time, have had to delineate between the unfortunate dichotomy that now exists between resource development and resource non-development. These kinds of questions presuppose indigenous peoples' interests. Perhaps indigenous peoples' interests are for their land mass to grow, for example. How do we get to the point of having conversations with indigenous people about their desires? Instead, we have a government that continually wants access to indigenous peoples' resources and lands, and it is finding every single way to do it, even though the courts and the international community have been clear that indigenous people have a fundamental right to their lands and a say in its use. That includes the right to say no.

These are fundamental rights that would ensure clarity for industrial partners. That is what I have been hearing from resource development companies, in particular. They just want clarity. If they can find a way to get clarity on who has those consultative rights, then perhaps those companies, including those of indigenous people, would not have to settle these disputes in court. This would require a government that would be willing to understand and implement treaties in a number of treaty areas. It would also require the government to act in earnest in areas where there is no treaty, fully recognizing that they are indigenous lands.

When we do not recognize this, there is a cost and a consequence. As a matter of fact, we saw this cost and consequence manifest during the last Parliament, when we saw one of the most historic instances of indigenous people saying no. That was in the Wet'suwet'en uprising in British Columbia. They had simply said no to a project, and it resulted in what we are again seeing today: immense violence, such as police officers with chainsaws ripping down doors. There is no reason for this violence in our country. The days of burning indigenous people off their lands are over.

It is time now to respect indigenous people for our perspectives, our knowledge and our ways of being, not simply for having to play defence for the Liberals or the Conservatives any time they bring up an issue concerning indigenous people for their own partisan benefit. That is the only time we debate these issues in the House.

I am asking my colleagues to rise to the occasion, to rise to the true dignity that Murray Sinclair called us to, and there are those who have already invoked his name. He called us to reconciliation

because, without it, we will have resistance. Those words live on in my head and in the minds and hearts of indigenous people right across this country. They demand better. They demand reform and demand that these issues be taken more seriously and be given more credence.

I want to make a final comment in the last point I will make today, which is on indigenous procurement. I understand that there have been numerous discussions related to who is indigenous and who is not indigenous. This is a serious issue that has touched the hearts and minds of Canadians and those across North America. It is in the media, in academia and in this place. There has never been a time more important than today to work with indigenous people, to understand indigenous people and put indigenous people in the leadership role in developing a framework that would see indigenous identity truly respected and taken care of. I call on the government to immediately audit the existing list of businesses, strike down any that are ineligible and create a framework with indigenous people that gets to the bottom of this and ends Britannianism in procurement across Canada.

• (1740)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is so much more that can be done. As a government, we are working to do as much as we can.

I have been a parliamentarian for well over 30 years now. I look at what we have been able to accomplish over the last nine years in terms of finances, legislative processes and building relationships, tangible relationships, nation to nation. I would be very much challenged to come up with another federal government that has done as much. I recognize that, yes, a lot more needs to be done, but I do believe, whether in the area of reconciliation, finances or legislation, that we have made significant gains.

My question to the member is not about that, but it is about the opposition members. This will be the third concurrence report in a row where they have instructed committees to call witnesses. I am concerned about the parliamentary procedure of using committee reports to get concurrence on the floor of the House as a tool to take away discussions that could be and should be possibly taking place in standing committees. What are his thoughts on that?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, this would have been an important study nine years ago. It would have been an important study 20 years ago. This would have been important when the country was founded. It has taken until today. Now the Conservatives are smelling blood in the water and want to take a partisan approach to this issue. That is the only reason we are debating this now.

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I hear the member when he talks about the procedures of this place, but I respectfully submit that we should have been debating this a long time ago. When indigenous people began to be a part of our economy, which was always, we should have been asking the question of how they best fit in.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, we have been talking a lot about how infrastructure affects indigenous people and about the lack of infrastructure. We have talked about housing. We could talk about water and the economic impact on communities.

Not only is the government not providing the right infrastructure, but there are also negative effects from resource extraction, for example. I am thinking of a study carried out by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which showed the extremely negative impacts that resource extraction sites have in western Canada. They have consequences for nearby indigenous communities. This is an example of a bad project that does not put economic power back in the hands of indigenous people. What is more, it harms them, particularly indigenous women and girls.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about these negative effects.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, it is no secret that indigenous people have been disproportionately impacted by resource development throughout Canada's history. I am not talking only about oil and gas. I am talking about the fur trade industry, for example, that began Canada's exploitation in the area I am from. I am talking about the nuclear exploitation that took place in Ontario of indigenous people. I am talking about all kinds of exploitation that Indigenous people often suffer by way of this economic demand by Canadians.

It is true that indigenous women in particular are facing disproportionate levels of violence at resource extraction zones. The member was on the committee responsible for the study I am mentioning. There was testimony in there regarding an indigenous woman who had to resign from being chief because of the amount of terrible things that were being told to her and around her, and the issues that were pertaining to indigenous women and their ability to survive in that resource sector area.

Sexualized violence, racism and hatred, and systemic racism are perpetuated in these systems. We need to find ways to better support our workers in these places so they are better equipped to deal with the challenges of living in a northern isolated community, in addition to assisting those workers in finding pathways to becoming a benefit in those communities, as opposed to what is right now a very serious, risky and dangerous scenario.

• (1745)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my thanks to the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach for an extremely helpful view of the procurement processes and the need to go through those to remove the exploitation once again of indigenous peoples through fakery.

I want to put a question forward really clearly. Reconciliation has to be more than land and territorial acknowledgement. This is the land we are standing on today that was stolen. When will we get to land back? When can we get to a real discussion of indigenous territorial sovereignty over lands that were stolen?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for that great question. This is something I think we would agree on. The fundamental issue is the land. Indigenous people have a fundamental right to this land. This comes from the very important reality that these people, indigenous people, are part of the land.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that took place in the early 1990s delineated three things that constitute a nation: land, power and money. If there has ever been a moment in time in which indigenous people deserve to have their lands fully recognized as theirs, it was yesterday. The next best opportunity is today.

Let us acknowledge indigenous peoples beyond just our territorial acknowledgements of having traditional territory in this place. They have real territory in this place. These are their lands. We have to respect that and come to terms with that; by God, I hope we can find a way to have reconciliation and forgiveness. With the pathway of ensuring indigenous people have ownership and access to their own lands, in addition to Canadians' ability to reconcile, if that happens in earnest, I think we actually have a chance to live harmoniously in this great place we call home.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thought my colleague gave an extremely powerful speech. When I see the Conservative members come into the House and say they believe in indigenous reconciliation, I feel as though a crocodile is inviting me down to sit by the river's edge and have a picnic with them. They say, "Trust me, we will get along famously." We have seen the long history of the Conservatives; we have also seen the complete failure of the Liberals, year in, year out, all the way back to Confederation.

In our region, Treaty No. 9 signed over to the state what were pretty much the richest gold, iron, copper, hydro and forestry lands in the world; it built Canada. Our communities were left on these postage stamp-sized reserves. We still have it happening with the Ring of Fire; Doug Ford said he was going to drive a bulldozer into the Ring of Fire himself. Meanwhile, he is ignoring Neskantaga First Nation's 28 years without water; he will not even talk to Neskantaga. He will not even talk to Eabametoong First Nation, yet he says he is going to get at the wealth of Treaty No. 9's territory for an Australian mining giant.

What does my hon. colleague think of the Conservative promises?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I would say this to Canadians who are following this debate: The only time the Conservatives will mention indigenous people is if it is to score partisan points. That is always the case, and it has always been the truth across Canada.

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It is that truth or the second truth, which is that indigenous people have something the Conservatives want. That is the case in point that the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay just raised. I want to mention that he is a stalwart of indigenous rights. He has long been committed to indigenous people and our participation, not just in this place but right across the country.

I am willing to set aside what I have seen as a pattern from both parties to get a commitment from them to truly see that the solution toward indigenous justice lies not within their parties, but in the minds, imaginations and spirits of indigenous peoples. Their right to self-determination will never die.

• (1750)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his amazing speech. In all of these conversations, I am consistently brought back to some of the work that I do on national defence and the links to the Arctic, conversations about resource extraction there and what is going on.

Could the member relate what he was talking about earlier to the Arctic and what we are seeing for indigenous people there?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from London—Fanshawe for her fantastic work and her deep commitment to reconciliation on behalf of indigenous people, particularly when it comes to those who are serving in our armed forces.

Indigenous people have deeply committed to the defence of this country through the Canadian Armed Forces. We can remember them and their deep contributions in World War II or World War I, but they also contribute today, insisting that the very important work of protecting the Arctic should be indigenous led. Inuit have long protected the northern part of the Arctic. We must continue in that great tradition and support them as they continue to do that work on behalf of themselves and Canadians.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak tonight on this concurrence debate. I will be sharing my time with my neighbour in the riding and here in the House, the member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

This seems like everything old is new again with this debate and looking at this particular issue. We looked at this issue over six years ago in the operations committee. I know I have rarely mentioned my work in the operations committee over the nine years I have been on it here in the House.

In 2018, the OGGO committee, the mighty OGGO, put out report number 15 on indigenous procurement and the government's role and how we can help with indigenous businesses. I really encourage everyone, especially the government, to read the report. The government did a response to the report, as it is required to, which, of course, was full of nothings.

A couple of years later, in probably 2020 or 2021, I asked the government to table an analysis line by line of the recommendations, to see how many had been achieved. On the 35 recommendations, the government came back with 35 examples of basic word salad, which means it basically has not done anything.

I have to ask again why we are studying this issue. My colleague from Edmonton Griesbach gave us a shot at the end, and I am perfectly fine with that. We did work together on public accounts, and I know he is passionate about this and we share a lot of similar values. The government should be following its rules and there should be accountability for government for its actions. We continue to see nothing on this issue.

From the report, I am going to go over some of the titles. My colleague from Edmonton Griesbach asked why we have not done anything in the past 20 years. I have to say that we have a blueprint on how to succeed in this issue, and the government sat on it for six and a half years. Here are some of the headings from the report, just so the government can understand some of the things we are talking about. It talks about governance and interpretation of the indigenous strategy, promoting the indigenous strategy and preventing corporate fronts. Of course, we talked about that a lot in the question period today. Perhaps the member for Edmonton Centre would like to weigh in on this issue, or perhaps read the report himself.

There are other sections on supporting small and medium-sized indigenous women-owned indigenous businesses, and set-asides and the establishment of targets and goals, which makes me kind of confused. Why does the government need goals and targets? We have set rules on indigenous set-asides, on business that has to be set aside for indigenous-owned companies. Why we call it a goal when it is firm in writing is beyond me.

Another section is on partnerships and joint ventures, which again is a topic often discussed today, and on the front page of the National Post, about basically fake indigenous companies being set up, or shell companies. Another is lessons from the oil and gas sector. My colleague from Edmonton Griesbach weighed in on that as well, and I am going to respectfully disagree. We heard indigenous business communities all say that across the country, the energy sector in Alberta is promoting and using indigenous businesses the most. The ones doing the worst job were PSPC and INAC.

There was a section on the evaluation of the indigenous strategy and data. This is funny because the government at the time, when asked how it was recording which indigenous companies were getting business and recording successes, commented that it was being tracked by Excel spreadsheet and that it did not have proper numbers. A couple years later we asked the same question and were told it was being tracked on an Excel spreadsheet. Thank God it was not using Lotus 1-2-3, because I am sure the government would, if it could get away with that.

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Another section of the report was on large-scale procurement projects, and my favourite one, parliamentary precinct. I want to read part of the report on parliamentary precinct, which reads, “[The government] informed the committee that in fall 2017, PSPC posted a tendering process for project managers for a portion of the rehabilitation of the parliamentary precinct for only three weeks.” For all three of those watching at home, I am referring to the re-building of Centre Block, which is about a \$10-billion project.

• (1755)

The government put out an RFP that was only valid for about three weeks. The report continues, “Moreover, he highlighted that one of the requirements in that tendering process was that eligible companies had to acquire their resources from within a 50-kilometre radius of Ottawa.” That excluded Métis and indigenous businesses that were just outside of that 50-kilometre limit.

The Liberals, who spend so much time patting themselves on their backs and are almost throwing their arms out from patting themselves on the back so hard, rise repeatedly in the House to say that there is no relationship more important than theirs with the first nations. However, for the symbol of our democracy, Centre Block, the very building that defines freedom and democracy in Canada, they purposely excluded Métis and other indigenous businesses from being able to bid or even being subcontractors on this project. It is mind-boggling and shameful.

We also spoke in committee about the use of aboriginal criteria and that the government should be having their suppliers track subcontractors so we can see if there are community benefits for first nations. Just in the last couple of weeks, we have been studying indigenous procurement, again, at the operations committee. We were told that we are not tracking subcontractors. Why are we not doing this simple process to see if the community benefits are flowing through? The government seems more interested in finding a company that is 51% indigenous-owned, which may be fraudulent or deliver no benefits to the communities, to tick a box, rather than doing the real work.

We heard of this in the ArriveCan scandal, where we had Dalian with its partner, Coradix, which received hundreds of millions in government contracts. Coradix would create a venture with Dalian, which had self-identified as indigenous, receive hundreds of millions in contracts, and then not employ indigenous businesses. The government has known about this, which we know from the study, and it has done nothing.

From the OGGO report from 2017, we learned:

...the [Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business] suggested that the federal government award points to bidders that are Progressive Aboriginal Relations...certified, which consists of an independent jury of Indigenous professionals that “evaluates companies on their relationships with [indigenous] businesses and communities in day to day operations.”

This is another ongoing issue we have heard of. We have had first nations groups come to committee and say that they should be the ones who are deciding who is indigenous, so we do not have that fraud. It should be indigenous-led to dictate who are indigenous companies, not led by PSPC, yet what do we have? We have PSPC defining it based on self-identification, so we have rampant fraud worth perhaps hundreds of millions. We are not sure.

Part of the committee's study was on preventing corporate fronts. PSPC “explained that Indigenous status is not required for Indigenous businesses to be recognized as such since that recognition is based on self-identification.” One has to shake their head and ask why we have clearly identified rules to benefit indigenous companies and at the same time the government states that it is okay as long as people self-identify.

Now, of course, we have the ongoing issue of the other Randy. I am not sure, in the current issue, whether he is the other Randy, the other other Randy, or Randy's other Randy, but we have the Minister of Employment's company, of which he is 50% co-owner, bidding as an indigenous business.

The government said to committee that one is not required to be indigenous to bid. They just have to state that they are indigenous. This is the crux of the issue. We have a government that is more interested in photo ops and virtue signalling than in following the rules and getting the work done. I wish I had more time to discuss this issue because it has been building up for six and a half years, but I will just say that the government should be active on this issue now.

• (1800)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thinking in terms of a Conservative commitment to cut the Canada Infrastructure Bank, even though the Canada Infrastructure Bank has not only many projects that are complete but also others that are on the way. It has a wonderful program called the indigenous equity initiative, which works in partnership with indigenous people in many different ways.

I am wondering whether the member can explain how the Conservatives have made the determination that they are going to cut the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and whether he could give a clear indication whether or not they would at the very least, after they have cut the Infrastructure Bank, put in some form of an indigenous equity initiative to replace it.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I would just ask my colleague across the way this: Will he stand with us and demand that the member for Edmonton Centre, the minister for employment, be fired from his job as minister? He committed fraud. His company put down that it was indigenous-owned when it was clearly not. The government paraded the member for Edmonton Centre for years through their indigenous caucus when he was not indigenous.

I am sure the member will have another chance to ask a question. Will he simply stand and say that yes, he supports the firing of the Minister of Employment?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his great work at OGGO, getting to the bottom of much of the serious procurement issue before us. One of the issues we worked together on in the public accounts committee was the issue of subcontracting. At the time, when we were investigating Dalian, a company that claimed to be indigenous for the purposes of getting government contracts, we had learned throughout the process that even he did not know the rules around the indigenous procurement strategy. He never knew them.

How can a government fail so much that even the person applying to the program did not have any idea, according to him, that there were misleading applications? Is this just part and parcel of the program that one must admit to not understanding the program in order to apply? What would the member have to say about those two options with respect to Dalian and with respect to the other Randy?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach. We do miss him on public accounts, so I hope he will come back.

The issue is a serious one. I think the member brought up in his own speech, and some pointed toward us, and that is fair, that people were using the indigenous community for scoring points or for gaining traction. The government needs to move past this. We have to follow the rules. We have to include the community when setting out very clear guidelines on what is considered indigenous-owned and what the community benefits are that will maximize the benefit of indigenous communities.

We have to stop using photo ops and seeking attention, or patting ourselves on the back for all the great work we are doing when nothing is getting done. We need to involve all the members of the House and all the members on the committee to ensure that strong work, whether it is the OGGO report or public accounts work, is followed and that we focus on getting results and not just ticking a box somewhere in the bureaucracy.

• (1805)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague. I have a great amount of respect for the work he does. I have seen a lot of scandals over the years. This one, to me, is very tawdry. It has been like an endless line of scandals with the member for Edmonton Centre, but there is something really deplorable about someone who has the power of government and then presents themselves as indigenous in order to secure contracts from the government. This seems like the ultimate grift. It is also a slap in the face to anything that speaks of reconciliation in this country. It just cannot be allowed to stand.

I want to ask my colleague why he thinks the member for Edmonton Centre is still sitting on the front bench.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, one of the witnesses who appeared at OGGO made a comment about the situation. He stated, “You’re harming the community by taking that opportunity away. Whether it’s food out of their mouths and social impact on the community or a job.” This is very much at the crux of it. The actions of the Minister of Employment are attacking and taking

away opportunities from those people who are deserving in the indigenous community.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would just like to give a round of applause to my colleague, the member for Edmonton West Edmonton Mall, as he often says, for an excellent speech.

I am thankful to participate in this debate because this is what Parliament is all about. It is about debating these very important issues. I am very proud to come here, not only as a representative of Sturgeon River—Parkland but also as a representative of a number of indigenous communities, including the Enoch Cree Nation and the Alexander First Nation, as well as the area that was traditionally occupied by members of the Michel Band. Sadly and unfortunately, in the 1950s, the Michel Band was enfranchised under some suspicious circumstances; to this day, people are still fighting to get the recognition they deserve.

My region, which is in Treaty 6 territory, has been a region of significant settlement for indigenous and Métis peoples. I am very proud not only to be a representative of Sturgeon River—Parkland but also to represent these peoples.

I am rising to speak today on the issue of indigenous procurement programs. For those of my constituents who are watching, I want to provide a bit of background on what we are talking about today. We know that, over the time period of Canada being a country, and even before, indigenous peoples were disadvantaged in many ways by policies that were carried out by the government, racism and a number of other things. I could talk about those things at length, but I am going to focus on indigenous procurement.

We know that these issues have really disenfranchised first nations, indigenous and Métis people, as well as others, from participating in the economy. The ability to participate in the economy is the ability to free oneself to really take charge of one's own life financially. When programs are set up, such as an indigenous procurement program, it is a recognition by government that marginalization has taken place. This needs to be addressed by a special program, with the hope that marginalized communities and entrepreneurs from these communities will have the opportunity to bid on government contracts. They will then be able to build their capacities to provide the services that the government is contracting for, and this will provide economic opportunity for people in their nations across Canada.

What has happened is a symptom of a government that has let its hand get off the wheel of governing and has really taken a laid-back approach to accountability and transparency. What should be a good program to increase capacity and support indigenous peoples with developing their economic capacity has been taken advantage of by unscrupulous actors who are exploiting a weakness in government. They are exploiting a lack of accountability and transparency to access these programs.

Routine Proceedings

We are talking about potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in funds that have been misappropriated. We know that there is this recent phenomenon of pretendians. I am sure it has been a long-lasting phenomenon. Here, people who have no indigenous heritage and no status with any indigenous community claim indigenous heritage through the government's indigenous procurement program. They are trying to give themselves a leg up when seeking out government contracts. We have seen this pretendianism manifest itself in many ways, but this is a very specific example of how it can be financially beneficial.

The member for Timmins—James Bay asked if this was the ultimate grift. This is an example of grift, where we see people taking advantage of a program that is meant to empower marginalized people, and the people who are doing this are very empowered in the first place.

A case in point example is when we are talking about the Minister of Employment and his business partner, Stephen Anderson. I do not think anyone in the House would argue that these are marginalized people. These are people who are at the pinnacle of political and economic power in this country. The Minister of Employment was a Rhodes Scholar. He is a very privileged person, yet he and his business partner are checking the box, claiming their indigenous heritage, in order to benefit from a government program. This program is meant to build capacity and support people in marginalized indigenous communities so that they can empower themselves, build their businesses and be successful.

• (1810)

I pray that some day in the future, hopefully sooner rather than later, we will live in a country where there is no need for programs like this because indigenous people will be on an equal footing with all other people in terms of their success and their capacity to build their own businesses and to succeed in the marketplace. I know there are many great indigenous companies that are already succeeding. There are indigenous companies in my riding that are participating, particularly in the oil and gas sector in my province, and are succeeding massively.

There was a recent agreement made under the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, which was set up under a Conservative government in Alberta, where we saw indigenous communities such as Enoch Cree Nation in my constituency partner on a new power plant project, the Cascade power plant just outside of Edson, Alberta. This power plant was built on time, on schedule and on budget and is now providing power for the people of Alberta, including many of these first nations communities, and first nations have a tangible ownership stake in this company. That is to show just how successful indigenous people can be when these programs are built correctly and yet, under the current Liberal government, we have seen transparency and accountability really go by the wayside.

There have been research findings revealed by Global News and first nations universities that have uncovered fraudulent schemes where consultants are paying indigenous people to front companies so that they can apply for this program. We are seeing shell company operators who have been abusing loopholes for years while Indigenous Services Canada is just standing by. We had witnesses

who came to the government operations committee who said very clearly that this is harming indigenous peoples because it is not only taking away financial economic opportunities that indigenous people should be given priority to access, but it is also undermining the very programs themselves. When people see that this fraudulent activity is taking place, it undermines the public support for these very important programs. Therefore, we need to ensure that these programs are targeted. We need to ensure that officials are doing the background checks necessary so that the people these programs have been designed to help are being helped. That is when we will see Canadians continue to firmly support these programs.

Talking again about the Minister of Employment, a colleague of mine during question period today made a very interesting point, which is that when the first indigenous justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, stood up to government corruption, she was removed from cabinet and yet, we have another Liberal minister who pretended to be indigenous to try to get government contracts when he was in the private sector and he is still standing on the front bench. It speaks volumes that we have a Prime Minister who allows this to happen under his leadership. Leadership comes from the top down, and when people in the Liberal Party see what their Prime Minister is getting away with, I guess they just take it as an example of what they think that they will be allowed to get away with themselves.

I just want to say that I am incredibly proud to represent so many wonderful indigenous, first nations and Métis peoples in my region. I have been speaking to leaders in the community and they are absolutely furious that these programs have been exploited by bad actors in order to enrich themselves while indigenous business owners who are very deserving have been left out, either from a lack of information or a lack of funding. These funds are going to companies that do not have the right to access these funds. It is really a slap in the face to reconciliation for the government not to take action immediately to solve these issues.

I would like to move a subamendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended, in paragraph (c), by adding the following: “(iii) given priority to this study, subject only to its order of referencing Bill C-61, An Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on First Nation lands; and (iv) have the first priority for the use of House resources for committee meetings, subject to any special orders previously adopted, for the studies referred to in subparagraph (iii)”.

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The subamendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure members have heard the phrase “fake news”. What we have witnessed is fake concern from the Conservative Party on such an important issue for Canadians. Let me explain why in the form of putting forward a question for the member.

Routine Proceedings

The member knows that the Conservative Party has had numerous days of opposition. We might be surprised, or maybe not, that it has never, ever used the issue as an opposition day motion. If I am wrong, I would like the member to tell me the day it actually did, or to say that, yes, it came close and maybe even gave some thought to talking about the issue when it has thought about opposition days.

Can the member give any sort of sign of hope that the Conservative Party of Canada genuinely cares about indigenous issues, outside of using what it has today, which is nothing but a political manoeuvre as part of the multi-million dollar filibuster? That is what we are witnessing, because I have never seen an opposition day on the issue. Am I wrong? Was there an opposition day from the Conservative Party on the issue of indigenous people?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to push back against the member's assertion. I think members can check the record. I have raised issues numerous times on behalf of my constituents, including my indigenous constituents, related to the Enoch Cree Nation. It has made multiple attempts to access rural broadband funding, housing funding and waste-water funding from the federal government, only to be rejected every single time.

In fact, the chief and council of the Enoch Cree Nation reached out in relation to a funding program that was set up by the government to clean up abandoned orphaned wells. There are a number of orphaned wells on the Enoch Cree Nation's lands. There was money left over in the fund. The nation begged the Liberal government to set aside the funds so first nations could go out, do the work and clean up the abandoned wells.

What did the government do instead? It clawed back the funding, not only hurting our environment and leaving first nations communities with a bigger cleanup bill and environmental disasters on their lands but also preventing indigenous businesses from succeeding—

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of being in the House from 2008 to 2015, when the Conservative government, under Prime Minister Harper, was here. In that time period, there were dozens of indigenous nations across this country that did not have access to clean drinking water, one of the primary elements of life. The government of the time sat and did nothing about that, so I do not think we should take any lessons from the Conservatives about care and concern for indigenous communities in this country.

The member talked about economic development. To me, the basis of economic development for anybody is to be anchored in their community with a home; it is an essential need in order to be able to participate as a member of society. However, the Conservative leader has told his MPs to stop advocating for funds for municipalities that want to obtain funds through the \$4-billion housing accelerator fund. This was admitted by Conservatives. Can he tell us whether he supports his leader's telling Conservative MPs not to obtain funds for housing for their constituents?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I have to admit that I am somewhat confused because I am never sure which New Democratic Party I am going to see in the House today. When my colleague from Edmonton West was speaking, there were members of the NDP standing up and holding the government to account. When I get up to speak, there are members of the NDP looking like they want to join the Liberal Party and parroting its talking points.

It is so important that we focus on the debate here today. I find it kind of odd that the New Democrats claim to stand up for indigenous communities and indigenous small businesses. I know that the member from Edmonton Griesbach was very eloquent on this. Maybe he should be speaking with his colleagues and reminding them how important it is to stand up for them so they can access the programs and ask questions that are relevant to the subject matter we are speaking about today.

The fact is that indigenous-owned businesses have been under-represented in our country and that the funding programs that were designed to increase their capacity and economic empowerment have been taken advantage of by bad actors who are using shell companies and consultants to exploit indigenous peoples to access funds and enrich themselves. It is absolutely wrong and shameful that a member of the NDP is not championing the issue each and every day in the House.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I start my comments today, I have an opportunity, because I am standing up, to recognize Sabrina Larson, who has worked in my constituency office for 16 years. She is here in Ottawa today to get a long service award. I cannot tell whether she is in the House but I am very thankful for the work she has done for many, many years, helping my constituents handle their casework. I serve what is no doubt the largest constituency by population in the country, with a lot of casework. We think there are between 260,000 and 280,000 people right now in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin. I am looking forward to the boundary changes in the next election. I should mention that Sabrina's husband, Laine, is here in Ottawa. I am very thankful for him as well.

The new constituency, when the boundaries take effect at the election, will be switched from Edmonton—Wetaskiwin to Leduc—Wetaskiwin. In that new constituency, the community of Maskwacis will be added to my constituency. I am very much looking forward to the riding boundaries being moved in that way. It is very important for Maskwacis to be included in the region we are in.

Of course, the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach and I may not agree on very many things, but as he spoke today, I was listening intently. I appreciated his comments, and I appreciated, especially, his shout-out to Willie Littlechild, who was the member of Parliament for that area, I believe, from 1984 to 1993, or in that time frame anyway.

We also have a connection in that he is very involved with the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation. I worked for the Edmonton Oilers before I was elected. I am very thankful to Willie for his contributions to the broader community and specifically to the community of Maskwacis.

Routine Proceedings

This debate is really important. As I was listening to the debate today, I was struck by Liberal members, including the Liberal member for Winnipeg North, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, and, earlier, the member for Saint John—Rothesay, standing up and completely discounting the importance of this conversation, completely demeaning the fact that we would even have this conversation today, talking about how unimportant it is.

Of course, the member for Winnipeg North called it “fake news”. Just a few minutes ago, as we were talking, he referred to the whole debate we are having today as “fake news”. Interestingly, Conservatives have brought up this issue at various committees in the House. We are having this debate today because of a concurrence motion brought forward by Conservatives.

The member will have the opportunity to vote on this concurrence motion and the amendments in the coming days. We will look forward to seeing how the member for Winnipeg North votes.

I want to focus on the member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre and the broader issue here. Of course, he is the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages—

• (1825)

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know the Conservatives are trying to have a high level of debate today, so I just wanted to correct the record. It was not “fake news”. The member was saying it is fake concern from the Conservatives.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, actually, the quote-unquote comment was “fake news” from the hon. member, so that point of order seems to be fake news in and of itself.

I serve in an Edmonton riding. I have served for 19 years in the House. I have had the opportunity to—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I appreciate the high level of debate, but I was not sure if the Speaker ruled that it was a fake point of order or not a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It was not a point of order. It was a point of debate.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I always appreciate the member for Timmins—James Bay and his dedication to a high level of debate in the House.

I will come back to the member for Edmonton Centre, an on-again, off-again member of the House. Of course, he was a member for four years and then was put on a time out and then came back for the last few years, taking a cabinet position as one of two Alberta members of Parliament.

I will point out that even before the series of scandals the minister has found himself in, he did absolutely nothing for the people of Alberta or the people of Edmonton in his role as the minister responsible for Edmonton. In fact, on multiple occasions, I had the chance to be on panels with him, up until—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I am having a hard time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we have some order, please? A speech is being given.

The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would sincerely like to apologize, but I do think the conversation was that he had done some stuff by getting the procurements. I think it was unfair, but I do retract—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are getting into debate and mocking the procedures of the House, and I really do not appreciate that.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin has the floor.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, that is one of the first comments I think I have ever heard the hon. member make that I might agree with. We agree that it seems as though the minister in question sees every government program as a personal opportunity. That is what we are talking about today. It sounds like the hon. member was making the same point I am.

I was going back to the conversations I have had in year-end panels with the minister, where just the two of us, sometimes three when an NDP member from Edmonton was there, talked about the situation with the federal government and the impact on Edmontonians or Albertans. The minister constantly repeated government talking points as they relate to, for example, the energy sector in Alberta. As mentioned earlier today, there are few industries more committed to indigenous involvement and meaningful indigenous contribution and benefit than the energy sector in Canada, yet the minister constantly stands in opposition in the House to the energy sector in Alberta.

I had the opportunity to do four constituent round tables last week, and it is unfortunate that with the scandals facing the minister today, he is not able to take part in meaningful conversations at cabinet. I believe there is a cabinet meeting tomorrow. I suspect this cabinet meeting will be more consumed with the side hustles of the minister than talking about employment, the workforce or official languages.

What my constituents are concerned about is our broken systems across the board. The government seems consumed with experimental policy on housing, immigration, public safety, energy and the environment. All of these issues were things that constituents were consumed with at the four constituent round table meetings I had over the past week. They are very concerned that their Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, is not just lost in the conversations but completely incompetent when it comes to dealing with the very real issues that Canadians are facing today.

Routine Proceedings

With the indigenous procurement strategy, the outcome was supposed to be a stimulating of economic activity that benefits indigenous people, with a 5% set-aside for indigenous businesses. Of federal contracts, 5% were supposed to go to indigenous businesses, but before this even came up, a concern was raised, which has been raised over the last little while. There are three different areas of abuse that we can point to: instances where non-indigenous companies claimed to be indigenous and came to be regarded as indigenous by the federal government; instances where the joint ventures between indigenous and non-indigenous companies, which meant the joint ventures could access set-asides, led to the work and benefits being monopolized by non-indigenous partners; and instances where small, nominally indigenous companies received contracts and then subcontracted them to non-indigenous companies. The first of these instances is what we are dealing with right now.

Even before this conflict, many of us, many of my constituents and, I would say, most people in Alberta believed that it was time for the minister to resign. The context to the conversation we are having today is that there was an underlying conversation about indigenous procurement and, as we have talked about, this concept of “pretendians”, as they have come to be known.

• (1830)

We were already having this conversation, and then it came to light over the last week that the minister himself and the organization, the company that he is a part of and has been a part of, is engaged in this same activity. I believe the lobbyist that he is tied to has received \$110 million in government funds, which are taxpayer funds. Let us be clear on this. We are not talking about government money. The government has no money. Individual Canadians have money taken from their paycheques, money that would otherwise be used for things such as food, housing and maybe the odd vacation, if they can afford it. Instead, this lobbyist received \$110 million. Then, while the minister was a partner in the company, it received a further \$8 million in government contracts. In fact, he was a director in the company. There was already a conversation happening about that, and then this new situation came to light.

I will point out a couple of things that are really important in terms of the conversation. In question period today, we will notice something about the responses from the government on this particular question. No one denied that, before he was a minister or a member of Parliament, the minister pretended to be indigenous and that his company applied for federal funding. Even in the answers in question period today, nobody denied that this is the case. The government House leader, I believe, did an interview after question period today, and this is what she said. We should listen carefully to the wording. She said, “We addressed the fact that that business was never listed as an Indigenous business on the procurement site, and it in fact received no funding from the Government of Canada.”

I would hope the Prime Minister is holding his cabinet ministers to a higher standard than that. The assertion is that, before he was a minister, the minister pretended to be indigenous and his company applied for funding meant for indigenous procurement. The fact that the government did not give it that funding does not change anything about the minister's conduct and the question of whether the minister meets the standard that Canadians would expect.

I do not think there is any doubt that most Canadians would say that the minister needs to resign and that, if he does not resign, he absolutely needs to be fired by the Prime Minister. I would bet that, if we polled Canadians on that question and let them know exactly what the circumstances are, it would be 99% in favour of the Prime Minister firing the minister. I would be surprised if it were not. That is how serious this circumstance is that we are discussing today.

I am curious about the questions I will be asked. The Speaker is signalling to me that there is no time for questions. I will miss the member for Winnipeg North asking me a question today.

I will comment further on this. I want to point out something interesting: It seems that even the minister's cabinet colleagues have questions. It was interesting again today, in the early part of question period, that in question after question, no other minister was willing to stand up and defend the minister. It is very rare to see the minister have to stand up. He did not actually respond to or answer the questions. After question period, when a reporter asked the procurement minister clearly about the situation, he said, “It's for [him] to continue explaining the circumstances.” He named the Minister of Employment, not the other Randy.

• (1835)

Even Liberal ministers do not want to carry the water for the Liberal minister. In the larger picture, his time is up. His time is almost certainly up as a minister. Even as incompetent a government as this government is, there is no way it can possibly continue having the minister serve in the capacity that he is serving in. His time as a member of Parliament will be up too, because there is no way that even the staunchest supporters in Edmonton Centre will support him. They were not going to vote for the Liberal government anyway, but they certainly are not going to vote for this member of Parliament when the time comes.

I will conclude by saying that we look forward to the debate this week. We hope that ministers in the government and maybe the Prime Minister, if he is able to make it out this week, have some responses to this. We also look forward to seeing how every member of the House votes on this motion.

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

[*English*]

Shall I dispense?

An hon. member: No.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Chair read text of amendment to the amendment to House]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member participating in person wishes that the subamendment be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, common-sense Conservatives ask for a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, November 19, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1845)

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in Adjournment Proceedings to pursue a question I originally asked the Minister of Environment on September 16 of this year. It relates to a very controversial project in the province of Quebec.

[Translation]

My question is about Northvolt. No advance assessment was done on this project. Now, the mayors of Saint-Basile-le-Grand and McMasterville have requested an environmental assessment.

[English]

Quebec's environmental review from the BAPE does not apply because these are areas of federal jurisdiction. More than 4,000 people at the time of this question had asked through a petition for a federal environmental review.

In response to my question about whether there would be an environmental review of Northvolt, the Minister of Environment said that the Impact Assessment Agency was reviewing the request for an assessment of the project and that the review was ongoing. The minister also told me the agency would make a recommendation to the ministry in the weeks to come. That was on September 16, so quite a few weeks have come and gone since I asked the question.

It is generally seen as an environmental, green project to ensure that Canada has more components of the renewable energy supply chain for the lithium ion battery storage of renewable energy. The difficulty here in particular is that the Northvolt site is on contaminated land, previously contaminated by the Canadian Industries Limited explosives plant. There is tremendous concern about the proximity of the Northvolt plant. It is so close to the Richelieu River that an advanced environmental assessment is needed to ensure that we know the project has adequate safety measures in place to

avoid the contamination of the Richelieu River by the Northvolt plant.

Since that time, there have been a number of developments surrounding Northvolt. Its financial security is in doubt after the company had a downturn in its economic fortunes. In fact, the company might welcome an environmental review to keep its Canadian prospects alive while it tries to revive its financial prospects. The most recent note on the Impact Assessment Agency website is from nine days after I asked the question. On September 25, it reported that parts of the project, particularly the battery cell components of the project, could not be evaluated because construction had substantially begun and it could therefore not do a review.

However, as far as I can see from tracking this issue closely, it is still the case that we do not know if the project as a whole will have a full environmental review under the federal environmental assessment law. It is really critical for the protection of key habitat and species in that area that the environmental review take place soon and that the proponent is informed early of what precautionary steps it will have to take to ensure that the environment surrounding the Northvolt plant in Saint-Basile-le-Grand, McMasterville and the Richelieu River is protected.

This was a great opportunity to pursue this matter tonight, as the question is an open question: Will the government have an impact review of Northvolt?

[Translation]

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be here for the late show tonight. I know that the plant is in Quebec, but I will answer in English.

[English]

I thank my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, for her ongoing advocacy for all environmental causes in Canada. She really is a legend.

This past June, the Government of Canada delivered on its promise to quickly and meaningfully amend the Impact Assessment Act to respond to the Supreme Court of Canada and provide regulatory certainty for major project proponents and indigenous partners in Canada's investment climate. The Impact Assessment Act is designed to protect the environment, ensure that sustainable projects can move forward safely and instill public confidence in how the Government of Canada makes decisions concerning major resource projects.

I would just add that the improvements we have made are real. The old impact assessment regime under Stephen Harper really did not do anything to protect environment, but ours does. The amended Impact Assessment Act ensures that federal decision-making, namely the designation decision, the screening decision and the final decision at the end of the assessment, is focused on areas of clear federal jurisdiction.

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In any exceptional circumstances, the Impact Assessment Act provides the minister of environment and climate change, under section 9, the power to “designate a physical activity that is not prescribed [in the] regulations”, if they are of the opinion that “the carrying out of that physical activity may cause adverse effects within federal jurisdiction or direct or incidental adverse effects.” They may, in deciding whether to make it an order, consider public concerns and adverse impacts the physical activity may have on the rights of indigenous peoples of Canada, among other things.

However, there are limitations on the minister's power to designate. They may not designate a project if the project has been substantially started or a federal authority has made a decision under whether or not an act of Parliament that permits the project to be carried out in whole or in part.

The minister can confirm that he has received a designation request for the Northvolt Six projects. The request, co-signed by some 50 citizens and a few organizations, highlighted adverse effects on fish and fish habitat in the Richelieu River, as well as certain species at risk.

On September 25, 2024, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada responded to the request in relation to the battery cell component production and assembly plant in the crushing and sorting facility. The response noted that the minister's power to designate was limited, as these two components of the project have already substantially begun. However, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's analysis process continues for the battery recycling plant, which will inform a decision as to whether or not the project warrants a designation.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague, the parliamentary secretary. I would like to add a few words about the environmental impact of this project. The planned project site is located on wetlands that are really important for biodiversity. What is more, the region's forests have already been subject to clear-cut logging.

Environmentalists in this region of Quebec are strongly opposed to this project. However, with an environmental assessment, the impact could be mitigated. That is the purpose of an environmental assessment: to alter plans and protect the environment. It is not just to stop projects.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, the Impact Assessment Act is designed to protect the environment, ensure that sustainable projects can move forward safely, and instill public confidence in how the Government of Canada makes decisions concerning major resource projects.

As is the case with any designation request, the portion of the request pertaining to the battery recycling plant is being reviewed by the Impact Assessment Agency, and a decision will be rendered in a timely manner. The Northvolt Six may be subject to other federal legislation, such as the Species at Risk Act, the Fisheries Act and/or the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

Once again I would like to thank my friend and colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her decades of environmental advocacy and stewardship.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, Adjournment Proceedings are where we debate unsatisfactory responses to questions raised in question period, and tonight I rise to follow up on a question asked on June 14. That day, I asked two questions of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The questions were about the suppression of his department's information proving that the carbon tax costs the Canadian economy \$30 billion in lost GDP.

When I raised the first of these two questions last week, it degenerated into quite a spectacle. The parliamentary secretary accused me of some kind of bait-and-switch in his opening remarks and of not debating the question submitted. So, for added clarity, this was the question that I am looking for a better response on. On June 14, I asked:

the government only does the right thing when it gets caught. The Liberals only disclosed the information because Conservatives forced them to. The NDP-Liberal government put a gag order on the Parliamentary Budget Officer because it did not want Canadians to know the economic cost of the carbon tax. Per capita GDP is falling and the carbon tax makes life more expensive, proving that this Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

The...minister has misled Canadians by hiding the truth. When will he resign?

That is the question I asked, that is the question I submitted for debate tonight, and it really is a reasonable question. Misleading Parliament and misleading Canadians is a serious matter. Any minister caught misleading Parliament must correct the record at the earliest opportunity, and any minister who deliberately misleads the House should resign. The minister appears to have sat on important information, withheld it from an officer of Parliament and abused the access to information system to prevent it from being released. So, my question remains: Will he resign?

However, last week, something really extraordinary happened. The minister's parliamentary secretary accused the Alberta industry of using “Canada as an exhaust pipe”. I cannot imagine anything more demeaning to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who work in the Canadian energy industry, and who supply Canadians with safe, reliable and what should be affordable energy. It dismisses the industry and the regulations with which it complies, the billions of dollars of taxes that it pays and the equalization formula, which comes into play where Alberta finances much of the rest of the country's economic development, health and other transfers. It is a matter of how this government treats this industry.

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For decades, Canadians from every part of Canada have come to Alberta in search of, and finding, good, high-paying jobs with great prospects for long, fulfilling careers that can sustain families. The workers, and these jobs, provide the energy for our country. So, it is arrogance with which this government, and particularly the member for Milton, look down their nose at the Canadian energy industry, which was palpable and on full display last week.

However, back to the follow-up question that is tonight's debate. The government thought it was laughable that Conservatives were demanding accountability from a government that tried to fudge its data and refused to turn over a report that undermined its core narrative on the carbon tax, and that somehow Canadians are better off—

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member's ability to fit misleading and untrue rhetoric into a short question is remarkable. Let us stick to the facts.

First of all, Alberta has 10% of Canada's population. I love Alberta. I have tons of friends there, and I go to Edmonton, Calgary and Canmore all the time. I absolutely love Alberta and Albertans. I also know that Canada relies heavily on Alberta for energy, and that is important to recognize and appreciate in Canada. However, it is also important to recognize that Alberta has 10% of Canada's population while the industry there is responsible for 40% of Canada's emissions. That is a big discrepancy.

Let us also consider that oil and gas as a whole is worth about 5% of Canada's GDP and 31% of Canada's emissions. These are things that need to be addressed. If the Conservative Party, particularly that member, wants to ignore the fact that Canada's oil and gas sector is having an outsized impact on our emissions profile in Canada and on Canada's disproportionately high carbon footprint, then that is irresponsible and it is irrefutably biased toward only one aspect of Canada's economy. Every aspect of Canada's economy is important. That includes energy, but a government's job is not to suck up to industry. Our job is to regulate industry and ensure that it is fair, competitive and ethical. That is what we are doing with a pollution cap on the oil and gas sector. That is what the member and those members on the Conservative side are opposed to.

On the environment committee, we have been working on a taxonomy of sustainable finance and disclosure for all companies in Canada, but the Conservatives stand against all of that type of regulation. They do not believe that climate change is caused by the burning and production of fossil fuels. They want to turn a blind eye to all of that.

The Conservatives also do not listen to economists, who have repeatedly asked for Conservatives to tone down the rhetoric against carbon pricing. I point to the conclusions of a group of well-established, extremely well-educated independent economists from across Canada, called the Ecofiscal Commission. They analyzed Canada's pollution-pricing policy and concluded that it is absolute-

ly the best way to do two things: reduce our emissions and grow a green and robust economy. They are not the only ones who know this fact. Countries around the world have been using some sort of pollution pricing to grow their green economies for decades. The World Bank confirmed that there are now 75 carbon pricing instruments in operation worldwide.

To listen to the opposition, one would think that the government's approach to pollution pricing is some type of isolated experiment, but it is not. It is an internationally recognized and widely adopted economic mechanism, and it actually has its roots in conservative economics. William Nordhaus, who is a Nobel Prize winner, says that Canada is getting it right regarding carbon pricing, which is the topic of his Nobel Prize. There is a whole world of support for carbon pricing out there, and if an entire commission of independent Canadian economists is not good enough for the member to understand how pollution pricing is so effective, then how about asking the leaders of 30 or 40 different countries that we trade with and that are also using different market-based instruments to lower emissions?

It is very clear that the Conservatives want to turn a blind eye to unlimited pollution from certain sectors, but Canadians can count on the Liberal Party to stand up for them, for their health, for lowering our emissions and for maintaining Canada's competitiveness in an increasingly decarbonizing global energy market. These are Canadians' partners in a global effort to reduce our emissions, but the Conservatives want to turn a blind eye to all of it, which is what the Stephen Harper government did. They want to get us out of the Paris Agreement and pretend we have no action to take on fighting climate change.

One last statistic for the member is that we are 0.5% of the global population and 1.5% of global emissions. That is an outsized impact on the environment, and we need to address it.

• (1900)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has misrepresented and mis-characterized both me and our party. We know that the industry will lead the way in best practices and in technology to reduce or be able to produce more efficiently while doing its best to minimize emissions.

He has ignored the question again, which was about the suppression of information. The current government ran on a platform in 2015 to be the most open and transparent government in Canadian history, but it has become the most secretive and least forthright government in Canadian history.

Right now, we are seized in Parliament because the government still will not release documents, the production of which was ordered by the House. The minister misled Canadians. The minister refused to provide information and abused the access to information system, which is—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, the member is right on one thing. I did ignore all of the misleading and mis-characterized allegations he made against the minister.

All documents requested by the Parliamentary Budget Officer were 100% delivered on time in full, unredacted. That is why we got a good report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, which indicated exactly what we have been reiterating in the House of Commons: Eight out of 10 families get more money back through the Canada carbon rebate than they pay.

Members not only want to ignore that on the Conservative side, but also want to ignore the cost of inaction on climate change. They want to abdicate all responsibility for lowering our emissions and regulating industry. They want to say it is okay for Alberta to be unaccountable for 40% of Canada's emissions. The fact that a

province with 10% of Canada's population is responsible for four times more emissions should cause some alarm. For the oil being produced in Alberta, much of the emissions intensity has gone up—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is that.

The hon. member for Victoria not being present to raise during Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice had been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:05 p.m.)

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