



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 383
Thursday, December 5, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 5, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND REPORTS ANALYSIS CENTRE

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 72(2) of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, an audit report from the Privacy Commissioner concerning the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, 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 seven petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled "Audiovisual Co-production Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of South Africa", done at Cape Town on September 3, 2024.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research, entitled "Distribution of Federal Funding Among Canada's Post-Secondary Institutions".

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

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, research and innovation are key to Canada's future, yet the disastrous government has caused runaway inflation, unaffordable homes and an explosive deficit, which are hurting the students and teachers we need to do this crucial work.

That is not all. The Liberals have looked the other way while anti-Semitism has escalated on campus, and the government's tri-councils have funded studies that have been used for partisan interference in elections. Canadian students, researchers and, yes, taxpayers, expect and deserve better.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled "Oversight of Social Media Platforms: Ensuring Privacy and Safety Online".

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

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the witnesses, the analysts, the clerk and everybody involved in the presentation of this report.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports from the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, widely known here and by everyone else as the mighty OGGO.

I am presenting the 21st report, entitled "Supplementary Estimates (B), 2024-25", and the 22nd report, entitled "Canada's Postal Service: A Lifeline for Rural and Remote Communities".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests the government table a comprehensive response to the 22nd report.

Routine Proceedings

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this morning to present a supplementary report on the postal service in Canada's rural and remote communities study. During its study, members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates heard from witnesses who raised concerns regarding the state of the services being provided by Canada Post to Canadians living in rural and remote communities. While the main report contains some recommendations that are sound, it avoids addressing the most serious issues Canada Post faces in pursuing its mandate as a self-sustaining Crown corporation tasked with delivering quality mail services to all Canadians. Therefore, Conservatives can only partially agree with the recommendations contained in the main report.

• (1010)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 29th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development in relation to Bill C-353, an act to provide for the imposition of restrictive measures against foreign hostage takers and those who practice arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations and to make related amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The committee has studied the bill and recommends not to proceed further with this bill.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th Report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled "Supplementary Estimates (B), 2024-25". The committee has considered the votes referred and reports the same.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, presented on Friday, June 16, 2023, be concurred in.

I have the delight of sharing my time today with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

I am pleased to rise today to discuss my concurrence motion on the report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development on Canada's approach to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

This was an important report that made 14 recommendations to the Government of Canada's work to promote and fund sexual and reproductive health and rights globally. I want to thank all of the witnesses who came before our committee to provide us with their expertise and their important information.

This report comes at a crucial time when we are witnessing, globally, a terrifying backsliding on women's rights. We are living through a coordinated global backlash against sexual and reproductive rights for women, and we are seeing a global rise in authoritarianism. We are also seeing real barriers to access to reproductive and sexual health care here in Canada, and this is unacceptable because women's health care is a right and women's lives matter.

This report came about after a very challenging period of time for the foreign affairs committee. The Conservatives decided to impose their ideological extremism on the other members of the committee and initiated a filibuster that lasted nine meetings. That was 18 hours of committee time. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan essentially held this committee hostage for an entire season, meaning that the committee could not do the other urgent work on Ukraine, Ethiopia, Haiti and others—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

There seems to be a lot of noise, so I would ask members, if they want to have conversations, to step outside to have those conversations.

Is the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley rising on a point of order?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I would ask, as the Conservative MPs flee the chamber during this discussion about reproductive rights, that they be as quiet as possible so we can hear our hon. colleague make her speech.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the feedback, but it was not just the Conservatives. There were a variety of discussions being had.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

My colleague alluded to the presence or absence of members in the House, and that is unacceptable. I would like him to withdraw his remarks.

• (1015)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did not understand the point of order.

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, allow me to explain. My NDP colleague said that members from a specific party were leaving the House. That is not permitted, as per the Standing Orders. I would like you to take a stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member's comments. What I understood was that a certain party was making a commotion in the House and that he wanted peace and quiet, but now I understand what the hon. member was saying. The NDP did not say who exactly was leaving the House. Now, as I mentioned, it was not those leaving the House who were making a commotion. It was those who were having discussions.

I would remind members that they cannot indicate whether a particular person is leaving the chamber or not.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona has the floor.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I was talking about when this study was in front of committee. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan obstructed the work of the committee for 18 hours, so we could not do any of the work we needed to do as the foreign affairs committee. I have to say, as well, that as a woman, being told for 18 hours what I can do with my body by a white male was extraordinarily difficult. I am sure it was very difficult for many women who were watching the proceedings in the room.

I want to talk a bit about the House and what our committee heard from the testimony. Julia Anderson of CanWaCH said Canada needed to develop a “cohesive strategy around [sexual and reproductive health and rights]” in Canada’s foreign policy and that “investment alone is not enough.” Lauren Ravon of Oxfam Canada said that being effective was “a matter of combining money and voice.” Kelly Bowden of Action Canada argued that Canada “has a huge platform to stand on” because of investments made, but that we risk backsliding on women’s rights if we do not leverage the opportunity to make more progress, especially through a more full-some feminist foreign policy. Beth Woroniuk, a good friend of mine, noted that we still have not seen the government’s “long-promised feminist foreign policy”, and in the absence of that document, “diplomats and aid workers are often not aware of what their responsibilities are”. Canada has not been clear, globally, with our partners. Dr. Kanem, of the UN Population Fund, told us that Canada needs to show global leadership on the issue now because the push-back on gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights is intensifying.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are still individuals having conversations, and I am sure they are more interested in their conversations than they are in the speech being given in the House. I would ask them to please take their conversations aside. Many of the members are very seasoned, and I would ask them to please respect the rules of the House.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I want to talk a bit about the global context in which we find ourselves. What we are seeing globally is terrifying: ongoing violence against women, restrictions on women’s access to reproductive and sexual health care, rising support for extreme-right politicians and political parties in several countries, a weakening of our democratic institutions and a growth in far-right misogynistic attitudes and movements that is provoking growing levels of sexual and gender-based violence around the world. Anti-trans violence is on the rise globally, with trans women of colour being the most at risk. Moreover, attacks, intimidation, threats and harassment against women politicians are growing.

These are all evidence of a backlash against women’s rights and feminist movements. It is necessary for all of us to fight for women and gender-diverse people, as well as for those of us who are in positions of power to use our voice for that. We are seeing increased attacks on gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights at the United Nations, in national political and legislative processes, online, in schools and in our communities. We know these attacks share common tactics, strategies and funders across borders, and

they are linked to broader white supremacist, anti-democratic, anti-human rights and oppressive regimes and political actions.

In 2021, a report by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights documented funding from Russian oligarchs to anti-abortion organizations across Europe. These are the same oligarchs who have been sanctioned for their role in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which President Putin has framed as defence of “traditional values”. Globally, the people who deny women their rights are the same people who praise authoritarian tactics and policies.

We do not get to escape this. What is happening in the United States and in other countries is proof that we cannot assume our rights will remain protected in Canada. Today, access to reproductive health services is severely restricted for some people in Canada, including those in indigenous, rural, remote and northern communities, as well as in provinces where the federal government has not done enough to ensure access is available.

We have also seen strong opposition to examining abortion and reproductive rights in the House of Commons, led by members of the Conservative Party, many of whom get support from anti-abortion groups. In Canada, there are over 300 documented anti-abortion organizations trying to dissuade people from accessing the health care they are entitled to. They use a variety of tactics, including disseminating misinformation and disinformation. Many are affiliated with U.S.-based organizations. They mimic their talking points around “traditional values”. They reject the advancements of a range of human rights related to sexuality and gender. They are emboldened by the support of the Conservative Party of Canada. The anti-choice movement is calling the shots for the Conservatives. This is very clear.

Restricting access to reproductive health options for women does not stop abortions from happening; it simply stops safe abortions from happening. Racialized people, those from households of lower socio-economic levels, young people and other marginalized people are always those who bear the burden of these retro policies. Predominantly white, wealthy women will always have access to the reproductive services they require because they have the means to access them. New Democrats will continue to resist attacks on the human rights of women, trans people and all people by the Conservatives.

Abortion is health care. It is wrong for governments to set barriers between women and the care they choose for their own bodies and the future they choose for themselves and for their families.

Routine Proceedings

Public universal health care, including abortion, is part of Canada and of our Canadian values. Today, too many pregnant Canadians have the heart-wrenching experience of calling to find that abortion care is not available, that roadblocks have been put up in their place, that long waits or even a price tag is attached. Members should make no mistake: This does not have to be the way we do this. We have seen the Liberals let women and gender-diverse people down. Their actions have not matched their words. The Liberals are too weak to stand up to those Conservative premiers who are restricting women's access to health care.

• (1020)

In New Brunswick, the last abortion clinic closed last year. In my own province of Alberta, Danielle Smith is handing hospitals over to a private, faith-based group that will put such health care as MAID and reproductive health care at risk.

This committee study and report were important in reminding us that sexual and reproductive health is at the heart of the most important decisions a woman makes: if and when to marry, how long to stay in school and how many children to have. We know that millions of women and girls around the world do not get to make these decisions freely. Poor health services and information limit their freedoms and put their lives at risk. When women are not allowed to make decisions, we all suffer. Every woman must be able to do that.

I am a mother and a woman. I have a daughter. I would not want her rights to be infringed upon at any point. What I want for my daughter is what I want, as a New Democrat, for all daughters and all women.

• (1025)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this very important topic to the House today. I often think back to when I was a child, in the early eighties. I remember my mother being at the forefront of pushing to ensure that women had the opportunity to choose what to do with their reproductive health and that it was a decision that was made by nobody other than that woman.

My wife benefits from the action that my mother's generation took. I now find myself in this weird place of wondering what it will be like for my daughter when she is older, in terms of the choices she gets to make. I am greatly concerned when I look at what is going on in the world and hear about what is going on in the Conservative Party of Canada. This is especially true of what they are talking about in the back rooms, because people are not really exposed to that.

Can the member provide her thoughts on that?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned at the end of my speech, I have a teenage daughter. I have nieces. I have family members. I expect that my daughter will always have the full access to the health care she requires; we come from an awful lot of privilege. My challenge is thinking about reproductive health care, thinking about health care for women, gender-diverse people, racialized people, people of lower socio-economic levels and people living in other countries who do not have the same rights as my child; that is where I become so upset.

As global citizens, we have to do everything so that the people in the world who need to access health care have the ability to do that. Members should make no mistake: This is health care we are talking about. We have every obligation to fight for them as much as we would fight for ourselves, for our daughters and for our family members.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government has passed a number of bills that have led to more violence against women.

How can the member support measures that have measurably decreased the quality of life of women and their safety in Canada since they signed their confidence and supply agreement with the Liberal government?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, frankly, that is just not true. I would say that, last week, when I had members of my caucus in the House, the members of the Conservative Party came into the House after they had been drinking. I had women, indigenous people, racialized women in this place. They Conservative members heckled. They made this space a dangerous place for my colleagues to work.

They cannot—

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

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I think the member for Edmonton Strathcona just reiterated a mistruth in the House, and it is up to you to make sure she withdraws that comment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I cannot attest to what the hon. member has indicated. There is a question of privilege on that. It has raised some disorder in the House, so I would ask members to please not make reference to members that way. I would also ask members to please be respectful of each other and to stick to the matter that is before the House.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I would say that, because of how the Conservatives behave time and time again, many women in the House feel that this is an unsafe work environment for women. I am among them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I remember taking part in some of the meetings on this study at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. What struck me was how religion was brought into the equation and how it skewed the debate on women's right to control their own bodies.

Is this not another argument for saying that it is absolutely essential to remember the importance of secularism in government, particularly so that religion does not get mixed in with women's rights?

Routine Proceedings

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, when we were having those discussions in the foreign affairs committee, I agreed very much with my colleague that we need to look at this as an issue of health care access for women. It is an issue of making sure that women around the world have access to health care, and there is no role for faith in that conversation. Every single person, man, woman or child, should have access to the health care they require. This is a fundamental principle that New Democrats believe in. There is no argument for taking away an individual's rights to determine what is best for their bodies, for their families and for their lives.

• (1030)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I raise my hands to the member for Edmonton Strathcona and thank her for all her advocacy on protecting women and girls across the world, in Canada and in the House.

There has been an alarming rollback of women's rights around the world. In my community of Port Moody—Coquitlam, it came right home to our families with the killing of Mahsa Amini. It was unbearable for thousands of Iranian Canadian women in my community who know first-hand the cruel Iranian regime that limited their freedoms and forced them to leave their homeland for safety. These women carry the deepest sorrow, yet their resolve continues. Their brave voices of resistance continue in Vancouver almost weekly.

While the world sits by doing nothing for these women, Aho Daryaei was recently punished for standing proud in her underwear on a campus in Iran to protest the mistreatment of women. She was labelled as sick and was taken to a psychiatric ward, her rights and dignity stripped because she is a woman, just as women have been stripped of their dignity for centuries. It is all rooted in misogyny.

In Palestine, women and children disproportionately are being killed to carry out a genocide. Palestinians are being treated as if their lives do not matter, and women and children have no defence. The world is failing them. Canada is failing them. In Afghanistan, women are not allowed to speak in public. They have been erased from public life.

There are more countries where women cannot receive the most basic of human rights. The list is long. One of the countries we never could have imagined is the United States. I never would have thought that in 2024, women would lose their right to basic health care just because of their sex, but it is happening. As women in the United States face increasing restrictions on their reproductive rights, including access to safe and legal abortions, Canada has an obligation to step forward as an ally to women and to advocate for women and diverse genders. No one would have predicted when the study was taking place and finalized that such discrimination would happen so close to us, just south of the border.

It is important for Canada to be prepared and to do its part to save lives. One of the most tangible ways Canada can help is by making it possible for U.S. women to access abortion services in Canada. This could include expanding the availability of abortion services, particularly in border communities, and ensuring that Canadian health care facilities can accommodate patients travelling from the U.S. The federal government could work with NGOs that

could offer logistical assistance, travel coordination and financial aid to U.S. women and girls seeking care in Canada.

An absolute must is for Canada to leverage its position on the global stage to advocate for reproductive rights as human rights. Through international forums like the United Nations, Canada must work to pressure the U.S. to respect and protect these rights. These are the important conversations that the Prime Minister should also be having with the president-elect, who has bragged about overturning *Roe v. Wade* even though the overturning has proven to be dangerous to women and newborns. Maternal deaths have tripled in the States with an abortion ban, and infant mortality is up 7%. Over 700 more newborns have died since the Supreme Court overturned the life-saving legislation.

New Democrats stand up to say no to the attack on women's bodies and that it cannot make its way north to Canada. All of us must stand on guard, because a Conservative federal government would threaten women's access to safe and trauma-informed abortion. We know that the Liberals will not stop them; they are already failing Canadians by letting Conservative premiers cut access to abortion.

• (1035)

Under Conservative leadership, there have been relentless attempts to restrict reproductive rights, including by Conservatives in the House right now with private members' bills targeting abortion access. The Conservative leader has already used coded language to embolden anti-choice extremists while claiming to avoid the debate. Conservatives have shown they cannot be trusted to defend a woman's right to choose, nor can they be trusted to move toward more—

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

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, in the House there are two official languages: English and French. I do not understand what the member means by “coded language”. If she could—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate. When members stand on points of order, I would hope that they are going to quote which standing order they are rising on.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, Conservatives have shown they cannot be trusted to defend a woman's right to choose, nor can they be trusted to move forward toward more equity in health care for women and diverse genders. We saw this very recently when they voted against the NDP pharmacare bill that included access to free contraceptives. New Democrats will fight every day against regressive Conservatives and their hidden agenda to restrict women's access to life-saving health care.

Routine Proceedings

I will now go back to the report on what Canada needs to continue to do to protect sexual and reproductive rights across the globe. Canada needs to “speak out clearly and consistently in global forums and bilateral discussions” on sexual and reproductive rights for women, and the government must release the “long-promised feminist foreign policy” that my colleague, the member from Edmonton Strathcona, referenced. Having a clear written document is important because, as she referenced, it sets out feminist policy guidelines, not just for international development but also for trade, immigration, diplomacy and consulate affairs work.

Canada can be a leader, a beacon of hope at a time when there is push-back on gender equality and the rights of women, diverse genders and girls. If the government does the work now to protect women's rights, more Canadian women and women across the globe will be safer.

Multiple witnesses in the study stressed to the committee that legal restrictions on abortion do not stop abortions from happening. Instead, these restrictions increase the proportion of abortions that are unsafe. Julia Anderson, one of the witnesses, stated the following: “The evidence is unanimous and clear that the restriction of abortion does not stop abortion; it only increases unsafe abortion, and it loses women's lives.”

Why is Canada not investing in abortion access here at home and abroad? The reality is that, despite what is known about the consequences of unsafe abortion, Canada allocated only less than \$2 million in support of safe abortion services. Kelly Bowden, a witness in the study, noted that while the Government of Canada is naming access to safe abortions as part of a comprehensive package of care, it is not putting the money in that area just yet.

I will close out today by highlighting recommendation 9 from the report, which recommends Canada “scales-up its assistance for sexual and reproductive health and rights globally, the Government of Canada ensure it is fully supporting access to modern forms of contraception, safe and legal abortion services, and post-abortion care.” Canada must do this here, at home, just south of the border and across the globe.

● (1040)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was quite dismayed by the point of order from the member for Calgary Centre, talking about coded language. I will tell the House exactly what that language is. The coded part is when there are members of Parliament like the member for Peace River—Westlock, who went on a documentary and talked specifically about how he is organizing people within the Conservative caucus to become pro-life and to help move forward the ambitions to have a caucus that is pro-life and does not want to give women the right to choose.

Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition goes out and says, “Oh, I am pro-choice, no problem here.” However, his caucus behind him is forming to do exactly the opposite.

I am wondering whether the member could expand on her comments about where the Conservative Party of Canada in particular is on the issue.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, women across this country and across the globe and diverse genders in this country and across the globe are well used to the tactics of the Conservatives and to the right-wing ideology that women and diverse genders are not allowed to have access to health care. The Conservatives are limiting it in any way they can. We are very used to it. It does not surprise me that the Conservatives do not understand the debate, because they do not understand issues of women and diverse genders in this country.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I hope I do know a few things about women; I am one.

What is really interesting here, for anybody watching, is that this has happened for decades. There was an opposition motion today that was to stand up for Canadians who are using food banks in record high numbers. IPV, intimate partner violence, has escalated at exponential numbers and sexual assaults have increased 75% under the Prime Minister. Women have never been less safe in this country than under the Prime Minister, and that is a fact. Women cannot get into shelters; YWCA in Halifax has said that.

Today there was a motion that used the Leader of the Opposition's own words about the failures of the government. Ten million Canadians do not even have a doctor, so let us talk about health care, shall we? Why would the New Democrats interrupt a motion, when Canadians need help more than ever, to kibosh it and to prop the Prime Minister up while Canadians suffer and women are murdered in broad daylight under the government and that Leader of the Opposition?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, the member shows why having a limited number of women represented in the House for almost 150 years perpetuates on the streets and in this country. Only Conservatives and Liberals have ever been in government federally in this country, and both parties have failed, over and over again, women and diverse genders by cutting back health care. The Conservatives are famous for cutting back health care; “health care cuts” is their middle name.

The NDP will always stand for health care and will always stand for women's rights.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Peterborough—Kawartha said “that Leader of the Opposition”. There is only one leader of the opposition, and it is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. That is not a point of order; it is a point of debate.

I do want to remind members that if they are not being recognized and do not have the floor, they should wait to pose any questions or make any comments, and if members have already posed a question, they should also wait if they want to add to it.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

Routine Proceedings

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday I tried to move a motion calling on the House of Commons to join the Bloc Québécois in denouncing the presence of a religious exemption in paragraph 319(3)(b) of the Criminal Code. This exemption permits hate speech under the guise of religious beliefs. However, the Conservatives and Liberals seem to be against the idea of repealing this Criminal Code provision and stopping people from using religion as an excuse to spread hate speech or calls for violence.

My colleague cited the situation with women in Iran and Afghanistan. I am very worried about the spreading influence of religious extremism, and I am afraid we are starting to see it even here in Quebec and Canada. It especially affects the most vulnerable members of our society, as well as women and women's rights. I would like to know what my colleague thinks of the growing presence of these influences and how they might affect certain politicians' thinking on issues like this.

• (1045)

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the rollback of women's rights across the globe, and it was very difficult to get a conversation around women's rights on the table. Therefore today I am going to focus on health care because I believe that the member just raised some very important concerns. Health care is also being impacted by religious values, as the Conservatives are calling them.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I will be splitting my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I want to start by thanking the member for Edmonton Strathcona for bringing up this vitally important issue and also for bringing up the fact that, for 18 hours, it was filibustered in committee by the Conservatives, because I think that says something.

People say that abortion rights are not up for discussion in Canada, and they ask why we are even talking about it. This is why we have to talk about it, because American women also did not think that abortion rights were up for discussion. We really thought that. For our mothers, our aunts and those who had to fight for those rights, we thought that the debate was over.

Now we look across, and at every opportunity, the Conservatives will avoid, at any measure, a vote on this issue, because they do not want to admit that there is a huge majority in that caucus who actually stand against a woman's right to choose. This is something I think every Canadian woman is extremely concerned about. As such, I thank the member for Edmonton Strathcona for that motion.

I would like to start with a personal story. There is a member of my family of that generation that had to fight for these rights, a close member of my family, who at one point found that she was pregnant with a child that was severely handicapped. When she first immigrated to Canada, she worked in a sector with a lot of severely handicapped people, and she was deeply religious, deeply Catholic. When she found herself pregnant, she thought and prayed

very much about what the right thing to do was. After going through a process where she made that choice between herself and her faith, she had to go in front of three male doctors and defend her decision, and those doctors decided that she could not have an abortion.

This family member was despondent. She already had two young children, two girls, and she did not pass a psychological evaluation, because of the impact of being told, after she had prayed and come to this decision between herself and her husband, that she could not do it. Thankfully, there was a geneticist, a woman and doctor, who helped her and arranged for her to go to the United States, to Seattle, so that she could have autonomy over her own body and her own life choice.

That case was one of the cases in the Morgentaler decision, which overturned that draconian abortion law in this country that said a woman had to go in front of a panel of doctors, mostly men, to justify her decision and her autonomy. I am very proud of that woman, that family member of mine. I think that, because of her, women in this country have autonomy over our own bodies. I am so proud of her.

I do not want to have to redo this debate, but sadly, we do.

When it comes to the reason I ran, the moment I decided that I was going to run for office in this country, I was working internationally. I was working in Africa. I was working in other parts of the world. At one point, the regional coordinator for my project, which was about women in politics, was from sub-Saharan Africa, a young woman from Mali. All of a sudden, in 2010, which was in the Harper years, the government cut funding to any international organization, no matter what other good things it was doing, if it also provided abortion. The government did it with absolutely no warning. In the coordinator's country of Mali, a clinic that had been there for 40 years, which provided all kinds of health services, which she went to as a child and which that community benefited from, was suddenly closed, just because one of the things that clinic provided was abortion.

That coordinator got on Skype with me at that time in 2010, and she said, "You Canadian women are hypocrites."

I was stunned. I sort of took a moment, and I asked, "Why would you say that?"

She said, "Because I went to Montreal and I studied at McGill. I know Canadian women have reproductive rights, but your government shut down a clinic in my village out of ideology. Now I know that Canadians think that it is not good enough for us African women to also have the same rights that you Canadian women have."

I was ashamed. I was actually so ashamed at that moment to be Canadian and to have my government, at that time the Harper government, do this kind of thing, which was so harmful to so many people, that I decided I had to run for office. I did not win that 2011 election, but I won in 2015.

Routine Proceedings

● (1050)

I fought hard the minute I was elected, alongside many women in this chamber, to get our feminist international assistance policy, FI-AP, in place, and I was able to come full circle just a little while ago this January.

As a result of FIAP, as a result of the fact that we are putting \$700 million a year into SRHR, that we are the number one donor to the UNFPA and that, when the Americans pulled back, we stepped up, I went to a clinic in Kinshasa, the country where I worked before I was elected. This clinic offers, among other things, safe abortion services. I met a young girl who was in her twenties. She told me that when she was 16 and she was raped, she had nowhere to go, but then she found out about this clinic.

It is because she was able to get a safe abortion in this clinic, she is now planning to go to medical school to become a doctor so that she can help other people. However, that young woman could have been dead, because 10% of maternal deaths in the Democratic Republic of Congo are because of unsafe abortions. When we say that we do not want to provide abortion, we do not want to have SRHR or we do not want young women knowing their rights all over the world, we are killing women, because that is 10% of maternal deaths. We are saving lives with this policy by supporting SRHR.

I was so proud of those young women. There was a group of marginalized youth who sat in a circle with me and talked about what our funding for this clinic meant to them. It was the young girls, the teenagers, who were saying that they were talking to the traditional leaders. They are talking to the faith leaders, and they are explaining. One young woman said to me, “I understand my rights, and I want to make sure that every young woman understands her rights.” These strong, incredible young women are the future, the new leadership of Africa and of the world, and they are working side-by-side with the older generations to ensure that this is something that is accepted and understood.

This is not ideology. This is saving lives. This is giving rights. This is giving autonomy. This is ensuring that we have generations of young women who do not have to go through what my family member went through: the indignity and the injustice of being told, “No, you can't have an abortion.” That woman in my family still prays for that baby. She honestly says to this day, and I think she is watching, that she believes that the little baby, whom she named Jennifer, is in heaven thanking her for saving her from a life of pain.

Now, that might not be everyone's choice in this place. I know that there are so many babies born with severe disabilities who are loved, but that is not the point of this discussion. The point of this discussion is that this woman made her choice by her own conscience, and she was overruled. No woman should ever be in this position, whether here in Canada or in other parts of the world, when, after tremendous thought, and with whatever faith she might believe in or not, she comes to a choice about her own body. I will never accept it, and I will stand in the House to the very last day to make sure that nobody on that side is ever going to force a woman to carry a child to term that she does not want.

We are saving lives. This debate is absolutely 100% necessary. I thank the member for Edmonton Strathcona for giving us the opportunity to put our words on the record.

● (1055)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

During question period this Tuesday, I made a remark that I wish to withdraw.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the number of sexual assaults have increased. IPV, or intimate partner violence, has increased. For sextortion and rape, the numbers are outstandingly horrible. How can this member, after nine years, with numbers as horrible as they are, play into this procedural nonsense and the charades of the government? Canadians are catching on. Please speak to that.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There is a member who is trying to make a comment but should not do that until he is recognized, if he is recognized.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Speaker, “procedural nonsense” were the words used by the member opposite. The chair of the status of women committee is saying that a debate in the House about protecting women's rights and their autonomy is procedural nonsense. I think they have just revealed exactly who they are.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, members would know, from looking down south, the pernicious ways in which policy is cooked up by fanatics, right-wing extremists, policy lapdogs for people like Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller under the auspices of project 2025. We know that those same policy extremists advise the Conservative Party of Canada on its policy.

Could the hon. member perhaps expand on why these back-channel policy extremists could potentially influence the next federal election with these pernicious far-right ideologies?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Speaker, I am very happy that my hon. colleague raised the issue of what has happened in the United States, because there is an increase in the demeaning objectification of women. Words matter. What they say has led to an eroding of rights of women in the United States. The irony is that a family member of mine had to go to the United States to be able to get an abortion, and now there are women in the United States who have to come to Canada. This is something that we have to stop because it is a risk. It is here.

That right-wing rhetoric that the member is talking about is alive and well. We are seeing it in the House today in the way that Conservatives are heckling the women who are standing up for our rights.

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[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I attended certain committee meetings dealing with this study. I will ask my colleague the same question I asked my NDP colleague a bit earlier.

We really saw that certain witnesses had religious motivations. Their faith was the reason they had come to talk about the issue of women's reproductive rights. Why did members of my colleague's party, the Liberal Party, oppose the motion that the Bloc Qu eb cois tried to move yesterday to basically repeal this religious exemption? This motion sought to take one more essential step toward secularism, because, all too often, the relationship between religion and women's rights becomes muddled, and women's rights are violated in the name of religion.

Why did her party oppose yesterday's motion underlining the importance of removing religious exemptions from the Criminal Code and emphasizing the importance of state secularism?

[English]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Speaker, I think this issue about religion and rights is actually a very important one. This is about supporting a woman's right to choose. Look at the case that I talked about. This was someone who was deeply religious and she made a choice. I think it is not up to anybody, no matter what their faith, to tell another person what they should do, any more than we would tell that person of faith what they should do with their body.

The important part here is choice. I did not get elected to be the one to tell a woman what she should do. That should be something between the woman, her doctor and whatever faith or god she might believe in. However, that is her choice and hers alone.

• (1100)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to participate in debate on the concurrence motion that has been put forward by the NDP. For those who might be watching and are not fully aware of what happened in the House today, I would like to set the picture so they can appreciate what happened.

We originally had the Leader of the Opposition here, who was going to lead off on his opposition motion today. He came and he sat in his seat. He was flanked, in the perfect formation behind him to get the best camera angle, by his most loyal MPs. They sat there. They were all ready to go and we could see him getting ready. He was ready to kick off the day with his great speech that he probably conjured up in his mind while in the shower this morning. Then moments before he had the opportunity to rise to do that, and to have the excitement of his members behind him cheering him on endlessly, suddenly the NDP did to the Conservatives what they have been doing to the House for three months.

For three months now, the Conservatives have been putting up concurrence motions to filibuster and to prevent this House from doing any business. I must admit, I found it absolutely wild earlier when the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, my neighbour, challenged the government and the NDP on procedural tactics, when the Conservatives have been doing that for three solid months. The NDP did nothing more to the Leader of the Opposition

and the Conservatives today than what the Conservatives have been doing for months. They just got a taste of their own medicine this morning. That is it.

It was quite a moment. I sat in my chair and saw that the Leader of the Opposition knew right away what happened. He jumped out of his seat and he marched right out of here, leaving the flank of MPs sitting behind him in the perfect formation absolutely bewildered. They had no idea what had just happened. The Leader of the Opposition did not bother telling them. He just marched right out of here because he knew exactly what had happened. He left them behind to wonder what possibly could have just occurred and why their great leader was not giving his amazing speech right now.

That is what happened. That is what the NDP did. Unfortunately, that is what this place has turned into. It has turned into a tit-for-tat. If they do something to us, we are going to do something to them. We are going to have procedural games here; we are going to have procedural games there. However, I will hand it to the NDP members for one thing. They brought forward an issue that is incredibly important in today's political context.

We have, regrettably, seen a regression, with the loudest voices out there, the voices that appear to be the most influential or incredibly influential, trying desperately to roll back the clock on women's rights. I said in a question earlier today that my mother participated in the movement to secure these rights back in the 1980s. I remember as a child wondering what she was doing and what that was all about, because I did not fully understand it. What I do know, and I fully understand today, is my wife benefited from that incredible work my mother's generation did and her mother's generation did.

Now, unfortunately, I am left wondering what the future holds for my daughter. I hear Conservatives, and I mean small-c conservatives and big-C Conservatives, talk about rolling back a woman's right to choose.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I hear them saying, "Oh God, what is he talking about?" I will tell members exactly what I am talking about.

I am talking about their colleagues who go on documentaries and are asked questions like, "Is it possible for us to completely ban abortion, or is it crazy to even think about it?" That question was asked of the member for Peace River—Westlock, who we know to be at the centre of the Conservative Party of Canada's movement, along with one or two other MPs, to do exactly that. This was his answer to that question: "Anything is possible. I thought that overturning Roe v. Wade in the United States was impossible, but yet here we are today."

Routine Proceedings

● (1105)

Anybody out there who happens to have CPAC on today and is watching this can google the Peace River—Westlock MP and “banning abortion”, go into the video section and find the video almost instantly. Conservatives roll their eyes and say the Liberals, NDP and progressives are just trying to paint them as bad guys, but they would never actually do that. Then why are their MPs making these comments? Why do they have MPs who participate in the pro-life marches in front of this place every spring and get up to the microphone and actually say, “We can do this”? That is what they do. They should not try to dismiss it or suggest it is not the case.

What else do Conservatives do? They continually line up candidates to run for them who have well-known positions of being anti-choice. That is what Canadians are faced with.

For those out there who may want to believe the Leader of the Opposition when he says he would never ban abortion, just look at his track record, and that of Stephen Harper, saying he would never do those kind of things. They will. They might not do it in a very direct form of introducing a bill that says, “We ban abortion”, but they will do it in other ways. They will do it by taking money and resources away from institutions and agencies that educate and inform women, and by providing resources to those who would like to suppress that right. They will do it through private members' bills and say, “Oh, this is just a private members' bill; it is up for anybody to vote on. Members can vote their conscience; that is what private members' bills are all about.” That is how they will do it.

For those out there who think that if the Conservative Party of Canada forms government, they will bring in a bill that says, “We ban abortion,” the Conservatives will not do it like that; they will do it in more calculated ways to achieve their end objective without being so transparent. It is extremely important that this issue be taken seriously.

To give more context to the Conservative Party of Canada, the Campaign Life Coalition has three ratings: green, yellow and red. Green means it totally supports the candidate because they believe in the group's values. Yellow means it does not know but thinks the candidate can be influenced. Red means the candidate would never support the group in this endeavour. The Campaign Life Coalition has 40 MPs currently sitting in the House it has deemed green and another 40 MPs it has deemed yellow. That is 80 sitting MPs. The Campaign Life Coalition deems a majority of the Conservative caucus appropriate to represent its views.

Nobody should be fooled by the false narrative of the Leader of the Opposition. The Conservatives will prohibit and restrict a woman's right to choose. They will not do it in a very transparent and obvious way, like introducing a bill, but they will certainly do it in other ways. We need to stand up to protect the work that my mother's generation did. We also need to stand up for future generations, for my daughter and her generation, so they can live with the same experiences my wife benefited from that came from those who did the work in the 1970s and 1980s.

● (1110)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the deep fears I have is that there is a

creeping attack on women's rights in Canada and around the world. We know that, under Stephen Harper, the Conservative Party cut all supports for reproductive health care with regard to Global Affairs Canada and international affairs.

The member spoke about some of the members of Parliament who are named as being supportive of attacks on women's health care, but I have to point out that there are members on his bench who are also named. The member for Winnipeg North and the member for Scarborough—Guildwood have also been added to that list. Therefore, we have to be aware that there are people within the government and the opposition who do not fundamentally believe women have a right to health care. That should be a concern for every one of us in the House.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is a concern of mine and I will use every opportunity to talk to any member of the House, regardless of political party, about why they should support a woman's right to choose.

I will remind the member that our Prime Minister, who was a leader at the time in 2014, made it very clear that if a person wanted to sit in the Liberal Party, they must vote in favour of legislation that protects a woman's right to choose, full stop.

I also want to say the member was right when she said Conservatives will slowly take away money and resources. That is how they will do it. They are not going to show up here on day one, if they form government, and introduce Bill C-1, which would say they ban a woman's right to choose; they are going to show up here and, one by one, through budget bills and other measures, remove those resources and make it more difficult for a woman to have that right to choose.

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on the notion of how women's rights are being undermined in slow and insidious ways.

As a nurse, who went to nursing school in the 1970s, I saw the impact of a lack of choice for women far too many times. I also saw it in my work in the community with the most vulnerable.

I wonder if my colleague could speak to the many ways the government is working to enhance women's rights, certainly through the right to choose, but also through programs like \$10-a-day child care, pharmacare, the school lunch program and ways we give women the ability to be financially independent and able to make choices within the family. We can really move this conversation out to all of the things we do through housing, access to food and finances, and also the right to choose what we do with our bodies.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, that is what we need to do. As a matter of fact, the government agrees with this report and, in the response to this report, it agrees with a number of the recommendations that came from committee as to how strengthen the supports the member speaks of.

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However, I think the member is talking about a broader issue: How do we give women the tools to properly be equals in society. Unfortunately, we see Conservative policies and positions that try to roll that back. She is absolutely right when she talks about \$10-a-day child care. We know women are more often the ones who stay at home with children. This is about making sure they have the choice, that if they want to go into the workforce, they are not subject to having to stay at home because they do not have child care.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about Conservatives slowly cutting funding for abortion access, that Conservative creep that would restrict a woman's right to choose.

However, under the Liberal government, we have seen the closure of Clinic 554 in New Brunswick. I went to high school in New Brunswick and remember sitting with a friend as she looked at driving to Montreal, 14 hours away, because she could not get access. I did not think I would be standing here, two decades later, with the same issue coming up for young people in New Brunswick.

Can the member answer for the government's inaction on this?

• (1115)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I will be honest. I do not know much about this particular clinic and why it closed. Typically, the clinics are under the jurisdiction of the province. I do not know if that is the exact case in this situation.

I will say that it is important, and the member is absolutely right, that nobody should have to drive 14 hours to get the care they are looking for. We need to properly fund those and make sure they are in place.

What I find most surprising about my question and answer period is that there was not a single question from Conservatives.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, what we are witnessing today is an attempt by the NDP to stop our confidence motion on the NDP leader's words. What we are seeing today is a continuation of the meltdown by NDP members because of our confidence motion that uses the NDP leader's words that purport to stand up for unions and the unions' right to strike.

We actually saw a terrible meltdown last week, as the NDP had to continue to prop up the government. NDP members are clearly frustrated and upset that their sellout leader continues to do this. In fact, they charged a Conservative member's seat—

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member well knows that he is not allowed to use unparliamentary language. This has been ruled on before. I would ask the member to apologize and withdraw.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I must have missed what the hon. member said, so I will get the information and come back to the House. Again, when hon. members rise, it would be great if they could say what standing order they are rising on.

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, we are continuing to see the meltdown. Now NDP members are melting down to interrupt

my speech because they are unhappy with the fact that the NDP leader continues to prop up a corrupt Liberal government.

There was a time when they had an NDP leader who stood up against corruption. Former NDP leader Jack Layton brought down a corrupt Liberal government as a result of the corruption in which its members were engaging. Unfortunately, what we see now is an NDP party that supports the continued ongoing corruption, such as the corruption in the green slush fund. We have now seen corruption in the CEBA business loans. Very obviously, some members are—

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. What we are debating today is women's access to reproductive rights. To this point I do not see the relevance in the speech of the member.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I would ask members to quote the Standing Orders. There is some latitude given to members during their speeches, and I am sure the hon. member will be relating the relevance of what he is saying. I want to ensure members know that their speeches are supposed to be on the matter before the House.

The hon. member for Victoria.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, on the first point of order I raised, Standing Order 18 talks about disrespectful or offensive language. The member said “sellout”—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Hon. members, I am the Chair, and I will listen to what the hon. member is saying. She has quoted her Standing Order. If she wants to add additional information to that point of order, I will hear it. As I indicated, we are checking right now to see what was said. Obviously, it has caused a disturbance, and I would ask members to not use certain language that they know will cause a disturbance. That way, the House can run smoothly.

The hon. member for Victoria.

• (1120)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I wanted to ensure to that members know that on disrespectful or offensive language, Standing Order 18 states “No member shall speak disrespectfully” of members in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is exactly what the Standing Orders indicate, that members should not be using words that are disrespectful. Therefore, I will allow the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon to continue, and I hope members will respect the rules of the House so that we can function properly.

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

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Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, the meltdowns continue. It is now the third interruption of my speech, as I put to the members their uncomfortableness with how their leader is forcing them to continue to prop up the corrupt Liberal government and how afraid they are of the Conservative confidence motion with respect to the NDP leader's own words. I understand why they are so afraid. The Halifax International Longshoremen's Union said on Monday—

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, chapter 13, talks about when members impute motives to other members in the House and personal attacks made when a member's motives are being maligned. The member needs to apologize and withdraw his comment as well.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I am not maligning anyone's intent. I am clearly stating what their intent is. There is no malice in that, so I do not see the relevance of the point of order.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I do not need male MPs in the House to tell me what my intentions are. In fact, we are not allowed to assume the intentions or motives of other members in the House. I would ask him—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The fact that members choose not to respect the rules of the House is very problematic. I would ask members to please be respectful to each other, think about the words they are going to use and rephrase them so they are more acceptable.

I believe that some of what is being said is debate. At this point, I am still looking into the matter that was brought forward. I will come back to hon. members in a few minutes.

In the meantime, the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon can continue his speech.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, if the NDP members are uncomfortable with my words, perhaps they will listen to the Halifax International Longshoremen's Association's words. It said, "On Monday the NDP has the opportunity to reinforce that they will not bring in back to work legislation by supporting their own leader's words."

This is why we are having this debate trying to prevent the Conservatives' confidence motion. This is why NDP members continue to interrupt me. They are increasingly uncomfortable with the fact that they will have to vote on a confidence motion on their leader's words and how the Liberal government took away the rights of workers to strike. They are trying to avoid this by putting forward a procedural motion that normally is not brought on an opposition day.

The NDP has done this for the purpose of avoiding a confidence vote. As such, to prevent further meltdowns, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): When the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona rose on a point of order, the hon. member had already read his motion. I will put the motion

forward and listen to the point of order after we deal with that motion. Both happened at the same time. The hon. member had already moved the motion, so I will go through with the motion and then come back to the point of order at the appropriate time.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1210)

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

(*Division No. 910*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
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Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
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Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Fortin	Gallant
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Jeneroux	Jivani
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo

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Rempel Garner
Roberts
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Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion defeated.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona still have a point of order? I said I would come back to that.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I was simply wanting to bring up the issue of relevance with the Conservative member's speech, but of course the Conservatives have now taken 45 minutes to do everything possible to stop talking about women's health issues.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has decided not to do that.

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Resuming debate, the hon. member for Shefford.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am rising this morning in place of my extraordinary colleague, the member for Montarville. I would like to take a moment to recognize our fantastic critic for foreign affairs, who also serves as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. I am speaking here today because my colleague was kind enough to share his speaking time with me, as well as invite me to ask witnesses questions at certain committee meetings when it was conducting the study that led to the report we are debating today. I want to thank him. It gave me a lot to think about.

Most of my speech today is based on the Bloc Qu b cois's supplementary opinion on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development's study on sexual and reproductive rights around the world.

This long-awaited study has highlighted the very important work that remains to be done if Canada is to move from words to deeds when it comes to its feminist foreign policy.

As the expression goes, it is important to walk the talk. While this long-awaited study was being conducted, there was a great deal of obstruction. My colleague from Montarville had told me about it, and when I took part in the meetings, I saw for myself that the Conservatives were filibustering.

That being said, I will begin by quoting what some of the witnesses said about the accountability of this government with respect to feminist policy. I will talk more specifically about certain parts of the world. Then, I would like to talk about secularism, which is a very important value in Quebec.

Firstly, it was surprising to hear from witnesses that almost 7 years after its announcement, Canada's feminist foreign policy is still not defined through a document that details principles, objectives and implementation guidelines. This may potentially explain why sharing results in this area seems difficult for Global Affairs Canada. So, on the one hand, we have GAC announcing during the study that "Canada is making significant progress in meeting its existing commitments". On the other hand, we have the Auditor General's assertion that Canada's feminist international aid policy includes commitments describing how the funds are to be spent, "...but had no goals related to specific improvements in the circumstances of those who benefit from the funding".

I actually had a conversation with my colleague from Terrebonne about this Auditor General report.

So there's a lot to think about when it comes to the development of international feminist policy by Global Affairs, from objectives to results, and how Quebec and Canadian taxpayers' money is actually being used to advance women's rights and gender equality around the world.

Indeed, there was a lot to think about. Now I would like to get into a little more detail about specific problems in certain parts of the world, starting with Africa.

Secondly, Africa is an area where the issue of sexual rights is debated, as we heard from several witnesses who discussed cultural differences, and the need for Canada to work in this part of the world. One statistic sums up the problems associated with reproductive rights: sub-Saharan Africa accounted for some 70% of maternal deaths in 2020. Canada has a duty to support countries seeking to make progress in terms of abortion rights and access to quality health care — COVID-19 having imposed, in some countries, additional difficulties in accessing health care, particularly in terms of distance.

Keep in mind that these remarks were made in committee, particularly by Global Affairs Canada representatives, but the Auditor

General also released a report on international assistance in support of gender equality. UNICEF representatives also testified in committee, and the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health submitted a brief. We heard from a lot of witnesses, and all of them seemed to highlight the need to strive for greater accountability.

● (1215)

At a time when the government is developing an "African plan", it is vital that international development, gender equality and access to healthcare services are key pillars of this strategy.

Also, while some committee members denounced, during committee meetings...certain laws in certain countries that run counter to people's fundamental rights with regard to their sexuality... Ms. Th roux-S guin of the Centre d' tude et de coop ration internationale, in her testimony, expressed the hope that Canada could support legislative measures, and promote recommendations aimed at improving sexual and reproductive health. We therefore hope that the Canadian government, through a statement or in international forums, will take the lead in welcoming the development of projects that provide greater access to abortion and reproductive health services around the world. While interfering in the national policy processes of other countries is out of the question, Canada must nonetheless be vocal and offer assistance to countries that request it, to enable the development of essential reproductive health care services.

Thirdly, funding is a central issue, and several witnesses, including Oxfam-Qu bec, Oxfam-Canada and Action Canada, [all] raised concerns about the government's commitment to devote \$700 million a year to support sexual and reproductive health and rights, with a particular focus on four neglected areas: family planning and contraception; safe and legal abortion services and post-abortion care; comprehensive sexuality education; and sexual and reproductive health and rights promotion activities.

I would also like to point out that some witnesses told us some rather disturbing things. In countries with tougher anti-abortion laws, there are not fewer abortions. Rather, there are fewer safe abortions, and therefore more deaths. Several witnesses pointed out that most maternal deaths are preventable. Here is another excerpt from the report:

According to the office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Women's sexual and reproductive health is related to multiple human rights, including the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to health, the right to privacy, the right to education, and the prohibition of discrimination. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have both clearly indicated that women's right to health includes their sexual and reproductive health.

International political agreements reinforce this position.

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [which we talked about a lot] reinforced...and explicitly enshrined women's rights as human rights.

It is crazy that women's rights were not recognized as human rights until 1995. That was not that long ago. The report later mentions "the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, which was launched in 2010". Numerous international agreements have echoed that call for Canada to do more. Here is what the report says about the four neglected areas:

These four issues received \$104 million of the total funding of \$489 million for the same year.

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If the committee's report correctly recommends the need for the government to meet its commitment to invest at least \$700 million in women's sexual and reproductive health and rights globally by the end of fiscal 2023-2024, we ask that the government significantly increase its funding in the four neglected topics.

Members of the Global Cooperation Caucus are constantly reminded about them. These four neglected areas keep coming up. International co-operation organizations reach out to us about them, and representatives of all the parties hear the same thing. It really is important to keep in mind that we hear about this regularly.

Upholding the right to safe abortions, just like the prevention and treatment of HIV-AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, is an important medical and socio-economic issue. It is worrisome. We are also often reminded of that by the organizations working on the ground. Cases of HIV-AIDS are on the rise in certain places in Africa, and again, women are disproportionately affected. As I said, there are also sexually transmitted infections. To that category, we can add HPV, human papillomavirus, which can be avoided through vaccination. We were reminded of the World Health Organization's vaccination objectives, because it is a virus that can lead to cancer but that is preventable by vaccine. Canada is missing its target, however. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done on these issues.

This week, I attended a breakfast meeting where it was mentioned that cases of HIV-AIDS in indigenous communities are on the rise here in Canada. That is extremely concerning. Canada is actually falling behind compared to the other G7 countries. Canada is the only country where cases are on the rise, including because of this increase in indigenous communities.

• (1220)

"Fourthly, we heard the poignant testimony of Ukrainian MP Lesia Vasylenko, who spoke of the Russian army's use of sexual violence as a weapon of war."

I had the opportunity to meet this MP for the first time in October 2022 at an Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly in Kigali, Rwanda. We had an opportunity to have a conversation.

It is very troubling to see this "barbarity without a name that must lead to the criminalization of the perpetrators". That is the message that she wants to send to us. She was travelling around, and she also came here, to Parliament, to draw our attention to this issue. My colleague from Drummond also met with female Ukrainian MPs who told him about the horrors that are happening right now in that conflict zone.

This committee has already recommended to the government, in its report on the situation in Ukraine, that it "work with Ukraine and other international partners to prosecute those most responsible for Russia's crime of aggression against Ukraine by supporting the creation of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine or other similar mechanism". In the quest for justice, sexual violence cannot be ignored when condemning Russia. And unfortunately, such situations are commonplace, since as the Canadian Partnership for Children's and Women's Health points out, "Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of the consequences of forced displacement, particularly in conflict zones where they face soaring levels of sexual violence".

We therefore expect that in the next National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the Government of Canada will increase its funding for programs enabling girls and women who are victims of sexual violence in conflict zones to obtain the justice they deserve.

The goal is to stop women and girls from being used as weapons of war in these conflict zones, which, as we see, are growing in number at the moment. Unfortunately, women are paying the price.

I would like to return to a question the Bloc Québécois has been raising all morning as part of this debate, namely the question of religion as it relates to sexual and reproductive rights. Witnesses came to testify in committee about religious opposition to the question of abortion out of principle and religious belief, which is harming women's health. It is not right for people to use religion in such a way that women have to pay for it with their lives or their health. I will go even further. One should not use religion to engage in hate speech. This is an opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of secularism.

I could talk about the situation of women in Iran, which relates to this issue of secularism. The Bloc Québécois was the first to move a motion following the death of Mahsa Amini, who was killed for wearing her veil improperly. It is absurd that today, in 2024, women are still dying for not wearing a piece of cloth properly. We will continue supporting Iranian women in their struggle for secularism. The same applies to Afghanistan. The Taliban regime is rolling back women's rights. In my Inter-Parliamentary Union meetings I have had exchanges with Afghani parliamentarians.

To get back to the October 2022 general assembly, I met with parliamentarians there, but only male parliamentarians. I was told that women had not won the right to leave the country. They had not managed to get the proper chaperone, which would have allowed them to attend this general assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to express themselves as female members of parliament. This issue is crucial, because the objective of this general assembly was to determine how to achieve a more representative, and hence democratic, kind of parliament. We need to hear these women's viewpoints. They are entitled to be present in the public sphere, which is not the case right now. They are being excluded, and the rights they had won in Afghanistan are being rolled back. This is extremely troubling.

I will take this opportunity to remind my fellow members of the importance of the Bloc Québécois bill aimed at repealing this religious exemption. Ottawa must take concrete action to counter hate speech, which has been rising especially since the start of the war in the Middle East. What we are seeing now, however, is that the Criminal Code still protects people who willingly foment hate when their words are uttered in good faith and based on a religious text in which they believe.

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• (1225)

The elimination of the religious exemption in the Criminal Code, an exemption that also compromises the government's religious neutrality, is crucial to safety. Right here, right now, it is creating tension and conflict. It is for this reason that the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-367. It was to close this loophole in the Criminal Code that permits hate speech if it is ultimately motivated by religion. Unfortunately, the content of the bill apparently did not please the government, which we have a hard time understanding, considering it calls itself feminist. Separating church and state gives women power. That is really what we found out from the committee study. The witnesses who came to tell us that abortion is bad were hiding behind religious beliefs and motivations. I would like to remind my colleagues that women are still dying today in countries where they do not have access to safe abortions.

In conclusion, now more than ever, Canada needs to update its feminist foreign policy and respond to the Auditor General's questions and concerns. COVID-19 and the growing number of conflicts and natural disasters caused by climate change are all factors that are changing the world order and current priorities. As a G7 nation, Canada must step up and start walking the talk. It is our duty to help women and girls in all these places around the world where they are being subjected to heinous sexual acts and losing their rights. We have to do our part. That is what the world is asking us to do.

The major international co-operation organizations are reminding us of our obligations as a G7 nation. There are female parliamentarians on the ground who are worried. Just a few days ago, female MPs from Ukraine came to tell us about advancements that have been made possible thanks to technology, but also to share their concerns. They need our help to continue participating in the democratic life of their country. The same is true for all women in situations of conflict or war. They need help to regain their rights as women, to have access to safe sexual and reproductive health care and to play their role in society to the fullest. We should not leave them stuck in this situation where the only thing that is happening is an erosion of their rights. On that note, I urge everyone to take action, and I am ready to take questions from my colleagues.

• (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member gave a very good speech on this topic. She mentioned what Canada is doing and that we should try to do more around the world.

Has she got any ideas on how Canada should be helping other countries in the world catch up to where we are, when it comes to abortion and women's rights?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying in my speech, it is important to be able to know where the money is going and how it is actually helping women on the ground. Answers are needed to the questions raised by the Auditor General, who is calling on the government to be more accountable when it comes to feminist policy.

I would like to add something that I forgot to mention in my speech. According to co-operation organizations, it would be important to collaborate with local organizations to help empower local groups. It is these local organizations that are asking us to do so. I think that is something else we need to consider. We must also ensure that the money is spent and that cuts are not made to international co-operation budgets. The local organizations are worried about cuts, too. The Canadian government must pull its own weight. To that end, it must not divest from international co-operation, but maintain its commitment levels by spending the necessary money to rectify the situation.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a woman's right to choose, which is a fundamental right.

However, the Bloc and the Conservatives just voted to try to kill this debate. They could have chosen to adjourn debate, so we could return to this and vote on it later. Instead, they chose a motion that would kill the debate altogether.

In the current Parliament, we have had a motion like this come up in the House 36 times, and every single time, the Bloc has voted against that motion, against killing debate. I thought the Bloc did this on principle. However, the one time the Bloc votes to kill debate is when it is on a woman's right to choose. Why is that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc is well known for its pro-choice positions and support of feminist policies. We have done our committee work on this report. I have said it and I will say it again. Thanks to my colleague from Montarville, we have done our job. Our positions are known.

What is happening now involves a procedural matter. This is not the first time I mention this, and we are also seeing this in committee. People are trying to play politics with women's issues, and I find that deplorable. I saw this as recently as last summer at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. What happened is no trifling matter. The Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats brought victims to tears in their attempt to politicize this issue. It was absolutely horrible. The media decried the situation. I let victims recount their experiences with domestic violence, their right to be women and to be free of this violence. Unfortunately, instead of asking these women questions and doing their job, all three parties got bogged down on a procedural question to determine who defends women's rights more. While they hurled accusations back and forth, the victims rose to tell us we should be ashamed as members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I sense the exact same climate this morning in the House. Attempts are being made to politicize this issue. The Bloc's pro-choice positions on women's rights issues are known, but this should not be used for procedural wrangling. Above all, the issue should not be politicized, and yet that is what I sense is happening now in the House. I also feel it in committee, where we were known for our lack of partisanship and our ability to follow procedures. This is so unfortunate.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Shefford on another brilliant speech.

I cannot help but be extremely surprised and disappointed by the question asked by my colleague from Victoria, who appears to be questioning the importance the Bloc Québécois places on this inalienable right, in our view, to access to health care and to full autonomy in making decisions about one's own body. I find it almost disgusting, especially since the New Democrats themselves sabotaged House procedures regarding opposition day.

I especially want to talk about the secularism issue my colleague from Shefford addressed in her speech. I am extremely concerned by the House's rejection yesterday of the motion I tried to introduce to recognize the importance of repealing the religious exemption in the Criminal Code that allows people, on the pretext of religious conviction, to engage in violent speech, calls to death and calls for the annihilation of entire peoples.

I also see a rise in masculinism, a rise in right-wing populism and a trend to return to so-called traditional values, values that disrupt the principle of absolute equality between men and women. This worries me tremendously, and I think it also represents a step backward in terms of women's rights.

I would like my colleague, who sits on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, to share with us the concerns of women in general with regard to the potential erosion of their rights and gains, acquired after decades of struggle by the feminist movement in Quebec and Canada.

• (1235)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I cannot get over all the studies we have to do in the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, studies that remind us that there are real risks of losing ground. In fact, it is already happening. Masculinism is clawing back the rights women acquired thanks to those feminists who paved the way for today's women through decades of struggle. Now we see that, because of misogyny and the rise of masculinism online, women's rights are being eroded. At committee, many witnesses have come to tell us how important it is to control what can be said online and how far hate speech like this can go. This is not just a religious issue. It is an issue of hate speech undermining women's rights.

It is ridiculous, because it was uncomfortable for the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development to realize that, in the end, the only witnesses who spoke against abortion were doing so based on religious principles, with no science to back their remarks. In fact, it has been scientifically proven that, when laws are enacted to limit abortion solely on the basis of religious

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principle, women end up dying. There are not fewer abortions, just more unsafe ones.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her fine speech. It was very powerful.

[*English*]

The hon. member always rises to bring nuance and a fighting spirit for women, for feminist issues. One member spoke of procedure. I share his disappointment, but my disappointment is in the two months that have been lost in the House to procedural shenanigans from the Conservatives, who have shut down really valuable opportunities for us to debate issues such as this. As such, out of procedural fairness, when we had the opportunity to present this, I was surprised that the Bloc voted against it. Had we not been allowed to continue this debate, one of its strongest and most powerful feminist voices would not have had the opportunity to rise and present on this speech.

We are in this debate; while they voted against it, we are still here speaking. What is before us is the threat that we saw down in the States, with project 2025, as well as all this religious fanatic extremism around women's reproductive autonomy. Given that, can the hon. member rise again and just share why this debate is important, even if the Bloc does not necessarily agree that it is important to have right now?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, the 12 days of action to end violence against women campaign is in full swing. People have had an opportunity to speak out. As for the debate, we would have had other opportunities to discuss our views on this important issue.

My colleague just said that the work of the House has been shut down for months, but we finally have an agreement and we managed to end the impasse and restore opposition days. In fact, the NDP has one coming up. However, now that we have broken the gridlock, what do they do? They block the work of the House again, because of course they do. We have been saying for weeks and months that we needed to end the gridlock in the House. We managed to get an agreement restoring the Conservative and NDP opposition days. I know they will bring this up again during their opposition days. At least, that is what we have heard. They could still revisit the issue. I am not in their party, I do not know what they will say, but they have an opposition day coming up. What we just did this morning, though, was to relaunch a procedural war, just when we had broken the gridlock. That is what is bothering me right now.

Regarding the subject of the report, the Bloc Québécois will always be an ally of feminists. We had the opportunity to talk about defending women's rights, we are talking about it now, and we will continue to talk about it.

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● (1240)

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that this is an important, productive debate. When we see the backsliding not only south of the border but also here in Canada, it is critical that we rise in the House to discuss the issue of a woman's fundamental right to choose. This is foundational to gender equity, to public health and to human dignity.

Access to abortion care is health care, both here in Canada and around the world. This is a conversation about rights. It is not abstract principles. It is the lived experience of women and gender-diverse people, as well as the tangible rights of these people in our country. Canada has been a leader in affirming abortion as a fundamental right. In 1988, the Supreme Court's decision struck down restrictive abortion laws as unconstitutional.

The Conservatives like to talk about freedom. They wave freedom flags, but when it comes to the freedom of a woman to make choices about her own body, about our own bodies, for some reason, those freedoms are up for grabs. The majority of Conservative MPs are anti-choice. One-third of them are openly campaigning on anti-choice legislation and are endorsed by anti-choice organizations. However, if we look at their voting records, we see that the vast majority of them are anti-choice. According to the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, 100% of Conservative MPs are anti-choice, given their recent vote on backdoor legislation.

Bill C-311 is very similar to the bills down south that Republican elected officials used to undermine *Roe v. Wade*. We are seeing the same tactics in Canada. Of course, the Conservative leader is saying that Conservatives promise they will not support legislation that bans abortion. This is despite the fact that the Conservative leader voted five times in favour of legislation that would restrict access to choice or voted in favour of anti-choice bills, such as Bill C-311. However, we know that his intention is to cut health care, services and funding internationally for reproductive rights, as the Harper government did when the Conservative leader was a minister in that government.

Anti-choice rhetoric is finding a firmer foothold here in Canada. It is amplified in the House by the Conservative members. It is paraded around by such members as the member for Peace River—Westlock, who went outside the House of Commons to anti-choice rallies and made commitments to his supporters, to the supporters of the Conservative Party, to fight to end a woman's right to choose and to restrict access to choice, to health care for women and for gender-diverse people across this country. He is not the only Conservative MP to do so.

The MP for Cypress Hills—Grasslands took a paid trip down to a church in the United States. A pro-life, anti-choice church brought him down to speak about his stance on trying to end a woman's right to choose. To have Conservative MPs going to the United States to learn new tactics, to collaborate, to organize with anti-choice activists there and to bring that back to Canada is terrifying. It is terrifying to me, and I think it is terrifying to women across this country.

I also want to bring up the MP for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. Not only has the member been vocal about being

against a woman's right to choose, but he also spent 18 hours filibustering this report because he did not want to talk about the fundamental right of women in Canada and around the world to access abortion care.

It tracks that the Conservatives want to cut funding for reproductive rights. Abortion care is health care. Whether it is for a broken leg, heart surgery or abortion care, Canadians need access to health care, to quality health care across this country. Conservatives have a track record of cutting that.

● (1245)

Unfortunately the Liberals have a track record of failing to uphold the Canada Health Act. I have spoken about this in the House before. About two decades ago I was sitting with a friend in New Brunswick, in grade 11, talking about the multi-hour drive to Montreal she would have to take if she wanted to access abortion. I am getting choked up because it is a horrific reality that so many women in Canada face when they do not have access to the care they need.

I could not have imagined that two decades later, Clinic 554 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, would close and that the Liberal government would not use the provisions in the Canada Health Act that it knows it could use to ensure access for all women in British Columbia and for all people across this country. Our health care system guarantees Canadians the right to access medically necessary services. Abortion is that kind of service, yet those kinds of clinic closures demonstrate the fragility of access to care.

I think about women and gender diverse people in Alberta, whose provincial Conservatives have outsourced health care to private institutions and religious institutions that will not provide contraception and abortion care to the women who need them. Those are systemic barriers that hinder equitable access. The lack of leadership from the federal government to enforce the Canada Health Act makes these barriers worse.

I also want to talk about our responsibility globally. We need to demonstrate leadership when it comes to prioritizing sexual health and reproductive health on the global stage, including through our international assistance policy. We know about the cuts that happened during the Harper era. The Harper government cut all funding to reproductive health, reproductive services and sexual health services around the globe. Canada has a responsibility to step up to support nations around the world in accessing health care and reproductive care.

I find it difficult when Conservative members talk about the rights of the unborn or try to sneak legislation in that has increased penalties for the murder of pregnant women or the harm of an unborn child. Evidence shows that limiting access to abortions or restricting women's choice does not stop abortions; it just means that unsafe abortions happen.

When we restrict comprehensive reproductive health services, everyone suffers. When we ensure that access exists, societies prosper. Investing in the services reduces maternal mortality, improves economic opportunities for women and promotes equality.

It is our duty as parliamentarians to protect and promote these rights. We cannot allow a vocal minority in Canada that has influence over the official opposition to undermine these rights. We cannot allow it to undermine decades of work that feminist organizations and people across Canada have fought to protect. We must act decisively. We need to ensure compliance, enforce the Canada Health Act, ensure that we are eliminating any kind of user fee and provide equitable abortion access in every province.

• (1250)

We need to invest strategically and expand funding for clinics and services in rural and underserved areas. We need to ensure that midwives, nurse practitioners, nurses and family doctors are available for people when they need assistance with their reproductive health.

We need to combat misinformation, challenge the anti-choice narratives and ensure that facts are brought into the House and that we have rights-driven education campaigns. We must not allow backdoor legislation to undermine these rights, and we must not allow the vocal minority that wants to undermine our right to choose to have influence over the decisions of the House.

Access to abortion is a domestic issue, but the report focuses on the global issue of human rights with respect to public health. Around the world, millions of women face unsafe abortions because of restrictive laws, lack of resources and systemic inequalities. Each year, 35 million unsafe abortions occur globally. That is a horrific statistic. Unsafe abortions lead to preventable deaths and life-altering injuries. Canada must be a global leader in supporting sexual and reproductive health.

It is terrifying to think of what Conservatives would do to abortion rights here in Canada if they were in power. It is horrific to think about the consequences of the cuts they would make to international assistance around the world and what that would mean for women who are trying to access reproductive care.

The world is at a crossroads. Some countries are advancing abortion rights, but others, and I think we see this in the Conservative caucus, are emboldened by movements in the United States to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. There is a backslide happening. Our leadership at this moment matters. By standing firm, Canada can continue to support the global efforts to ensure that every woman and every person, including all gender diverse people everywhere, has the right to make decisions about their own body.

We have talked before about Conservative creep for this kind of legislation, the changes in tone and rhetoric and also the changes to

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the laws that would have a fundamental impact on people's right to choose. I want to speak directly to young women and young gender diverse people who might be looking at the prospect of the Conservatives' getting into power and undermining their rights. Their voice right now matters. Their organizing matters. Standing up for their right to choose matters. It matters to have these discussions in the House.

I am disappointed that the Bloc decided to try to kill the debate. I am not surprised that the Conservatives would do that. I know there are staunch supporters in the Bloc of a woman's right to choose, but I am still disappointed that at this moment, when we are at a crossroads on reproductive and sexual health, the Bloc would do that, especially given that every other time a motion like the one before us has come up to return to orders of the day, 36 times its members voted against it. I thought it was a matter of principle, but then the one time that they vote to kill debate is on a woman's right to choose.

New Democrats will always stand in unwavering support of abortion rights. We will not let regressive policies and regressive members of Parliament take us backward. We will fight back against the misinformation and the rhetoric that try to undermine our fundamental rights.

• (1255)

We will stand up for investments in health care. Every Canadian deserves quality health care and deserves to access the health care they need when they need it. Abortion care is health care.

Together let us affirm the right to choose, not as a procedural tactic and not as something to bring up in order to score political points, but as a cornerstone of gender equality. It is a non-negotiable. The time to act is now. I do not want Conservatives or Bloc members to avoid a vote on it.

Therefore I move:

That the question be now put.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is in order.

Question and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Victoria for her speech and the passion she has for this issue.

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Before asking her a question, I would just like to get back to her tone when she accused the Bloc Québécois of siding with the Conservatives on the question of voting to get back to the orders of the day. She said we had voted 36 times. The only two times we voted to get back to the orders of the day had to do with following procedure. Both times, it was because the NDP had pulled the rug out from under the Conservative Party during its opposition day. There is a matter of principle at play here.

The report came out in June 2023. If my colleague was so keen on debating it, I do not see why the NDP waited so long before putting it back on the agenda. What is more, our NDP colleagues also have an opposition day this week. We voted to get back to the orders of the day because we are not engaging in these sorts of tactics, even though, when it comes to the subject at hand, I admit that we find this debate far more worthwhile than the one proposed by the Conservatives during their opposition day. I think the subject is important enough for us not to get embroiled in petty politics, as seems to be the case here. This is very unlike my colleague from Victoria. I just wanted to point that out.

Now, as for the subject at hand, there is something that concerns me. Canada is contributing financially to support developing countries.

Does my colleague think that Canada should ensure, because this is not entirely the case, that the developing countries it supports have values and should provide their citizens access to sexual and reproductive rights and to care, such as abortion? Should Canada include that as a prerequisite to receiving financial support?

• (1300)

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Bloc for focusing some of the debate on how religious extremism has sometimes undermined and continues to undermine a woman's right to choose. I do think we need, as Canadians, to provide assistance for reproductive health and sexual health around the globe. We need to continue to put out education campaigns to ensure that we are fighting back against the anti-choice rhetoric.

I do have to say that I am still disappointed that the Bloc would not vote, on principle, to continue the discussion on a woman's right to choose but instead would vote with the Conservatives today to kill the debate.

Ms. Leila Dance (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people in my riding of Elmwood—Transcona have talked to me about the challenges of accessing health care. Whether it is for a broken leg, heart surgery or abortion care, the government has a responsibility to ensure that Canadians have access to health care, and abortion care is health care. Manitobans know that Conservative cuts would undermine the ability to access the quality health care that everyone needs.

Can the member speak to the long-term impacts the government's inaction will have on the rights of women in this country?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her staunch advocacy for a woman's right to choose and for health care access in Canada. It is important to acknowledge that Canadians are struggling to access the health care they need, whether they are

looking to get cancer treatments or they have a broken bone. There are not always family physicians and there are not always specialists. People are sometimes waiting hours and hours in emergency rooms to get the care they need. Whether it is a broken leg, a head injury or abortion care, everyone deserves the right to quality health care in Canada, and the government needs to step up.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are having this very important debate on an issue that I would argue has unfortunately come to the forefront not in just Canadian politics but in many countries I would have otherwise thought of as progressive countries throughout the world. There are Conservatives who are continually starting to push this agenda of rolling back a woman's right to choose. However, I actually do not think that, if they ever formed government, they would be so bold as to bring in a piece of legislation that banned abortion. What I think they would do is take other measures, such as defunding certain organizations, slowly removing some of those rights or working around and chipping away at those rights, as opposed to one bold action, which others might assume they would do.

I am wondering if the member can give her comments on how she sees a potential Conservative government treating an issue like this.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, we know Conservatives will work to undermine a woman's right to choose. They did it during the decade under Harper and will do it again, if given the chance.

I want to raise something the member for Kingston and the Islands said earlier in this debate, which is that he did not know what Clinic 554 in New Brunswick was. It is really concerning that the deputy House leader of the government does not know about the clinic that closed in Fredericton. The government is not acting rapidly to ensure that women and gender-diverse people in New Brunswick have access to the health care they need. Abortion care is health care.

• (1305)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the member for Edmonton Strathcona, and the member for Victoria as well, for bringing forward this really important conversation in the House on reproductive rights. She is right that abortion care is health care.

I just wonder if there is more she would like to say about any of the 14 recommendations that she might not have had time for in her speech but wants to share with the rest of the House.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for standing up for a woman's right to choose. Our leadership in this moment matters. It matters for women here in Canada, and it matters for women and gender-diverse people all around the globe. I hope that the government responds to this report.

However, I do want to take a moment to talk about the conservative creep that is happening and the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has such control over his members of Parliament. We have heard in media reports that his members are not allowed to fraternize and they are told what to say. There is an extreme amount of control over members of Parliament, yet somehow, even despite that control, his members are going and speaking at anti-choice rallies. His members are going to the United States to go to churches for anti-choice activists and to bring that kind of organizing back here to Canada.

The Leader of the Opposition has extreme control over his members of Parliament, yet he allows them to bring forward legislation that would bring in backdoor legislation to restrict a woman's right to choose, anti-choice legislation. That is unacceptable. We will fight tooth and nail to stop it.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking about Conservative creep is very timely, because we are in a scenario right now in the House where there are many people within the Conservative caucus who spend a lot of time internationally trying to undermine women's rights not just here in Canada but in fact around the world. They have a hidden agenda. When they were talking about procedural shenanigans in the House, what they failed to mention was that for the last two months we have not had the ability in the House to deliver for Canadians and to debate actual legislation. Instead, we have been listening to Conservative shenanigans.

Can the hon. member please expand on how, over the last two months, we had an opportunity and we lost the opportunity? What things would she like to speak about now?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his staunch support for a woman's right to choose.

It is extraordinarily disappointing to me that we have members in the House who would try to undermine a woman's right to choose, and we know they are in the Conservative caucus. Over one-third of the Conservative caucus is endorsed by anti-choice groups as pro-life, a.k.a. they want to undermine a woman's right to choose, and 73% are rated as anti-choice MPs by the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada.

Actually, it was 73%, but now 100% of them are rated anti-choice because of their vote on Bill C-311, which is the same kind of legislation that Republican elected officials brought in the United States to start undermining a woman's right to choose and overturn Roe versus Wade. This is what they are trying to do here in Canada, and we will fight to stop them.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. If a member participating in person wishes the motion to be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the chair.

The hon. member for Victoria.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote on a woman's right to choose.

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

* * *

• (1310)

PETITIONS

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring forward a petition about the recent RCMP reports that the Government of India has interfered in Canada's elections and have murdered, threatened and extorted Canadians on Canadian soil.

Later today, we will have Patrick Brown, the former candidate for leader of the Conservative Party, testifying before the public safety committee regarding serious allegations reported about foreign interference in the electoral process of choosing a Conservative leader. This petition is very timely given that there are serious allegations that the Leader of the Opposition could not win leadership unless someone's finger was on the scale.

I also note that in this petition the undersigned residents of Canada are calling on the leader of the Conservative Party to get his security clearance and take action to help stop foreign governments from interfering in Canada and targeting Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know I do not have the best—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Let me wait for things to quiet down.

The hon. deputy House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I just wish that you could ask members in the House to be a little quieter. I am sitting four seats away and I could not hear the member.

The Deputy Speaker: It is a reasonable request to keep the noise down. I heard it as well.

Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the exceptional roles and responsibilities Canada's military members undertake while in service can lead to physical and mental health difficulties. Adjusting to civilian life can be challenging for many of our military veterans, and this adjustment can impact their physical and mental health. The process for veterans and their family members to obtain Veterans Affairs Canada benefits and services because of illness or injury obtained from service can be complex, drawn out, confusing and repetitive.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, citizens in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon call upon the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Minister of National Defence to dramatically cut red tape, simplify and expedite the delivery of services and benefits for our military veterans, especially during their transition to civilian life.

ARTS FUNDING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions. The first recognizes the critical importance of the arts to the vibrancy of communities across the country. The petition was signed by almost 2,000 people.

The petitioners note the economic impact of the arts as well as the impact on activism, mental health and our well-being. The economic impact is \$54.8 billion to our GDP every year. They note that public data shows there are significant regional inequities to arts funding across the country. I would point out that this includes in my community as well. The petitioners note there are better options available. For example, the regional development agency model that sets up organizations like FedDev can ensure that funds are more equitably distributed across the country.

The petition includes several calls to action. First is restoring the funding of the Canada Council for the Arts back to the \$500 million it had during the pandemic. Second is applying the regional development agency model to ensure that organizations and artists in communities across the country, including in mine, more equitably receive these really critical funds for artists, creatives and art organizations across the country.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on behalf of Canadians who recognize that we remain in a climate crisis, one that requires urgent action in this closing window of opportunity. They note that the impacts of the climate crisis are being felt across the country, from droughts to wildfires and, at the same time, that the federal government today spends at least \$4.8 billion a year, though other research shows it is actually higher, on subsidies to the oil and gas industry in the midst of this crisis and at a time when the oil and gas industry's profits are reaching record levels.

The petitioners call for an end to all subsidies to the oil and gas industry and, rather, call for the imposition of a windfall profit tax on the excess profits of this industry. The petitioners call for those dollars to be used for a just transition into good green jobs, including a youth climate corps.

● (1315)

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the House of Commons in which Canadians are concerned that the Leader of the Opposition continues to refuse to get a security clearance. The undersigned residents of Canada are calling on the leader of the Conservative Party to get his security clearance and take action to help stop foreign governments from interfering in Canada and targeting Canadians.

PESTICIDES

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of many constituents in my region concerned about the use of glyphosate in Canadian forests.

Glyphosate in Canada is the most widely sold pesticide. It is used in agriculture as a herbicide to kill crops for harvest and in forestry to kill unwanted target trees and vegetation and as a herbicide on rights-of-way. The result is that residents in Canada, including infants and children, consume glyphosate residues in their food and water and are exposed to it while outdoors for recreational and occupational activities, hunting and harvesting.

The use of glyphosate harms aquatic and terrestrial species and causes loss of biodiversity, thereby making ecosystems more vulnerable to pollution. It endangers pollinators, including wild bees and monarch butterflies, and exacerbates wildfires since conifer-only forests burn faster and hotter than mixed forests. In 2015, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer classified glyphosate as a probable carcinogen to humans—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, we did not hear one word of what my colleague read because there are people talking to one another. I have no idea what the petition is about. I would maybe invite the member to start over.

The Deputy Speaker: I completely agree. Even with my earpieces, I cannot hear him.

[*English*]

I will ask hon. members to show a little patience and allow the hon. member to present his petition, as we allow all members of the House to do.

I will ask the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay to start from scratch.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about health issues and cancer, and to be heckled by Conservatives over fundamental health issues is a disgrace.

Glyphosate in Canada is the most widely-sold pesticide. It is used in forestry to kill unwanted target trees and vegetation, and as a herbicide on right-of-way commercial and residential grounds, golf courses, schools and other landscapes. The result is that residents, including infants and children, consume glyphosate residues in their food and water and are exposed to it while outdoors for recreation, occupational activities, hunting and harvesting.

The use of glyphosate harms aquatic and terrestrial species and causes a loss of biodiversity, thereby making ecosystems more vulnerable to pollution and climate change. It endangers pollinators, including wild bees and monarch butterflies, and exacerbates wildfires, since conifer-only forests burn faster and hotter than mixed forests.

In 2015, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer classified glyphosate as probably carcinogenic to humans.

The petitioners, residents of Canada, call on the Minister of Health to: first, ban the sale and use of glyphosate to protect human health and the environment; and second, develop a comprehensive plan to reduce overall pesticide use in Canada.

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a petition to present today.

Canadians who have signed this petition are drawing the attention of the House to the fact that the RCMP has reported that the Government of India has interfered in Canada's elections. They are deeply troubled by the testimony at the foreign interference inquiry, that foreign agents have interfered in Canadian elections. They are also deeply troubled that the leader of the Conservative Party is choosing to protect his party before protecting Canadian lives.

The petitioners therefore call on the leader of the Conservative Party to get his security clearance and take action to help stop foreign governments from interfering in Canada and targeting Canadians.

I could help the Table by presenting this and bringing it straight to the leader of the Conservative Party if you, Mr. Speaker, would find that to be more efficient than sending it through to everybody else.

• (1320)

The Deputy Speaker: We will stick to the procedure that is set before us.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

SITUATION IN GAZA

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received a request for an emergency debate.

I invite the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona to rise and make a brief intervention.

S. O. 52

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proposing an emergency debate tonight based on the report that came out yesterday from Amnesty International, concluding that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. This finding of genocide from the world's most respected human rights organization has immediate implications for the Government of Canada and for every single member of Parliament.

In short, Canada must change course immediately, given such a conclusion, or the government may be found complicit in genocide by the International Court of Justice. This has serious implications for Canada's reputation internationally and for Canada's adherence to international law. It also requires that Canada do much more to end the genocide in Gaza and to withdraw its political and military support for Israel while the genocide is ongoing.

This report is meticulous in its research on Israeli authorities, policies and actions in Gaza as part of the military offensive they launched in the wake of the Hamas-led attacks on October 7, 2023. It situates these actions “within the broader context of Israel’s unlawful occupation” and what Amnesty calls a “system of apartheid against Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel.” It assesses allegations of violations and crimes under international law by Israel in Gaza within the framework of genocide under international law, concluding that there is sufficient evidence to believe that Israel’s conduct in Gaza following October 7, 2023, amounts to genocide.

I note that Amnesty is also working on a research report on the horrific crimes committed by Hamas on October 7 of last year. We anticipate that this report will detail the egregious violations of international law by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, and the need for accountability under the international justice system.

I further note that this report is specific to Israel's actions. Amnesty requests an arms embargo apply to Israel, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups operating in Gaza. It also advocates for sanctions on both Israeli and Hamas officials implicated in crimes under international law.

The New Democrats support these calls and we believe that all perpetrators, Israel, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, all perpetrators in the region, must be held accountable.

The report states that Amnesty has found “sufficient basis to conclude that Israel committed, between 7 October 2023 and July 2024, prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part.”

This is why I am asking for an emergency debate.

Business of Supply

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for her intervention. However, the Speaker is not satisfied that this meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1325)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CONFIDENCE IN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC) moved:

That,

- (i) whereas the Leader of the New Democratic Party said he "ripped up" his supply and confidence agreement with the Liberal government,
- (ii) whereas the NDP Leader said, "the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people",
- (iii) whereas the NDP Leader said, "the Liberal government will always cave to corporate greed, and always step in to make sure the unions have no power", in response to the Liberal Labour Minister's referrals to the Canadian Industrial Relations Board that ordered the workers of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference and the ILWU 514 to resume their duties, violating their right to strike",

therefore, the House agrees with the NDP Leader, and the House proclaims it has lost confidence in the Prime Minister and the government.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in the spirit of non-partisanship, to put our differences aside and take a good idea and a good perspective, no matter where it comes from. Too often in this place we refuse to accept ideas or input from other people. I thought I would remedy that by taking the words and the message of the leader of the NDP and put them in a Conservative motion so that all of us could vote for the very wise things he said.

Allow me, in the spirit of this non-partisan spirit, to read the motion that we have here, a common-sense Conservative motion:

- (i) whereas the Leader of the New Democratic Party said he "ripped up" his supply and confidence agreement with the Liberal government,
- (ii) whereas the NDP Leader said, "the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people",
- (iii) whereas the NDP Leader said, "the Liberal government will always cave to corporate greed, and always step in to make sure the unions have no power", in response to the Liberal Labour Minister's referrals to the Canadian Industrial Relations Board that ordered the workers of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference and the ILWU 514 to resume their duties, violating their right to strike,

therefore, the House agrees with the NDP Leader, and the House proclaims it has lost confidence in the Prime Minister and the government.

We all applaud the NDP leader. I know that he is enjoying the praise we are giving him.

I am splitting my time, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Let us go through this point by point to prove the charge of the NDP leader. He says that the Liberals are too weak. He is right about that. The economy is weak, having lost \$500 billion of net in-

vestment to the United States; having shrunk the last eight quarters in a row, on a per capita basis; having seen the productivity per hour worked in Canada drop for six quarters in a row. Our economy is now smaller than it was 10 years ago. We have gone from having median incomes equal to American median incomes to the present, where the American worker makes \$22,000 more.

Our economy is shrinking in per capita terms. The cost of living is out of reach. We have two million people lined up at food banks. We have double the housing costs and the worst housing price inflation in the G7. Vancouver and Toronto are the most expensive housing markets in all of North America. We recognize that, economically, the Liberals have made the country weak. Then there is politically weak.

The Prime Minister has lost the support, not only of Canadians, who overwhelmingly want to fire him, but of his own party. In fact, the Liberal leader in Ontario has said that his carbon tax is wrong. How could she not say that? It will quadruple over the next five years, bringing economic nuclear winter to our country, emptying our shelves of groceries, driving even more people into starvation. The Liberal Premier of Newfoundland has said that the Prime Minister's energy cap will kill jobs in that province. Then 20 Liberal MPs want to fire him. However, it has also gone to his own cabinet. Right in the middle of a potential trade dispute with incoming President-elect Trump, we would assume that the foreign affairs minister, of all ministers, if she were to appear in the New York Times, would be doing so to fight against the tariffs. Instead, she was in the New York Times with the following headline, "Tapped by [the Prime Minister] to Steer Foreign Affairs, She's Now His Possible Successor." That is the foreign affairs minister—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. He is not even remotely good at what he is trying to do. He is trying to use a prop. Could you please—

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind the hon. leader of the official opposition to keep that down.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, for him to dismiss the foreign affairs minister in that way is outrageous. The reality is that she is the one who chose to go to a photo shoot in a studio with the New York Times in an article about how she was the possible successor to her own boss. We would expect a foreign affairs minister, of all ministers, would be busy fighting tariffs with our biggest trading partner. Instead, she is fighting to replace her boss.

• (1330)

[Translation]

We would think that the Minister of Foreign Affairs would be busy fighting tariffs, but no. She went to the New York Times to be part of a big article presenting her as her leader's potential replacement. That is a sign of weakness.

Business of Supply

[English]

The leader of the NDP is right. The Liberal Prime Minister is weak. Is the Prime Minister selfish? Well, what else could we call it? He has treated himself to illegal vacations to private islands, lavished himself with constant gifts and benefits, shut down Parliament numerous times to cover up scandals, refused to allow Canadians to have accountability for the missing \$400 million in the green slush fund scandal, and protected his own trust fund from the tax increases he has imposed on everyone else. One can only think that this is selfish. Most of all, he stays in power after seeing the devastating consequences this is having on the lives of everyday Canadians. That is nothing if not selfish.

Then, we can move on to the charge the NDP leader makes that the Prime Minister is attacking the rights of workers. Of this, there is no doubt. We have seen the leader of the NDP. He has gone to rallies at places where courageous workers are striking to recuperate many of the lost wages that have resulted from government-induced inflation. We know we had more strikes last year than in any year since 1983. That is a 40-year high.

We have Canada Post workers on strike. That strike now is lasting a long time and doing incredible damage to small businesses. Hopefully, it will come to an end soon. The NDP leader showed up at these strikes and said, "If there is any vote in Parliament that in any way impacts your rights, we are going to vote no.... Whether that vote is a confidence vote or not, whether it triggers an election or not, I'm telling the Prime Minister and the Liberals right now, 'You're never going to count on us if you're going to take away the rights of workers. Never'". What a powerful and absolutely categorical statement that was.

Therefore, surely, the NDP leader will vote on this motion, keeping his word to those workers, or was he looking them straight in the eye and telling them a plain falsehood? Will he go back to them after this vote and tell them that, when it came down to putting his vote where his words were, he just did not have the courage, that he was under too much pressure, that the fear of losing an election and facing the music, for his own record was too much for him, and therefore, he backed down and turned his back on those workers and left them out in the cold? Is that what he is going to tell those union workers? If so, how would they ever believe anything he says to them again? The answer is that they, of course, could not.

However, if the NDP leader does decide to vote against his own words, it would mean two things. One, it would mean that he does not want to take responsibility for his own record and that he does not want voters to have the ability to judge his record and his plans because he fears that they would render a verdict that is not in his favour. Two, it would reveal that, in the next election, there are not five or four parties running. There would be two parties running. There would be the NDP-Bloc-Liberal coalition, which taxes people's food, punishes their work, doubles their housing cost and unleashes crime and chaos in their community, and there would be the common-sense Conservatives, who would axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. That is the choice. It is a binary choice. If they vote for the NDP, they would get the Liberals. If they vote for the Liberals, they would get the NDP. If they vote for the Bloc, they would get both the NDP and the Liberal Party.

If they are among the grand majority of Canadians who are unsatisfied with the downward spiral of our country, with broken borders, broken immigration system and broken economy, and if they want to bring home Canada's promise again and restore a country where hard work earns a powerful paycheque and pensions that buy affordable food and homes in safe neighbourhoods, where anyone from anywhere can do anything in the freest nation on earth, in Canada, then let us bring it home.

• (1335)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the House, and in other public settings, there has been a member of Parliament, and I will let the leader guess which one, but that member has been here for about 20 years and has a big pension, who has said the following couple of quotes. Perhaps the member could comment on them. This member has said, "The union has the power to shut down a workplace...legal powers give the union a state-enforced monopoly on labour".

This member spoke of "fattened union contracts." This member allowed right-to-work legislation, that is optional union membership, in his party's platform. That member cannot comprehend that union firms can be competitive with non-union ones.

I wonder if that member of Parliament could explain those comments, which he made about working people in this country.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the member can distort my record instead of defending his own.

He is a part of the government, this former corporate lobbyist and party staffer who spent his time making money off the political system, and he can explain why he and his government have presided over the largest number of strikes in the last 40 years of Canadian history. Never have there been more strikes than since 1983.

The Liberals, with the help of the NDP, have consistently overpowered the rights of workers to carry out those strikes and used their legal authority to rob workers of their autonomy and their independent decision-making. That is their record.

By the way, it is the first time in our history that people with good union jobs cannot afford homes. It is the first time in history that, en masse, union workers are lined up at food banks. That is the tragic record of the broken government. That is why we need a common-sense Conservative government. We will bring home the country we knew and loved.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will not hide the fact that I sometimes have a hard time following what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. To demonstrate inflation and the carbon tax, he has often said that teachers are quitting because there is no heating in the schools, and that nurses are quitting because there is no heating in hospitals. However, he never proposed a solution to his concerns. Not too long ago, he said that an electrician could capture lightning and run it through a wire.

I wonder whether that electrician could also heat schools and hospitals. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could tell us that.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, yes, that electrician can heat schools and hospitals because he has exceptional powers thanks to science and knowledge, which I admire. That is why I spoke so poetically and eloquently of tradespeople. My colleague cited one of my extraordinary odes to them. Once again we see that the Conservative Party loves art.

We are prepared to write more poetry to help the Bloc Québécois understand common sense and our solutions. They include eliminating taxes that force the provinces to fire nurses and teachers so they can pay heating bills. We will eliminate those taxes and we will support teachers and nurses.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the Conservative Party would be laughable if his hypocrisy were not so ridiculous.

He stood up right now and, in his opening remarks, exposed himself. This man has never been to a picket line. He called it a rally for striking workers. The leader fought aggressively against card-check legislation. He was one of the loudest supporters of the anti-union bill, Bill C-377. Also, he is proudly one of the loudest proponents of the U.S. right-to-work legislation.

My question is simple. Despite all of his cosplay, we have seen he cannot even put on a high-vis vest. Has this member ever, once in his life, visited a picket line?

• (1340)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, yes.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am trying to listen to my Conservative colleague. He is giving a speech, but his own colleagues are heckling him. Could you ask them to stop, so I could hear the hon. member?

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member. It is getting a little too noisy in the chamber, so I want to make sure that the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry has the full attention of the House. Until I see I have the full attention of the House, I will stand here and wait.

The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry has the floor.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour, and it is a tough act to follow the Leader of the Opposition, Canada's next prime minister. I am sorry for the noise on this side of the House, but we are fired up for a carbon tax election, which the NDP has the opportunity to allow for today. We are going to, on the floor here now, debate to call the NDP out.

The leader of the NDP is so mad that he has had enough. Let us recall again what he has said in just the past few months alone. He said that he had ripped up his coalition agreement with the Liberals. He said that he was fed up. He said that “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”. He also said, “The Liberal government will always cave to corporate greed, and always step in to make sure the unions have no power.” That was in response to the Liberal labour minister's referral to the Canada Industrial Relations Board, which ordered the workers of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, in ILWU 514, to resume their duties, violating their right to strike.

The NDP leader talks a tough game. At press conferences, on Twitter, on X, on Facebook, on social media and in question period, he pretends to be outraged. We are going to test that outrage. If he has truly had enough, it is time to vote non-confidence. We are saying that the House and the Conservatives simply agree with the NDP leader. We are fed up with the Prime Minister. We are fed up with this NDP-Liberal government. Enough is enough. He must back his words up with action and vote to have non-confidence in the government. It is time for a carbon tax election.

The question is, will the NDP finally do that? I have a feeling, from what we have heard in the last couple of days, that the NDP will not do that. Its members claim that, for all the wonderful things they are getting done for Canadians, they just need more time. They need more runway to prop the Liberals up. The coalition agreement was not ripped up. After that little stunt and photo op, the NDP leader taped it back together piece by piece and handed it right back to the Prime Minister. The sellout leader of the NDP has done it time and time again, even this week when we found the NDP's own words put into a motion. There is all that tough talk, but they are going to prop the Prime Minister up again.

Let me make it very clear. It is not because the NDP is getting things done for Canadians. It is because of the record of what NDP members have done, the true record, which Canadians know they are complicit in, over the last miserable few years that millions of Canadians have faced. Let us think about it. There are two million visits to food banks in Canada per month in this country. The Feed Ontario report came out, and one million Ontarians are now using a food bank in this country. The Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto says that 10%, one in every 10 Torontonians, are using a food bank.

Business of Supply

The NDP members sit here and say that they support workers and that they have their backs, but their record is a doubling of housing costs, food inflation rising faster than we have seen in decades and a carbon tax that goes up and up, which will be quadrupled. There are all of these stats, and we are seeing workers hurting more than ever before, in my lifetime and beyond.

Of the food bank users, 18% are workers. They are working, but they cannot afford to make ends meet. Workers cannot afford their mortgages or their rent, which have doubled under the watch of the NDP-Liberals. We can also look at crime, with increasing gun violence and an over 100% increase in gun and gang violence in this country. After nine years, auto theft is through the roof under their watch.

Time and time again, when we look at every part of their record, it is not delivering for people. It is hurting people. This is the hypocrisy of what NDP members are doing here. They are putting their own words into action.

• (1345)

If the New Democrats are so outraged at how bad the Prime Minister is and all the things that are happening in this country, if they are upset about the labour rights of unionized workers to be able to strike, if they truly meant what they said outside this chamber and if they truly meant what they said during question period and debates, when the question gets called and we have to stand, they would easily say what millions of Canadians want them to finally say, that they do not have confidence in the Prime Minister, and then they would vote non-confidence and call a carbon tax election, but they will not.

Here is the thing: In a carbon tax election, let us just think about the NDP and where its members are. I think I have lost track of the numbers. I think 28, the last time I heard, is the number of times the NDP voted with the Liberals to prop them up in confidence votes, budgets, estimates and everything else in between. Every single time, those plans supported the carbon tax and supported the plan, along with the Bloc Québécois, to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre.

Funnily, around the end of summer a by-election came in an NDP riding in Winnipeg. All of a sudden I think the NDP leader was hearing at the doors with his candidate about just how unpopular the NDP has become by propping this Prime Minister up and by quadrupling the carbon tax. The NDP leader came out and said that the New Democrats no longer supported the carbon tax and they supported something else. He did not say what that was. With the by-elections over, the NDP eked through, its margin shrunk drastically, no sooner did the NDP leader flip-flop on the carbon tax. He flip-flopped on his flip-flop now, and he is voting again with the Prime Minister and the Liberals to prop them up, prop the carbon tax up and prop up the quadrupling of the carbon tax.

The NDP is in political wilderness right now. Its members said they did not support the carbon tax after they supported the carbon tax. Now they are back to supporting it by propping the Liberals up, but they will not say what their plan is. It is like being in the political wilderness, and the only time they come out of the forest is to vote to prop the Liberals up, and then they run back in again. That is exactly what they have been doing for years. They do not want to

have an election because they know that they are on the wrong side of Canadians. There are two choices; there are not five or six different options in the next election. The Liberals, the NDP, the Bloc and the Green Party think the carbon tax is doing wonders. They think when we tax a farmer who grows the food, we tax the trucker who ships the food and we tax the stores that sell the food with the carbon tax, nothing contributes to inflation, and it all is just made up in Canadians' heads.

Canadians know better, and that is why members are desperately avoiding a carbon tax election.

It is the NDP leader's record on labour that is absolutely hypocritical, time and time again. I want to read a quote from just about one month ago. He said, "If there is ever any vote in Parliament that in any way impacts your rights", speaking to union members on November 12 last month, "We're going to vote no. I can tell you right now we'll vote no. Whether that vote is a confidence vote or not, whether that triggers an election or not, I'm telling [the Prime Minister] and the Liberals right now, you're never going to count on us if you're going to take away the rights of workers. Never."

He said that last month. Our motion calls that out today. It is not a game to vote for non-confidence, to have an election and to say "enough" of this Prime Minister. What is political games is the New Democrats voting against their own words and not matching their actions with the rhetoric they have used for the last while.

I want to wrap up today, and I want to say to Canadians in my part of eastern Ontario and across this country, that things are not good right now. The stats are difficult to hear. We have to spend a lot of time talking about doubling of housing prices, food inflation, food bank use and drug overdose deaths, but I want to provide a message of hope.

It was not this bad before the NDP and Liberals came in, and it will not be that bad after we give them the boot. Today, in this motion, it is not just about the NDP; it is about the 30-something-year-old who is stuck in their parents' basement. We are going to build new homes by axing the GST on new home sales under \$1 million. Some 47,000 Canadians have lost their lives to drug overdoses. We offer treatment and recovery, not the legalization of hard drugs. We are going to restore the Canada we know and love. It is time for the NDP members to get with the program, call an election and back up their words. Let us let Canadians finally have their say.

• (1350)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking moments ago, he said "Liberals, with the help of the NDP, have ... overpowered the rights of workers". Can the member explain what he meant by that?

Business of Supply

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, that is right in the motion. The NDP is calling out the Liberal failure and the Liberal Minister of Labour for what he has done when it comes to not respecting the right of union workers to strike. It is that minister and those members of the Liberal government who have answered the question that took away union workers' right to collective bargaining. They talk a big game and their actions say something completely different. It is time now for the NDP to call the Liberals out and say how bad it is. It is time to respect union workers. It is time to respect the collective bargaining process.

Rather than just tough rhetoric out of the microphone and in question period, it is time for the New Democrats to back their words up with action. It is time to do that when it comes to a vote and it comes to a carbon tax election.

Ms. Leila Dance (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a new member of Parliament, I was not part of the confidence and supply agreement, but I do not want to be a part of a government that does not support workers in this country. I have walked the picket lines many times in my life, specifically with the workers of Teamsters. I watched my dad fight for the rights of brothers and sisters. I have listened to my brother talk about the safety issues his co-workers are facing every day on the job. I do not support the back-to-work legislation that the Liberal government forced.

However, what will the Conservatives do to support workers in this country? I do not mean in words; I mean in action.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome that new member to the chamber. I remember that during that by-election campaign the hon. member, alongside her leader, said they no longer supported the carbon tax.

What are we doing to support workers in this country? We are going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Union workers and other workers in this country are using food banks at a record level. They are living in their parents' basement because they cannot afford a new home. At a time when we need to build more homes, we are building fewer.

Here is the thing about the NDP again saying it does not support the government. She was not here when the supply and confidence agreement was written, but guess what? She is going to be voting on this motion. If she is so upset about all the things that she just mentioned, the New Democrats should take it to Canadians, make the pitch and make the case. The NDP will not do that because they know that Canadians are going to give them the boot, not a reward.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech that my colleague from Ontario just gave. When it comes to calling out the leader of the fourth party in this place, the leader of the NDP, it truly is one of these examples where the talk comes to action.

I am wondering if my colleague from Ontario could expand a little bit on how the vote that will take place in just a few days is an opportunity for the fourth party to decide whether they are all talk or whether they are willing to take action and actually put these ideas to the test before Canadians.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's reminder to Canadians about the question that the NDP is going to be

voting on. We are putting their own words to a vote. I did not make anything up. I am not even putting my words in there. Those are not even Conservative words in this opposition day motion. We are being non-partisan and letting the NDP finally let that stress relief out. If they have ripped up their supply and confidence coalition agreement, if the Liberals are "too weak, too selfish and too beholden", and if the Liberal government always caves to "corporate greed" and always steps in to make sure "unions have no power", they should support their own words. Give Canadians their say in an election.

It is that simple. What are the New Democrats scared of?

● (1355)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat confused today, because we all remember when, for electoral reasons, the NDP tore up their agreement, saying they no longer had confidence in the government. However, they continue to support it.

As for the Conservatives, they have long been saying that they no longer have confidence in the government.

The Bloc Québécois was clear and set two conditions pertaining to seniors and to supply management, which the Conservatives supported at one time or another.

Now that we say that we are prepared to trigger an election, we have been stuck here for weeks, because the Conservatives continue blocking our work instead of moving a non-confidence motion.

Do they really want an election?

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc-Liberal coalition with the NDP is alive and well. The member is saying the House has been paralyzed, but the Liberals are holding back on the \$400-million green slush fund documents that should go to the RCMP. If Bloc members tried to negotiate with the Liberals and got nowhere, it is their credibility that is shot, no one else's.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time. Perhaps the member for Kings—Hants will even be nice enough to finish my speech.

[Translation]

I am honoured to rise today to speak about our government's strong commitment to fairness for Canadian workers in the face of a very hypocritical Conservative leader who is determined to weaken the labour movement in Canada. The member for Carleton is trying to wax poetic in the House today when he talks about workers, but make no mistake: The only workers' right he supports is the right of Canadians to work for less.

In contrast, it is an honour for me to talk about all the progress that has helped Canadian workers and their families have a fairer, more prosperous future.

[*English*]

Instead of standing up for workers, the Conservative leader now uses them as unwilling props in his latest parliamentary temper tantrum.

Let me tell members what the member for Carleton proudly supported. He supported two anti-union bills, Bill C-377 and Bill C-525, which sought to make it harder for workers to organize and undermined the ability of unions to fight for their members. We repealed those bills.

There is also the Conservative Party policy declaration that states it, “supports right to work legislation to allow optional union membership”.

On the other hand, the Liberals have been there for workers from day one. On this side of the House, we stand on our record, not empty slogans. We have made sure that federally regulated employees have access to up to 10 paid sick days per year. That helps nearly one million Canadians.

A growing share of Canada's workforce is now comprised of gig workers. Gig work can offer many benefits, such as flexibility and more freedom at work. However, these kinds of work arrangements can also deprive workers of the rights, protections and entitlements they deserve. Therefore, on June 20, we brought legislation into force to better protect gig workers in federally regulated industries against misclassification.

Last year, we announced five new clean-tech tax credits. We are investing \$93 billion over the next decade in tax credits for carbon capture, utilization and storage; clean technology adoption; clean technology manufacturing; clean hydrogen; clean electricity; and EV supply chains. However, to get the full extent and benefit of four of those five tax credits, companies have to hire union workers or pay workers a prevailing union wage and create apprenticeships.

After question period and after the votes today, we will have the opportunity, myself or my colleague from Kings—Hants, to go into deep detail about the positive progressive record of this government for unions and workers. We will not be talking about things like the Conservative leader talks about, that the union contracts that pay workers a decent wage result in, “pointless”, “unnecessary inflation of costs that non-union firms with lower wages are good for competition”.

The Conservative leader is pretending. It is fake. We will have more to say later.

Statements by Members

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*English*]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will mark 35 years since the murder of 14 women in an engineering class at Polytechnique Montréal simply because they were women. I wish I could say this misogynistic violence was an outlier, yet this year alone, 168 women and girls across the country have already been killed in femicides.

In the face of this gender-based violence epidemic, the frontline work being done by organizations, including those in my community like Women's Crisis Services, the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region, the Coalition of Muslim Women and YW Kitchener-Waterloo, is all the more important. I offer my sincere thanks to them.

For those in Waterloo region looking to come together on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women to remember the victims of the Polytechnique massacre and all those we have lost since, CFUW Kitchener-Waterloo will be hosting a vigil at 5:30 tomorrow night at St. Columba Anglican Church. I hope to see them there.

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HOUSING

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since elected, I have been working with my colleague from Steveston—Richmond East to address our housing priority in the city of Richmond. As a result, early this January, the Liberal government invested \$35.9 million through the housing accelerator fund for Richmond to build more homes faster. This important funding enabled the City of Richmond to approve over 1,166 new housing permits by August, exceeding Richmond's target of 1,125 homes four months ahead of schedule.

The Conservative leader claimed municipal politicians are “incompetent, greedy [and] money-hungry”. Let the facts speak for themselves, and let us not forget that when the Conservative leader was the housing minister, he helped build zero apartments, zero co-operative housing units and six affordable units across Canada.

The Liberal government will continue to work with municipalities to turn ambition into action. Together, we will deliver real and lasting progress for my community of Richmond Centre and communities across Canada.

*Statements by Members***BOW RIVER OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES**

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, athletes from team Canada are in Ottawa to be recognized for their achievements at the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

I would like to recognize three exceptional athletes from the Bow River riding: Jessica Sevick from Strathmore, a two-time Olympian in rowing who switched from doubles to women's eight, culminating in a successful Olympics and a silver medal this year; Keyara Wardley of Vulcan, a two-time Olympian with the women's rugby sevens team, who won silver at the Paris Olympics; and Jennifer Oakes of Brooks, a three-time Paralympian with Canada's women's sitting volleyball team, Canada's best server in 2020 and winner of a bronze medal at this year's Paralympics.

These three extraordinary women exemplify Olympic spirit, doing Canada proud every time they wear the maple leaf. I congratulate them on bringing it home.

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[Translation]

PARADE OF LIGHTS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with gratitude and admiration that I thank Robert Rainboth of the Ottawa Professional Fire Fighters Association for organizing the Orléans Parade of Lights for the past 27 years.

Thanks to his vision and leadership, this event has come to symbolize real joy and magic in Orléans. Every year, he made the eyes of young and old alike sparkle and gave the community a unique opportunity to gather in record numbers—150,000 strong—along St. Joseph Boulevard. Organizing a parade of 75 floats for nearly three decades is no mean feat, but he has always been dedicated to doing a brilliant job.

November 30 was Robert's final parade, but what he created is more than just an event. It is a tradition that, year after year, is one of the things that makes Orléans shine so brightly.

I am incredibly grateful to Robert for these past 27 years.

* * *

• (1405)

CLUB D'AVIRON DE BOUCHERVILLE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Boucherville rowing club is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2024. From its inception in 1974, the club has taken full advantage of its outstanding geographic location across from the majestic St. Lawrence River in Boucherville.

Over the years, many of the club's athletes have been selected to join our national teams. Some have even made it to the Olympics. The Club d'aviron de Boucherville is a learning ground where members develop positive values like mutual support, team spirit, determination, surpassing personal limits and good lifestyle habits. It boasts a family-oriented, fraternal atmosphere, which, I have to say, is great to see.

Congratulations to the club's president, Julie Dermine, and its head coach, Christian Hardy-Cardinal.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this organization over its half-century of adventures. Clearly, everyone is rowing in the same direction, toward excellence.

* * *

[English]

CANADA CARBON REBATE

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I received a message from a small business owner in our community. He said, "Thank you, MP Shafqat Ali and the Liberal leadership. Our small business received the Canada carbon rebate today. It came in unexpectedly and at the right time." It is great to know the Canada carbon rebate for small and medium-sized businesses is making a real difference.

Around \$2.5 billion of the proceeds from the price on pollution is going back to about 600,000 small businesses. Our government is committed to making life more affordable for Canadians while protecting our environment and helping small and medium-sized businesses to grow, innovate and stay competitive.

* * *

ALBERTA

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Alberta is the beating heart of Canada. It is where farmers, truckers and energy workers rise before the sun, roll up their sleeves and build this country's prosperity. It is where hard work, freedom and community are not just values; they are a way of life.

However, the NDP-Liberal government is hell-bent on crushing Alberta. It continues to hike the carbon tax, forcing families to choose between heating and eating. It is capping oil and gas, killing the jobs that built this country and leaving towns struggling to survive. It does not respect Alberta, its people or what we stand for. Albertans do not quit. We do not break. We work harder, stand taller and keep moving forward.

The solution is clear: a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the carbon tax, scrap the cap, and restore hope and prosperity to Alberta. Together, we will bring home the Canada we know and love: strong, proud and free.

NORTH DARTMOUTH ECHO

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate an incredible milestone for a small but mighty voice in Dartmouth: The North Dartmouth Echo. Twenty years ago, this non-profit newspaper was born out of a single but powerful vision: to amplify the good news in the community, news that too often went unheard.

Since then, The Echo has become a beacon of positivity, staffed entirely by dedicated volunteers. There is now an all-woman team that publishes five inspiring issues a year. This is more than a newspaper. It is the heartbeat of a community. The Echo shares the triumphs of local schools, small businesses, non-profits and everyday residents. It connects, celebrates and uplifts North Dartmouth.

I want to give a quick recognition to Sylvia Anthony, a co-founder whose tireless efforts selling ads, gathering stories and even delivering the newspaper herself keep this incredible initiative alive.

As The Echo publishes its December issue, let us all celebrate this 20-year legacy of community spirit and good news. Here is to another 20 years of making North Dartmouth proud.

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[Translation]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been 35 years since the massacre at École Polytechnique. As I do every year, I will be joining my community on Mount Royal to commemorate and honour the 14 women whose lives were stolen simply because they were women.

The advocacy of survivors like Nathalie Provost and the members of PolyRemembers continues to inspire and encourage us to strengthen gun control across the country. Especially on a day like today, and today in particular, I rise in the House of Commons to thank PolyRemembers for their determination.

● (1410)

[English]

Our government is committed to fighting gun violence. We have taken historic steps to ban assault weapons like the one used in the femicide at Polytechnique, and we are working tirelessly to curb the scourge of gender-based violence.

Fourteen young women were taken from us 35 years ago. We will never forget them. We owe it to them and to all victims of gun violence to continue this fight.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada now has the dubious distinction of having a violent crime rate even higher than the United States. Just yesterday, two people were wounded in a stabbing attack in Vancouver. It is like Canadians have become numb to these stories. It is almost like they expect them day to day.

Statements by Members

Liberals have presided over a 92% increase in gang-related murders since they took office. Child sexual abuse and exploitation material offences are up 52% since just last year. Police chiefs are calling out the Prime Minister for allowing extremely violent repeat offenders out on bail. It is not just about the numbers. On the other side of each crime statistic is a victim whose life has been changed forever. These people usually remain nameless, voiceless and faceless.

This is the Prime Minister's track record. This is why we need an election now. I can promise this: Unlike the Prime Minister, a Conservative government would fight for the nameless, voiceless and faceless.

* * *

TAX RELIEF

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, inflation is cooling and interest rates are dropping, but not all Canadians are feeling the relief quite yet. That is why our government is putting a bit more money back into the pockets of Canadians, to help them afford the things they need and save up for the things they want.

The vote passed last week and that means this season, Canadians will not pay GST on things that are holiday essentials for many of us, like prepared meals, kids' clothes and Christmas trees. Oddly, though, one member in the House did not want to give Canadians a tax break this holiday: the Leader of the Opposition, the same guy who loves to talk about axing taxes and even ran on giving Canadians a GST holiday in the last election.

This is the time of giving and caring. Maybe the opposition leader's heart is just two sizes too small.

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FINANCE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition leader offered the finance minister two hours to present the fall economic statement on Monday. The minister's response was to reject the offer to provide an update that would take no more than a minute.

It is absurd that Canadians are in the dark about how dire the fiscal situation is in this country. The NDP-Liberal costly coalition has created inflationary deficits that are hurting Canadians at the grocery store, at the gas pump and in their monthly heating bills. Canadians are trying to manage household budgets while the government's inflationary deficits are costing every Canadian, as the deficits blow up uncontrollably.

Statements by Members

Canadians were promised a \$40-billion deficit cap in the spring budget. What is the real deficit number and why will the finance minister not take up the offer by the opposition leader to tell Canadians the truth in the people's House? By hiding the truth, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister are proving once again that they cannot be redeemed at this point and must be replaced by a common-sense Conservative government that will fix the budget.

A carbon tax election cannot come soon enough.

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NDP-LIBERAL COALITION

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government can be summed up by two principles: pensions and power.

The leader of the NDP will continue to vote confidence in the government so he can receive his pension. It is the perfect partnership. The Prime Minister gets the power and New Democrats get their pensions. It is more hypocrisy from the Maserati Marxist, champagne socialist, jet-setting, high-carbon coalition that has broken our economy, doubled our housing costs, and crippled our natural resource, agriculture and transport sectors. It brought in back-breaking regulations and taxation that have led to record numbers at our food banks and sky-high violent crime.

The New Democrats make their grandiose announcements about breaking up with their Liberal partners, but when push comes to shove, they continue to prop up the very government that has gotten us into this mess. When will the leader of the NDP finally stop the talk, take some action and call a carbon tax election so Canadians can decide between the carbon tax coalition and a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the tax, stop the crime and fix the budget?

* * *

● (1415)

TAX RELIEF

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

Silent night, holiday bright, Mr. Speaker, we did what is right.
With inflation still hard to bear, we voted for real relief to show we care.
With GST/HST off essential needs, we are helping families to succeed.
Silent night, not all is right; the Leader of the Opposition refused this light.
The leader who vowed to axe the tax turned his back when time to act.
Broken promises, Canadians see a leader who is out of harmony.
Silent night, the question is clear: Why deny hope this time of year?
Canadians deserve to know why tax relief was met with "no".
This Christmas season, from my family to yours, may joy and cheer bring warmth and peace for the year.

* * *

[Translation]

GAZA

Mr. Alexandre Boulerville (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after months of investigating, gathering data, hearing testimony and analyzing the facts, Amnesty International has concluded that genocide is taking place against Palestinians in Gaza.

After the bombing of civilian populations that has killed more than 52,000 people, injured more than 100,000 and displaced two million people in a zone from which they cannot escape, and with a humanitarian crisis where hunger is being used as a weapon of war, this conclusion will come as no surprise. At least, it should not surprise anyone who has been paying any attention at all and has any compassion.

With that in mind, Canada is violating its own legal obligations under the genocide prevention convention. Despite its promises, the Liberal government continues to authorize arms sales to the Israeli regime.

In doing so, the Liberals risk being complicit in a genocide that is happening right before our very eyes. That is why the Liberal government must sanction the Netanyahu regime, stop the arms sales and officially recognize the Palestinian state.

* * *

MEDIA FUNDRAISING DRIVE

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Christmas is coming as we can see today, not just because we are buried under a nice layer of snow, but because of the annual media fundraising drive.

To launch the 24th annual drive, today volunteers are collecting funds at more than 400 sites in Quebec, including Trois-Rivières. Under the theme "La faim est si vite arrivée", or hunger strikes quickly, this year the goal of the drive is to shed light on how anyone can be one misfortune away from food insecurity. Job loss, separation, accident or illness, no one is immune.

Since no one is immune, let us all come together this holiday season. All month long, until December 31, Quebecers will be able to continue making contributions and food donations. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I encourage all of us to contribute generously to the great media fundraising drive because generosity warms the heart, even under a layer of snow.

* * *

[English]

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one in four Canadians is skipping meals, and two million are going to food banks. A new report confirms that families will have to spend an extra \$800 on food thanks to the NDP-Liberal carbon tax.

What does the NDP leader do? He sells out Canadians to secure his \$2.2-million pension. He is refusing to vote non-confidence on a motion that is based on his own words. He stated, “The Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”. However, he is now putting on a show once again. This sellout leader has voted for the carbon tax 24 times. With friends like the Maserati Marxist, it is no wonder the Prime Minister keeps him around. He does not care about workers, paycheques or Canadians. We need to end this costly coalition and put Canadians first by calling a carbon tax election.

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● (1420)

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week we have learned more about the reports of alleged foreign interference in the Conservative leadership race. Party leaders for the Bloc, the NDP and the Green Party have taken the government up on its offer to get a security clearance. However, the leader of the Conservative Party still refuses to get the security clearance and to access classified documents that would help him protect the party and Canadians from foreign interference. This is not real leadership. Canadians are wondering what the Conservative Party leader has to hide. If he had nothing to hide, he would get the clearance, take the briefing and protect the country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they say weak men create hard times. The weak Prime Minister's inflationary deficits gave Canadians the worst standard of living in over 40 years. The finance minister promised that one of her fiscal guardrails would be not going over her deficit, which is \$40 billion. In fact, the PBO said she blew right past it.

I have a simple question: What is the deficit?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what my hon. colleague fails to point out is that Canada is projected to have the fastest-growing economy in the G7 next year. He fails to point out that we are creating jobs at a near record pace. He does not understand that wages are increasing faster than inflation.

His strategy for the economy is to make cuts to the programs that are supporting people, cuts to the programs that are building houses. Ironically, he is opposing the tax cut that would deliver relief to families over the holidays. We are going to focus on growing the economy in a way that works for everyone, not the Conservative approach to cut the supports that families need.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he could have just said he does not know, as he does not know where the million people he lost went. Even the number-challenged Prime Minister admits that every new dollar of his handouts makes his inflationary deficits worse. He says he is going to leave

Oral Questions

the economy to the bankers, that he does not think about monetary policy. He said budgets balance themselves. It is the same incompetence that made Canadians bank broke, building broke and belly broke.

Canadians want to know how broken the Liberal deficit is. What is the number?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague seems to have a penchant for alliteration and personal insults, but what he lacks is an ability to advance policies that will grow the economy or actually help people in need. At every opportunity, the Conservatives oppose the investments that are creating jobs in this country. They oppose the investments that are building homes in this country. They oppose the measures that are going to provide tax cuts to middle-class families, to low-income families and to workers in this country. For once, I wish we could have a debate about the issues instead of stooping to these lows; they throw insults instead of advancing policies that help real people.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is a common-sense policy that common-sense Conservatives will bring in when the minister's constituents fire him after the next election: We are going to axe the tax for good, for everyone. These deficits the Prime Minister keeps making have sent over two million Canadians to a food bank in a single month, made one in four Canadians skip meals and sent one in five kids into poverty. The finance minister said all of them are just feeling a “vibe recession”.

If she is not going to release her economic statement, will she at least tell Canadians how badly she is going to blow through her deficit?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that, the last time Conservatives were in government, more than 16% of kids were living in poverty. That is over a million children. Since we came into government, we have lifted hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty through such measures as the Canada child benefit, which is supporting families each and every month with up to over \$700, and the national school food program, now in place in four provinces across this country, which is helping to ensure kids have food at school. This is not to mention a GST/HST tax break. We are there for Canadians.

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● (1425)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois, this Liberal government is so bad that it is ashamed of its own results. In the last budget, the Minister of Finance forecast a \$40-billion deficit. We now know that this government added \$6 billion in inflationary spending to that forecast. However, the Prime Minister is refusing to disclose the state of the public finances.

Will the Prime Minister agree to the official opposition's offer, be transparent with Canadians and present the fall economic statement on Monday? What is he so afraid of? Why does he not want to tell Canadians the truth?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about telling Canadians the truth. What did the Conservative Party leader do when we offered Canadians a tax break during the holiday season, a measure that he was in favour of just two years ago? He told his MPs to vote against it, regardless of what they actually wanted to do.

Conservative MPs are no longer the voice of their constituents in Ottawa. They are now the voice of the Conservative Party leader in their ridings. That is inexcusable. If the Conservatives are serious about helping Canadians, they will vote in favour of the tax holiday.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this member should be ashamed of himself. While the Prime Minister, with the help of the Bloc Québécois, spends without a thought for being accountable to Canadians, families are the ones paying the high price. According to Sylvain Charlebois's food price report, families will be paying up to \$800 more for groceries in 2025. The Prime Minister believes that budgets balance themselves. He has also said that deficits cause inflation. The Prime Minister has promised to limit the deficit to \$40 billion.

Will Monday's economic statement confirm that he has kept his promise, or will it again result in more inflation and more spending for families?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has just quoted professor Sylvain Charlebois on food issues. This same professor believes that climate change is the biggest challenge facing the agri-food sector. He published a report today on the macroeconomic impacts on the agri-food sector. On page 14, the first item mentioned in the report is climate change. Pollution pricing is not even mentioned. That is not one of the criteria, according to Mr. Charlebois. The Conservatives are talking nonsense.

The Speaker: I will remind the minister that he may not use documents as props. Members may quote from documents, but may not use them as props by pointing to them.

The hon. member for La Prairie.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this may come as a surprise: The Senate is taking its sweet time with Bill C-282, the bill to protect supply management. The wise ones in the upper chamber have had this single-clause bill for 18 months now. It has taken them 18 months to look at one clause. Meeting after meeting, they keep postponing the vote on a crucial amendment. They are trying to put this off until after the holidays.

Will all the party leaders tell the senators to stop stalling and vote to pass Bill C-282 before Christmas?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware that the government supports this bill. The Prime Minister, all the ministers and the entire caucus have spoken with the senators and asked them to do their job. The only party leader whose position is unknown is the Conservative Party leader. We know the Conservative caucus is divided on supply management, but I can assure my hon. colleague that the government fully supports supply management.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, things are not moving fast enough. There are two possible explanations why senators have failed to complete their review of a one-clause bill after 18 months: either they are due for retirement or they are thumbing their noses at us. By "us", I am not just referring to the parties in the House. They are also thumbing their noses at the supply-managed farmers of Quebec and Canada and the 90,000 Quebec jobs that depend on them. These people deserve some reassurance before the holiday season.

On behalf of our farmers, will all the parties ask the senators to get a move on before the Christmas break?

● (1430)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we completely agree with my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois. This matter is important for farmers and for every supply-managed sector in Quebec and across the country. We agree with this bill. We support what the Bloc Québécois has done and we support the bill in the Senate. Only the Conservatives do not. I therefore invite my hon. Bloc Québécois colleague to talk to the Conservative leader to make sure that Conservative senators are not blocking this bill.

* * *

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people across the country are struggling with the cost of living. A new report shows that a family of four will pay \$800 more for groceries in 2025. The CEOs of the big corporate grocery chains are getting richer. The Conservatives want nothing to do with the working class, but they always want to help billionaires. The Liberals could make a real difference.

Will they finally stand up to the greed of the big corporate grocery chains?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. The NDP has an opportunity to help people over the holidays by giving them a tax break. We would like the NDP to work with us to help Canadians by giving more than eight million people a tax break over the holidays. The New Democrats have an opportunity to do just that, and they should take it.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the translation is that they will not.

Canadians are feeling squeezed. A new report says that a family of four can expect to pay \$800 more in food in 2025. While grocery CEOs are getting richer, workers are scrambling to put food on the table. Liberals let people down, and the Conservatives want tax breaks for CEOs, leaving Canadians paying more for everything. Billionaires do not need relief; the working class does.

Will the Liberals permanently remove the GST from life essentials so families can get a break?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that life is expensive, and we want to deliver a break to Canadians. We know that the cost of food has gone too high, which is why we want to remove tax over the holidays. The irony is that the Conservatives make the same attack but are opposing a tax cut on food for families.

I should point out that there is an important stakeholder who is in Ottawa advocating for a national school food program this week. Her name is Molly, and she is an eight-year-old in grade 3 at A.G. Baillie Memorial school in Nova Scotia. We are going to provide not only a tax cut on food but also a national school food program so she and her classmates will be able to enjoy a healthy meal every day of the year.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal carbon tax coalition is delivering to Canadians a Christmas nightmare.

“Canada’s Food Price Report” showed that, on average, Canadians will spend \$800 more on groceries this year. The Prime Minister’s carbon tax is making a dire situation even worse. The number of food bank visits in Toronto was up by a million people to 3.5 million visits, a 43% increase in new food bank users. Scurvy is on the rise. Food insecurity has surged more than 20%.

All Canadians want for Christmas is a carbon tax election. When will the Prime Minister make that Christmas wish come true?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us get serious.

The very report that the member opposite cites says that climate change is the greatest driver of food price inflation. It is the same thing Sylvain Charlebois said when he came to committee recently.

The Conservatives have no plan to fight climate change. In addition, we stepped up over the holidays to offer Canadians a GST tax cut. What did the Conservatives do? They opposed it. When we stepped up to help children across Canada get food at school, what do the Conservatives do? They opposed it.

If Conservatives want to give Canadians a Merry Christmas, then they should step up and help Canadians—

• (1435)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Foothills has the floor.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess it would take a Festivus miracle to have a serious prime minister who understands that when one increases the taxes on farmers who grow the food and truckers who move the food, one increases the cost of the food.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, this is the Christmas list Canadians face: grocery prices are up \$800, the price of food inflation is up 36% higher in Canada than in the United States, and a quarter of Canadians are skipping meals.

When will the Prime Minister grant a common-sense Christmas gift to Canadians and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Marc Lévesque, former chief economics strategist at TD Securities, says that he is not in the habit of calling people liars, but that it is an outright lie; the report the member is referring to does not mention that the carbon tax is a factor behind the \$800 increase, and certainly does not say that the carbon tax will cost families \$800 more on food.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Prime Minister, New Brunswickers continue to struggle and will now have to pay \$800 more for food next year. After nine years, the NDP-Liberal carbon tax has caused the price of groceries to skyrocket. According to Food Banks Canada, the number of people accessing food banks has increased by 73% in the last two years. Over a million Ontarians are relying on food banks; that is more people than live in my home province. Canadians deserve better.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister agree that now is the time to call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a reminder that the member and all Conservatives have had an opportunity to support the work we are doing to provide relief to families in New Brunswick and across the country. I look to the national school food program. So far, four provinces have signed on, meaning that over 184,000 kids will receive food at school this school year. That is more than 1.5 million meals.

The Conservatives could support us with affordability measures, should they choose to do what is right

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not a single plate of food has been served, and 1.4 million Canadian children are living in poverty. The rise in the cost of food is a direct result of the carbon tax. The Prime Minister does not understand that if they tax the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who ships it, they end up taxing the family that buys it. Already the NDP-Liberal carbon tax has resulted in food prices increasing 36% faster in Canada than across the border.

Will the Prime Minister finally give Canadians the carbon tax election now?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Although the Chair could not quite make out the words, he did hear some people intervening from the far end of the chamber. It was brought up this morning that it is really important for members not to speak while other members are talking, for no other reason than the respect that we should have for our members who use the interpretation devices, so they can hear what is going on in the House.

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

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just because a Conservative member of Parliament makes something up does not mean it is true. The Minister of Environment has quoted the actual report that says specifically that the price on pollution is not responsible for the increase in food prices.

If the Conservatives were honest with Canadians and wanted to actually do something to help them with the high cost of food over the holidays, they could support our GST tax break for Canadians that is taking the GST off essential items, including groceries. If they were honest with Canadians, they would support the school food program that is feeding 184,000 kids.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member for Abbotsford to please not to take the floor unless recognized by the House, so everybody can participate.

• (1440)

[Translation]

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, are you aware of the lovely Canadian tradition of children writing letters to Santa? This year, it is not so fun. Today, *Le Journal de Québec* and *Le Journal de Montréal* reported that a record number of letters have been received. The worst part is that the children are not asking for toys. This year, they are asking Santa for food, mittens, scarves and winter coats. That is what children are asking for after nine years of this government. That is the result of this government's \$500-billion deficit, which it accrued with the help of the Bloc Québécois.

Are they proud of their record?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find what my colleague said hard to believe. Let us consider the fact that he just voted against removing the GST from coats, mittens, children's clothing, and a good number of restaurant and prepared meals.

This member not only voted against the GST cut, but, believe it or not, he is also against the breakfast club. He does not want to fund breakfast and lunch at schools. It is unbelievable.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed against the 10¢ tax cut on a bag of chips. That measure of theirs is a really huge deal.

The reality is that, after nine years of this government, how many Canadians are using food banks? Two million Canadians are going to food banks, and the cost of groceries is going to increase by \$800 this year with this government's inflationary policies.

After nine years of this inflationary government, supported by the Bloc Québécois, is this government proud of its fiscal record?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we are very proud of the low unemployment rate in Quebec, the record level of foreign investments coming into our country and being a world leader in that regard.

What does my colleague do when we offer a tax holiday on children's clothing, toys, Christmas trees and restaurant meals?

He stands up and votes nay. He wants to make life affordable, but he is against affordability.

It is unbelievable.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the situation is critical for Lion Electric, and the Prime Minister must keep his promise.

In 2021, the Prime Minister personally visited Lion's plant to announce billions for the zero emission transit fund. The Prime Minister told Lion to prepare for a flood of bus orders from Canada. That never materialized, primarily because of the federal government's refusal to provide the full subsidy amounts promised to potential buyers.

Will the Prime Minister finally keep his promise and unfreeze his zero emission transit fund without delay?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his question.

Lion Electric is indeed a very important company for the electrification of transportation, and not just in Quebec, but across Canada. The federal program will enable municipalities to purchase hundreds of electric buses thanks to this program, contrary to what my Bloc Québécois and Conservative Party colleagues are saying.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, “will” is in the future; by then, it will be too late.

The Prime Minister made that promise not only to Lion Electric, but to all the company's workers, including the 400 workers who were just laid off, right before the holidays.

Lion Electric took the Prime Minister at his word at the time. The company opened a second battery plant in Mirabel, hired people and made arrangements with suppliers. Now it has empty order books because the federal government has failed to provide the subsidies it promised to clients.

The Prime Minister is partly responsible for Lion Electric's troubles. The Prime Minister himself must do something about it.

Will he?

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know where the puck is going in the world economy, which is toward the clean economy of the future. Our government has been working hard to attract billions of dollars of investment to secure good-paying jobs for generations to come. That is precisely the work we have been doing.

We know that Lion Electric is a leader in electric buses and electric trucks in this country, and we will make every effort to work with it to get projects across the finish line. The situation is being monitored closely, and we know how important it is to Quebec and to the Government of Canada.

• (1445)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canada will make the green transition in transportation. It is inevitable. Canada will go green for school busing and everything else. The question is, will we be buying electric school buses made in Quebec by Quebecers, or will we be buying American buses made by Americans because Ottawa, lacking vision as usual, failed one of our flagship companies?

Oral Questions

Will this government finally wake up and let the zero emission transit fund dollars flow?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through the zero emission transit fund, the federal government is helping public transit and school bus operators across the country to electrify their fleets.

It is essential to have made investments to support the transformation of our economy and to seize the opportunities to enhance the green economy. I am having conversations with my Quebec counterparts to find solutions.

We will continue to make the necessary investments to enhance the green economy across the country, including in Quebec.

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[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach Christmas, there is no joy. A recent study shows that more than 21% of Nova Scotia households were food insecure in 2022, which is a 17% year-over-year increase, and about one-fifth of the people who are food insecure seek help through services like food banks. As a result, food bank use in Nova Scotia has skyrocketed. Food bank leaders say, “It's a perfect storm between the rising cost of living, unaffordable housing and inadequate income”.

Will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election today so that Nova Scotians can feed themselves with dignity?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, food insecurity is a very serious issue, including in my home province of Nova Scotia, but it is hard to take seriously that question from Conservative Party members when they are literally opposing a tax cut on food. This holiday season, we are putting a GST holiday in place to reduce the cost of the food people buy, including when they eat at restaurants and products that are not exempt at grocery stores.

I hope the hon. member will put his money where his mouth is and, for once, support a measure that is going to deliver meaningful financial relief to families in need.

Oral Questions

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the member opposite go to the grocery store again because grocery essentials are already GST exempt and the temporary tax trickery on foods such as sugary and salty foods, coated-candy popcorn, beer and ready-to-drink alcoholic drinks are certainly not going to help food insecurity on behalf of any Canadians. We continue to see that accessing food banks has increased 73%, and now more than a million Ontarians are visiting food banks, which is six times the population of Prince Edward Island.

Canadians need relief. Will Liberals have a carbon tax election now?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that my hon. colleague was not listening to the answer to his first question before he delivered his second. I said specifically that we are exempting the tax on food that is not already exempted from the GST, including food that people may purchase at a restaurant.

What is interesting is that Conservatives are opposed not just to the tax cut on holiday gifts, toys for kids, clothing for kids, diapers, car seats and food, they opposed the measures we put in place to reduce the cost of living when we cut taxes for the middle class and when we stopped sending child care cheques to millionaires so we can put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families.

Conservatives just do not care about people. It is all politics.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the minister has not been to a grocery store in a while.

The NDP-Liberals driving up the carbon tax will cost people in Saskatchewan \$2,000 a year. The latest food price report shows that Canadians are being forced to buy less nutritious food because of the higher prices. This is Canada under the Prime Minister. To make matters worse, the average family will spend an additional \$800 on groceries next year.

Will the NDP-Liberals finally do the right thing and call a carbon tax election so that Canadians can decide between their plan to tax everything and the Conservatives' plan to axe the carbon tax on everything for everyone?

• (1450)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this feigned sympathy and these crocodile tears on behalf of the Conservatives are fooling no Canadian. When the Conservatives had the opportunity to support measures that would help Canadians, measures like cutting their taxes, they opposed them. When we proposed a school food program that is going to help feed thousands of children across the country in their schools, they opposed it. Every time we try to help Canadians, Conservatives stand up and oppose that help.

Let us be clear. The Conservative leader does not have the interests of Canadians at heart.

HEALTH

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, parents are struggling to get their children the health care they need. Five million Canadians do not have a family doctor. They are relying on emergency rooms to get care, and ER visits are even higher for kids. A new report shows that one in seven ER visits could have been treated in primary care. Liberals and Conservatives before them cut health care transfers and it has led to this crisis.

Why are the Liberals doing so little for Canadians to get the care they need?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve good public health care across the country. That is why we, as a government, support a publicly funded health care system. That is why we are making unprecedented investments in our health care system, \$290 billion over 10 years, across the country, to every province and territory, with the sole purpose of ensuring that primary health care is available to all Canadians across this country.

We urge our provinces to take action to make sure that there are more doctors and nurses available in all those communities by using the federal dollars that have been transferred to them.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everyone across Canada is feeling the high cost of living, and that is especially true for people living in the remote communities on Haida Gwaii, who are isolated from the mainland by a seven-hour ferry ride. There is a tax deduction that is meant to help people in remote communities afford the high cost of living, but 30 years ago, it was a Liberal government that cut Haida Gwaii's access in half. They have been fighting to get it back ever since.

Will the Liberal government do the right thing and restore the full northern residents tax deduction for the good people of Haida Gwaii?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working since day one on affordability issues for all people of the north and isolated communities. We have brought in a tax cut for groceries, for diapers and for essential items last week. The Conservatives voted against it. We brought in a national school food program. The Conservatives voted against it. There is more to do but we will get it done with partners.

JUSTICE

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the government announced its intention to split the on-line harms act into two parts, to move quickly, to act now and to advance child protection measures. We have lost too much time because of Conservative stalling tactics. I find it unconscionable that the Conservatives are opposed to forcing the removal of child sexual abuse material from the Internet.

Can the Minister of Justice explain why the updated Bill C-63 is essential for the safety of Canadians, especially our kids?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will do everything in my power to protect children. That is what splitting this bill is about.

At committee this morning, Carol Todd, the mother of Amanda, said, “I have waited 12 years for this, because on day one of Amanda’s death, I knew that things needed to change in terms of law, legislation and online safety. I can’t bring my child back, but we can certainly keep other children safe.”

Parents need our help. Children need our help. Bill C-63 is about protecting kids and saving lives. Every party in this chamber has a vested interest in doing just that. Will everyone find the courage to back this bill?

* * *

• (1455)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the people of Toronto were shocked to see a man attempt a violent carjacking, shooting up cars all over the 401. It is not just Toronto. Gun violence is up 116% under the Liberal government. In fact, it is the ninth consecutive year that gun violence has increased in this country.

What are the Liberals doing today? They are making another announcement, but not targeting the criminals on the 401. No, they are targeting turkey hunters and sport shooters and trained, tested and vetted law-abiding Canadians.

When are they going to realize that gun violence is only going to stop when they go after the criminals responsible for gun violence?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite shameful that on the anniversary of one of the largest mass shootings targeting women in this country, the Conservatives seem to be more concerned about keeping guns on the street that are designed for the battlefield.

We are not going after hunters or sport shooters. What we are doing is protecting our communities. In particular, we are protecting women, who are disproportionately victims of gun violence. While Conservatives work for the gun lobby, we serve Canadians in keeping them safe.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has no credibility when it comes to protecting women. In the nine years the Liberals have been in power, sex-

Oral Questions

ual assaults have increased 75%. Ninety-four municipalities and the Province of Nova Scotia have declared intimate partner violence an epidemic.

In Canada, one woman in Peel region is strangled to death every single day and violent abusers of women are getting let out on bail easier than ever because of the Liberal Bill C-75. There is only one party in this place that is going to protect women from the monsters who abuse them and put criminals of gun violence behind bars, and that is the Conservative Party.

When will we get an election?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our track record on protecting people from violence, on guns—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

Colleagues, I cannot even hear the answer. Please, I am going to ask for colleagues to restrain themselves while we hear the answer.

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

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, our track record on protecting women from violence, from violent firearms, speaks for itself, with respect to assault rifles and with respect to handguns. What I find actually quite appalling is that party’s ability to stand up and talk about what women want in this chamber. Today, Barbie Lavers, at the justice committee, said, on Bill C-63, “We must work together as communities, families and governments to reduce the online abuse of our children.... Social media platforms must be held accountable. They must...keep our children safe. Children like our Harry are dying.”

Her son is dead because of online safety issues that party opposes. That is unconscionable.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the status of women committee, we hear from abused woman after abused woman who have been hurt and their lives endangered because of Bill C-75. Their abusers are getting out on bail easier than ever before.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am sorry, but I am having some difficulty hearing the hon. member.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul, from the top, please.

Oral Questions

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, the statistics on women speak for themselves. There is a 75% increase in sexual assaults. That is a 75% increase since the Liberals have been in power. Sexual violations against children are up 120%. Why is this? We have heard, at the status of women committee, over and over from abused women that it is Bill C-75. These monsters are getting out on bail and killing women. That is on the Liberal government, no matter what its members say. Their announcement today will not protect a single woman in this country.

When are they going to call an election so that Conservatives can get in power and do something about this?

• (1500)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are listening to women and we are listening to mothers. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection put out a promotional video about our work to combat online harms. It had the mother of Rehtaeh Parsons, the mother of Amanda Todd and the mother of Harry Burke, whom I just quoted. All three of these women share one thing in common. They desperately want this Parliament to keep Canadian children safe. We have a proposal to do exactly that, by taking child pornography and child sex abuse material off the Internet. Surely, for the love of God, 338 people can agree on that priority.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are ending the days of action to end violence against women on a very bad note.

In May 2020, this government unilaterally banned the use of firearms legally obtained by law-abiding citizens. In November 2022, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, the government banned hunting rifles. While the government is attacking honest citizens, armed violence has increased by 116% in nine years. Illegal guns are crossing the border unimpeded, criminals are using them with impunity and women are paying the price.

Will the government leave hunters and sports shooters alone and go after the criminals?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have adopted meaningful measures to rid our streets of weapons of war, guns designed for battlefields, assault weapons that have no place in our communities.

I think it is shameful that, on the 35th anniversary of the Polytechnique shooting, the Conservatives are standing up to repeat the falsehoods of the gun lobby.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Quebec National Assembly made me truly proud to be a Quebecker when it unanimously adopted a motion denouncing hate speech and calling for an end to the religious exemption. Calling for someone's death in the name of God should not be any more legal than calling for the death of someone we do not like. Freedom of religion does not give a person carte blanche to spread hate. If a

religion is misogynistic and homophobic, the problem is not women or homosexuals.

Why did the Liberals reject my motion denouncing the religious exemption, even though it was similar to the motion adopted that same day in the Quebec National Assembly?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of how much hate exists in our communities and the anti-Semitism that exists across Canada right now.

The Bloc Québécois's suggestion is quite welcome. It is a good suggestion, and we would like to study it thoroughly. I do want to emphasize, as I have already mentioned several times, that we have already introduced legislation that would help combat hate in Canada, namely Bill C-63.

If the Bloc Québécois would support us on that, it will help all Canadians.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Before I had time to read even a sentence of my motion yesterday, we were already hearing “no” from the Liberal benches. I had just enough time to say, “That the House affirm that no hate speech is tolerated”, when the Liberals were already saying no.

Some people in the House have no problem tolerating hate. People can say, “May God strike all the unbelievers dead.” According to these Liberals, uttering threats and spreading hate is perfectly fine as long as it is done in the name of God.

The Liberal justice minister claims to want to abolish hate speech. How does he feel about Liberal MPs who insist that death threats should be legal as long as they are made in God's name?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the numbers are astounding. Hate has risen by 130% in the past few years. It is a problem for all Canadians, including Quebeckers. We are perfectly willing to keep discussing the bill put forward by the Bloc Québécois. However, it is important to note that we already have a bill on the table, Bill C-63, which addresses the same sections of the Criminal Code. It seeks tougher penalties for people who incite hatred.

All of us must do this work together.

• (1505)
[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was just reported in Vancouver that two people were wounded in another random stabbing. After nine years of the Prime Minister, these tragic stories are sadly more common, as violent crime is up 50%. The NDP-Liberal soft-on-crime policies and laws have unleashed a crime wave across Canada, including random attacks.

Bill C-75 created a catch-and-release bail system. Bill C-5 removed mandatory minimum sentences on many serious crimes. Will the Liberal government reverse these reckless policies?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-75 codified existing Supreme Court jurisprudence and added a tougher decision on bail for those who target women. That is a fact.

Let us talk about the actual combat against crime. Let us talk about crimes against children. We cannot make this up. What the Leader of the Opposition has said, and what his justice critic has reiterated, is that no matter what progress we make, with the help of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, on taking down child pornography off the Internet, they will reverse it. That is morally bankrupt as a policy and incredulous to assert in this chamber. The combat against crime includes the combat against child sex predators.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a desperate and untrue response.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, Canadians do not even feel safe walking down the street, taking public transit or even being in their own homes. Canadians want repeat violent offenders to remain behind bars and mandatory jail time for serious violent crimes.

Small businesses have had it with the crime and the extra costs. Every Canadian premier called on the Liberals to scrap the catch-and-release bail policies.

Will the Liberals listen and reverse their reckless crime policies, or just get out of the way so that a Conservative government can fix what they broke?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the facts. The facts, as reported by CTV, are that the Conservative leader has vowed to repeal the legislation entirely should it become law. Yesterday, the Conservative justice critic indicated that it was exactly that, they would repeal online regulation bills passed by the Liberal government.

That might deter some people. It sure as heck is not going to deter me. I am going to keep Canadians safe, and that means Canadian moms and Canadian children. If I do that with my party's help, with the help of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, so be it. I will do it over the opposition of the Conservatives, because their position is morally bankrupt and endangers our kids.

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after a home invasion in Oakville, the Halton police chief said, "Yet another vio-

Oral Questions

lent offender already out on similar and violent charges with court conditions on him. Anyone surprised that some of these violent criminals reoffend?"

I know someone who might be surprised, the Liberal Minister of Justice. It is tragic and appalling that he thinks he knows more than police officers do in our country.

When will the Liberal government listen to police across Canada and stop violent criminals?

The Speaker: I invite the hon. member for Ottawa Centre to please not to take the floor when not recognized by the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are examples of a few police officers to whom I am listening. Deputy chief in Vaughan, Alvaro Almeida, has said specifically that without investments in resources like courts and Crown attorneys, we cannot keep the bad guys in jail. I am also listening to the National Police Federation and police officers. What they have said is that in order to be appointed as a JP, who decides bail, in Nova Scotia, a person has to have legal training. That is not the case throughout the country and certainly not the case in the province of Ontario, where I call home. This is an issue that needs to be addressed, because we all have a vested interest in keeping people safe.

The Speaker: Again, I am going to ask the hon. member for Durham, who is a new member, not to take the floor, especially after he asked a question. It is important for us to hear the response.

The hon. member for Sudbury.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is introducing a tax holiday for all Canadians, effective December 14, so that they can celebrate the holidays without worrying about additional costs. That means significant savings on food, snacks, children's clothing and much more. However, the Conservative members voted against this tax cut.

Can the minister explain to my constituents how this measure can ease their tax concerns during the holidays?

• (1510)

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is the Conservative leader doing for people to give them a tax holiday? He is doing nothing.

Oral Questions

I am sure my colleagues are all familiar with the popular Christmas movie *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. That is what is happening here.

That story had a happy ending, but in our case, the heart of the Conservative leader is not growing. He simply does not want to help families with a tax holiday on toys, diapers and groceries. Canadians can no longer trust the Conservative Party leader.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been eight months since fiscal year end. How are we supposed to vote on billions in spending and taxation without the deficit number?

Speculation is that the government has blown through its fiscal anchor despite the finance minister promising that “This is our fiscal anchor—a line we shall not cross, and that will ensure that our finances remain sustainable so long as it remains unbreached.”

What is the deficit, how big is the breach and how unsustainable are federal fiscal finances?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest deficit of all our G7 peers. We also have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio.

It will be our pleasure to present a fall economic statement, so all Canadians can see what the books look like, including the Conservative Party. However, we also need to support Canadians. We also need to have affordability measures. That is why we are cutting taxes for Canadians. We are giving Canadians a tax break, and the Conservatives have no explanation for why they want to deny Canadians a tax holiday.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what Stephen Poloz, the past governor of the Bank of Canada, said just two days ago, “I would say we’re in a recession, I wouldn’t even call it a technical one.” The past governor says that we are in a recession and the current deputy governor of the bank says that it is an emergency.

When will the government start listening to the experts and understand that its policies on its budgets, its spending and its deficits, whatever the number is, have caused a recession and an economic emergency?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite disappointed in the Conservative member opposite. He should know what the definition of a recession is. We have not even had a single quarter of negative growth. In fact, Statistics Canada just revised our growth numbers upward for the last three years.

The Conservatives would like to quote former governors of the Bank of Canada. I have got one. David Dodge said, “because [the Conservative Party] was obsessively focused on reducing the feder-

al deficit [between 2011 and 2015], the Harper government unnecessarily contributed to a slower, rather more muted recovery”.

This Liberal government has ensured a very strong recovery, the strongest in the G7.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of broken fiscal promises, the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister has zero credibility. He promised that the budget would balance itself. His finance minister promised that the 2023 deficit would not exceed \$40 billion. Now the Parliamentary Budget Officer has told us that the Liberal government has shattered through its \$40 billion-deficit promise by \$7 billion.

I have one question for the Prime Minister. What is the deficit?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we hear on the other side of the House is not resonating with Canadians. The reason is because Canadians, in their time of need, require a government that recognizes that its supports for dental care, supports for pharmacare, supports for a national school food program, supports for the most vulnerable in our economy are ones that the Conservatives ignore. They vote against them every single time. On this side of the House, we will always be there to support Canadians in their time of need.

* * *

● (1515)

TAXATION

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is introducing a two-month tax break for all Canadians. Starting December 14, we are taking the GST off children’s clothing and diapers, as well as prepared foods and restaurant meals. We would think that after all their preaching about cutting taxes, the Conservatives would walk the walk and support this measure, but they voted against it. Why will the Conservatives not axe this tax?

Could the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities tell us why axing this tax on the middle class is important for all Canadians?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): That is right, Mr. Speaker. Despite positioning themselves in a contrary way, those guys are all tax and no axe. The Conservatives are literally opposing a tax cut on the essentials over the holidays. We are talking about food, clothes, diapers, car seats and snowsuits for kids.

The only thing the Conservatives want to cut is the programs that are delivering real support to Canadians. They want to cut the programs that are helping get homes built across the country. They want to cut the programs that are actually delivering meaningful change to the environment in the country. They will not stand up for working families. They have had the chance and they said no.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Alberta has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, yet we have documents showing that Premier Danielle Smith is organizing a secret mission to bring over cheap labour from the United Arab Emirates of all places. This is at the same time the UCP states it finds it “disgusting” that workers from other parts of Canada are working in the oil patch.

The Liberals and Conservatives have allowed big CEOs to drive down wages and exploit foreign workers, while leaving Albertans who need jobs behind.

Will the Minister of Workforce Development stand up to Danielle Smith and defend the jobs of Alberta workers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is to provide Canadians with good, well-paying jobs. We are making Canadian workers a priority. We are sensitive to the needs of workers and the labour market. That is why we are scaling back the temporary foreign worker program so that we can meet Canadians' needs. We are always there to support Canadian workers.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, affordable housing dollars should go toward building truly affordable homes, yet that is not the case most of the time. It is all because CMHC does not use any affordability criteria for the majority of units it funds. Even when it does, it rarely use its own definition of affordable housing.

It is why I have introduced a motion that follows the calls of housing experts like Dr. Carolyn Whitzman to require income-based definitions across all affordable housing programs.

Will the minister listen to these experts and take up this important call?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my hon. colleague, as I do Dr. Whitzman, whom I have had the opportunity to benefit from on a number of occasions when it comes to receiving her advice.

The majority of our grant programs that deliver cash subsidies to affordable housing projects are designed to support social housing, non-profit housing and housing for low-income families. We do have a range of other programs, including financing that delivers market-based housing with certain affordability criteria, to make sure we can build more middle-class homes as well.

I look forward to continuing to work with the member and other members of the House who want to advance these important conversations and get more homes built, including in places like Kitchener.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, that notwithstanding any—

Some hon. members: No.

• (1520)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I am seeking consent for a motion for the House to recognize that everyone living in first nations communities should have access to safe, clean drinking water and condemn the Liberal government, which has failed after—

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:21 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the previous question to the motion to concur in the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

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

(*Division No. 911*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arva	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff

Routine Proceedings

Dance	Davies	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Desilets	Desjarlais	Vignola	Villemure
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Virani	Weiler
Diab	Dong	Wilkinson	Yip
Drouin	Dubourg	Zahid	Zarrillo
Duclos	Duguid	Zuberi— 209	
Ehsassi	El-Khoury		
Erskine-Smith	Fisher		NAYS
Fonseca	Fortier		Members
Fortin	Fragiskatos		
Fraser	Freeland	Aboultaif	Aitchison
Fry	Gaheer	Albas	Allison
Gainey	Garon	Arnold	Baldinelli
Garrison	Gaudreau	Barlow	Barrett
Gazan	Gerretsen	Berthold	Bezan
Gill	Gould	Block	Bragdon
Green	Guilbeault	Brassard	Brock
Hajdu	Hanley	Calkins	Caputo
Hardie	Hepfner	Carrie	Chambers
Holland	Housefather	Chong	Cooper
Hughes	Hussen	Dalton	Dancho
Hutchings	Iacono	Davidson	Deltell
Idlout	Ien	Doherty	Dowdall
Jaczek	Johns	Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Joly	Jones	Ellis	Epp
Jowhari	Julian	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Fast	Ferreri
Khalid	Khera	Findlay	Gallant
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Généreux	Genuis
Kwan	Lalonde	Gladu	Godin
Lambropoulos	Lapointe	Goodridge	Gourde
Larouche	Lattanzio	Gray	Hallan
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Jivani	Kelly
Lebouthillier	Lemire	Khanna	Kitchen
Lightbound	Long	Kmiec	Kram
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Kusie	Lake
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lantsman	Lawrence
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Lehoux	Leslie
Masse	Mathysen	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Liepert	Lloyd
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Lobb	Maguire
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Majumdar	Martel
McLeod	McPherson	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Mendès	Mendicino	McLean	Melillo
Miao	Michaud	Moore	Morantz
Miller	Morrice	Morrison	Motz
Morrissey	Murray	Muys	Patzer
Naqvi	Noormohamed	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Normandin	O'Connell	Poilievre	Redekopp
Oliphant	O'Regan	Reid	Rempel Garner
Pauzé	Perron	Richards	Roberts
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	Rood	Ruff
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Scheer	Schmale
Robillard	Rodriguez	Shields	Shiple
Rogers	Romanado	Small	Soroka
Rota	Sahota	Steinley	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Sajjan	Saks	Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)	Strahl
Samson	Sarai	Stubbs	Thomas
Sauvé	Scarpaleggia	Tochor	Tolmie
Schiefke	Serré	Uppal	Van Popta
Sgro	Shanahan	Vecchio	Vidal
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Vien	Viersen
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Vis	Vuong
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh	Wagantall	Warkentin
Sorbara	Sousa	Waugh	Webber
Ste-Marie	St-Onge	Williams	Williamson
Sudds	Tassi	Zimmer— 115	
Taylor Roy	Thériault		
Therrien	Thompson		
Trudeau	Trudel		
Turnbull	Valdez		

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on the motion to concur in the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion, as amended, 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.

• (1535)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (1545)

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

(Division No. 912)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Dance	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner

Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Medicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Sauvé
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Routine Proceedings

Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Normandin
Oliphant
Paupé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rayes
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
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Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
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NAYS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers

Business of the House

Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genius
Glada	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Krniec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Viensen	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 114

PAIRED

Nil

Motion agreed to

I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of deferred recorded divisions, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 23 minutes.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order because I believe when the member for Sydney—Victoria was raising his point of order there may have been filming taking place in the chamber. I wonder if you could take the opportunity to remind all members that when the mace is on the table, that is unacceptable.

The Deputy Speaker: I will simply say ditto; that is the rule. When the mace is on the table, there is no other recording to be happening in the chamber.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, regarding the situation my colleague just reported, I would like it if the cameras could be checked to ensure that, if photos or videos were taken, they will be deleted from any devices belonging to the House of Commons. We know that filming or taking photos in the House is not permitted.

Is it possible to ensure that photos or videos will be deleted?

The Deputy Speaker: We will look into that and come back to the House if we see that something has happened.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister of Labour saying “Please, give a speech.” I will maybe go beyond my normal short interventions. Honestly, I think most members of Parliament would like to know if the government House leader can update the House on the business of next week, should her government survive the confidence vote on Monday.

We know there are mixed messages coming from the NDP. We have put forward a common-sense motion agreeing with the NDP leader's words when he said the government was “too selfish and too beholden to corporate” greed to protect the rights of workers.

We expect the NDP will support that, that they would not swallow themselves whole and demonstrate to Canadians the heights of their hypocrisy. We expect the government will fall on Monday, counting on the NDP to declare confidence in its leader by agreeing with his words.

Should that not be the case, and the NDP members turn out to be flip-floppers and hypocrites, we would like to know what the government would be calling for the rest of the week.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite what the Conservatives might think, I do not actually think Canadians want them door-knocking at Christmas. What I can say is we are very much looking forward to being here next week.

[Translation]

We are already into December, which means there are less than two weeks left before the House is scheduled to adjourn for the holidays.

I am very proud that, last week, our government passed Bill C-78, a very important government initiative that will deliver substantial savings to Canadians through GST and HST relief across the country.

• (1550)

[English]

I am quite sure that indeed all hon. colleagues in this place are well aware that tomorrow, Monday and Tuesday will be opposition days. On Tuesday night, members of Parliament will have the opportunity to vote on the supplementary estimates (B), which includes funding on important issues for Canadians such as dental care, housing, indigenous reconciliation, the national school food program and much more.

Lastly, I would like to inform the House that the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth will deliver a ministerial statement tomorrow to commemorate the tragic 35th anniversary of the massacre at the Polytechnique.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CONFIDENCE IN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fear my friends across the aisle will not enjoy the rest of my speech.

[English]

When I left off, I was talking about the abject hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to working people, unions and the labour movement in this country. I am going to quote a few things here. The Conservative leader said union contracts that pay workers a decent wage result in a pointless, unnecessary inflation of costs, and that non-union firms with lower wages are good for competition. He also said he simply cannot comprehend that union firms can, in fact, be competitive with non-union ones.

That is the Leader of the Opposition prancing around talking about workers in the House. He is determined to deny them their historic, decades-long, hard-fought rights. The Government of Canada is committed to promoting safe, healthy, fair and inclusive working conditions. As of December 15, 2023, federally regulated employers are required to provide sanitary products to all female employees in the workplace.

For years, replacement workers have been a distraction to the collective bargaining process, and those days are coming to an end. That is because on June 20, Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, received royal assent. When it comes into force on June 20, 2025, it will ban replacement workers in federally regulated sectors.

[Translation]

Dealing with pregnancy loss can be very difficult. That is why the government instituted a new leave for pregnancy loss for employees in federally regulated private sectors. This leave will help support them during this difficult time. Adoptive parents and par-

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ents of children conceived through surrogacy need time to welcome their children home. That is why we have also instituted a new 16-week leave to support adoptive parents and parents of children conceived through surrogacy.

[English]

Technology is changing rapidly, and with it, so will the workforce. Increased availability of mobile technologies led to 20% of Canadians primarily working from home in 2023. In 2016, it was only 7%. However, remote workers are often required to be constantly available, which can lead to stress and burnout, ultimately impacting their mental health. We passed legislation to bring a right to disconnect into this new world of work. This measure will help restore the balance for nearly 500,000 federally regulated employees.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada is fully committed to pay equity as part of its overall goal of creating fair, safe and inclusive workplaces. It is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. When Canadians are able to count on equal pay for work of equal value, our economy benefits. That is the purpose of Canada's Pay Equity Act, which took effect in 2021. Since then, the government has been taking steps to ensure that everyone receives equal pay for work of equal value.

[English]

These are real accomplishments. Canadians watching this debate can see the cynical ploys of the Conservative Party of Canada. They must ask themselves, which one of these dozen or more tangible, real, legislative accomplishments for working Canadians would the Leader of the Opposition have brought in? The answer is none. The answer is the Conservative Party would not have initiated any pro-worker or progressive reforms to the Canada Labour Code that help Canadians in their jobs, in their lives and to achieve the kind of balance we all seek in these very complicated times. The answer is the Conservatives would have done none of that.

What we have is a Conservative leader and a Conservative Party trying to gaslight Canadians into thinking Conservatives are friends of workers. They are not, and the facts speak for themselves. In his own words, the leader of the Conservative Party has called into question the very basis and structure of labour unions, claiming union dues are forced on workers, and has called into question the role of workers in collective bargaining in Canada.

• (1555)

He complains, “The union has the power to shut down a workplace.... These legal powers give the union a state-enforced monopoly on labour”. Those were the words of the member for Carleton on May 29, 2012, in the House of Commons. The Conservative leader has attacked union jobs and union wages as “fattened union contracts”.

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My colleagues and I are proud that we have turned back this movement and proud of the significant progress we have made over the years, and we are not going back. We will keep listening and working alongside unions, other parties in the House and progressive Canadians everywhere to make sure we continue to be there for working Canadians and continue to provide the things, the reforms and the guarantees that we know they are entitled to and that Conservatives, cynically, would take away.

This motion deserves to be defeated. It is a cynical ploy. The Conservative Party is not pro-worker. It is anti-worker.

[Translation]

I encourage every member of the House to vote against this motion.

[English]

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard the speech from the member on the other side. This is a motion that really just says that if a member says something in the House of Commons, says something to the Canadian people, says something to their electoral base, then they have to be held to account for that.

We are actually siding with the NDP on this motion and asking them to put their motions where their mouth is, out on the hustings here, and vote the government out because the government clearly, according to what the NDP's words have indicated, does not deserve to be in power, is beholden to special interests and should be voted out.

Will the member acknowledge that at least when the NDP is saying this, it is saying it against the government and perhaps that should be weighed in the House of Commons?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, here is what needs to be weighed by the member and all members of this House of Commons: The Conservatives are asking the New Democratic Party to vote for a leader who says, "The union has the power to shut down a workplace.... These legal powers give the union a state-enforced monopoly on labour". Those are the exact words of the member for Carleton, the leader of that member's party. The Leader of the Opposition has said these are "fattened union contracts" and a "state-enforced monopoly on labour". That is what the member is asking all members of the House to vote for. That is ridiculous.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as usual, as the holidays draw near, when a Liberal minister or member rises in the House to boast about the Liberal record, we suddenly find ourselves in a fantasy world. It is as though they are talking about some perfect place where all manner of great things happened in recent years. Unfortunately, that is not the reality.

I would like the minister to address a very specific point. Something has been growing under the Liberal government in recent years: homeless tent cities throughout Quebec and Canada. I have seen them pop up in my riding, Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, and I imagine that every member in the House has also noticed tent cities popping up in their ridings. That is the reality.

However, the only Liberal program to fight homelessness is the reaching home program, which in recent years has been slashed by 3%. How can we allow the government to make a 3% cut to such an important program?

• (1600)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the member is talking about the government's track record. This member will never have a track record, because his party will never form the government. However, he is talking about a very serious situation: homelessness. That is why, yes, we are investing record amounts in housing. We are investing \$110 billion in the national housing strategy, which includes the reaching home program.

We are also working with Quebec. That will help in Gatineau, in my colleague's riding and across the province. We invested \$50 million in one-time aid to support Quebecers. I hope that my colleague will join me in telling the Government of Quebec to accept our offer, double that amount and help the homeless in Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always depressing watching how juvenile my Conservative colleagues are. Today, they voted to consign women to backroom abortionists and they think everyone else is going to join them in a Christmas election. I believe, though, the desperation is as information is starting to come out about how that member got into the 19-room mansion at Stornoway.

I would bring forward the recent report by Radio-Canada that said the member for Calgary Nose Hill was involved with Indian agents for the Modi government to pull support out of that leadership race and allow for the member who is now in Stornoway. These are serious allegations. There have been numerous allegations from CSIS about how that member got to the position he is in, because it certainly was not from talent.

Is my hon. colleague concerned that the Leader of the Opposition refuses to get a security clearance or is simply unable to pass a security clearance?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, no one believes the Leader of the Opposition. He will not stand up for Canada and he is in the right-wing echo chamber with respect to trade with the United States. He failed to stand up for farmers and for others in a bumper crop. There are these foreign interference allegations, and the member is quite right: The member for Calgary Nose Hill ran as fast as I have ever seen anyone run away from a camera.

The Leader of the Opposition refuses to get a security clearance. What is he hiding? What is going on? Who is the member for Carleton, the Leader of the Opposition, working for?

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Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, we are debating a confidence motion in the Prime Minister and the government. I think this gives members of Parliament a great opportunity to lay out a variety of issues, not only of the government but also the Conservatives, who are bringing this motion. It gives an opportunity to examine and look under the hood of where that party stands on a number of issues, including some that are just simply not clear yet. I look forward to using the next 10 minutes to go through different things in terms of how I view the government. I sit on this side of the House, the government caucus. I do not sit in the Privy Council.

I will talk about where I see things that the government has done well and things that I think we need to do better on. I will also compare and contrast this with where the Conservative Party is today.

I want to start with the economy. Yes, there are challenges around affordability. We have heard comments in the House. I have had conversations with my own constituents. It might be the same for the Deputy Speaker in West Nova.

It is important to examine the point that this is a global phenomenon. I listened to the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex the other day. She stood up in the House and suggested that Canada is the only country dealing with affordability challenges, that the government alone is responsible for the difficult periods we have gone through.

I will remind her that we went through a global pandemic, and I would invite her to read any newspaper around the world. We will see a lot of the same headlines: There are challenges around housing, the cost of living and affordability. I will remind Canadians at home that, as we have gone through a difficult period, thankfully, the government has been here to support Canadians along the way. Interest rates are back down within the target range of 2%. The hope is that we can see further Bank of Canada interest rate cuts, overnight lending.

It is important, when the Conservative Party stands up, to try to keep some element of credibility. When they talk about these issues, there is a level of nuance that exists. I want to highlight a few statistics for people at home. We have had the second-best cumulative economic growth in the G7 since 2015.

When the Conservatives get up and suggest that the country is broken, that nothing good has happened, they should be a little bit more pointed in their attack about where the government can do better and also recognize that there has been success. That is the second best economic growth in the G7. Many people at home may not know that; if they listen solely to what they may hear from the opposition benches, I do not think it is reflective of where we are at.

We have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Of course, that is an amount of debt as a proportion and size of the economy, which has been a really important target for the government to maintain. We have a AAA credit rating. We are one of the only advanced economies and countries in the world that have a AAA credit rating. We have seen the highest wage growth in the G7 since 2019.

I have said this before. I know that this does not mean that every Canadian who is sitting at home right now is necessarily feeling good about their circumstances. There are challenges. However, it is important, when we are in this place, to show a level of balance and reasonableness. If we are going to do that, we have to be able to highlight some of the successes the country has had and areas in which every parliamentarian, regardless of where they sit in this place, wants to continue to push government. That is our job as parliamentarians: to continue to push for better for Canadians.

I also want to highlight the fact that we often hear from the opposition benches about how, again, nothing good is happening in the country. However, they never talk about the fact that we had the third-highest amount of foreign direct investment in the world, not on a per capita basis, just in the world, in 2023. Those are really important numbers.

We have had productivity challenges over multiple governments for the last number of decades. The government has recognized that, and I think that it needs to continue to be stringent and focused on that question about what we can do to increase innovation and productivity in this country. I think we need to be focused on reducing regulatory barriers and red tape.

We have a massive natural resource benefit in this country. We have to make sure that we are balancing, of course, environmental outcomes, indigenous participation and engagement on these issues. At the same time, we need to build big projects that get things done in this country. I think the government has made some strides in this area, but I would humbly suggest we need to do more.

When we look at the overall economic realities, I would suggest that the government has had a pretty strong success story. When I compare it to the slogan factory on the other side, I am not hearing a credible plan in terms of what the Conservatives would actually do. When we write three or four slogans on the back of a napkin, that does not represent responsible public policy, in terms of what the opposition would do differently.

Let us talk about Canada-U.S. relations. This issue is extremely important; Mr. Trump returns to the Oval Office in January, and his inauguration is coming up. This poses challenges for Canada and other western liberal democracies.

• (1605)

The president-elect has talked about imposing a 25% tariff on all products from Mexico and Canada. I think that would be bad economic policy for the United States and, of course, it would have impacts on the Canadian economy. However, we have to examine who is the best to lead that relationship. The Prime Minister has an existing relationship with Donald Trump. The current government was there during the renegotiation of CUSMA to make sure that we worked alongside our American partners and Mexican authorities and that we protected Canadian interests at the same time. The government did extraordinarily well in the 42nd Parliament during that period. Last week, the Prime Minister went to Florida; he was the first G7 leader to sit down with Donald Trump following his election victory.

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I want to compare that to what I have seen in the House of Commons. The leader of the official opposition has said such things as that we have to put Canada first. I do not know what the heck that means, but it sounds isolationist. This country that exports many products around the world, whether in agriculture, forestry, critical minerals or energy; I do not think the idea of looking inward is good for Canada. That is the Conservatives' play, but they have not articulated what the heck it means. The Leader of the Opposition stands up and suggests that now we have to kill carbon pricing because Donald Trump is in. That is not a responsible element.

I look at what the NDP leader has said, and he suggested striking some type of war cabinet. No, lighting our hair on fire is not the way to go here; we need to have a level of statesmanship.

I have not agreed with everything the Prime Minister has done, and we have had some vehement disagreements. However, I do think that he has looked far more like a statesman than the other two leaders of the major parties in the House.

On foreign affairs, it is outrageous that the leader of the official opposition has not committed the Conservative Party to a 2% defence target. The Conservatives love to beat their chest about the work they would do for the Canadian military, yet they fail to remind Canadians that, when they left office, defence spending was actually below 1%. I think this government has taken a little bit too long to get there, but we have gotten to the 2% commitment by 2032. Looking at the tabled estimates, we can see that defence spending is increasing this year and will continue to increase over the next number of years. I find it extremely irresponsible that, as a government-in-waiting, the Conservatives will not commit to 2%. When will they formally commit to the 2% GDP target on defence? They owe the answer to Canadians and they owe it sooner rather than later, particularly in the environment we are in.

Let us talk about security clearance. We can think about this for a moment: Earlier, the member for Timmins—James Bay, referenced in his question that there are allegations that agents of the Indian government were involved in the Conservative leadership campaign, particularly to dispel and hurt Patrick Brown, who was running against the member for Carleton. The member for Carleton is the only leader of all the major parties to not get his security clearance. Why would he not do this? This man wants to be the prime minister of the country, and he refuses to go through the security clearance process to be adequately advised and informed by national security advisers on what is happening on foreign interference. That is not responsible leadership.

If I am presented with a question here about whether I have confidence in the government and the Prime Minister, I would ask this: Do I agree with everything that has happened? No, but I compare it to what the alternative would be. How could I ever vote for this confidence motion in good faith when the leader of the official opposition, who wants to be the Prime Minister, has not even gone through the vetting process?

The last piece I want to talk about is on affordability and social programs. Whether it is on dental, pharmacare or school food programs that really matter in my neck of the woods in Nova Scotia, the Conservatives vote against it. For seniors, they voted against increases to OAS, moved the eligible age for benefits from 65 to 67

and voted against increases to the guaranteed income supplement. On housing, they are taking away the money that we are giving to try to build more housing. We had the largest number of houses built in Nova Scotia in 2023. We still have to clean up that issue, but it is well on its way; however, the Conservatives want to take away the funding that actually builds the homes that we need to house Canadians.

For all those reasons and more, this is why I will not be voting in favour of this motion.

● (1610)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I took my colleague up on his challenge about looking at Canada's growth rate versus the other G7 countries. I noticed that, since 2015, when the government came in, this country's performance has shown less than half of the cumulative GDP growth that the United States has accomplished. That is the main metric we have to look at, not European countries that have gone through a major problem with energy provisions, particularly since the war. Quite frankly, they are underperforming. We have to look at where we are in this mix.

Can the member explain why we have underperformed the U.S. consistently since the government has been in power? If the carbon tax is not in the equation, then tell us what the problem is.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I said we are second in overall cumulative economic growth; of course, we are second to the Americans. I would ask the member to find me an advanced economy in a western liberal democracy that has been able to keep pace with the United States. There is none. I agree, and I said in my speech, that the productivity question is an important one. I think the member opposite and I would share the common concern that we need to bring forward initiatives; we need to continue to push the Privy Council and the cabinet on more measures that can be used. Actually, this relationship with the incoming Trump administration gives an opportunity for all parliamentarians to look at ways we can harmonize policy between Canada and the U.S. and focus on that question of competitiveness.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on whether the member who lives in Stornoway is refusing to or is unable to get a security clearance. An expert on this would be the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who is widely respected in the House. He told *The Globe and Mail*, on October 23, that the Conservative Party's concern was this:

[S]ecurity clearances involve a rigorous process that includes background checks on family members, credit and criminal checks and intrusive questions about one's sexual partners or whether they ever used drugs. The Conservatives fear any personal and family information obtained through this process could be used...for politically motivated purposes against [the member for Stornoway].

Simply put, what the heck is in the Poilievre family closet that they are so worried about?

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The Deputy Speaker: The member should not use the name of another member.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants has the floor.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay raises some really important questions that, frankly, I do not have the ability to answer. However, I will repeat what I said in my speech: If someone wants to become the prime minister of this country, they have to go through the security vetting process to get national security clearance. Whether there are skeletons in his closet or not, the member has not really given us a good answer on why he is choosing not to do that.

The member for Timmins—James Bay talked about the member from Stornoway. I want to put on the record that it is quite audacious for the member for Carleton to call out the leader of the NDP about why he sits in this place and why he serves when the member for Carleton has the biggest pension in this place. He may be the biggest fat cat, and he has not worked a day outside this place. That is absolutely ridiculous and unbecoming of the role we should be serving in as members of Parliament.

• (1615)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I spend a lot of my time in this place advocating for the government to do things it has promised to do and, most of the time, has not yet done. This may be the \$4.5-billion Canada mental health transfer, ending subsidies to the oil and gas industry or a fully funded Canada disability benefit that would lift people with disabilities out of poverty.

One way for me to look at this confidence vote, if I am to trust the polls, is to ask this: Is it better for my community if I focus my efforts on pushing the government to do the things it said it was going to do? Otherwise, is it better if I do so with a potential future Conservative government that not only has not promised these things at all but is also more than likely to backslide on them. An example of this is climate. What are the comments from the member for Kings—Hants on this?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, although the hon. member and I may share some slightly different views of the world, I like and appreciate the way he comes to this place in a respectful debate. I would say that, although he may not be satisfied with everything that has happened with the current government, I suspect there are many things he can agree with. He should continue to push the government and work with a government that is moderate and progressive and that will continue to drive the same values. I would hope that when he looks at the opposition benches, that is the furthest thing from what he would like to see sitting in the government benches.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am happy. I almost feel like I am among family. The member for Lac-Saint-Jean is here. My friend from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord is here, also. It is like being back in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. I feel good and confident.

As far as the motion of non-confidence in the government is concerned, I think that the Bloc Québécois's course of action is fairly

clear and understandable: We say what we do and we do what we say.

On day one, going back to September 25, the leader of the Bloc Québécois gave the government an ultimatum. Our goal was to protect seniors and our farmers. We gave the government a chance to come to terms with us and ensure that its minority government would hold. Unfortunately, when it came to Bill C-319 on increasing pensions and Bill C-282 on supply management, the government refused to listen. Instead, it proposed measures that seem to have come back to bite it today.

On the subject of the \$250 that excluded seniors in particular, people would not believe how much feedback I have gotten on that and how much it increased cynicism. Never in my time in the House, since 2019, have I heard so much about an issue. The same thing goes for the GST. I have heard from many business owners who said the measure was crazy and that they do not have the resources to change their entire system. This is what the government wanted to do.

It was clear from that moment on that if the Bloc Québécois had the opportunity, we would bring down the government. It should come as no surprise to the House that the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of the motion before us. Why? It is because I truly believe that the government cannot be trusted.

That being said, I am being a bit mischievous. The question of whether we can trust the government is interesting, but there is another one too, namely whether we can trust the leader of the official opposition.

I thought why not give the leader of the official opposition a dose of the same medicine he gave the leader of the NDP. In a past life, I taught at a university. I quite liked discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is kind of what we are seeing in the motion. What the Conservative Party is doing is taking the NDP leader's statements to show that if he wants to be consistent with his statements then he should bring down the government. The Conservatives are absolutely right about that. If the NDP wants to be consistent with the statements it makes, it should bring down the government.

Another rather interesting issue is whether we can have confidence in the Leader of the Opposition if we analyze his discourse and statements. That is what we are going to try to do. I am going to use a lot of quotes. The Conservatives should be happy about that since the content comes entirely from their leader.

The first reason that was widely put forward by the leader of the official opposition for bringing down the government is the infamous issue of wokeism. I will give some examples. My colleagues will see where I am going with this.

Last week, on November 26, during the emergency debate on U.S. tariffs, the member for Carleton, leader of the official opposition, said the following:

The woke political agenda is dividing us and distracting us from our work. Young men and women want nothing to do with the woke agenda. They want to fight for our country. They want to be proud of the Canadian flag.

We are going to get rid of the woke political agenda....

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We will have a warrior culture, not a woke culture.

In a moment, I am going to try and define what he means by a warrior culture rather than a woke culture.

● (1620)

I would like to read another quote by the Leader of the Opposition from the day before, November 25. He said, “Mr. Speaker, the lawless hate riot that we saw on the streets of Montreal is what happens after nine years of a woke Prime Minister pushing radical, woke identity politics, dividing people by race, gender, vaccine status, religion and more.” We know that the Leader of the Opposition has a penchant for conspiracy theories. That is another quote that shows the danger facing Canadian society, the woke danger.

I have another quote from last year. He said, “We will also bring back freedom. I know that freedom is a foundational principle of our country. The federal government wants to censor the Internet. The CRTC, a woke agency, wants to impose its values on Quebecers.” In the same quote, the leader of the official opposition talks about the “Minister of Canadian Heritage, and...other woke bureaucrats here in Ottawa, who will control what Quebecers can see and say on the Internet.”

I am going to provide a summary of the woke threat. When the leader of the official opposition talks about radical identity politics, when he talks about politics that divide people by race and religion and when he talks about politics that seek to impose values on Quebecers, the following question comes to mind: Who is doing that in Quebec? Who is acting woke in Quebec? The answer is fairly simple. Who represents that position? Guess what? Usually, it is the people who are against Bill 21, the state secularism law. Bill 21 governs religion in the public sphere. In Quebec, when we talk about someone who is woke, we are talking about people who are against Bill 21 and who have a view of minorities that goes against the Quebec national minority. We have a definition of what wokeism is in Quebec.

Let us now try to look at what the leader of the official opposition is telling us about Bill 21. On numerous occasions, he said, and I quote, “I’m against Bill 21.” He has also said, “If I were a Quebec politician, I would vote against it in the legislature. If anyone proposed it federally, and I do not see that happening, I would vote against it. I believe in religious freedom.”

That is the leader of the official opposition's interpretation. This woke culture is one of his main reasons for wanting to bring down the government. I would like to point out that, here in Ottawa, the Leader of the Opposition is against woke culture, but when he gets to Quebec, he himself is actually woke. The leader of the official opposition, from Quebec's perspective, is woke. That somewhat conflicting piece of information is pretty important. If Quebecers want to make up their minds about the Conservative Party's policy directions, I would suggest that is a bit more complex than the slogans we hear day after day in the House. At the very least, perhaps the leader of the official opposition could explain what makes those who are woke in Canada different from those who are woke in Quebec. Is this the solitude of the two wokes? Possibly, but it is clear that the leader of the official opposition's intentions are not in line with Quebec's aspirations.

Another crucial topic for the leader of the official opposition is inflation and its repercussions. The leader of the official opposition has often talked to us about the many ways inflation is negatively impacting Canadian society, which is broken. The leader of the official opposition often tells us that Canada is broken and the budget needs to be fixed. Canada is broken, and his solution is to fix the budget. By way of illustration, I would refer members to a misleading ad that the leader of the official opposition aired some time ago. It featured a Quebec family talking about how they could not pay their mortgage. Later, it emerged that this was not the case. It was a generic image, and the family was very angry with the Conservative Party.

● (1625)

This family said that they absolutely were paying their mortgage but were being portrayed in the media like a family of idiots, all because the Conservative party leader had decided to make them characters in his fantasy world. People will also remember the infamous video about the leader of the official opposition's idealized vision of Canada the day he appeared in a white cowboy hat. The member for Lac-Saint-Jean thought he was the singer from the Village People. The member for Lac-Saint-Jean is always ready to dance. His jaw soon dropped when he realized it was actually the leader of the official opposition, especially after all the over-the-top statements that came next.

What struck me the most was how the leader of the official opposition used the issue of medical assistance in dying. The leader of the official opposition linked medical assistance in dying to inflation, the recession, and the financial struggles that some people are facing. On June 7, 2023, the Leader of the Opposition said, “Those going to The Mississauga Food Bank and seeking help with medical assistance in dying, not because they are sick but because they are hungry, have never had it so good”. According to the leader of the official opposition, some people in Mississauga were going to food banks and were so hungry that they were requesting medical assistance in dying.

On May 15, 2023, he said, “One in five is skipping meals because they cannot afford the inflationary carbon tax on food.” Now there is another link. I will come back to that later, because the carbon tax is another pet project of the Leader of the Opposition. He went on to say, “1.5 million are eating at food banks, and some are asking for help with medical assistance in dying because they cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves.” Personally, I have yet to meet anyone who has requested medical assistance in dying because they were hungry. Maybe one day, the Leader of the Opposition will introduce us to those people. I asked him a question earlier after his speech, and he explained that it was meant to be an ode, that it was his version of poetry. I am very familiar with Miron, and I understand many poets, but I still do not understand the poetry of the leader of the official opposition.

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Lastly, we have scurvy. After medical assistance in dying came the resurgence in scurvy. In February 2024, the leader of the official opposition said, “There is the re-emergence of illnesses that were long ago banished, like scurvy, because people have become malnourished under the Prime Minister’s impoverishing policies.” If members are following what I am saying, it seems we have people who are asking for medical assistance in dying because there is nothing left to eat. Others are not asking for medical assistance in dying, but they have scurvy because they do not have anything to eat. If Canada is not broken, then one has to wonder what is happening. We are truly at a crossroads.

It does not stop there. I have often criticized the leader of the official opposition by saying that he is not presenting any solutions, but he is. I want to tell the House about the leader of the official opposition’s solutions to inflation. I found some quotes. I looked long and hard and I managed to find some quotes showing that the leader of the official opposition does have some solutions. Here is one of his first solutions to inflation: Canadians can embrace cryptocurrency to “opt out of inflation”.

It is a pretty interesting sleight of hand. The Leader of the Opposition is always telling us to take control of money away from bankers and politicians and give it to the people. Here is another quote from the Leader of the Opposition: “We’re going to give people the freedom, the FREE-DOM to choose their own currency without the Bank of Canada stepping in to print money and devalue the currency.” Finally, the Leader of the Opposition tells us that to stop inflation, to stop people from asking for medical assistance in dying and to stop people from getting scurvy, the solution is Bitcoin. It is pretty ingenious. Perhaps Bitcoin is the solution for domestic policy, but the other solution proposed by the Leader of the Opposition is to get out of Davos.

• (1630)

Apparently Canada is at a disadvantage because of a global conspiracy that is partly responsible for inflation. In a fundraising email, the leader of the official opposition said, “It’s far past time we rejected the globalist Davos elites and bring home the common sense of the common people.” He is not a globalist.

Here is another quote from the leader of the official opposition. During a speech he gave in British Columbia in July 2023, he said, “There will be no mandatory digital ID in this country, and I will ban all of my ministers and top government officials from any involvement in the World Economic Forum”.

That is one way to square a circle. Conspiracy theories say there will be digital ID. The people at the World Economic Forum are controlling whole governments like puppets. The leader of the official opposition has a solution: Bitcoin. He will also terminate the government’s involvement in the World Economic Forum. There are solutions.

The famous carbon tax is another key element to understanding what is driving the leader of the official opposition to defeat the government. Every member ends their intervention by saying that we need a carbon tax election. I will note that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. They may have a theme specific to Quebec, but clearly the leader of the official opposition is not addressing Quebecers when he talks about that.

I will provide an example that is just fantastic. On September 25, the leader of the official opposition said, “Let us talk about education. The carbon tax will cost Saskatchewan schools \$204 million. That is the equivalent of approximately 2,000 teachers losing their job, all to pay tax to heat schools in cold Saskatchewan winters.”

The leader of the official opposition often does that. He talked to us about a nurse who lost her job because of the cost to heat the hospital. He also talked about teachers losing their job because of the cost to heat the schools. The worst example was on September 24. The leader of the official opposition had a stroke of genius when he talked about “nuclear winter”. That is incredibly dangerous. The leader of the official opposition said, “What he actually wants to do is quadruple the carbon tax, which will grind our economy to a halt. It will be a nuclear winter for our economy.” There will be no more heating. If we listen to the Liberals, there might be no more teeth because there will be no more dental insurance. It is a mess. Canada is truly broken.

When the leader of the official opposition gave his speech today, I told myself that he had the solution. The leader of the official opposition has the solution, because he has told us before about the famous electrician who captures lightning and sends it through a copper wire to light up the rooms we are in. I think that this electrician could also heat schools and hospitals. I am sure he could do that. That is the answer. All we have to do is find more of these electricians who capture lightning. They will be able to heat our schools and hospitals. It will be great. That is once again a great solution from the leader of the official opposition.

Of course, I will skip over those things that pertain specifically to oil. I will, perhaps, digress briefly to talk about law and order, something that the opposition leader talks a lot about. However, there is one thing that he seems to gloss over. During the trucker protests, the opposition leader said, “I was at an overpass as the truckers went by, and what I saw were cheerful, patriotic and optimistic Canadians who want their freedom back and want their livelihoods back.” I think that goes well with his theme of law and order.

I will end my speech by saying that, after two years of this Leader of the Opposition, he is not worth the cost or the pollution. The Bloc Québécois, a party of staunch sovereignists, will eliminate funding for oil companies, increase pensions for people over the age of 65, stop hate speech and defend supply management. When is the election?

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us play a little game of what does not fit with the others. What do the Prime Minister, the leader of the Bloc Québécois, the leader of the NDP and the leader of the Green Party have in common? They all got their security clearance.

Business of Supply

Then we have to ask why the Leader of the Opposition did not get his security clearance. He has clearly painted himself into a corner. The Leader of the Opposition, in addition to maybe becoming the prime minister at some point, is failing badly. Then we roll in the questions around foreign interference with respect to his leadership. There is clearly something up.

I ask the member opposite this: Why will the leader of the official opposition not get his security clearance?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I am a very respectful person, so everything I said about the leader of the official opposition are quotations of his own words. I do not want to put words in his mouth. I do not know why he decided not to go through the process to get his security clearance.

One thing I do know is that the Liberal Party has decided to abandon seniors. I know that the Liberal Party has made a proposal that is completely irrelevant for a segment of the population whose income has never increased. The Liberals said that they will give \$250 to everyone, including those earning \$150,000 a year, but they will not give any money to seniors. That is what I know.

I know that the Liberal Party's GST proposal is very unpopular. Perhaps my colleague should focus on that rather than on the shenanigans of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague expresses himself very well. He is a university professor. He is well-spoken, but it is clear that his party is having a hard time with the fact that it has never been in power. That much is obvious. We all know the next government will be a Conservative government. When people attack a party, it is because that party will be the next to govern.

We know the Bloc Québécois members are analysts and stage managers. They comment on every single thing because they would not exist without the media.

They talk a lot about fighting for people in our region, and they really love their round tables. In regions like the one I am from, they say they are fighting for the forestry industry. I am curious about why, here in Ottawa, there has never been an issue that compelled the Bloc Québécois to fight for forestry workers in our region.

Forestry workers in the regions think the Bloc Québécois is fighting for them. Here, the opposite is true.

• (1640)

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out to my friend from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development had a meeting on the caribou issue, because I moved a motion on the subject and I did that because the Conservatives were trying to play a futile game.

The issue of the caribou order has now been set aside, and the federal government is in the process of negotiating with Quebec. If it comes back with the same thing, we will deal with it.

What all forestry stakeholders in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean want is a liquidity program, because they are going through an unprecedented crisis, with the U.S. keeping half of their money.

My colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord came with us to visit a sawmill. I would be happy to do it again. We will ask the government, and he is going to say that his government would agree to a liquidity program.

Then we shall see who is all talk and no action.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing the Conservatives say they are there for workers, but every time workers have problems, when I am on the picket lines, there are no Conservatives around. When problems crop up, all the Conservatives do is tell workers that they have to go back to work without getting what they need. That is a big problem, yet they keep saying they are there for workers.

What does my colleague think about that?

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on the quality of her French.

The Conservative Party's record speaks for itself. It is the party that created two categories of unemployed workers. It is the party that tried to weaken the laws that protect unions. The Conservative Party supports workers when it is the opposition, but generally, when it comes to power, it soon shows its true colours. The Conservative Party reverts to the party that takes orders from the big oil companies, serves the dictates of big business, and has little interest in workers.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear colleague for his very interesting speech.

I feel like I am living in the days of Ebenezer Scrooge when I see everything that the Conservatives are doing, when I hear everything they are saying and when they talk about wokeism. People know full well that the Bloc Québécois stands up for forestry workers and seniors.

I would like my colleague to talk about the situation of our two bills that are still on pause because the Conservatives are paralyzing Parliament.

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I can absolutely talk about that. It would be great if we were able to increase the purchasing power of seniors 65 to 74. It would be really great if we could ensure that supply management is protected, especially with the arrival of the Trump administration. It would really great if we could eradicate hate speech based on religious exemption.

I invite the Conservatives to end their systematic obstruction and move these bills through. Oddly, a while ago, I heard Conservatives say that they were not the ones paralyzing the House. We have been studying the same question of privilege for five weeks. How can anyone be perceived as not harmful to democracy when their only objective is to make the government look bad at the expense of the common good? My colleague is absolutely right.

Business of Supply

• (1645)

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois says it supports the motion calling on the government to provide the documents related to the \$400-million scandal. The other opposition parties also support it. All the opposition parties want the government to hand over the documents to the law clerk of the House so that he can pass them on to the RCMP.

The Bloc Québécois can also put an end to the filibuster, which it believes is being caused by the Conservatives. If the Liberals would hand over the documents, that would end it. My colleague can therefore end the filibuster with the Liberals.

Why does my colleague not put an end to the filibuster with the Liberals?

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I have a great suggestion for my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord. I am confident that I can convince my leader to end this filibuster. The member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and I could propose a liquidity program for the forestry sector to the government. If he is interested, we could do that together. We could work something out. The government already succeeded in suspending the question of privilege for 24 hours. We could suspend the Conservative filibuster for 24 hours to propose a liquidity program that would really help businesses in the forestry sector. This is a genuine proposal I am making. Perhaps my colleague could bring it to his party and see how it is received.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Nepawa, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, Innovation, Science and Industry; the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country, Taxation.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always say what a great honour it is to rise in a House such as this, chosen by the people of Timmins—James Bay, but I have to say that I am less and less proud every time I am asked to stand up because I do not know how to tell young Canadians to believe in democracy when they watch this dismal gong show day after day.

We are in a crisis of democracy around the world, a moment when Canada, which was always a land known for its tolerance and fairness, sits in this dysfunctional, broken crisis. It is not a natural break. I mean, the leader who lives in the Stornoway mansion says everything is broken. He is making it broken. We have had two months of a Parliament unable to work at a time when we are facing the threats coming in from Donald Trump, when we are facing the Russians moving to hypersonic missiles, when we are facing a larger crisis and Canada needs to be seen. Instead, we are sitting here playing these really stupid, dismal games.

Having been here 20 years, I do not want to say there have been glory days when we were all smarter, we were all wiser and we all rose to the highest standards. In fact, when I first got elected, it really reminded me of being in a new school in grade 9, walking into the cafeteria and having people throw food at me. However, there was a difference. The difference was that, for all the silliness and

the mediocrity, we knew that we were there at the end of the day for something bigger than us and our parties.

Just the other night, I was walking down Elgin Street, and a former Conservative cabinet minister, David MacDonald, stopped me on the street. What a gentleman. He was in the Joe Clark government. He talked to me about his concern about Canada's democracy at this time. He talked about those days. Those were serious days, the days of Reaganomics and the days of mass unemployment. We talk about affordability issues now, but at that time interest rates were hitting 18% and 21% and people were losing their homes across Canada. We never saw the darkness that is being generated now. He talked to me about being in the Joe Clark cabinet, finding people on the Liberal side to work with and calling Ed Broadbent to work with him.

However, that is not what we have now. Instead of the grade 9 cafeteria, this is kind of like *Beavis and Butt-Head* go to *Lord of the Flies*. I say that because for two months we have sat and watched these silly, stupid games. It is like today the Conservatives got this idea, "You know what we're going to do? We're going to get the leader of the NDP's words that he'll defend workers and we'll use that. Ha ha. Then we'll force him to have a Christmas election." They pat themselves on the back because they think that is actually offering something.

This has been two solid months of nothing getting done. I have been partisan my whole life. I have been in opposition my whole life, but I know there are moments when I put that aside for the good of the country. We need the fall economic statement to move forward. We have first nation issues and monies that are being held up so they can play their gong show about Canada being broken. I know multiple copper projects that are not going to go ahead, and that investment is going to go to Malaysia.

Do members know what the happy sock puppets tell people? "Don't worry. When our leader gets in, we'll fix it." The Conservatives want to break it. They want to burn the house to the ground.

I said that because, last night, Amnesty International released a damning report on the genocide that is happening in Gaza. These are the big issues that we are facing. The Amnesty International report comes on the findings of the UN that hospital workers are being targeted and murdered deliberately, which are crimes against humanity. The International Criminal Court has sent forward indictments, both against Hamas and against the key leaders in the Israeli government, for crimes against humanity. Canada was one of the founding partners in the creation of the International Criminal Court. Yes, we might have been small, but we stepped up.

Business of Supply

During the apartheid regime and the fight to bring down that oppressive, hateful regime, Canada played a part. Yes, a former Conservative prime minister stood up for the notion of international human rights and law. He did that. In Rwanda, in the face of a horrific genocide, there were Canadians on the front lines. When they were abandoned by the UN, abandoned by Europe, it was Canadians who were there to stop the genocide. In Srebrenica and Yugoslavia, Canada played a role.

• (1650)

When Canada was confronted with the International Criminal Court finding against Vladimir Putin, which was a very important finding, the Conservatives came in and voted multiple times against support for Ukraine, to burn the house to the ground. When the International Criminal Court found that a genocide was being committed against people, what did the member who lives in the 19-room mansion in Stornoway say? He said it was hare-brained and woke. This man is not fit for public office. I have never said that about anyone who has ever walked into this House, but a man who looks at the role that Canada played at the International Criminal Court and says it is hare-brained and woke is not fit.

I say this given the threats posed by Donald Trump. They are threats against the basic democratic order, because if the Americans lose the democratic order, we all lose the democratic order. When we see that he has posted a Putin troll to be in charge of intelligence, and when he is posting a man for the head of the FBI to target his political enemies, that is the undermining of democracy. His attack on Canada, a 25% tariff, threatens serious economic harm. We are going to have to stand up as a nation. We are going to have to stand up with some unity. We are going to have to stand up for Canadian values.

We cannot demonize the immigrant and migrant people who are coming here. We cannot use them to appease Donald Trump. Donald Trump is talking about fentanyl. He is accusing Canada of being the supply chain for the fentanyl crisis in America, when we know that it was OxyContin from the United States that created the crisis here and the huge death rates that we are still suffering. The fentanyl crisis is an unprecedented crisis. What does the guy who lives in a 19-room mansion say? He claims that the Prime Minister legalized fentanyl and put it on the streets.

We have rules about decorum. I cannot call that man a liar. That would not be civic, but he can use the deaths of thousands of people. He does that normally, but it is different when Donald Trump is accusing Canada of being a fentanyl chain into the United States and the impact will be 25% tariffs. That is when we put aside our pitiful partisan games and say there is a bigger issue here, but no, because he will burn our country to the ground to score a point. We can bet that Fox News will be having him on, and we can bet that the Conservative sock puppets who obediently repeat these falsehoods will be quoted again and again to justify the 25% tariffs that will cause economic havoc.

We have been through much worse times economically, but there was always a notion that we would come together on the key elements across party lines. I disagree with the government on a thousand things, and I will fight it on a thousand things, but I will put the security of my nation first. That was why I was elected.

This “burn our country to the ground” approach that he is using with Donald Trump is the way he went after doctors in the opioid crisis. He named doctors who then got death threats, doctors who are on the front lines. What has this guy ever been on the front line of, other than getting free food in the House of Commons' lobby? I have seen him in the front line there, but he attacked medical doctors and they got death threats.

Then he attacked independent journalism. Of course, he attacks CBC. He attacked CTV. He had workers fired for doing their jobs. He attacked Rachel Gilmore from Global, who was fired, and she received death threats. He thinks the independent media is a threat to the falsehoods of a party that lives on bumper sticker slogans. If someone runs an entire party based on dumbed-down slogans that all its members happily repeat, they cannot have an independent media, so they attacked CTV. He attacked CBC. He attacked Canadian Press. He attacked the Toronto Star. He is attacking the fundamental checks and balances in our system.

• (1655)

However, that is not all. Last week, the Leader of the Opposition went after municipal councillors.

It is really hard right now to encourage people to participate in democracy, and if we do not encourage good people to participate in democracy, democracy does not exist. I have never, ever seen a situation where some guy, whose only job, apparently, was at a Dairy Queen when he was young and then as a political attack dog for the rest of his life, goes out and states that Canada's municipal councillors are greedy. He said they were BS'ing the public, that they were swimming in money and that he would cut the taps off.

I know municipal councillors who get death threats for doing their job. We know that the mayor of Gatineau just stepped down. She did not want to do it anymore. I have talked to councillors who say it is not worth representing people. If those people do not step up, we do not have a democracy. However, the member for Stornoway decided that it was Canada's mayors and councillors who are now his new enemy because he gets bored with his old enemies.

We cannot run a democracy when one level of government decides that it is going to turn the dogs on another level. We can disagree, but someone would have to be some kind of special to be able to blame every municipal councillor and every mayor and every community in this country for causing the problem of housing when he has got no plan for housing. The Leader of the Opposition's plan for housing was to take out Patrick Brown. That was the plan.

Now, we are seeing from CSIS more and more evidence of the interference that took place. We just learned from Radio-Canada that Patrick Brown's head of the campaign, the member for Calgary Nose Hill, was approached by representatives of the Modi government to pull out support. We know that he got 170,000 memberships in the last 48 hours. I ran for party leader. I know that just is not done. That is something they generate in the backroom.

CSIS has been raising question after question regarding how that man got into Stornoway and how the Conservatives took down Erin O'Toole. I had lunch with Erin the other day. He said, "You keep saying nice things about me in the House." I said, "I know, Erin. Once you are gone, I will be nice to you." I said, "Erin, you would have been a good prime minister." Erin is a man of dignity. Erin and I disagree on a lot of things, but Erin served his country and will always serve his country, and he was taken down.

Therefore, we need answers with respect to the interference. The guy who lives in Stornoway says people cannot afford to eat and then tells his people to vote against food for children. He is the guy who was supposed to help us in the mental health crisis but told his people to vote against a suicide hotline. He is the man who ran an election on an HST break and then voted against it. Mister axe the tax is more like mister axe the facts.

At Stornoway, there is \$170,000 in repairs. It is \$190,000 a year and he gets a chef. That is what he lives with, in a 19-room mansion. I guess taking down Erin O'Toole was worth it.

Here is my thing: If he really were serious, why do we not forgo the chef? Now, I know "forgo" is a big word for Conservatives. It is kind of an older word, and it might not fit well on a bumper sticker. How about we just say, "Eff the chef"? This is my call to the member who lives in Stornoway. If he is serious at all about anything, eff the chef. I would put that on a bumper sticker. Do members not think people would support it? Eff the chef, and then maybe we could forgo the guy who is living off the chef. However, "eff the guy who lives in Stornoway" is too big. I am going to work on it. I will come back next week, and I will have a better one.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I will be here all week. If you need me for anything, just ask me, but I do want to bring forward an amendment at this time. I will keep talking and someone will get me the amendment. They never let me do amendments. Seriously, in all my time here, have I ever done anything procedural that you can remember, Mr. Speaker?

• (1700)

Anyway, let us just keep going back to the guy who lives in Stornoway. Now, here is another fact: I am not mad at all the Conservatives. I have great respect for some of them. The member for Wellington-Halton Hills, for example, said in *The Globe and Mail* on October 23 that there is a reason the leader of the Conservative Party may not get a security clearance, and it is because "security clearances involve a rigorous process that includes...checks on family members, credit and criminal checks and...questions about one's sexual partners or whether they ever used drugs". I did not say that. A Conservative said that. He said that Conservatives fear that that would be used for politically motivated purposes.

Business of Supply

I will end on this: What the heck is in that closet in Stornoway that he is so afraid of that he will not or cannot get a security clearance? We need to know what is in that closet because Canadians are paying the cost of that closet and of the chef who feeds the guy who has stuff hidden in that closet.

Here we are for round two. I move that the motion be amended (a) by adding, after the words "right to strike", the following: "(iv) whereas the NDP leader said the Conservative leader has 'deep connections to billionaires and CEOs', (v) whereas the NDP leader said, 'the Conservative leader voted against giving kids dental care despite having publicly paid dental care for nearly two decades'; (vi) whereas the NDP leader said, 'the Conservative leader would use his power to cut health care and other services that people rely on'" and (b) by replacing all the words after the words "the House proclaims" with the following: "its disappointment that for decades, the Liberals and Conservatives have stacked the deck for corporate CEOs against working Canadians."

I will be here all week. I am glad that, in the end, the Conservatives showed up. I will send them the YouTube clips.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. In the case that he or she is not present, consent may be given or denied by the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor's party.

Since the sponsor is not present in the chamber, I ask the deputy whip of the opposition party if he consents to this amendment being moved.

• (1705)

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, we do not approve.

The Deputy Speaker: Since there is no consent, pursuant to Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

With questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne has the floor.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. I will be honest, I am going to miss him when he is not in this place.

Business of Supply

The member spoke about the importance of a team Canada approach when we have a collective issue facing Canada and the importance of people who want to hold leadership positions to actually act like leaders. I understand that the Prime Minister had a meeting with all the leaders of the opposition parties this week to talk about the tariffs and our relationship with the United States.

However, I understand that, immediately following that, the Leader of the Opposition came out bashing Canada again. Can the member comment on that?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, that really goes to my point that we are at a really important moment, yet what do I see, and what do Canadians see?

We see four or five toxic kids sitting in a sandbox throwing stuff at each other, and everyone is running down the street saying the tsunami is coming. This is the nature of Parliament right now. It is a broken Parliament. It is being interrupted in its work.

At a certain point, we need to put aside certain divisions to make sure that we are ready to deal with the Trump administration, to make sure that we can keep our economy going, because people sent us here to do that. This is our job, regardless of whether we like each other or not. To undermine Canada at this time is very concerning.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are debating an opposition day motion put forward by the Conservatives calling for non-confidence in the government, using the leader of the NDP's very own words, and the New Democrats are saying they are not going to vote for it.

We have never had this record high food bank usage in our history. We have never seen child poverty at this rate. We have never seen homelessness at this rate. How can the member and his party justify continuing to sell out Canadians in their time of genuine suffering? How does he go home to his constituents and reconcile that he continues to keep the Prime Minister in power, despite the suffering that the government is causing?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, here is a member who just voted against taking HST off food items for children, after she ran on it. She ran on it, and then she voted against it.

That is a member who voted against school food programs and then comes in here and cries crocodile tears all over the floor about poor hungry children, who they would not support. That is a member who just stood up to vote to send women to backdoor abortionists because she has taken the abusive support of her leader.

She would not stand up for women and families ever. To the idea that we would ever stand with the Conservatives, not on your life.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind members to ask questions and make comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's speech. I really like the slogan, "Eff the chef". That is very good. I like it a lot. However, I would like to talk about a completely different topic with this experienced

member of the Canadian left who has been in Parliament for 20 years. He talked about the Conservatives. Right now, unfortunately, we are seeing a rise of the right, and not just in Canada. We have seen it in the United States, in Europe, particularly in France, as well as in other countries. Polls show that young people between the ages of 18 and 35 are starting to turn to the right. It is starting to percolate in Canada. This rise of the right-wing just about everywhere in the world is worrying, in my opinion.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about this as a representative of the Canadian left for 20 years. How can we fight this? It is all well and good to denounce the Conservatives in the House, but this is a global trend in our society. What are we doing to counter this scourge?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is a good one, and I thank him for it. The attack on democracy is clearly a plan concocted by conspiracy theorists and right-wingers in France, Germany and the United States, as well as in Stornoway. Democracy is important to protecting workers. Clearly, the Conservative leader must be called out for using digital tactics, as should Conservative caucus members who amplify disinformation, paranoia and conspiracies. Their actions undermine people's confidence in our system.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, before I became an MP, the word "solidarity" was just a word for me. After I became an NDP MP, I really learned the true value of what acting in solidarity means.

I want to ask the member, in the House, because we have not been doing enough, if he agrees that we, as a country, have not been doing enough for what is going on in Gaza. I want to ask about how that solidarity needs to show, especially when we have groups in Canada that have posters that say Jews are against the war on Gaza, and how important that solidarity is and how important it is for us to act to make sure that we are showing our solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, this is what I spoke about at the beginning. The role of Canada to be a voice for justice is important. It is not acceptable to watch a genocide and say that we do not want to say anything because the people committing the genocide are our allies. We have no allies who commit genocide. What we have is an obligation to speak up and defend people's rights. We have to defend all the rights.

The NDP spoke up against the horrific attacks of Hamas on October 7. Those were crimes against humanity. We expect the international court to act. We also expect Canada and the Prime Minister to stand up for the protection of people who are being deliberately starved.

Business of Supply

Canada has a bad history. It used deliberate starvation in an attempt to take the land from the indigenous people. People will never give up the land. That is the message we need to give to Netanyahu. We cannot starve the people off the land, and we cannot bomb the people off the land, but we can be held accountable for the crimes that we commit on the land.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, I asked the member opposite from the NDP a very honest question. The reality is that he is not listening to his constituents in Timmins, where the food bank usage is the highest in history. People cannot afford to do what they are doing. His rebuttal to me was not an answer.

The opposition day motion is that there is no confidence in the Prime Minister because, after nine years, we have chaos and suffering. My questions, again, to the member opposite in the NDP are these: Why is he voting against his leader's own words, the leader of the NDP's own words? Why is he continuing to have confidence in a Prime Minister who has caused so much suffering? It is a very simple answer. What would he tell his constituents in Timmins?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I will try again for the member, who comes in and cries crocodile tears about hungry children but votes against supporting food for children. It is appalling the way Conservatives use children and their suffering, yet vote against these measures every single time.

Conservatives say that they are using the NDP leader's language. Yes, he spoke about defending workers, something that party will never do. We will always stand on the side of workers, something that party will never do.

They want to call a Christmas election because the member for Stornoway is desperate to stay ahead of a CSIS investigation. I just pointed out to the member that she voted to send women to backroom abortionists. If she thinks that we are going to support her and her leader in forcing a Christmas election in order to take away the HST off children's snowsuits and food, she lives in a Conservative bubble. I am sure they are all going to go back and be really angry at me tonight, but not in a million years. No. I am sorry. If she needs an explanation a third time, I will write it out for her in big block letters.

• (1715)

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always great to be back in this place representing the amazing folks of Essex.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Here we are again. The NDP leader, the member for Burnaby South, said it himself: “I...ripped up the Supply and Confidence Agreement” with the Liberal government. Let us call it what it is: a stunt. It was designed to distract from the fact that the NDP leader and his party have been propping up the government that has been failing for years.

The NDP leader has been outspoken in opposing actions that weaken unions' power. He has stated unequivocally that if any vote in Parliament impacts workers' rights, the NDP will vote against it regardless of the consequences. However, despite his strong words, his actions have not always matched his words. While the NDP leader has condemned the Prime Minister for taking away the

Teamsters' and ILWU Local 514's right to strike, he has remained largely silent on other issues affecting workers.

The Prime Minister has launched a brutal assault on workers, hurting their paycheques through inflation, driving up prices with a carbon tax, doubling housing costs, hiking taxes, cancelling major projects that could create union jobs and issuing orders that undermine workers' chances of giving every Canadian a fair shot at a decent life and affording necessities. Despite these actions, the NDP leader has continued to support the Liberals.

Now the NDP leader faces a crucial choice: Will the NDP continue propping up a government that makes decisions that harm workers, or will it stand by its principles and vote to fix the government? The NDP leader said on November 12 that the Liberals are never going to be able to count on the NDP if the Liberals are going to take away the rights of workers. The time has come for the NDP to act on those words.

We are at a crossroads, and it has become clear every day that everything is broken. Seven in ten Canadians now say they feel the same way: that nothing is working anymore. Our economy is stuck and families are getting squeezed at every turn. According to Equifax and TransUnion, consumer credit debt has hit an all-time high, and Canadians are now paying more in taxes than they spend on housing, food and clothing combined. The cost of living has become so unbearable that 26% of Canadians are seriously considering leaving this country because it is simply too expensive to live here.

In the last year alone, 1.4 million children were living in poverty, and the number of Canadians turning to food banks has reached staggering levels with record-breaking numbers: over two million visits in a single month. One million people in Ontario alone used food banks last year. For the first time in Canadian history, 80% of Canadians believe home ownership is now reserved for the super-rich, with some families even forced to spend 100% of their income on rent.

Let us not ignore the reality on our streets. Violent crime is up 50%. Gun violence has more than doubled, and auto theft is rampant. However, instead of fixing these issues, the Liberals and the NDP continue to ignore the rising tide of hardship across the country.

In the middle of all this is the member for Burnaby South. The NDP leader has spent more time posing for cameras than standing up for Canadian families. He promised he would be an opposition voice and an advocate for the working class. Instead he handed over his principles to keep the Liberals in power.

Business of Supply

After his big media stunt, the member for Burnaby South still refuses to say whether he will vote to force a carbon tax election at the first chance. He voted to quadruple the carbon tax to \$0.61 per litre. It is a plan that will drive Canadians to food banks and grind the economy to a halt, killing hundreds of thousands of jobs. Remember that this is after he promised to be the voice against high taxes and big government. He promised to be the workers' champion, but instead he voted to punish workers and raise taxes on everything from gas to groceries.

Let us also not forget the real reason the member for Burnaby South is playing this game: his pension. It is not about workers or about Canadians; it is about the NDP leader's getting his \$2-million pension. He is delaying the election until next year when he qualifies for that fat payout. The—

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I know we are living rent-free in the member's little head, but the NDP leader does not have a \$2-million pension. If the Conservatives are going to continue the falsehoods, perhaps the member can explain how much the member who lives in—

The Deputy Speaker: That is falling into debate.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I am just going to let everybody catch their breath. Order. We are done.

The hon. member for Essex has the floor.

• (1720)

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, indeed, I do agree. The NDP leader does not have his pension yet. He has to wait until next year.

Under the NDP's coalition with the Liberals, the working class has been betrayed. While the Liberals continue to sell out hard-working Canadians, the member for Burnaby South has abandoned his responsibility to stand up for them, choosing instead to focus on securing his own political survival. He is playing games with taxes, pensions and Canadians.

Let us not forget that the government's policies hurt the very people Conservatives are fighting for: the people who have been neglected by this failure. Let me highlight a prime example. My private member's bill, Bill C-241, would directly address the struggles of hard-working Canadians, particularly those who are essential to our country, our tradespeople: the welders, electricians, carpenters and plumbers who keep everything running smoothly.

Nonetheless, for all their hard work, tradespeople are often left behind, with their contributions barely recognized. These men and women are the backbone of our economy, yet they are often left behind, overlooked and undervalued. These workers are often required to leave their family, travel across the country and sacrifice precious time with their loved ones just to ensure that their kids have access to basic necessities like food and medicine.

However, as we see time and time again, New Democrats have quickly aligned themselves with the Liberals, leaving us wondering whether the NDP genuinely stands for working people or whether it

is just another party caught up in the political game. By siding with the Liberals, it has allowed the status quo to continue, and working Canadians are the ones paying the price.

Therefore, who is truly fighting for hard-working Canadians? The answer is clear. It is not the Liberals and certainly not the NDP. It is the Conservatives who are committed to standing up for people who keep this country running, the workers who deserve more than just empty promises and political games. We can do better for tradespeople and hard-working families across the country.

The member for Burnaby South has completely forgotten the working class and the labour movement that once defined his party. He has abandoned hard-working Canadians in favour of a Liberal government that has disregarded their hardships in exchange for political survival. While the government raises taxes, the cost of living has increased dramatically. Housing is out of reach and food prices are still rising.

In spite of his pledge to defend workers, the member for Burnaby South has safeguarded his personal interests by obtaining a pension at the expense of people who are most in need of assistance. His backing of the Liberal government directly contributes to the escalating cost of living crisis and undercuts workers' rights.

In Windsor-Essex, the housing crisis is out of control. Habitat for Humanity Windsor-Essex has been forced to shift focus as families struggle to afford homes. While it has built or repaired 125 homes over 30 years, the need keeps growing. Families are spending 75% to 95% of their income on rent, far beyond what is affordable. The member for Burnaby South continues to prop up the government in its failure to address the crisis.

The NDP-Liberal coalition has only made things worse, with policies that drive up costs for Canadians. It is time to axe the carbon tax, build more affordable homes and bring the cost of living under control. The people of Windsor-Essex and all of Canada deserve better. It is time to stop supporting a government that caters to the wealthy, and to start putting working Canadians first. The member for Burnaby South has sold out his own supporters.

We need change: Conservatives who are ready to stand up for workers, cut taxes, fix the housing crisis and, finally, give every Canadian a fair shot at a decent life.

In closing, I would be remiss not to thank the hard-working men and women in the Windsor-Essex area, such as members of IBEW and of the carpenters' union, ironworkers, and members of LiUNA and Unifor, just to name a few. They build the homes, the infrastructure, the vehicles and the soon-to-be-completed Gordie Howe International Bridge. Their passion and dedication do not go unnoticed and are most appreciated.

Business of Supply

• (1725)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed my hon. colleague's speech. Living rent-free inside his head has been quite the experience. I would have thought he would have thanked us. We saw the Conservatives' behaviour the other night, and we are willing to take the GST off alcohol. I would have thought that would have helped them in their behaviour.

I want to get serious for a moment because we know now from CSIS investigations into the guy who lives in the 19-room mansion that there were multiple efforts by a foreign government to interfere. I want to ask about the member for Calgary Nose Hill, whom I like a lot but who seems to have disappeared ever since we found out that as co-chair for Patrick Brown's campaign, she was pressured by agents of a foreign government to withdraw her support in the race. I know that the Conservative Party is a party whose leader cannot get a security clearance.

Will the member tell us who in his caucus has worked for a foreign government in undermining Canadian democracy? Surely he knows. I know he is on the backbench, but members must talk.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, it really astonishes me that there are mothers at home who cannot buy diapers or feed their children. It blows my mind that seven out of 10 young adults do not believe that they will ever be able to afford a home. It blows my mind that the member is talking about a security clearance, when there is another discussion, about the green slush fund. If it is that important to—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

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

I just want to remind the member for Timmins—James Bay that he had the opportunity to ask a question. If he has something else to add, he can wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order. Can he quote the standing order?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, yes, it is section 10 of the Standing Orders. I just want to apologize. I think that what I said was uncalled for. When the member said that some things blew his mind, I said that it was just a little puff of smoke. I retract that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague said a lot about housing. He criticized the Liberal government, and rightly so, because it has done precious little to tackle the housing crisis. Its record is dismal, in my opinion.

Earlier, I talked about homelessness, which doubled in Quebec over the last decade. The number of people who have died on the streets in Quebec has tripled over the past few years. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation says that 5.8 million housing units must be built by 2032 to achieve market equilibrium. I have never heard the Conservatives talk about any solution other than waiving the GST on houses priced under \$1 million. I have never heard them talk about any other measure to build homes.

How are the Conservatives planning to address this major issue of our time?

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, we actually have spoken extensively about what we are going to do, and the first thing we are going to do is axe the tax. That is going to put more money in the pockets of young adults to be able to afford a home, after they are able to afford to feed themselves.

What really gets me is that if the second opposition party and the third opposition party really, really believe that this is the right thing to do, then why not call a carbon tax election and let Canadians make the decision?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned political games. I know we are in minority Parliament status. It is all I have ever known as a member of the House, which some might say is dysfunctional by nature, but there have been moments when we have been able to work together, collaborate and put the best interests of Canadians at the forefront.

How much have the Conservative games in the House cost Canadians while their Parliament has been frozen?

• (1730)

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I had to say “political games” because that is, quite frankly, what we saw this morning from the NDP, supported by the Liberals. I hate calling them political games outside the chamber, because it involves people's lives. Let us get the truth out on the floor and let us hand the matter over so we can get on with business. Instead, the Liberals are dragging their feet through the mud; they are holding up the important business of government and stopping people from getting ahead.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to hear from my colleague from Essex on all of his great insights, and it is great to see him back in this place.

We are here to debate a motion of non-confidence in the Prime Minister and the current government, because the workers of Canada are hurting. Workers and Canadians are struggling. In the words of the leader of the NDP, “The Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”.

The leader of the NDP also said, “The Liberal government will always cave to corporate greed, and always step in to make sure the unions have no power.” We agree, which is why we put forward this motion and why the NDP needs to stop propping up the Liberal government and vote non-confidence with us. That is what workers want. That is what Canadians want. They want a carbon tax election now.

Business of Supply

We saw in the Statistics Canada report on Friday just how much Canadian workers and Canadians are suffering after nine years of the Prime Minister backed up by the NDP. StatsCan reported that Canada's GDP per capita has declined for six consecutive quarters. In other words, our standard of living is falling, especially when compared to south of the border. There is now a \$33,000 per year difference in income per person between Canada and the U.S., according to the IMF. Add to this the punishing carbon tax in Canada, and those workers' paycheques are stretched even further.

Food bank use in Canada reached 2 million, and 18% of those are workers. That is shameful. The very inflationary tax policies of the Liberals, which have been supported all the way along by the NDP, have caused this cost of living crisis and are making Canadian workers and Canadians poorer. It is no wonder that in 2023 we saw the highest number of work stoppages and interruptions in Canada since 1983, which is 40 years, because when inflation is running rampant and the cost of living is out of control, workers rightly need more to get by, to support their families. They are fighting for better wages everywhere.

While statistics paint a damning picture of the economic carnage being inflicted on Canadians by the NDP-Liberal coalition, beyond the statistics are real people, real workers and their stories. I remember speaking to steelworkers on the floor of Stelco last winter. Of course, that is in Hamilton, and Hamiltonians have a reputation for grit, determination and hard work. It is the Hammer, after all, and nowhere is that more evident than on the floor of Stelco.

These workers work hard day in and day out to produce the steel that is so instrumental to our economy. It is hot, heavy work, but it should also be rewarding work. These are union workers, members of the United Steelworkers. A steelworker named Travis talked to me about how difficult it is as a young person to make ends meet. He has a good union job with good wages and benefits, but inflation, taxes and housing costs are taking an increasingly larger bite out of his paycheque. He also worries that his colleagues who have young families are in an even tougher spot.

Travis was not alone. Others that same day recounted the same story. The cost of living crisis has been a kick in the teeth, and they cannot afford to pay the increases they are seeing in their mortgage renewals, their rent, their groceries, filling up the truck or car to get to work, or heating their home.

Last month, I talked to union workers alongside the leader of the Conservative Party at the Boilermakers Local 128, as well as UA Local 67, which represents journeymen, pipefitters, plumbers and their apprentices. Their training hall is located in my constituency of Flamborough—Glanbrook. We also talked to LiUNA construction workers and others. These are the workers who build this country and are building our economy. Canada needs more of these skilled workers, but they need a government that has their back, which is why we introduced this motion today.

I think about my grandfather, who was a proud union member. My Opa Blok was a carpenter. He came to Canada from the Netherlands in 1949, at the end of the Second World War, in search of a better future for himself and his family. He braved a new land and a new language, and he came a year before bringing the rest of his family. My mother was five when they finally came. Opa worked

hard and saved up. As a carpenter, he joined the union, because it offered him good wages and modest benefits at that time for him and his family. He was always a staunch supporter of the unions, because unions built the middle class. Our family is an example of that.

● (1735)

Opa was also a card-carrying member of the NDP for almost 30 years. I wonder what Opa would think today about the NDP under the leadership of the current leader. The NDP has unwaveringly supported a Liberal government that has violated workers' rights to strike, that is increasing the cost of living for that middle class. I think it is safe to say the NDP under its current leader is no longer my grandfather's NDP.

My mom was also a union member, for her entire 45-year career as a registered nurse in Hamilton, working at various hospitals. My brothers and I were fortunate to grow up in a middle-class household. While we did not always get everything we wanted, my mom's union job as a nurse and my dad's work in the trades as a bricklayer allowed us the middle-class dream of Canada.

I contrast that to the conversations I had on the floor of Stelco that day and in the union halls in the Hamilton area in the time since. The middle-class dream of Canada is slipping away for workers, for people. What is ironic about the leader of the NDP is that he talks a big game, saying, "the Liberals are too weak", yet he is the one keeping the Prime Minister in power. He is the one supporting the very policies that are making life so unaffordable, especially the carbon tax, which the NDP has supported 24 times.

When workers, through their unions, demand more to pay their mortgages and their rents, to pay for their groceries and their gas, to sustain that modest middle-class living on their hard work, when they also fight for safety and the gains they have made in safety, as the Teamsters did this summer, the Liberals have shut down their strikes, shut down their job actions.

While the NDP leader has called this out, that same leader and his caucus voted confidence in the Liberal government twice earlier this fall. With the motion we have brought forward today, the NDP has a chance to do something about it. Let us vote down the government.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:38 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Privilege

[Translation]

The question is on the motion.

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

[English]

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Monday, December 9, at the expiry of time provided for oral questions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1740)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 4 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the member for York—Simcoe's speech, he mentioned how the Liberal government is no longer working for the best interests of Canadians. I know he has been working for some time on getting the Minister of Transport to prohibit the development of the so-called Baldwin East aerodrome in Georgina, which appears to be a cash crop operation for contaminated fill. This is an issue I know well, as illegal dumping in my community of Durham occurring at the Greenbank airport under the guise of aerodrome development.

Could my colleague give us an update on this issue?

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, sadly, this is the problem. With the current government, there is no update. We have been trying over three years, and four transport ministers, to put a stop to this illegal fill that is going on at an aerodrome. This company, with directors who have been charged and convicted for illegally dumping fill, has purchased land under the guise of an aerodrome, if members can believe it. However, the government now is not answering letters from my constituents and not answering emails.

Like I said, the current transport minister is the fourth. This is the Liberal government doing business badly for Canadians. It is absolutely shameful the government is not getting back to their member of Parliament and Transport Canada is not addressing this issue.

Unfortunately, to my colleague from Durham, there is no update that the government can give at this time, after three years.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not quite sure whether that question and answer had anything to do

with the question of privilege, but I will move on now to resuming debate with the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House to talk about SDTC and the green slush fund, because this gives us an opportunity to look at what is happening here in Canada. My friend from York—Simcoe talked about the way the government is working, or not working, I should say, or is working in a bad direction. My speech focuses on where the loss of trust is, how we have this loss of trust and why we have this loss of trust.

Over the last nine years, we see there have been so many things that have made Canadians, who voted for Liberals in 2015, say that they cannot trust the government anymore. The green slush fund is just another example of why Canadians have lost trust and hope.

What is the green slush fund and why was it created in the first place? When we look at Sustainable Development Technology Canada, we have to look at its mandate. Its mandate was to help Canadian companies develop and deploy sustainable technologies by delivering critical funding support at every stage of the journey. This sounds great. It is something we need, and for decades we did have it.

In the last six years, there was \$836 million spent on green startups. I am not against any of that, but the issue I have here is there were also 186 projects that had conflicts of interest. When I talk about loss of trust in the government, that is where I really want to focus. We, as a party and as opposition, have been asking for these documents for months.

Last December, in 2023, when the whistle-blowers came forward and talked about what was happening and how this money was being distributed, things started happening. We saw a freezing of the slush fund. The money is not available, which, in turn, is causing a lot of problems for people who are actually running legitimate businesses, who are not able to get the payments they expected and are not able to get the assistance from the government that would help them. However, because the government was allowing people to be eligible for truly ineligible reasons, those payments did not move forward.

We can talk about the conflicts of interest. We can talk about whether it was the CEO or board chair, but we can look at the conflicts of interest that were occurring in SDTC as well. This all goes back to looking at accountability and transparency, which is something we have seen very little of over the last nine years. For a Prime Minister who was going to have sunshine and said that everything was going to be fine and that they were going to be clear, accountable and transparent, which is what he was running on in 2015, that is exactly the opposite of what we see here in 2024.

Privilege

The loss of hope is one of the biggest challenges we are having here in Canada. When I had this opportunity to speak on this motion, I spoke to my friend from Oshawa. He was talking about what we can talk about, because he was looking at the censorship issues here in Canada. There are Bill C-63 and some of the other things the government has come out with, like with Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, which are just a whole bunch of bills that come together that continue to impact Canadians negatively.

My friend from Oshawa was talking about censorship. I thought I would talk about trust and hope and how this is just another example of how Canadians have lost trust in the government and have lost hope for the future. When we look at the data, it is very clear. We see the data between 2014 and 2024. People ask where the hope is and what can they see for their futures. As a mom of five, and I am very proud of being a mom of five, I am now watching my children, who are between the ages of 21 and 30, asking what the world is going to look like for them. How are they going to get ahead? I will add more to that.

I think it comes down to something very simple. If we look as of 11 a.m. today, we had \$1.356 trillion in debt here in Canada. This number makes me very queasy, knowing that just 10 years ago, under the Harper government in 2014, our debt was \$648 million. That is \$648 million compared to \$1.3 billion in nine years, which is just absolutely ludicrous. We know that is just wasteful spending and unaccountable spending as well.

Things like the current number of people working in Canada and the GDP are all data points we need to look at when we are talking about the economy and why we are talking about things not working. If we do not have a strong economy, everything starts falling apart. We have to look at the economy as a piece of this puzzle that has created so many drastic problems for people. On employment specifically, we have seen a decrease in employment. In Canada, as of October 2024, we currently have 33,977,000 people working, which is 60.6% of the population.

• (1745)

Just 10 years ago, we had 61.6% of the population working, which was over 28,930,000. This matters because at the end of the day, it is those people who are employed and paying taxes on their employment or pensions or whatever it may be, who are putting back into the system. It is really important that we have people out there working because it also adds to our GDP.

I had a great conversation about this with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. We were talking about what the GDP looks like and why it is important to understand the GDP-to-population ratio. When I talk about the number of people working being down to 60.6% from 61.6% just a decade ago, we then have to look at where our GDP is, and that is where these numbers become astounding. I compared the numbers for Canada, looking at 2014 to 2024, but also looked at GDP in the United States. I am not looking at total GDP, but looking at the increase because that is giving us the hope for prosperity. When people see an increase in our GDP that looks healthy, they know that there is hope for their businesses, for their future, for their employment and for their children's future as well.

In 2014, we saw a 2.87% GDP growth rate. In the United States, it was very similar at 2.52%. Today, when we are looking at the data, it is not a full year, but in 2024, our GDP growth rate right now is 1.34%, compared to the U.S. at 2.77%.

If we want to look at entire years, in 2023, we can look at Canada at 1.25% compared to the U.S. at 2.89% in 2023. When GDP growth rate is down, that is when people start losing great hope. What are they going to do when it comes to employment? How are their businesses going to survive? In the last few weeks, we have had many discussions with the people in my riding talking about how they are going to survive if we cannot have good public policy and legislation and the United States is talking about putting a 25% tariff on items coming from Canada. For people within my constituency, the moment that was announced, the phone started ringing. In my riding and in many areas of Canada, we are exporting 80% of our goods.

I spoke earlier to a gentleman who builds scoreboards, so we can watch some of those great NCAA scoreboards and know that they were built in London, Ontario. Eighty per cent of his markets are U.S. high schools and universities. If there is a 25% tariff, his business will close, so we have to make sure that the government is doing the right thing. That is what we have seen over the last week and a half.

Down in the United States, they talked about our leader, but, honestly, looking at the current government on its last leg, or actually on its last toe, it is really hard to know that it is doing the negotiating for the future of Canada when we do not feel confident in our own economy and our own strength. Therefore, when we are sending team Canada down to the United States, we need to make sure team Canada has some very strong representatives from the Conservative Party. When we become the government, we need to make sure that we have a very strong relationship so people like Jeff in my riding do not lose their entire business because of bad policies and relationships with the United States. It really comes down to the importance of making sure we have those trade relationships, making sure we have good policy, and making sure that our economy will continue to have drive.

Going from those GDP numbers, we have to look at other issues. Here in Canada, we are currently at a birth rate of 1%, which does not replace our Canadian population. We need 2.1% for replacement. For me, I step back and say that I have done my job; I have five kids and I am doing really well. I step back and think, why are other people not having children? For me, it is pretty darn simple. I can sit there and look at my own children. My son, who is 28 years old, is running his own business and I absolutely love what he is doing, but it is difficult starting. As a starter-business owner, he can do a great job, but then he also has to pay for his rent and his food and everything else. For him, it would probably be better right now to get a part-time job and have his actual career on the side so that he can pay for the groceries and pay for rent.

The way that this economy is right now, when people are paying almost \$2,000 a month for rent and utilities, it is darn hard to get ahead. I feel bad when I say to my kids that I paid \$220 a month in 1991 when I was in university to live in the worst place ever in a London residence when I was at Western University.

• (1750)

I have friends whose children are paying \$1,600 a month just to live in a four-bedroom house or apartment. Mine was \$220 a month. We have to look at the debt load being applied to our children.

We are seeing a rate of 1% increase. We know that the cost of student debt has increased. In 2014, when people were graduating, it was about \$12,800 for student debt. Now in 2024, it is way over \$30,000. We are not using the data on the rent increases that we have seen on many of our students who are using the food banks.

Why are we having these issues? It is because we have a government that does not spend wisely and continues to increase our debt for future generations to try to dig out of.

When I am looking at the cost to our students, 10 years ago student debt was a little over \$12,000. Now I look at students in 2024 with a \$30,000 debt load trying to rent an apartment starting at \$2,000. Can members imagine trying to pay off student debt, get food in the cupboards and actually pay the rent. If they want a car and insurance, well, holy cow, they would need to be lucky.

I look at the people who live in my riding, which is very rural. People need a car to drive from home to work. There is no public transportation, nor is there really a business plan for that at this time because of the population and how few people would be using that.

We have to look at our children today, who have these exorbitant costs, whether they are paying taxes, and we have this great debt of \$1.3 trillion, or whether they are paying for food, and the cost of inflation. It is very difficult for our children to move forward.

I am going to talk about my son who is hopefully going to be a plumber soon. He had taken a few years off school and then decided to go into plumbing. The opportunities for him in plumbing are endless. People say, "Hey, you're an apprentice? Great, we'd love to take you on." We are looking, all the time, for people to have these opportunities.

I think of my son and the fact is that he will probably have a job in about six months. Fantastic, but I bet it will take a long time for him to actually get out of my basement. After becoming a plumber, how would he pay to get into a house or to rent something, when he still has to buy his food and all of those things? He will be very fortunate because he is not going to have student debt.

That is very unlikely for the majority of the population in this country. He will still have the extraordinary costs of buying tools and supplies. Plumbing is not a cheap job to start off with, so starting his own business will be very very difficult.

Once again, the idea of being able to say, "I have got a job. I have graduated from school. I am going to go forward. I am going

Privilege

to get married. I am going to have children. I am going to have that white picket fence," those dreams that we talked about in the 1980s, they are so gone for this group of people that are part of Generation Z.

It is going to be difficult because when we look at productivity, it is one of our greatest challenges. We are going through a mental health crisis. I urge everybody to read this book that I have read called, *The Anxious Generation*. It is talking about Gen Z and what they are going through. I love to read it and ask myself, what am I doing, and how am I screwing up my kids?

I was listening to one colleague last night who talked about *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. He was talking about the government being very much like that, and having amnesia. Those were good years.

I think of the stress that my own children and all of their friends are looking at in 2024. When I graduated from university, my debt load was probably about \$6,000 or \$7,000, very minimal compared to what people are going out with now. I was also able to buy a house when I was 25 years old for \$122,000. I was also able to get a job and, this is the best part, that paid \$12 an hour, but that was okay because it actually paid the bills. That \$12 an hour, back in 1993, after graduating, paid the bills. It paid for my house.

Now we have lost hope. We have lost hope for this future. I look at my five kids and I love them to pieces. I do not know how many of them will be moving home when it comes to trying to find affordable living.

• (1755)

That is very difficult for me as a parent, thinking about what I did or did not do to set them up properly. It is not that I do not think I have set them up properly. They have been in great school systems. They have had amazing teachers over the years and amazing opportunities, but when it comes to them actually stepping outside the house, going and buying their own things, trying to create their own credit limit and trying to rent a place, mom and dad are very necessary. That is what we are seeing with this generation: Those in generation Z are really having to depend on their families, their parents. We have a generation of people, my generation, who are not only paying for their own bills but also helping their children out. The children cannot afford to pay for bills right now, with the cost of living and with their own student debts. This is something that we did not see 20 and 30 years ago. We now see that hope lost.

Those are the things that I think of when we are looking at the green slush fund and we are looking at where the government is and asking about what has gone wrong. We can say that it is poor direction, poor administration and poor ideas. There are ideas where we are throwing out money, but we should ask what we are actually sometimes getting in return. We have talked about very many social programs. Some have had a positive impact, and some have had a negative impact. I would really love to see what the cost rationale is for some of these things. For every dollar spent, are we actually leveraging a better Canada, or are we just throwing our money away? Those are the concerns I have.

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We look at the birth rate of 1%; we are trying to get a new workforce in this country and not being able to do that. We look at our extravagant student debt load. We look at the rate of people being employed in Canada, which is less than 60% right now; many of those are people paying bills so that other people can have benefits. We are looking at our GDP being at less than 1.25% right now. These things do not give us a lot of hope. They do not give the businesses that are trying to get into business more hope either.

That is why I wanted to talk at the last minute on the green slush fund and what it has done to start-ups. We have seen start-ups that have had to drop 30% of their labour force because what they were doing with the government stopped working. Because of the failure of the government on this technology program, which had been existing for over 20 years, we are now seeing technology companies having to decrease. It has actually taken away the competitive nature that was in place for so many years when it comes to technology in Canada. We have taken that away.

Those are some of the greatest concerns that I have moving forward. In the last 20 minutes, I have spoken about how we have seen nine years of the government creating greater debt and less hope for the next generation. We have seen a lot of stress. I do not see it getting better under the government.

We have talked about there needing to be an election. As everybody knows, I plan on retiring. If there is an election tomorrow, I am praying that we win with a Conservative majority. At the end of the day, we need to ensure that we have good programs and fiscal responsibility to get on track. These are things that I have great concerns about. I do not know whether that will be the case if we continue under the government for the next year that we are scheduled for. I can see that our GDP will only continue to decline, our debt will only increase and our hope will only decrease as well.

• (1800)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly have a ton of respect for my hon. colleague, and we will miss her in this place when she decides to retire. She mentioned the anxious generation. I too am very worried about this generation and, moving forward, its prospects; however, a big missing piece was its concerns about the environment. That is what I hear about a lot in my riding from constituents.

I know that the Conservatives want to end the carbon pricing mechanism, which is actually the most cost-effective way to bring down emissions. We would lose the rebates as well, but then what? I really would love to know what is in store for an environmental plan for this country. Should we end what we have been doing to lower emissions? What kind of hope will that offer for the next generation?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I will be honest. I have heard many people talk about the environment; it is important. It is important to me and to everybody in this chamber. However, it may look a little different in terms of the way we approach it. We had a great way of dealing with issues over 20 years. When we look at such things as the green slush fund, this is how we lose faith in what the government is doing. When the government asks us to support its carbon tax approach, we can talk about what it has done

with the green slush fund and any other program it has had. That is not fiscal responsibility.

We can talk about the fact that people get rebates, but rebates only come after people have given their money forward. It is like giving a gift and then getting it back. It is great to refer to eight out of 10 families, but if we continue to read the data from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the data indicates that this information is not actually accurate. I have farmers who are paying over \$11,000 a month. If members want to know why the price of food is going up, it is because there has been this increase on such things as grains and oilseeds at the very start of the food process.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to my hon. colleague. I noticed that she hardly read a single word, which is extraordinary, and I did not hear a single slogan. What we need in the democratic system are people who bring the life experiences that she brings to the House. I am very sorry that she is going to be leaving soon, and I share her concern about the younger generation.

I am leaving too, and one of the reasons is that my daughter, with her beautiful little tea shop, moved home and I am her low-level carpenter and schlep. Again, we support our young ones because they are facing economic uncertainty that we did not face.

However, I would ask the member, because of her expertise and we are losing her, about this. I have spoken many times about my concern about encouraging people to join democracy. This is not a good time to be in democracy; there is so much hate in that. However, has she thought, in her future life, and I do not know what she is going to do, of trying to be a mentor? With that kind of speech, she could be a mentor to her own caucus. That would be a good place to start, but I am thinking in general, because that was a really well-positioned speech.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I thank the member very much for that compliment. It was a little offside, but I thank him very much.

I am really proud of the work that we can do here as parliamentarians, and I know that, when I am back in my community, mentorship is something that I will be doing. I am part of a program, the Jean Collective, with Helen Cole and people like her who are doing great work in Sarnia, where we are getting over 350 young women together to talk about how to get involved in politics and involved in their communities. I also think of the work that has been done with Equal Voice, and there is a lot we can do. However, it is not just politicians but the general public.

Politics is a very different place to be, regardless of who someone is. If mentorship is part of it, then we need to teach our people how to be honest and how to get the job done, which is something that we have not seen in the last little bit.

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Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to pay my respects to my colleague on the great speech she gave, based on her experience over the last nine years that she has served her constituents here in the House of Commons and in her riding.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

The member has pointed out that the next generation, unfortunately, will face some very serious challenges. The next generation expects leaders to do their job conscientiously and honestly. In the case of the green fund under discussion today, the focus of our debate, three out of four projects failed to meet the basic rules of ethics. More than \$390 million of a \$500-million budget was mismanaged. This means that 78% was managed all wrong, and four out of five projects broke the rules of ethics.

How can we inspire confidence with a record like that?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, that is a great question, but the fact is that we have lost trust. It is not how we can get trust; we have lost trust.

What I always say to people is that we can hurt and impact people, and they may not be bruised anymore, but they are scarred. I think that this government has really scarred a lot of people. They may feel a little bit better, but they have lost that trust, like being in a bad relationship for many years. I appreciate that question, but it is time for this government to go.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have had the honour of being able to work, in some instances, with the member. I was able to participate in a committee that she chaired, and I will say that she showed us an example of how to do work across party lines and how important that is.

I am sorry if this is a little bit aside from the speech that the member was giving, but I would love for her to share, following my colleague's question as well, a little more on some of the work that she was doing around how important it is that we see more women entering federal politics. There was an entire report that talked about the barriers to women entering politics in general, which was done through the committee that she worked on.

Can she please share a couple of the things that should be done so that we can see a more representative Parliament?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I think of some of the work that I have done as a parliamentarian, whether it was going down to the Ontario legislature or speaking to people across the globe at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and doing some work there.

I believe that it does not just have to be women. Men are also excellent mentors. I think of my own mentor, Joe Preston, who was a member of Parliament here from 2004 to 2015. That man changed my life because he believed in me. I think we have all had that opportunity. There has always been somebody who has pushed us into this, so it is up to all of us to continue on with that mentorship.

It does not matter whether one is in politics or in business. It is giving a hand up to some of those people who just need a break. Sometimes it is in apprenticeship programs, and sometimes it is politics. Mentorship and leadership is what we need to do. That is what our generation should be doing right now.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know this is off topic, but I want to take the opportunity to thank the member for her jovial spirit I have always been witness to. We can spar in the House, but when we walk out into the hallway she has always been so friendly and easy to talk to. She is not running again, so I want to say I am going to certainly miss her spirit around here, believe it or not. I hope we will cross paths one day again.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I have so many comments on that, Madam Speaker. I thank the member for Kingston and the Islands so much. I recall being on PROC with him. It was a really good time. We got nothing done for 73 days during a filibuster that his government was doing.

This is a place where we can get a lot of work done, and working with different members in this Parliament has been excellent.

I am sure my husband will really be looking forward to this energy coming home, or maybe not, I should say. Good luck to my family.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to work with the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London. She is a remarkable human. I know she has devoted a lot of her time and effort to those who are less fortunate.

I am curious what she thinks \$400 million would have done for homelessness, for women in shelters, food bank users and every other vulnerable person in society who needs help right now. How much would \$400 million change the lives of people who need it most?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I was talking to a colleague not too long about the \$7 million we spent on that ice rink. When they said, "Well, that is only \$7 million," I responded that if we did that 100 times over it would be a heck of a lot of money wasted. That is exactly what we see with the \$400 million that was wasted on 186 ineligible projects. That money could have done so much, such as assist with training for our frontline workers who are dealing with sexual violence.

We all know about the bail system and that we need to do a lot with judges. Any time we are talking about what is happening in the criminal justice system, we could put some money there for proper training for our judges, so we do not have people who have murdered or sexually assaulted somebody back on the streets within 24 hours. We need to make sure that judges have the training.

Privilege

We need to make sure that money is used for food banks. There has been so much use of food banks. What could the government do? Cutting the carbon tax is one thing, but there are many others.

* * *

• (1810)

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill with an amendment to which the concurrence of the House is desired: C-26, an act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

Copies of the amendment are available on the table.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED INTIMIDATION DURING PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am rising to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for London—Fanshawe on November 29, specifically as it relates to the taking of the vote.

I am, obviously, not able to comment on what happened in the opposition lobby.

I believe it is extremely important that decorum be upheld in the House, particularly during votes. The member cited both *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* and Standing Order 16(1) in her intervention, which clearly point to the prohibition on making noise or causing a disturbance during votes. This is a rule that should be upheld. Not only do members of Parliament have the right to hear their votes being cast, they also have the right to be free of intimidation and harassment during the taking of these votes.

Unfortunately, the actions of Conservative MPs on the night of November 28 did not live up to these expectations. I hope the Speaker will take a close look at what occurred and respond accordingly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the additional feedback that the hon. deputy government House leader has provided. We will certainly take it under advisement as we deliberate on the question of privilege.

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, six months ago, the House of Commons ordered the production of all documents from the federal government related to the corruption and cronyism uncovered in the Sustainable Development Technology Canada program, a.k.a. the Liberals' green slush fund. At least \$400 million was improperly paid, and police are investigating. Conflicts of interest and even laws were ignored or violated by program officials. SDTC was a get-rich scheme for well-connected consultants.

The Liberals have refused to comply with the order from Parliament, which is empowered to oversee the government. Indeed, it is the primary reason we are all elected to this place. Because of this, the chamber is gridlocked. The Liberals must produce the green slush fund documents without redactions, so Canadians can get a full picture of how their tax dollars are mismanaged.

I detailed the deeply troubling mismanagement by senior officials of this program on October 22. I am back tonight because the Liberals just do not listen to common sense, nor are they ready to uphold the principles of Parliament.

I also serve as chairman of the House of Commons public accounts committee, which has been actively investigating the rot that has taken hold of this once-functioning agency. Our committee has discovered how deep it goes, and it is deeper than we previously imagined. That is why, almost every week, we see at committee that the Liberals and their coalition partner, the NDP, are working to end our investigation into the green slush fund. In recent weeks—

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

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, the member knows well that the NDP supported this motion multiple times. I was a member on public accounts when we supported the investigation—

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is a point of debate. The hon. member can maybe ask that during questions and comments. Again, I want to remind members to please quote the Standing Orders when they want to rise.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is also rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, our Standing Orders reference the fact that members cannot knowingly mislead the House, but the member is knowingly misleading the House.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, on another point of order, the Standing Orders also state that we cannot call another member a liar. We cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly, so—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did not hear that anybody was calling anyone, directly or indirectly, what the hon. member indicated. This has been raising some debate. I just want to remind members to please be careful. I want to ask the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach to please settle down. He does not have the floor anymore; I have not recognized him. I would just ask members to please be respectful if something is being said that is causing disorder in the House. Certainly, I ask members to please be judicious in what they are talking about and the words they are using.

The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Privilege

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, I look forward to the question from the now former member of the public accounts committee, where things have changed since his departure. The Liberal and NDP members at public accounts have introduced a closure motion to cut off debate. This is despite the fact that, in recent weeks, we learned even more about the enrichment of personal financial interests by Liberal-appointed officials overseeing SDTC as well as other benefactors.

For example, the radical Liberal environment minister joined the cabinet, and after that his shares in Cycle Capital skyrocketed. This was not a stroke of luck. It was a direct consequence of the abuse of his public office to funnel more taxpayer money into Cycle Capital through the Liberal green slush fund. Since the environment minister's appointment in 2019, another \$17 million has flown into the company. This double-dealing is totally unethical, but apparently allowed under the Liberals.

Our committee has asked the minister to appear for the last two months to answer questions from members, but he will not. What we have seen over and over again is the minister trying to dodge this accountability, to stonewall and to hide from the public accounts committee. I know the environment minister has appeared at other committees. However, when our clerk contacted his office and offered any date over the last two months, we were told it was not possible due to scheduling issues with his calendar.

The minister believes he is above Parliament. He believes the repeat abuse of tax dollars should not be questioned. That is the heart of the matter as to why we are here tonight and why this Parliament is dysfunctional under the Liberals. They too do not believe they have to be accountable to this place, which is why they are wrongly withholding documents that Parliament has ordered. They are, in fact, engaging in a huge cover-up to prevent Canadians from knowing how this program operated, how it was broken and who benefited from it.

When the House of Commons ordered the production of papers related to the scandal, the government used every trick in the book to keep the truth from being known. The Prime Minister's Office instructed departments to use the Privacy Act to censor documents, even though the law clearly states the Privacy Act cannot be used to withhold documents from Parliament. This is not transparency. This is the total opposite. This is obstruction and it is a direct affront to the principles of democracy.

This leads me to the rot that was fostered by Liberal appointees like Annette Verschuren, who was appointed by Navdeep Bains, the former minister of industry, over the objections of the previous CEO of the SDTC program. What followed was not a management of conflicts, but a systematic looting of taxpayer funds. A shocking 82% of the transactions sampled by the Auditor General were in a direct conflict of interest. A staggering \$400 million approved by the board benefited their own companies.

Liberal Minister Bains chose Ms. Verschuren, despite the fact that her company was already doing business with SDTC and was in a conflict of interest. However, Mr. Bains told the committee he does not remember any of this. I do not know about anyone in this room, but if I was tasked with making an appointment for a billion-dollar program that gave out tax money, I would take some notes. If

a committee had questions about it, I think I would be in a position to answer.

Of course, the value of Mr. Verschuren's investments dramatically increased thanks to SDTC funding. Practically overnight, the company's value exploded. It was not because of the technology it produced, a competitive process or even the patents it owned, but because of an injection of tax dollars. Even when these glaring conflicts were brought to light, what did the Liberals do? They did nothing.

Senior executives at SDTC like Ziyad Rahme refused to even address the issue of bonuses for those who oversaw these corrupt dealings. He dodged the question no less than seven times at committee, stating vaguely that any bonuses would comply with employment law. However, the truth is that, under the Liberals, overseeing a billion-dollar slush fund that enriches insiders does not just earn someone a salary; it earns them a bonus.

• (1820)

I want to thank the Auditor General, who has been relentless in her efforts to ensure that the truth was brought to light. However, it is now up to parliamentarians to ask tough questions and to receive answers from the government that continues to stonewall us.

The government's ongoing cover-up has paralyzed Parliament and has obstructed the truth from reaching Canadians. The former deputy minister responsible for SDTC, John Knubley, also appeared before the public accounts committee, and he gave a convenient story about not being aware of the many conflicts of interest. He said it was his deputy's responsibility. The top civil servant washed his hands of it.

Meanwhile, the assistant deputy minister he was referring to, Andrew Noseworthy, who attended every single board meeting where monies were dispersed, where Liberals were funnelling money to other insiders, to their own companies, was the department's supposed eyes and ears on the board. However, he claims he did not report obvious conflicts of interest because he was "not a lawyer." This is absolutely unacceptable.

The position of a senior government official is to protect the interests of taxpayers, not to turn a blind eye to corruption and obvious conflicts. We must ask ourselves how many more programs under the Liberal government are being mismanaged in this way.

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SDTC was a billion-dollar fund riddled with conflicts of interest, a fund that was meant to advance technology, not enrich Liberal insiders, yet here we are, finding out that no one, from ministers to political appointments to senior bureaucrats, is accountable. It is clear what we are dealing with, a dirty trio of fraud, corruption and lies. Hand-picked board members have fleeced Canadian taxpayers using a simple scheme: get on a board that approves government funding; own shares in a company; tell that company to apply for funding; approve that funding as a board member; and profit, big time.

The Liberal insiders turned SDTC into their personal piggy bank. This is not just a story of mismanagement. It is a story of corruption that reaches the very top of the Prime Minister's office. Indeed, the PMO's previous director of appointments, involved with the decision to select Ms. Verschuren, despite all her conflicts, is nowhere to be found, has disappeared and, today, cannot be found to be summoned to committee.

To my colleagues on the government bench, we all remember the Aga Khan scandal, when the Prime Minister took illegal vacations to a billionaire's island. We all remember the SNC-Lavalin scandal, when Liberals fired their own colleague for standing up to the Prime Minister's pressure. We all remember the WE Charity scandal, when millions of dollars were paid to a supposed charity that paid, of course, members of the Trudeau family for, we do not know what, but something.

Time and again, we see the same story: a Prime Minister who believes the rules do not apply to him or his family. Today I stand here, not just as a member of the Conservative opposition, but as a representative of Canadians who are tired of this behaviour. Canadians work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules, and they deserve a government that does the same. They deserve a leader who will put their interests above those of well-connected insiders. We cannot allow this culture of corruption to continue.

That is why my colleagues and I will continue to push for the release of all unredacted documents related to this program scandal. We will continue to demand accountability from the government in the House and at the public accounts committee. We will continue to fight for the principles of transparency and good governance, which are the foundation of our democracy. This green slush fund scandal is not just about money. It is about trusting that the government will act in the best interest of its people, not for the benefit of a select few.

The refusal to provide unredacted documents is a blatant disregard for the authority of Parliament, and it sends a dangerous message that the government thinks it is above the law. This is not just about dollars and cents. It is about the principles that underpin our democracy, principles that should never be compromised.

• (1825)

I want to take a moment to address the broader implication of the scandal of public trust in the government, because once trust is broken, it is very difficult, maybe even impossible, to repair. Canadians deserve to have confidence in their government, confidence that it will act in the best interest of Canada, uphold the highest standards of integrity and be accountable for its actions.

I know where I stand, and on this side of the House, we want our colleagues on the government bench to take a stand as well. We cannot sit idly by while our institutions are eroded and the trust of Canadians is betrayed. Canadians are watching us. They are watching to see whether we will stand up for them or whether the Liberals will once again turn a blind eye to corruption. They are watching to see whether we will take action to protect their hard-earned tax dollars.

The time for excuses is over. It is time for accountability and transparency in government. It is time for a change after nine long years of the tired and corrupt Prime Minister. I am confident that in the next election, Canadians will make their voices heard and choose a government that will serve them with integrity.

Canadians will remember that the green slush fund scandal is not just about the misuse of taxpayer dollars but also about the principle that no one, not even the Prime Minister, is above the law. The refusal of the government to provide the documents requested by Parliament is a clear violation of those principles. It is an attempt to subvert Parliament to shield from accountability the people responsible for the corruption. Parliament must not allow it to happen. When a majority of members of the chamber are in agreement that the documents must be released, it is a signal that the trust has been broken and that the government must act.

In the upcoming election, Canadians will have the opportunity to choose a different path. I stand today to say that Conservatives will bring on a government that Canadians can trust, a government that will be a responsible steward of their tax dollars and a government that will always act in the best interests of the people who elect them to serve them.

We will ensure that the people in positions of power are held accountable for their actions. This means real consequences for ethical violations and conflicts of interest, not just a slap on the wrist or, worse, the idea that these things are not even happening and do not matter.

We will ensure that tax dollars are spent wisely and responsibly. This means ending the culture of cronyism that has taken hold in the Liberal government and in too much of the bureaucracy. It means ensuring that public contracts and grants are awarded based on merit, not on whom one knows. It means bringing transparency to the process so Canadians can see exactly how their money is being spent.

Privilege

We owe it to the people of this great nation to live up to the standards they expect of their government, indeed the standards they live every day in their life and in their community. Unlike our opponents, Conservatives seek to govern for the betterment of Canada, not to flout accountability rules and make Canadians pay more to insiders and well-connected Liberals. We will work for Canadians. Conservatives will deliver a government that will improve this country and finally clean up the mess here in Ottawa.

● (1830)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member is the chair of the public accounts committee, which undertook the work. Through the course of our investigation at committee, we found out that Ms. Verschuren, the former chair of SDTC who took lots of money through conflict of interest, was part of the crony culture that existed before the Liberal Party was in government. It existed both in the Conservative Party and in the Liberal Party.

How much money does the member think was kicked back from SDTC to Ms. Verschuren and then to the Conservative Party? There are records that demonstrate she donated multiple times, for over a decade, to the Conservative Party.

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, I would assume it was not very much, because the NDP-Liberals cannot even say, but all donations are publicly recorded.

I will answer the earlier question the member asked on a point of order. Sadly, since his removal from the public accounts committee, the current member has flipped and is now working with the Liberals to shut down the committee's work. He is supporting a closure motion on the green slush fund and also on ArriveCAN and even on the Auditor General's recent reports. The NDP, it seems, is now back working with the Liberals and their coalition to shut down committee work again.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, obviously, I realize that my hon. colleague could not answer the question of how much money crony culture has kicked back between the Liberal and Conservative parties. We must consider that Ms. Verschuren, the chair of SDTC, was able to kick back lots and lots of money through conflicts of interest to herself and her company, then kick that money over to the Liberals and to the Conservative Party. She donated to the Conservative Party over a dozen times, even during the time she was chair.

I know the member may deflect, but I think it is an important question for Canadians: How much do you think Ms. Verschuren kicked back in donations to the Conservative Party?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the member.

The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, again, not very much; the information is publicly available. If it was such a huge amount, the member would say so, but he has not. That is because it is a small number compared to the amount of money the government has fleeced from taxpayers.

I appreciate the member's political deflection, and I am sorry his party no longer stands with others at public accounts to get to the bottom of this. Instead, it is trying to shut us down as we try to find the answers we think Canadians need to hear.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my friend this: In his capacity as chair of public accounts, how many times have the NDP and the Liberals collaborated to ensure that transparency and access to document requests to bring this issue to light have been shut down at committee?

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, I do not have enough time to go through all the times. I will say that we had a meeting yesterday on the Auditor General's latest reports about the \$3.5 billion that the government wrongly paid out to recipients of the CE-BA program and another \$8.5 billion in outstanding loans. The Liberals and NDP shut down that meeting and then moved a motion to try to shut down not only that study but also the studies of ArriveCAN and the green slush fund. This is about freezing oversight on an opposition committee when we are working every day to get to the bottom of these matters for Canadians.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, I have the record here. If the member would like, I can read them out and ask him. How much of a kickback does he think Conservatives got when Ms. Verschuren donated the maximum on March 24, 2022, to the Conservative Party? How much does he think she kicked back in 2022? It was another maximum donation the year before that. There are maximum donations stemming all the way back to 2005. Ms. Verschuren is not just a Liberal insider; I would conclude that she is a Liberal-Conservative insider.

Again, how much money does the member think Ms. Verschuren took from Canadian taxpayers and kicked over to the Conservative Party? I would like to know exactly how much. The member knows.

● (1835)

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, again, I appreciate the effort of my hon. colleague, who is conflating leadership donations to a failed candidate with the party. Again, he has the number, but it is small compared to the half a billion dollars that flew out the door with the Liberals. The NDP is now trying to cover this up to keep the government in power, so the NDP leader can secure his pension sometime next year.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are supposed to be talking about a cover-up of 186 cases of conflict of interest involving \$334 million. Canadian taxpayers are getting completely fleeced, and all the NDP can do is ask about something that happened years ago. What does it really matter—

Privilege

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There might be a chance for another question, but I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach to please be respectful of the rules of the House. If people keep interrupting, I will not recognize them.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, why does my colleague think the NDP is so disrespectful of taxpayers' money?

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, I think there has been a change of heart; certainly, we see this in the public accounts committee. We were formerly working with the NDP member, but he was swapped out for whatever reason. We now have a member who has not only belittled our work but actually belittled the work of his own colleagues as well, saying that he is not going to be held accountable for the decisions the previous member made. I do not understand that.

I just assume it is because the leadership of the NDP has had a change of heart. Whereas they were once with us, working to expose corruption, they have now flipped with the NDP leader and are working with the Liberals to keep them in power. Because of that, a cold, dark blanket has gone down on our investigation. We are fighting every day in committee to keep our studies alive, but the Liberals and the NDP are trying to shut down those reviews and legitimate questions that come not only from our committee but also from the Auditor General of Canada. It is a shame.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, this member knows I have a great deal of respect for him. He is the chair of the public accounts committee. We have done great work together to get to the exact bottom of SDTC. It is a shame that he will not answer directly how much the chair, Ms. Verschuren, kicked back to the Conservative Party.

He talks about pensions, and the Conservatives talk about pensions. At the time that they would both turn 65, Pierre Poilievre would qualify for a \$230,000 pension—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do not use the first and last name of a member in the House. Again, the hon. member knows full well he is not to do that. I know that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

The hon. member has about 30 seconds to wrap up.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I apologize and withdraw the use of a proper name.

The leader of the Conservative Party's pension is one of the largest public pensions in the country in history. He would stand to earn \$230,000 when he turns 65 because he was elected to this place for over 20 years, and the Conservatives often harp about our leader, who does not even qualify for a pension. The fact of the matter is that Conservatives are seeking to deflect from the very real reality that the Leader of the Opposition is a bootlicker for billionaires. He lives in a publicly funded mansion; he has a private chef paid for by taxpayers; he is driven here in his car, which is a taxpayer-funded car. Can the member explain why?

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, this is so rich coming from the party of the Maserati Marxist. Has the member seen his leader and what he trucks around in, his fancy watches and his high-flying lifestyle? Talk about champagne socialists, and he is just hanging on so he can get that pension. As he does that, he is putting the hopes and dreams of Canadians on the back burner. That is how much the NDP cares about working families today: not a squat.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really like cars, but perhaps not enough to drive around in a Maserati. Let us just say that I will leave that to the Maserati Marxist.

It is still very important to remember that we are talking about a green fund that seeks to reduce pollution. This fund was not managed properly over 180 times. Four out of five projects were not managed properly. That is close to \$400 million in taxpayer money that was not properly allocated.

One could even say that this is just the tip of the iceberg. There is another \$8-billion fund called the net-zero accelerator. Yesterday, in committee, we were able to ask questions about that. Do members know that over half the projects do not even have a net-zero emissions target? How can we trust this government?

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, this problem has to do with the federal program that we examined but also other programs throughout the federal government. In my opinion, this problem exists across the federal government. That is why we need a change in government as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, it pleases me a great deal to rise to speak on SDTC, to try to clarify some misleading facts present in both the Liberals' and Conservatives' speeches throughout this affair.

It is of obvious interest to the Conservatives to try to score one on the Liberals, while ignoring the convenient fact that Ms. Verschuren is kicking back money that she stole from taxpayers to the Conservative Party. They do not want to talk about that. They do not want to talk about the fact that their party is so corrupt, one of the most corrupt parties ever to exist in this country. It is the same party that invented residential schools, the same party that said we were going to have a sixties scoop and the same party that said first nations people do not deserve clean water.

My colleagues will have to forgive me if I do not believe them when they say they are ready to stand up for Canadians. They are not ready to stand up for Canadians. They are barely ready to stand up for the truth, because the truth is that Ms. Verschuren has kicked back money she got through SDTC as donations of the maximum amount to the Conservative Party for over a decade. They like to deflect by saying it is not that much money. A little bit of corruption is great, right? It is okay. We can have a little bit of corruption. No, we cannot tolerate any of it.

These two dinosaur legacy parties have continuously, over and over, time and time again, abused taxpayers. They are the same side of the same coin—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. The hon. deputy government House leader is rising on a point of order. I hope he is going to be able to quote the standing order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not know the number, but—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but that is debate. The hon. member will have 10 minutes of questions and comments, and I am sure that members have enough time to jot those down.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I apologize to my hon. colleague, and I withdraw the comment that they are dinosaurs. They are definitely not dinosaurs. They are more like a broken-down car, as a matter of fact, but I digress.

I will get back to the point of how much Ms. Verschuren donated to the Conservative Party, the maximum amount, when she was also serving as chair of SDTC. She donated the maximum amount but not to a leadership campaign. For some reason the Conservatives think that is less relevant, but she donated the maximum amount in a non-leadership campaign in March 2024, directly to the Conservative Party; on February 6, directly to the Conservative Party; on February 6, 2017, directly to the Conservative Party; on March 19, 2009, directly to the Conservative Party; and on May 31, 2023, directly to the Conservative Party.

There were dozens and dozens of donations over the last decades as she served as a Liberal-Conservative crony, and the Conservatives do not want to face this fact. However, I want them to, because if they did, maybe we could try to rebuild the reputation of the Conservative Party, which consistently wants to omit real, relative facts to this real, serious issue. We have this SDTC fund created in 2001. Several times over again, they seek to defend their crony culture, but then they blame the other guys every time it is one of their members. They are the same party of the same coin. At the end of the day, the Liberals and Conservatives stand for the very same policies. They stand for the very same people, and they get donations from the very same individuals.

That is something we have failed to speak about in this place, but I will turn back to the matter at hand, which is relative to Ms. Verschuren and her conduct. It is true that Ms. Verschuren, during her time donating to the Conservative Party, multiple times throughout her career, did in fact, at one point, stand for, at least in some instances, green technology.

Privilege

Another unfortunate reality of the SDTC fund is the fact that we support the green initiative policy. It is important that we continue to do that. Me and my colleagues, New Democrats in particular, believe that Canadians can build the best and most innovative technologies in the world. We can do that right here in our country, and that innovation could also be used to support good union jobs while also supporting the very important innovation that is needed to combat the climate crisis. We could do both. We could have a fantastic economy, and we can support workers.

I want to mention support for workers. We had a whole debate around workers, and in this case, we are having a debate about workers again. However, the Conservatives have never stood on a picket line in their entire lives. It is a fact that they have never done that. Every time a union goes to bat to exercise its members' constitutional rights, to increase their wages, to increase safety in the workplace, to make certain that they have work-life balance, the Conservatives always opt for back-to-work legislation.

I find it rich that the so-called party of workers, which is the cosplay Conservatives, consistently say that they are for workers when every time they have a chance to, they are nowhere to be found. I have stood on every single picket line and I have never seen one Conservative there. Madam Speaker, I know that is also the case for you, as well as for me and my colleagues. I dare the Conservatives to stand on a picket line for once in their lives. Show us if they can even do that, which is an important piece to this work. However, now they are going to be upset—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have another point of order from the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, he is lying.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pardon me?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, he is lying.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will ask the hon. member to withdraw his comment. He cannot mention that individuals are lying. He knows that is not appropriate. I would ask him to apologize and withdraw.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I apologize and withdraw. He was—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would leave it there, because I think the hon. member will get himself into a lot of trouble if he continues. Again, the hon. member may not be in agreement with what is being said, and he can deal with that during questions and comments—

An hon. member: I have a point of order. For the record, I have stood on a picket line.

Privilege

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, that is not a point of order. I do not think the hon. member's mic was on, but that is a point of debate. There will be 10 minutes of questions and comments, so please save it for then.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith has a point of order.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, my colleague is not wanting me to stand up, but I would like to point out that the member said a word that is unparliamentary. I would like to ask him to please apologize for the comment he just made toward our colleague.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member.

It would be so much easier if members were respectful to each other. That is what we expect in our own homes, in our workplaces and in our communities. As MPs, we do have a very high standard to uphold here, and we need to show that we are leaders.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach has the floor.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I have obviously upset the Conservatives because they consistently mislead. The fact that he called me an “asshole” is inappropriate and is unbecoming of the Conservative Party and that member. I am happy that he apologized and withdrew it, but—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepeewa is rising a point of order.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, that is very unparliamentary language. I ask the member to please withdraw it.

An hon. member: I was quoting him.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, my colleague had withdrawn the comment. I do not think it is correct for a member to keep raising it once the member has done the honourable thing.

I would ask the member to both withdraw what he said and apologize, as this member did.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The government deputy House leader is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is entirely appropriate to comment on anything that happens in the House, including when somebody might choose to withdraw a comment. For that member to suggest that suddenly, because somebody withdrew something, we cannot discuss it anymore, is in my opinion, and I believe you would find the same thing, just not correct.

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On the same point of order, the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, then it would be fine for me to say that the Prime Minister once called someone in the House a piece of shit.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is now getting out of line. I would ask all members to please be respectful. It is raising a lot of discourse in the House.

I would again ask members to please be respectful with the words they are using in the House. This has raised disorder, and I would ask members to not use those words, whether against each other or in reference to what has been said.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepeewa did the right thing and withdrew his statement, so I would ask members to please be respectful.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach has the floor.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I always appreciate your interventions and the clarity they provide in this place to ensure all of our colleagues act with the best conduct that is fitting of their constituents. It is unfortunate that that member from the Conservative Party would be so weak and so beholden to his emotions that he would go out of control like that in such a sporadic and extreme way, to try to diminish this place so greatly—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, now they are heckling me. That they continue to try to diminish the reputation of this place is truly unbecoming of the Conservative Party. It is so unfortunate—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach has two minutes to continue his debate, and he continues to have the floor.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I will say again that I always appreciate your interventions for the clarity they provide in this place. I just wanted to bring greater clarity to the Speaker's statement regarding the importance of the decency we should all have.

It is so unfortunate that, in the last few weeks, we have seen such dissent in the demeanour of Conservative Party members. It is likely because of two things. One, it is likely because their leader continues to whip them so badly that they cannot say what they truly mean, or two, it is because they are getting so worn down by the fact that their tired old slogans can only go so far, and the bumper on their car is only so big.

It is important that we do the hard work of ensuring that we get to the bottom of SDTC. One of the most important ways to get to the bottom of SDTC would be to know exactly the interests of those who abused taxpayer dollars. Ms. Verschuren abused taxpayer dollars, kicked money back to the Liberals and the Conservative Party, and now both do not want to answer questions about it. The Conservatives want to do something even worse, which is to attempt to go around some of that and accuse—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will be able to finish his speech the next time this matter is before the House, which will probably be sometime tomorrow. I will be here tomorrow, and I hope members will be much kinder to each other and to me.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians were shocked and outraged to learn that the Prime Minister's climate change ambassador charged taxpayers over a quarter of a million dollars in less than two years to travel around the globe promoting the failed carbon tax. She is probably in the air right now.

My question is simple.: Does the member personally believe that Canadians are getting good value for money from the Prime Minister's climate change ambassador, yes or no?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am responding to the question the member asked in the House not long ago. I would just remind him that in recent years, climate change has had unprecedented effects on Canadians. Impacts from climate change are wide-ranging, affecting our homes, the cost of living, infrastructure, health and safety, and economic activity in communities across Canada.

Released yesterday, “Canada's Food Price Report 2025” states that extreme weather and climate change pose significant challenges to the cost of food, something I know the hon. member is very interested in as someone from an agricultural community. The science is clear: We must continue taking ambitious actions to combat climate change before it is too late. This includes using all of the tools in our tool box, including putting a price on pollution.

Despite what the Conservatives may think, the Bank of Canada has confirmed that carbon pricing contributes less than 1% to inflation. In fact the impact of carbon pricing on inflation is just 0.15%. Our government's plan to combat climate change is working. For the first time in Canadian history, we are on track to meet a climate goal, in 2026.

We are focused on building a stronger economy, combatting climate change and making life more affordable; that is exactly what putting a price on pollution does. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed multiple times that the vast majority of Canadians

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are better off with the Canada carbon rebate. A family of four in the riding of Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, a very beautiful part of my home province, the member's home province of Manitoba, with the Canada carbon rebate, will receive \$1,200 a year. That is not all; in rural communities, residents will receive an additional 20% top-up.

We remain focused on the bigger picture: protecting Canadians from the devastating impacts of climate change and ensuring a prosperous future for generations to come.

I know that the hon. member is a strong environmental advocate. I would like to hear him and his party, for once, talk about climate change, the opportunities it has for our economy and the impacts it is having on agriculture and on people's lives from coast to coast to coast.

• (1855)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, we all realize climate change is real. In climate change, we have to reduce emissions. Meanwhile, the climate ambassador is flying all over the world, racking up air miles.

The member did not answer my question. Does he believe that Canadians are getting good value for money from the Prime Minister's climate change ambassador, yes or no?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, my answer is an unqualified yes, and we are getting good value from the measures that we are introducing to combat climate change.

As I mentioned earlier, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that carbon pricing does not contribute to inflation. We know that the impacts of climate change are something in the order of \$25 billion a year. They are impacting our farmers. They are impacting people in cities and in rural Canada alike. I was very happy to hear the hon. member say that climate change is real. I think he is one of the few members from his party across the aisle whom I have heard say that.

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I take some exception to how my colleague across the way just responded to my other colleague on this side of the house. We all believe there is climate change going on here, and no matter what the narrative of his party is, we actually understand what to do about it. His party has been failing at it for nine years now, quite frankly, because they are spending money and getting absolutely nothing done.

I am here tonight to ask more questions about the Sustainable Development Technologies Canada scandal that I asked a question about some weeks ago in the House.

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Let us revisit the timeline. This started in early 2023, when a whistle-blower at SDTC came forth and said there were significant malfunctions happening there, conflicts of interest and money going out where it should not go out. Then in December 2023, that whistle-blower appeared before a parliamentary committee and disclosed exactly what was going on. It was evidenced for everybody.

Following that, on June 4, 2024, SDTC was disbanded as an organization and rolled into the NRC, as far as what it was doing, dispensing funds for green innovation in Canada. Not to precede anything, but suddenly, on June 6, the Auditor General came out and ruled in a report that, effectively, there were a whole bunch of conflicts of interest, that \$76 million in funding was tied to conflicts of interest and another \$60 million went to projects that were not even eligible under the requirements of the program. It was just a complete shemuzzle of a program. That is what we are dealing with here in Parliament right now.

Subsequently, on July 24, the Ethics Commissioner ruled that the chair of SDTC, Annette Verschuren, was in violation of ethics guidelines. She had approved grants to her own firms through that SDTC funding mechanism. This is interesting because, of course, as we go all the way through this piece, it is about granting funds to an organization.

This came to the House of Commons. We are looking for these documents to see exactly where these funds have gone, the entities that have benefited from this and, of course, the connected individuals, all of whom seem to have Liberal connections. This is why we want the documents in front of the House of Commons.

The Speaker fully ruled on this, that the government defied the authority of Parliament by refusing to hand over documents relating to SDTC. This House of Parliament, the House that is supreme in our democracy, voted with a majority to get those documents in front of Parliament, to have them handed over. We are supposed to turn them over to the law clerk, who would then distribute them to the RCMP for its investigation of this matter. The government is to hand over all files, communications and financial records to Parliament's law clerk.

Beyond rare exceptions, as noted, for the sake of national security, the House of Commons has the absolute power to produce any documents pertaining to the House's business. All kinds of protestations have come from colleagues on the Liberal side that, in fact, this is something they cannot do at this point in time. The Speaker of the House rejected every argument. Still, the Liberals are not providing the documents.

To finalize, my question is this: What is in those documents that is going to lead to Canadians seeing how much money the government has wasted in its green attempts to accomplish nothing?

• (1900)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, whom I respect greatly. I am happy to respond to his comments regarding Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC.

The government remains committed to providing the documents sought in the House of Commons motion from June 10. In fact, the

government has already submitted thousands of pages of records to the law clerk for onward distribution to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or the RCMP. I suspect the member opposite knows this, but the Conservatives would rather filibuster their own motion and hold up the important business of the House than move forward with the important work of helping Canadians. Quite simply, to say that the government is intentionally withholding documentation is a serious accusation, and it is simply false.

The government has been very forthcoming since the allegations against SDTC first came to light in early 2023. In fact, as soon as the allegations were made, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry took immediate action to investigate and undertake proper due diligence to understand the facts and get to the bottom of the issue at hand. As part of that process, the government worked diligently to respond to the findings of multiple independent reviews of SDTC, including third party audits, committee studies and a report from the Office of the Auditor General.

I would like to remind the member opposite that SDTC was created by Parliament as an arm's-length organization. This model allowed for oversight but emphasized that the work of identifying clean tech projects would lie with those within the independent organization with the appropriate expertise. To claim that the government was directly involved in SDTC is inaccurate; not only that, but it runs contrary to the arm's-length mandate that existed with SDTC.

That being said, at the conclusion of the various reviews and audits, it became apparent that the arm's-length nature of SDTC was no longer working and necessitated change. That is why we announced a new delivery approach for SDTC programming to enhance due diligence.

It is the prerogative of the RCMP to undertake an investigation, and no one in this room is privy to its nature. The government is prepared to offer its full co-operation with the RCMP if and when required. At the same time, we listened to the RCMP when it confirmed that handing over documents to the House to be transferred to the RCMP could jeopardize any ongoing investigations. That, I think, gives us all pause for thought.

Instead of continuing to hold this place hostage with a Conservative filibuster, we should let the RCMP investigation continue, free of political interference and involvement, while also referring this matter to committee as directed by the Speaker.

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• (1905)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I will dispel a few myths that the member threw at us. He said thousands of pages of records have been provided. These were thousands of pages of blacked-out documents. This is not transparency at all. This is the way the government actually operates, and it has to change.

As far as the RCMP goes, we all know that the RCMP can ignore evidence. It has not given any indication that it would find the information provided by Parliament would be out of line. Maybe the member stood for Parliament not understanding his role here, but Parliament is supreme. We voted to have these documents produced. We want the documents. However, full co-operation is something the government does not have.

We want to get to the bottom of this because we strongly believe a number of funds have gone to Liberal insiders. We would like to see where these documents lead. We want to make sure the police know that. We want to make sure they have full access to all the documents.

When will the Liberals provide all the documentation?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I want to be clear: The government has zero tolerance for the misappropriation of public funds. The member opposite's accusation that the government has funnelled taxpayer money and is obstructing justice is completely false.

The Auditor General was clear in her findings and highlighted several areas where SDTC's governance and rules were not followed. This and the other reviews conducted by the department signalled that there were weaknesses in SDTC governance and delivery, and the government took clear and decisive action.

The government fully supports Canada's clean technology industry and appreciates the important role these companies are playing in shaping Canada's economic future. The steps we have taken will ensure that these companies can continue to succeed while simultaneously ensuring the proper stewardship of public funds.

TAXATION

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country. I rise today to address an issue that worries most of the residents in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country, and this is the NDP-Liberal government's continued commitment to higher taxation. On April 1, the carbon tax and the excise tax on alcoholic beverages are going to go up again, and the capital gains tax has gone up, impeding investments and retirements.

First is the Prime Minister's favourite tax on everything: the carbon tax. Despite widespread opposition against the carbon tax from the majority of Canadians, 62% according to a recent Leger poll, and a majority of premiers across all political parties, the Liberal environment minister confirmed this past week that his government will still increase its carbon tax by 19% on April 1. The NDP-Liberal plan to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre by the end of this decade is just wrong for farmers, businesses, families and our economy.

The Fraser Institute reported that the carbon tax will result in 57,000 fewer jobs and a 6.2% reduction in Canada's GDP. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has already confirmed that Canadian families suffer a net cost from the carbon tax, paying far more in taxes than they receive back in rebates. That is fewer dollars in Canadians' pockets while doing nothing for our environment. On top of this, GST is charged on the carbon tax. This is a tax on a tax, which is absolutely wrong.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending meetings of the trade committee to ask witnesses about the damaging impacts of the Liberal capital gains tax hike. The Council of Canadian Innovators commissioned a survey of entrepreneurs, and the results showed that 90% of respondents believe the Liberals' capital gains tax hike would negatively affect the innovation economy. We heard from many entrepreneurs and investors that Canada will be less competitive for talent, investment and capital in the global market because of this capital gains tax hike.

Arlene Dickinson, the legendary Canadian venture capitalist best known for supporting small business owners on *Dragons' Den*, told me she did not believe the Liberal budget when it said, "Increasing the capital gains inclusion rate is not expected to hurt Canada's business competitiveness." Instead of supporting our entrepreneurs, the NDP-Liberal government views them only as a cash cow.

Last, coming from a region with many wineries, cideries, distilleries and breweries, I must raise the Liberals' commitment to raising the alcohol escalator excise tax by 2% again next year. Speaking with residents of mine who work in this sector, I know the pressures on their bottom line. These costs will only be passed on to our local retailers, restaurant owners and other licensees, putting unnecessary economic pressure on an industry in the heart of the Okanagan.

Tax increases ultimately always get passed on to the consumer. Canadians cannot afford the squeeze anymore. The NDP-Liberal government's cost of living crisis will not end until it brings permanent, long-lasting tax relief for everyone.

• (1910)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate and discuss the measures the government is taking to make life more affordable in Canada, especially as the holiday season approaches.

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Inflation is way down and has been back within the Bank of Canada's target rate for 10 months in a row. Wage growth has now outpaced inflation for 21 consecutive months. Earlier this summer, the Bank of Canada lowered interest rates for the first time, making Canada the first G7 country to do so. It has since lowered interest rates three more times.

Although inflation and interest rates are falling, we know that Canadians are not yet feeling the effects on their household budgets. This is particularly true during the festive season. That is why, starting December 14, the government wants to give a tax break to Canadians, which the Conservatives oppose. The temporary two-month GST/HST exemption for select expenses means Canadians would be able to buy items like prepared food, snacks, children's clothing and toys, all tax free.

This means that a family spending \$2,000 on qualifying goods during the relief period between December 14, 2024, and February 15, 2025, would realize GST savings of \$100. This tax break would last until February 15. This would deliver meaningful savings for Canadians by making essentially all food GST/HST free and providing real relief at the cash register.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, I am not surprised that the member opposite is raising the recent temporary, two-month, tax trick, but the key word is that it is temporary. Conservatives will favour permanent tax relief, such as axing the carbon tax. Looking at the capital gains tax or at the escalator on excise tax as well would provide relief.

The short-term Liberal tax trick on a last-minute Christmas tree will not mean much when the carbon tax on every Canadian's gas,

groceries and home heating will rise 19% on April 1, 2025. Christmas tree farmers in my region are small and would not even charge GST anyway because their business is small.

Conservatives will have a tax reform. We will axe the federal tax on new homes sold under \$1 million to build more homes and put more money into first-time homebuyers' pockets. Conservatives will actually lower taxes so people have more money in their pockets.

● (1915)

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, thanks to the measures we recently announced, Canadians will be able to concentrate more on celebrating the festive season with family and friends and to start the new year with a little more money in their pockets. Canadians can continue to count on the government to make life more affordable in this country on an ongoing basis.

As Canadians, we have so much to be thankful for. Canadians work hard and they deserve to celebrate their achievements. That is what the new holiday-season support is all about.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:16 p.m.)

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