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Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1405)

[*English*]

BARRY JANYK

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a remarkable individual, Barry Janyk.

Barry served as mayor of the town of Gibsons for four terms, from 1999 to 2011. Known for his smile, humour and infectious spirit, he was beloved by those who had the pleasure of knowing him. He was a pioneer in advancing smart growth for Gibsons. He spearheaded the development of parks throughout the town, supported the creation of Tetrahedron Provincial Park and got Gibsons' drinking water recognized as the best in the world.

As a skilled pilot, environmental advocate who got stuff done and devoted father, Barry's impact was far-reaching. From being an extra in *The Beachcombers* to working to engage and lead the community, his story is part of the fabric of Gibsons. Barry's legacy lives on in every park, in every initiative and in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

In this difficult time, our thoughts are with his loving wife, Jane; his three kids, Kohlby, Roen and Garnet; his many friends; and the entire community of Gibsons.

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GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, Canadians are paying the price for the NDP-Liberals'

economic vandalism. The carbon tax and job-killing oil and gas cap hurt rural people and non-profits the most.

The Dewberry Agricultural Society paid over \$5,000 in carbon taxes in just six months and cannot afford to heat its hockey rink much longer. The NDP-Liberals said small business owners are tax cheats. The reckless capital gains tax hike and shameless, temporary two-month tax trick prove it.

Sheryl, an accountant from Vegreville, says the tax hike will slash nearly 10% of savings when owners sell their life's work and the labours of love they rely on for their retirement. Ron from Glendon says the cost to switch his store's items to be GST-exempt and back could cripple his business at the most important time of year.

Canada's promise is that anyone from anywhere can work hard for a powerful paycheque and pension, living in safe and healthy communities, but the NDP-Liberals broke it. Common-sense Conservatives will restore it, axe the tax, spike the hike and turn hurt into hope for all.

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ELEVATION TO CARDINAL

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Christmas season, our Catholic community here in Canada and around the world was blessed to begin this period of prayer and preparation for the arrival of Jesus Christ at the heart of St. Peter's Basilica, when Pope Francis inducted 21 new members into the College of Cardinals. Among them was one of our very own, His Eminence Cardinal Frank Leo of the Archdiocese of Toronto. It was a proud moment for Canadian Catholics and for our proud Italian Canadian community.

Born in Montreal to immigrant Italian parents, Cardinal Leo is one of the youngest cardinals serving the Holy Mother Church and courageously shepherding Christ's flock. As he witnesses the Church in today's world, Cardinal Leo finds strength in prayer; he anticipates that "the Lord wants to pour out generously into our hearts many graces".

Statements by Members

May this sacred moment inspire us to live with renewed purpose and generosity throughout the Christmas season and the upcoming Jubilee 2025, declared by Pope Francis. I send my congratulations to Cardinal Leo and our entire Catholic community. *Buon Natale* and merry Christmas to everyone.

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[*Translation*]

MADELEINE ARBOUR

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, “We are the offspring of modest French-Canadian families, working class or lower middle class”.

With those words, a small group of artists launched an artistic and social revolution in 1948, laying the foundations for what would become modern-day Quebec. The *Refus global* is perhaps one of the most fundamental texts when it comes to understanding today's Quebec. The manifesto, which was signed by Paul-Émile Borduas and co-signed by the group of artists known as the “automatistes”, calls for an end to fear, freedom from the oppression of religion and the joyful fulfilment of our fierce desire for freedom. Under Borduas's name, we see the name of Madeleine Arbour, who has just left us at the venerable age of 101. Madeleine Arbour was an extraordinary painter, a brilliant visual and design artist, a set designer, notably for Duceppe, and a teacher, who spent her whole life helping to make Quebec a more beautiful and caring place. She was one of the last surviving signatories of the *Refus global* manifesto. We owe an immeasurable debt to these men and women. They are the builders of an identity, the liberators of a people and the founders of today's Quebec. The Quebec nation is grateful to this great woman.

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● (1410)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, I was speaking with Myles, a resident in my beautiful riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard. Myles is a young man of 33. He works in transport; he is also super-fit and in training for the Highland Games.

Myles and I were talking about how our Liberal government is making life more affordable and how people have been lifted out of poverty. Myles says he actually sees it. He sees it in his neighbourhood. He sees how our Liberal policies are making an impact and putting a dent in poverty. This is proved by the numbers.

[*Translation*]

When the Conservatives left office in 2015, 13.5% of Quebecers were living in poverty, whereas, today, the poverty rate is only 6.6%.

[*English*]

We have dental care, pharmacare and the child benefit. We kept the age of retirement at 65.

These are Liberal policies. We are working for Myles and all Canadians.

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FIREARMS

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Taylor and Melody from my riding are national champion sports shooters who compete internationally. They are supposed to represent team Canada on the world stage in Czechia. They put years of hard work into training and competing, but the latest Liberal-NDP gun grab has put their training and competition in jeopardy.

The Liberals are weak on crime, yet sports shooters, hunters, farmers and first nations people across Canada are punished for this incompetence. After nine years, gun crime has skyrocketed 116% across Canada. The weak Prime Minister's catch-and-release bail policy lets repeat violent offenders out on the street.

Instead of this ridiculous gun grab, the Liberal-NDP government needs to step back so that a common-sense Conservative government can restore law and order, secure the border and ensure repeat offenders get jail, not bail. We will respect the traditions and livelihoods of our hunters, farmers, first nations people and sports shooters and bring home safe communities once again.

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DEMENCIA

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Winnipeg South Centre is home to thousands of older adults. Upon being elected, one of my first steps was to establish an older adult advisory council. The council comprises nearly a dozen constituents over the age of 65, and we meet regularly to discuss issues that are pertinent to them.

One topic that we have visited on several occasions is the heart-breaking damage caused to individuals and families as a result of dementia. Tragically, many Winnipeggers, including Earl Moberg, have gone missing or been put in harm's way because of this awful condition.

Fortunately, Earl and his family have had many champions, such as my constituent Ashleigh Mitchell, who is working hard to draw awareness to this important cause. The Alzheimer Society of Manitoba and other organizations, alongside individuals such as Ashleigh, continue to serve as wonderful advocates and resources. I rise today in honour of their work to draw attention to this plight facing tens of thousands of Canadians across the country and to encourage all of us to elevate the conversation so that, together, we can support families, individuals and our communities alike in the face of these challenges.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all across Canada, government charges account for more than 30% of the cost of a new home. These taxes block homebuilding and drive up prices for all Canadians.

Statements by Members

Conservatives offered a plan right here in the House to axe the federal sales tax on new homes under \$1 million. This would have saved Canadians up to \$50,000 on the price of a new home and would ignite the construction of more than 30,000 new units every single year.

The Liberal government's own top housing official confirmed at committee yesterday that this policy would inspire more homebuilding if the cost of homebuilding could be reduced. The Liberals and the Bloc, of course, voted against it.

While the Prime Minister continues to borrow money to buy support from the bureaucracy-building mayors this week, common-sense Conservatives will fight to axe the federal sales tax on new homes under \$1 million, saving Canadians thousands of dollars. Let us bring it home.

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WOMEN IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now, more than ever, the Canadian Armed Forces need women. Not only do we need to recruit more talented, dedicated women to serve our country, but we also need to retain those we already have.

Unfortunately, thousands of CAF members experience sexual assault in the military each year, and women are at the highest risk. Of the sexual assaults in our military, 80% go unreported because the survivors do not believe speaking up will make a difference.

We must call out the underlying rape culture and act urgently to change it. Bill C-66 introduces changes to the National Defence Act and places investigations of sexual misconduct outside the chain of command and into the public system. It is a start, but it is not enough. Survivors have felt invisible for far too long. I will keep fighting for their voices to be heard.

I will end with an excerpt of a poem written by my constituent, a survivor and a veteran, describing her experience of living with this trauma. It reads:

It was only one night. Move on, let it go. Forgive and heal is what you say,
but for me it has been 10,220 days
10,220 days of losing my career, my ability to hold a job, my health, my self-
esteem, my hope
10,220 days stolen
But yes, you're right, it was only one night.

This has to stop.

* * *

● (1415)

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet again, the leader of the NDP has sold out Canadians, who are being pumelled by the economic vandalism of the Prime Minister.

The leader of the NDP said, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests”. It turns out his words mean absolutely nothing, because this week the NDP had an opportunity to support a Conservative motion of non-confidence that in-

corporated those very words but did not, because the leader of the NDP selfishly wants his \$2.3-million pension.

After claiming to have ripped up his coalition agreement with the Prime Minister, the leader of the NDP has taped it back together under new terms whereby the leader of the NDP gets his pension, the Prime Minister gets his power and Canadians get the bill. It is time for a carbon tax election.

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[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis is hitting Canadians across the country. That is why we, the Conservatives, are proposing an effective, concrete and costed measure that will directly help young Canadian families. We want to get rid of the GST on new housing. In practical terms, this measure will save prospective buyers up to \$50,000 or \$2,250 per year in mortgage payments. That is a concrete, effective measure that will directly help young families. That is why the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec, the Quebec landlords' association, has described the Conservative leader's proposal as a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, the leader of the Bloc Québécois and his members voted against this common-sense plan. That is what the “Liberal Bloc” is all about, specifically, voting with the Liberal government and blocking help for young families. However, the CMHC boss said that if the cost to build new housing units could be brought down, that would certainly encourage more construction. Despite that, the leader of the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals oppose our plan. A good Conservative government cannot come soon enough.

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[English]

YUKON UNIVERSITY

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Yukon University has officially become the 97th member of Universities Canada. Over the past 60 years, this progressive institution has grown from a vocational training centre to a college, and finally in 2020, it is Canada's first university north of the 60th parallel. Universities Canada is the voice of universities in this country. Yukon U's membership enriches this voice with valuable northern and indigenous perspectives.

This news is more than a recognition of academic excellence; it also highlights the university's role in empowering northern communities through innovative education and research driven by local priorities such as climate change and health. The achievement will open new doors for collaboration, reconciliation and knowledge sharing, positioning Yukon University to better serve its students and its community.

Statements by Members

Congratulations to President Brown, Chancellor Geddes and all the dedicated staff and students at Yukon University. Here is to their continued success and to the unique impact they will make as a university in the years to come.

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VANCOUVER GRANVILLE

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we get ready for the holidays, as always, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the residents of Vancouver Granville. We are all made better by their ideas, engagement and solutions, and I am so grateful to serve them.

The holidays are a time to take care of one another, and that is why the two-month GST holiday that starts this Saturday will make the holidays a little bit brighter. Together we are delivering on things that matter to most every Canadian. In Vancouver Granville there are four institutions, the Hellenic Community of Vancouver, the Vancouver Fringe Festival, the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the planetarium, that will all receive change-making funding to expand and improve their services and buildings.

As we head into the holidays, let us be kind to one another, reach out to those in need and be grateful for the fact that we live in the best country on earth. Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah. *Khushali Mubarak.*

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WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a recent report issued by Women's Shelters Canada has found that the crisis in affordable housing is impacting women's shelters across Canada and putting women's lives at risk. As the executive director of Women's Shelters Canada explained, "Since there's no affordable housing, women are staying in shelters longer...new women can't move in if women already in shelter have nowhere to go."

The lack of affordable housing is so acute that half the women who are needing shelter are having to return to live with their abusers because they will otherwise become homeless. Access to affordable housing is a matter of life or death. Women's shelters are at capacity. There is nowhere to go. It does not have to be this way.

In Alberta, the Canada housing benefit for survivors of gender-based violence was announced in mid-April and ran out of funds in August. The federal government must step up and provide more funding to women's shelters, to the housing benefit program, to the building of transitional housing and to non-market and co-operative housing initiatives, in order to create real options for women who are at risk.

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● (1420)

*[Translation]***AMÉLIE DUCEPPE**

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to Amélie Duceppe. That

last name may ring a bell for some of my colleagues. They probably know about the Duceppe theatre company, which she heads, and its long tradition of excellence in Quebec theatre.

The newspaper *Les Affaires* has honoured Amélie Duceppe as president and CEO of the year for 2024 in the social economy category. After her aunt Louise passed the torch to her in 2018, Amélie Duceppe has transformed the theatre's administration into a collaborative, agile and creative team effort. Under her guidance, together with artistic co-directors David Laurin and Jean-Simon Traversy, the doors of the Duceppe theatre are opening to a growing number of new audience members discovering, or rediscovering, home-grown theatre.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I congratulate Amélie Duceppe, and I thank her for perpetuating a name of seminal importance to Quebec culture.

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BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a very disappointing move yesterday, the Bloc Québécois saved this government yet again.

Since the leader of the Bloc Québécois arrived in Ottawa, his party has voted in favour of more than \$520 billion in Liberal spending. They have voted to support this government nearly 200 times. To achieve what? One has to wonder.

The public service has practically doubled in size, consulting firms have been hired, and yet services have deteriorated. Meanwhile, the Bloc Québécois, which claims to defend Quebec's interests, supports spending that is only feeding an increasingly large and centralized federal government. How can the Bloc claim, with their hands on their hearts, to want Quebec independence while actively collaborating with the federal Liberals?

That is not the way to serve the interests of Quebec. Quebecers deserve better than this Bloc-Liberal coalition that is turning its back on their true aspirations and hitting them in their wallets. They deserve better.

They deserve a Conservative government.

* * *

*[English]***PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE**

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, education is the key to an individual's success and to the progress of society, whether economic, social, scientific or cultural. The quality of a student's educational experience is dependent upon the passion and creativity of their teachers.

Oral Questions

I would like to draw the attention of the House to Rosemary Hill, who teaches grade 7 English at Beaconsfield High School and who is a recipient of the 2024 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. Through the use of literature, Ms. Hill turns her classroom into a doorway of discussion of global issues and community involvement. She challenges her students to find and tell stories from and about the world around them, and she shows them that language and literature are tools for communicating narratives essential to personal growth and collective progress.

I thank Ms. Hill for being an inspiration both to her students and to her fellow educators, and for helping to build a better Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weak Prime Minister has lost control of immigration, the border, spending, inflation, the debt and even his ministers.

According to The Globe and Mail, relations between the Prime Minister and the finance minister “have chilled as tensions grow over the push for politically strategic spending measures such as the GST holiday... risking the minister missing her pledge to keep the deficit at or below \$40.1-billion.”

Why is the Prime Minister pushing his Minister of Finance to break her promise on the inflationary deficit?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader likes to sensationalize things to try to distract Canadians from the fact that he voted against a tax holiday for Canadians, against dental care that is now being provided to to 1.2 million Canadians, and against investments in the school food program.

He continues to try to muzzle his MPs to prevent them from speaking in the best interest of their community. He refuses to get his security clearance to be able to protect our democracy. That is what he wants to distract Canadians from.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister who is trying to muzzle his own Minister of Finance. She promised to keep the deficit to \$40 billion to prevent higher inflation, which is very expensive for Canadians who cannot feed their children. Now, he has forced his minister to break that promise and he is attacking her in the papers.

Why is the Prime Minister forcing his minister to break her promise and undermine her credibility?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just saw why the Conservative leader keeps playing his petty high-drama games. Inflation is now at the Bank of Canada's target rate, which allowed it to lower the key interest rate by 0.5%.

We are there to help Canadians. We have reduced inflation. The Conservative leader talks about young people who are hungry. Then why did he vote against the school food program, which will

help young people right across the country? He is blocking access to dental care. He is not there to help Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): The weak Prime Minister has lost control; he has lost control of the borders, lost control of immigration and lost control of spending, debt and inflation. Now he has lost control of his own cabinet.

Yesterday The Globe and Mail reported that there is a big fiscal feud that has broken out between the Prime Minister and his finance minister. At stake is that the finance minister wanted to run a gigantic \$40-billion deficit, but that was her guardrail, and now the Prime Minister is pushing her through that guardrail and pushing all Canadians off the fiscal cliff. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader likes to make up little dramas to try to distract Canadians from the fact that he voted against a tax break for all Canadians. He is trying to hide from the fact that he continues to muzzle his own MPs so they cannot be their communities' voices in Ottawa but are instead his voice in forcing them to face billions of dollars in cuts to housing programs. He continues to refuse to get his security clearance because he does not want to keep his own MPs safe from foreign interference. That is why he is trying to distract Canadians from what is going on.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Liberal MPs are not speaking out against him, not because he is allowing so much liberty but because he is so weak, and there is nothing worse than a weak bully. He is now cracking down on his own finance minister. Some feminist he is.

On this side of the House, I lead by inspiration, while the Prime Minister leads by intimidation.

Once again, why will the Prime Minister not follow my inspiration and stand up for the promise that he made to keep the deficit under \$40 billion?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see very clearly that for the Leader of the Opposition, it is all about him. Well, for us, it is all about Canadians. It is all about giving Canadians a tax break over the next two months, which the Conservative leader voted against. It is about delivering dental care to 1.2 million Canadians, while three million Canadians are already approved to access dental care in the coming year.

The fact is that we continue to be there for Canadians. The Conservative leader continues to be there for himself to try to block the help we are delivering to Canadians and to make sure everyone thinks everything is broken, because he is busy breaking it.

Oral Questions

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he has been the Prime Minister for nine years. Let us review the chronology: Not even eight months ago, his minister said the deficit would not exceed \$40 billion, the guardrail. Then he went and got his banker friend, carbon tax Carney, to become his top economic adviser, stripping the power away from his finance minister. Suddenly, the guardrail was broken.

Is he really going to subject his finance minister to the humiliation of reading Carney's fiscal update, which busts through the guardrail?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Bank of Canada announced interest rates are going down yet again. That is terrible news for the Leader of the Opposition, but it is great news for Canadians, for whom things will become more affordable. On top of that, a tax break will be out for Canadians over the next two months that the Leader of the Opposition voted against. Why? Because he cares more about his own political interests than he does about Canadians who are struggling. He will talk about the challenges Canadians are facing to try to instrumentalize them for his own gain, but he will not lift a finger to help Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has tabled a report that literally puts Quebec's values on trial. Why is that? It is because Quebec, like most western nations, supports the separation of church and state.

I wonder what the Prime Minister has to say to the hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Quebec who are happy and welcome, in French, in a host society that knows exactly what it is.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we will always protect freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of belief.

That is a fundamental value held by all Canadians and by everyone who comes to Canada. That is why, on this side of the House, we will always protect individual rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is unequivocal.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really want to put this in clear, concrete terms. Does the Prime Minister side with the people who are imposing the presence of religion in secular schools in Quebec, or does he side with those who are being literally attacked for wanting to uphold the principle of secularism in Quebec schools?

It has to be one or the other.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear. We will always defend freedom of belief, freedom of expression and the fundamental freedoms so cherished by all Canadians and all Quebecers. That is why we are moving forward to defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

That said, whether it is at universities, which are independent, or at other institutions, everyone has a responsibility to hire the best teachers based on merit. All Quebecers and all Canadians expect that.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump is a bully and bullies prey on weakness. When Trump says jump, the Prime Minister asks how high. When Trump trash-talks Canada, the leader of the Conservatives repeats that garbage. When Trump trolls Canada, hundreds and thousands of Canadians worry they might lose their job.

Why will the Prime Minister not fight back and protect Canadian jobs?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the job of a Canadian prime minister is to stand up for Canadian jobs, Canadian workers and the Canadian economy. That is exactly what we are doing, with a level of seriousness, a level of focus and, quite frankly, a team Canada approach that brings together the premiers and brings together different actors from unions, from businesses and with expertise across the country. That is why we will continue to take this seriously and not freak out like the NDP or repeat the attacks like the Conservatives. We will stand up for Canadians like we have before, as we will again.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): His job is not safe either, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister does nothing while President-elect Trump thumbs his nose at our country and threatens good Canadian jobs. I have fought against bullies my entire life. We have to be firm and not play their game.

When will the Prime Minister stop displaying weakness?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, when Donald Trump's first administration imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum across the country, we responded reasonably, but firmly, and those tariffs were lifted. We were able to renegotiate NAFTA while protecting not only supply management, but things like the cultural exemption and trade continuity between the two countries. We did this by taking the challenges seriously, but working responsibly.

That is what we will do again.

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister said in 2022, “This is a line we shall not cross.” Then she listed three lines: one, that the deficit would only go down, and it went up; two, that she would pay off the COVID debt, and not only has she not paid off a penny, but the debt has gone up; and three, that the debt-to-GDP ratio would only drop, and it has risen.

Did the finance minister voluntarily cross her own lines, or did the Prime Minister push her?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is once again putting on his little dramatic acts because he is trying to distract Canadians from the core facts.

First, interest rates are down again; second, Canadians will be getting a tax break over the next two months, despite the best efforts of the Conservative leader, who once again, twice this past week, saw that this House has no confidence in him; and third, three million Canadians are now approved for access to dental care for the coming year. These are things that he stood against but Canadians are getting anyway.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is silencing his own finance minister. She was already wildly irresponsible with the public purse, but not irresponsible enough for him. She wanted to keep the deficit at an already massive \$40 billion, and he said it was not enough. Canadians are not paying enough inflation, according to him.

Once again, did she voluntarily smash through her fiscal guardrail or did he push her?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition puts on these little performances because he wants to try to distract Canadians from the facts. We have the lowest deficit among G7 countries and will continue to. We are the third-largest receiver in the world of foreign direct investment, number one per capita in the G20, because countries around the world and companies around the world have confidence not just in Canada but in Canadians.

The question people should ask is, why does the Leader of the Opposition not have confidence in Canada or confidence in Canadians?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1440)

The Speaker: I know it is Wednesday and colleagues are very enthusiastic to participate, but I would invite them not to take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not have confidence in him, nor does his own party or his own cabinet, nor, apparently, does the Bank of Canada, which today was forced into an emergency panicked rate cut to confront the collapsing economy. The Governor of the Bank

Oral Questions

of Canada said the economy is softer than he expected it would be, and despite the fact that inflation is rising, that all four measures of it are above the target, he is being forced to cut the rates to save the economy from outright collapse.

When will the Prime Minister stop breaking the economy and call a carbon tax election so Conservatives can fix it?

[Translation]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we get nothing but absolute nonsense from the opposition leader.

[English]

Sorry, there is no good way to say that in English.

The reality is he is just making this stuff up in a way we could not believe. Inflation has been within the target range of the Bank of Canada for over 10 months now. This is because we have been there to help Canadians with things like dental care, like a school food program, with investments that are growing the economy in a way that has brought down inflation and allowed the Bank of Canada to cut rates faster than just about any other G7 country. We are there for Canadians. He is the one voting against things to happen.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do members know what is up? Inflation is up and unemployment is up. Inflation is not only up; every single measure of inflation is now above its target. Unemployment is up. It is at 10% in Toronto now—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, please start again.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: You know what is up, Mr. Speaker? Inflation is up. All four measures of inflation are now above target. Unemployment is up. In Toronto, it is over 10%. What else is up is housing costs. They have actually doubled. They have risen more than in any other country in the G7. What else is up? Food bank use is up. It, too, has doubled, with two million people lined up at the food bank.

What else is up again? The promise-breaking inflationary deficit, so why does the Prime Minister not tell us, if he has figured out how to count, what the deficit will be this year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one has to take a moment to appreciate how difficult it must be to be the Leader of the Opposition at a time when things are getting better for Canadians. He spends all his time, and has for the past—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I am going to ask members, please, and in particular the member for Portage—Lisgar as well as the member for Abbotsford, not to take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker.

I am going to invite the right hon. Prime Minister to start again.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the challenge faced by the Leader of the Opposition is he spent so long explaining to Canadians that everything is broken that when things start to get better, he refuses to actually help Canadians. He has voted against a tax break for Canadians over the next few months. He has voted against the dental care that has helped already well over a million Canadians. He is stuck in a place where, as Canadians are starting to come through the difficult times the global economy has put them in, he needs to continue to talk down Canadians, talk down our economy and scare people into voting for him. It will not work.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Bloc Québécois again voted to authorize an additional \$21 billion in federal spending by this centralizing government, in other words, a total of \$500 billion in inflationary, centralizing and Liberal spending, more power for the government here in Ottawa and less money in the pockets of Quebeckers.

What did the Prime Minister offer the leader of the Bloc Québécois to convince him to support big deficits, big bureaucracy and the enormous inflation the federal government is imposing on Quebec?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question that Quebeckers and all Canadians should be asking instead is why did the Conservative Party vote against Kids Help Phone, against funding for affordable housing, against military help for Ukraine, against funding to combat auto theft in Canada, against support for victims of hate crime, against dental care and against the national school food program.

The question is not why parliamentarians supported that, it is why the Conservative leader stands against Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that money will never do what he is saying it will do. It will only serve to bulk up the bureaucracy in Ottawa, as usual.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois said that he has to support the government's spending by voting for tax credits or else the government will simply stop operating, much like in the United States, but we are not in the United States. Here, if a vote fails, the government does not stop running. There is an election, which gives people a choice.

Will the Prime Minister pay to give the leader of the Bloc Québécois some training on how the parliamentary system works?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are starting to get used to the Conservative leader's contempt for government members, but the fact that he is beginning to treat other members of Parliament, other opposition leaders, with contempt shows his real approach, which is not worthy of this chamber or of the responsibility that we all have to defend the interests of Canadians.

He cannot explain why he voted against a tax holiday for Canadians. He cannot explain why he voted against dental care for seniors. Instead, he is choosing to attack and insult. Canadians deserve better.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, are higher education institutions free like the Prime Minister says? That is a good question.

What we do know is that education falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, and it is up to Quebec to decide what happens in Quebec schools.

As in the previous question, what I want to know is whether the Prime Minister is siding with the students and teachers of sex education in Quebec schools, or whether he is siding with those who wish to intimidate them and engage in religious fearmongering.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, regardless of the various jurisdictions across the country, which we do respect, the federal government has a responsibility to ensure that all Canadians are protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that freedom of expression, freedom of thought and freedom of belief are respected across our country.

Obviously, we respect the work that the provinces are doing to run their education systems, but we will always be there to defend these fundamental freedoms for everyone, particularly vulnerable children.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, examples of courage are few and far between in this Parliament.

I want to remind everyone that there is a provision in the Criminal Code that allows people to spread hate and incite violence under the guise of religion.

If he does not have the courage to do anything else, will he at least put an end to the religious exemption and stop allowing hate propaganda and incitement to violence on religious grounds?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, spreading hate and encouraging violence are still illegal in Canada. That is why we expect our police forces and courts to be there to protect the public and enforce the law.

The federal government will always be there to protect and defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of belief and freedom of thought in Canada.

• (1450)

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister and the entire Liberal caucus voted against taking the GST off new homes, which would have saved up to \$50,000 for a young couple trying to buy a home and almost \$3,000 a year in lower mortgage payments, and would have stimulated an extra 30,000 additional homes built. Even the Prime Minister's own housing adviser said that this was the best housing policy he has seen in a generation.

Why does the Prime Minister insist on taxing the young people who are struggling to pay the doubling housing costs, which he has brought since he took office?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have long learned that, whenever Conservatives make promises, they have to look at the small print. What the Leader of the Opposition actually proposed was to cut billions of dollars' worth of investments to municipalities across the country to create more density, to accelerate the construction of homes and to cut bureaucracy and red tape. Indeed, members of the Conservative Party have been advocating to invest in their communities and send money to their mayors, and the Leader of the Opposition wrote a letter in their names saying that none of them want those investments in housing. Shame on him.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is again imagining things. His program does not build homes; it builds bureaucracy. The only density is in his head.

Our policy was—

The Speaker: No, I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that statement and to rephrase his question.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is in his imagination. That is all.

The Prime Minister wants to tax people up to \$50,000 when they are buying a home so he can give more money to the very bureaucrats who block homebuilding. It is not that his housing funds do not help. It is worse. They actually block new homebuilding with more bureaucrats.

Why do we not follow my plan to slash the bureaucracy, axe the tax and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem with what the Conservative leader is saying, leaving aside the childish insults, is that his own MPs are going behind his back, pleading to the minister to please send investments to build more homes to their municipalities, and complaining behind his back to the CBC that they cannot stand up for their communities. MPs are supposed to be their communities' voices in this place, but he gives them a rap on the knuckles if ever they dare be anything but his voice in their communities.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member for Niagara Falls to please not take the floor when not recognized.

Oral Questions

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Bloc Québécois voted against eliminating the GST on homes.

I would like someone to explain this to me. A self-proclaimed sovereignist party wants to take money out of the pockets of young Quebecers who are buying homes and give it to the most centralizing government in history, the big bad feds.

Why is a sovereignist party supporting the concentration of power and Quebecers' money here in Ottawa?

The Speaker: That question is not relevant to the administration of government, but I see that the right hon. Prime Minister is rising to answer it.

I hope that this will not become a trend.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the members of the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative members from Quebec understand is that the \$1.8 billion that the federal and provincial governments are investing in the housing accelerator fund is helping to create more density, to accelerate the construction of homes and to cut bureaucracy and red tape.

The Conservative members from Quebec are not allowed to talk about that or about how harmful the \$1.8 billion in cuts that the Conservative Party is proposing will be, because they are afraid of their leader.

• (1455)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to put up to \$50,000 in the pockets of a young Quebec family buying a house, after Liberal programs have managed to double the cost of housing and, in fact, triple the cost of rent in Montreal.

The Bloc Québécois is voting to feed the federal bureaucracy with Quebecers' money. The Conservative Party is the only party that wants to help young Quebecers be sovereign and keep money in their pockets.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this federal government sent \$900 million to Quebec to build more homes, reduce bureaucracy, accelerate housing construction and cut the red tape, but the Conservative leader is proposing to take that money away from Quebec.

These young Quebecers who need affordable homes and opportunities are not going to see any construction under a Conservative government because the Conservatives want to cut investments in housing. That is what people voted against.

Oral Questions

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the special interlocutor, the AFN, the Canadian Medical Association and the victims ombudsperson are calling for legal mechanisms to end residential school denialism, but the Liberal Attorney General is missing in action when it comes to the rise of extremism against indigenous people. He has failed to protect survivors and their families from violence. Inciting hate is not free speech.

Will the Prime Minister heed these calls and adopt my bill, Bill C-413, to protect survivors and their families from the incitement of hate?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree. Incitement to hatred and incitement to violence are not free speech. We need to make sure that the path of reconciliation that this country is on is walked on by everyone.

That is why we have stepped up significantly in our anti-racism strategy while we continue to work with that member on her private member's bill and move forward to make sure that everyone who believes in the better future for Canada, despite all those who continue to attempt to deny residential schools, hold together and prevent denialism from happening.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is the holidays. Winter is here and people are dying. At a time when people should be gathered around the table, under a warm roof, four Edmontonians have died on the streets. Last winter, over 100 people lost a limb due to frostbite. Liberals have let people in Edmonton down. They are either too weak or do not care to stand up to Conservative Premier Danielle Smith's cuts to Edmonton's social services.

Why is the Prime Minister, just like the Conservatives, standing by while Edmontonians freeze?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have put significant amounts of money forward for the provinces to tackle the issue of encampments and to tackle homelessness. We have made historic investments in increasing housing and decreasing homelessness. Provinces have been varied in their response to be willing to work with the federal government.

That is why we are working directly with the City of Edmonton and Mayor Sohi to move forward on supports to fight homelessness in Edmonton, just as we are right across the country. It takes investment, compassion and partnership, and that is what we are doing.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, our government has made reconciliation with indigenous people one of the most crucial priorities for Canada. We have made important progress from returning unceded land back to communities, making aggressive investments in housing, reforming

health care and eliminating almost 150 long-term boil water advisories across the country.

Would the Prime Minister tell Canadians what more we as a government can do to support reconciliation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Northwest Territories for his tireless advocacy and his leadership. We introduced the first nations clean water act to ensure clean drinking water for generations to come and give first nations the tools to manage their own drinking water infrastructure.

It was shameful that, in the presence of chiefs gathered from across the country, members of the Conservative Party voted to refuse to send that bill to the Senate. They stood against us sending Bill C-61 to the Senate. Shame on them. We need to solve drinking water for generations to come.

* * *

● (1500)

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the weak Prime Minister has lost control of our borders. He started by teaming up with the British Columbia NDP to decriminalize fentanyl. He has kept 80% of fentanyl precursor ingredients legal. He allows 99% of shipping containers to come into our country uninspected. He passed Bill C-5, which gives house arrest to the kingpins who produce that poison.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his radical liberalization of drugs so that not one more mother will have the heartbreak of losing a child to an overdose?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the toxic drug epidemic has been hitting hard in communities right across the country and, indeed, across North America. That is why we have been stepping up by using an evidence-based, compassion-based, public health-based approach to solving the opioid epidemic and the toxic drug crisis. We are going to continue to lean on scientists, researchers and compassionate frontline workers as we invest to support Canadian families from coast to coast to coast.

It is not more ideology proposed by the Leader of the Opposition that is going to solve this. It is the careful application of reasonable responses.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister's weird, woke, liberalization ideology that has caused the 47,000 deaths and the 200% increase in overdoses.

However, just like the Prime Minister has lost control of the drugs, he has lost control of immigration. Do not take my word for it. The Globe and Mail said that the Liberal government "lost control of Canada's immigration system", highlighting that there are now 30,000 people who have been ordered deported that the Prime Minister has now lost track of. What is his plan to find them and deport them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite the Leader of the Opposition trying to pretend it is not true, Canada remains the best country in the world, and the fact that we are facing significant challenges, like other places around the world, does not take away from that.

We will continue to roll up our sleeves. We will continue to defend Canada's interests, defend Canada's borders and work with our partners in the United States. The Leader of the Opposition cannot help talking down Canada and Canadians. We are going to work with Canadians, with provinces, in a team Canada approach and protect Canada's structures and systems.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have the best country with the worst Prime Minister. He is weak, woke and wasteful, and he has lost track of 30,000 people who have been ordered deported but have now vanished. Now, we have millions of other people who are going to come up for exit when their permits and visas expire over the next year and a half, and the Prime Minister will not tell us what the plan is to get people out of the country who are not supposed to be here.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to have confidence in immigration as a good thing for our economy, a good thing for our country, because they know we have a strong and rigorous immigration system that adjusts, depending on the needs and the opportunities for Canada to grow and integrate more people. That is what we are continuing to defend. That is what we fight for every single day.

While the Leader of the Opposition talks down Canada, talks down Canadians and puts partisan attacks ahead of reasonable policy solutions, we are going to do the work necessary to protect Canadians and protect our immigration system.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is another weak response from a weak Prime Minister who has lost control of our immigration system.

Three Chileans who are in Canada illegally escaped from a hold-up centre in Laval. In addition to these three fugitives, there are nearly 750 foreigners in Quebec who are considered to be dangerous but who this government is incapable of deporting. What is more, apparently the government has literally lost track of 30,000 people who have been ordered deported.

What is the plan to deport them?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over these past few years, we have made considerable investments in our border security agency. We have made investments in our police forces.

That is in contrast to the Conservatives, who laid off 1,100 border officers when they were in power. They made cuts to our police services. They made cuts to our border services. They chose to reduce Canada's security while encouraging sales of ever more dangerous firearms.

That is why we made it impossible to buy assault-style weapons, and we will continue to protect Canadians.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of a strange question for the Prime Minister. The Conservative leader is taking advantage of his position to say all kinds of things about the Bloc Québécois, Quebec and me. He is doing this while cravenly refusing the many invitations I have issued again and again for over a year to debate me publicly. Today, he has gone a step further.

Is the Prime Minister not concerned that the Conservatives are firmly determined to push the Bloc Québécois even further toward independence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that members of the Bloc Québécois, like all other parliamentarians in the House, do not take what the Conservative leader is saying very seriously. In fact, very few Quebecers take this Conservative leader seriously, in light of his position against women's rights, his support for making assault-style weapons legal again and his wish to get rid of the dental care program, which has already helped hundreds of thousands of Quebecers.

We are here to invest by working with our Bloc Québécois and NDP colleagues to help people. The Conservatives just want to pick fights.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a House of Commons committee is attacking Quebec. The Minister of Immigration is attacking Quebec's premier. The Conservatives' question box is clearly empty, since they have repeated the same thing eight times. The government has not had any answers for a long time, and we are no longer dealing with the challenges that we should be dealing with in this Parliament.

Is it not time for us all to heartily wish each other a merry Christmas, because we have the right to do so? We can see each other again when it is time for an election.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always willing to wish everyone in the House and across the country a merry Christmas, but we still have work to do.

We have to present the economic update, which will provide help for Quebecers and Canadians. It will include investments in our future, while we are dealing with challenges with the Americans. We have work to do during the upcoming spring parliamentary session to add people to the list of those who are eligible for dental care. We are here to provide free prescription contraceptives and free insulin to those who need it. We have work to do, and we are going to do it for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is time for an election.

Yesterday, the Bloc Québécois voted several times against an election. It voted to keep this government in power. There is going to be a debate and the leader of the Bloc Québécois is going to have to deal with the fact that the Conservatives want to eliminate the GST on new housing and the Bloc does not. The leader of the Bloc Québécois wants to create more federal bureaucracy by supporting this government. We want to get rid of it. That is the choice Quebecers will make.

• (1510)

The Speaker: We are hearing more questions that have nothing to do with the administration of the government, but I see that the right hon. Prime Minister is rising to respond.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in the House, we voted in favour of Canada's action plan on combatting hate, in favour of the national Holocaust remembrance program, in favour of the Canada housing benefit. However, the Conservatives voted against. We voted in favour of the veterans emergency fund and in favour of the national strategy for the protection of children from sexual exploitation on the Internet. However, the Conservatives voted against.

I recognize that parliamentarians from other parties voted in favour of these good things. The Conservatives continually vote against the interest of Canadians, against direct help for those who need it.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a weak Prime Minister who has lost control of spending, debt and inflation. Workers are now forced to fight to make up lost wages. That is why, last year, Canada had more strikes than in any year since 1981, that is, since the last Trudeau was breaking the country and its economy. Canadians are now suffering because they cannot get their donations to charities, small businesses cannot get their payments and the economy is losing millions.

Will he sit the two sides down, get a deal and put an end to this dreadful strike?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservative Party, whose attacks on unions are well documented, from Bill C-575 and Bill C-377, its anti-union bills

that the Leader of the Opposition voted for, to continually choosing to use back-to-work legislation, as it did time and time again, we believe that the best deals happen at the bargaining table, which is why the minister has gotten the two sides of Canada Post together to try to find a solution that will work. We know that small businesses are hurting. Canadians in rural and remote areas are hurting. We will continue to look to help them, and we will get this resolved the right way.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weak Prime Minister has lost control. He has lost control of spending, debt and inflation. This has forced workers to fight for wage increases. Last year, we had the highest number of strikes since 1981, when his father broke the economy. Now the strike at Canada Post is turning out to be very costly for non-profit organizations and small businesses. It is costing our economy a lot of money.

When will the Prime Minister listen to both sides and reach an agreement to end this strike?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada's hostility towards workers and unions is well documented. I do not need to revisit that.

We will continue to ensure that the best agreements are reached at the bargaining table. That is why we encourage both sides to keep working on it, because, yes, small businesses are suffering, NPOs need postal services, and Canadians living in rural and remote areas depend on Canada Post.

That is why we are working to find solutions to try to resolve the situation.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Emmanuela Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week marked the 35th anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre. Quebecers and Canadians across the country mourned the 14 women who were killed in a sadistic act of gender-based violence.

In recent years, mass shootings have caused unbelievable tragedy in many communities, such as Portapique, Truro and Quebec City.

Can the Prime Minister explain the measures that are being taken by the government to protect Canadians against armed violence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Laurent for her question and for her hard work.

Oral Questions

Unlike the Conservative leader, we always choose Canadians' safety over the gun lobby. That is why we are taking assault-style firearms out of our communities through the buyback program.

Let us be clear. We will always condemn violence against women through measures such as red-flag legislation and funding to prevent gender-based violence. We will always be there to defend women and to help put an end to family violence. The Conservatives will be there to make sure that there are more guns.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us see what the police have to say about that. After a 116% increase in gun crime under this Prime Minister and a repeat violent offender out on early parole allegedly murdered a 34-year-old woman in Toronto on Sunday. The Toronto Police had this question for the Prime Minister: "How was this person, with their history, allowed to access a firearm and be alone with a partner when they were supposedly living in a supervised community setting? What answers are you providing ... to the victim's family, or our communities who continue to see the heartbreaking results of your weak policies on crime?"

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite Conservative opposition, we continue to move forward on bringing in red flag laws and yellow flag laws to make sure that people who are charged with domestic violence do not have access to firearms. Conservatives stood against that and fought against that every step of the way. Just like they are working hard to make legal again assault-style weapons that we rendered illegal in this country four years ago, they want to unfreeze the handgun bans. Last time they were in office, they cut 1,100 workers from the CBSA who were there to prevent illegal guns flowing in from the United States.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has not banned a single gun. He spent over \$60 million to fail to take a single gun off the road. He has had to give an amnesty to reverse all of the announced gun bans that he did, standing in front of a cartoon image of a scary Hollywood-style gun. What has been the sum total of all of this? It has been a 116% increase in gun violence since he became Prime Minister.

When will he realize that banning Grandpa Joe's hunting rifle is not going to stop crime and that instead we actually have to lock up the criminals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, instead of trying to scare Grandpa Joe, the member should be honest with Grandpa Joe. We have banned assault-style weapons and already we have seen thousands of assault-style weapons collected and destroyed. These are things that we are doing that the Conservative Party and its funders, the gun lobby, continue to stand against. They would re-legalize assault-style weapons in this country and unfreeze the market on handguns. That is what they promised the gun lobby, and they hide behind Grandpa Joe because they cannot admit it out loud.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he admitted he does not even know what an assault rifle is, let alone be able to ban one. He spent \$60 million and his gov-

ernment admits it did not take a single firearm off the road. There has been a 116% increase in gun violence under his leadership and 99% of the shipping containers that come in are not inspected at all, even though the previous Conservative government increased the number of frontline border officers.

Why is the Prime Minister so busy trying to protect turkeys from hunters that he does not protect Canadians from criminals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only has the House defined what an assault-style weapon is in law, but the RCMP is now acting on that classification—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am certain all members can exercise restraint here. I am inviting all members, please, to do so.

The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, not only has the House defined what an assault-style weapon is, over the objections of Conservatives, but we are now removing those guns and destroying those guns while we compensate those who lawfully purchased them. That is what responsible gun control looks like. Unfortunately, the leader of the Conservative Party has promised the gun lobby that he will relegalize assault-style weapons, reopen the frozen market for handguns and make things more dangerous for Canadians, and particularly for women, right across the country. Shame on him.

* * *

• (1520)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been through a lot in the last few years, and they are looking to all levels of government for relief and support. That is something I hear at the doors in Halifax West, and it is the call I bring every day to Ottawa when I represent my constituents, unlike the Conservatives, who have been forbidden to advocate for their communities.

Can the Prime Minister give an update on what this Liberal government is doing to make life better for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Halifax West for her advocacy and her hard work.

Oral Questions

There was good news this morning. The Bank of Canada has cut its interest rate by another 50 points, and today we announced that three million Canadians have been approved for dental care, with more than 1.2 million Canadians, mostly seniors, already having received care. The good news does not stop there. On Saturday, a tax break will go into effect for all Canadians. The Conservative voted against it, but it is real. Canadians are going into Christmas and the holiday season with lower interest rates, lower taxes and more money in their pockets.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, forest biomass energy production has the potential to provide Canadian electrical grids with a sustainable source of energy. This will also create high-paying jobs for rural communities, like the paper mill in Port Alberni. The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act includes tax incentives for biomass, putting Canada's forest sector at a competitive disadvantage. The Liberals promised a clean technology and electricity investment tax credit in 2023 but failed to deliver.

Will the Prime Minister finally commit to the timely passage of these tax incentives to help protect Canadian jobs in the forestry sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, biomass is an important part of the solution as we move forward into being more reliant on renewable energy and understanding how important our forestry industry is not just for creating good jobs and goods to export and build homes with, but also to contributing to our energy opportunities and challenges.

We will continue to stand up for innovation in our energy industry. We will continue to stand up for energy workers right across the country in all industries as we work to decarbonize, as we work to invest and innovate and as we create a better future for all Canadians.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, Monday, we will find out the extent of Canada's deficit. The Greens offer some solutions: Offset deficits by taxing the excess profits of big oil and big banks and by taxing the billionaire class.

Why will the government not make them pay their fair share?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following the pandemic, we actually brought in an excess profits tax on the big banks and insurance companies that were very profitable through a very difficult time for Canadians, and those measures continue. We will always look at making sure everyone pays their fair share.

In regard to the oil and gas companies that are creating incredible profits by selling oil and gas to Canadians, we are actually making sure there is a limit to how much they can pollute, because no industry should have unlimited pollution. They can continue to produce, but they need to reduce their emissions. They need to invest in new ways of supporting their workers and supporting our future.

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of our former colleague and former leader of the opposition, Gilles Duceppe.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

● (1525)

[English]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order, or usual practice of the House, at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, December 16, 2024, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings to permit the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to make a statement followed by a period of up to 10 minutes for questions and comments; after the statement, a Member from each recognized opposition party, and a Member of the Green Party, may reply for a period approximately equivalent to the time taken by the Minister's statement and each statement shall be followed by a period of 10 minutes for questions and comments.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. minister's moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

[Translation]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

SYRIA

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That,

(a) the House welcomes the end of the brutal and corrupt Assad regime;

(b) Canada has been and will continue to be a friend to the Syrian people who have the right to live in peace and dignity;

(c) in this time of great uncertainty for their country, Canada stands in solidarity with the Syrian people as they pursue their legitimate aspiration to build an inclusive state for all;

(d) the House call on the Canadian government to help advance efforts for a democratic Syria that respects the rights of all its people; and

(e) we call on the transition government to reject extremism and support an inclusive government that represents the diversity of Syrians.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker—

An hon. member: No.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: You have no idea what I was going to say. It gets good.

Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the House leaders. I move that, given that the Liberal government will—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am hearing a number of noes, so I am afraid there is not unanimous consent.

I will allow the hon. member to present a second one.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I was just giving the government an opportunity to defend its own economic update, but this one is different—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am afraid that I am hearing no.

I am going to encourage all members to make sure that, when they rise for unanimous consent, there has been negotiations among all members so that we have a reasonable likelihood of the motion succeeding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets: Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to adopt the following motion, which is seconded by the members from Mirabel, Louis-Saint-Laurent and Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie: Given the construction of Mirabel International Airport, which led to the expropriation of thousands of families in 1969, given that the families who lost their homes, land and community following this forced expropriation are suffering from trauma and unspeakable pain, and given that commercial flights at Mirabel airport have ended, that this House issue an official apology to the residents of Mirabel who were expropriated in 1969.

• (1530)

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In response to our House leader's point of order, I want to point out that before he even had a chance to say a word—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify what your ruling is going to be moving forward. Are we to expect now that if somebody says no before a word is spoken on a point of order, you

Oral Questions

are going to stand up and shut down that member from speaking, regardless of which party it is, from now on? Is that the precedent?

The Speaker: I can assure all members that I am continuing with the normal practice of this House: that when there is a clear indication that there is not unanimous consent, we will move on from that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege.

I see there are two hon. members who are rising on points of order.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Order. I see there are members who are rising on points of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, in a red-faced fashion, clearly flipped the bird over to this side, which is another way of saying gave the finger. That is highly unparliamentary and I would ask him to uncatagorically withdraw the finger. It is not appropriate. He should apologize to all parliamentarians.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his intervention. That is an important issue that has been raised.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I see there are a number of members rising on points of order. I see the hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap, followed by the member for Edmonton Griesbach, followed by the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap has the floor.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, when the parliamentary secretary was making his statement, I could not understand what was being said through the interpretation because you have failed to keep order in this place. Please correct that so we can hear what is being said.

The Speaker: Order, please. I appreciate that the hon. member is raising the issue of interpretation not being provided. That is a fair point. I will then allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to rise again.

However, to respond, once again, to the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, when it was made clear to me that the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was rising on seeking unanimous consent, once there is an indication that there is no unanimous consent, we pass on to other things, as opposed to what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons was rising on. It was not unanimous consent he was seeking; he was making a point of order, which does not require unanimous consent. That is the reason I allowed the member to stand up.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the leader of the government in the House of Commons.

Speaker's Ruling

• (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my point of order was with respect to the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, who, in a very angered, red-faced manner, flipped the bird to the government. That is highly inappropriate. The member knows that and he should unconditionally apologize for the manner in which he expressed himself. That is what we are asking him to do.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I bore witness to the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, in an outrage, disgrace this place and all members by yelling out of turn and then giving you the finger. We expect this place to have a level of decorum and respect, and the member has demonstrated multiple times a breach of the very important decorum of this place. He gave the finger. I witnessed it and many members saw it. We expect an apology and a withdrawal, and we demand that he understand the severity of the issue.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of Parliament for 24 years. This is the first time I have flipped the bird to anybody.

To correct the member, it was not to the government; it was to the member for Kingston and the Islands, but of course, nobody deserves that, and I withdraw it and apologize to the House.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I certainly accept that apology and take no offence to it, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it is a Kingston thing.

The Speaker: We will consider the matter closed.

* * *

PRIVILEGEALLEGED INTIMIDATION DURING PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE—
SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on November 29 by the member for London—Fanshawe concerning alleged intimidation during the proceedings of the House.

In her intervention, the member claimed that before and during the taking of the last recorded division on Thursday, November 28, the disorderly behaviour of many Conservative Party members reached an unacceptable level. She alleged that members were disruptive to the point where she and her colleagues could not hear their names being called by the table officers.

Furthermore, she indicated that her caucus had, prior to the vote, alerted the Chair and the Table to the possibility of intentional disruptions because of what she felt was inappropriate behaviour in the shared opposition lobby. This made it difficult for her to carry out her duties as the deputy House leader for the NDP and constituted a breach of privilege and even a contempt. The member described the behaviour of the Conservative Party members both in the House and in the lobby as unacceptable, toxic and designed to intimidate other members as they carried out their parliamentary duties.

[Translation]

The member for New Westminster—Burnaby weighed in to support the member's question of privilege. In addition to commenting on the lack of decorum during the vote, he alluded to what he con-

sidered as other objectionable behaviours by some Conservative Party members, whom he accused of being inebriated, and reminded the House that the party whips are responsible for ensuring a safe workplace that is free of harassment for members and employees who work with them.

[English]

Other members intervened on the matter, frequently with conflicting accounts of what occurred in the lobbies leading up to the vote, as well as on the floor of the House during the sitting and after adjournment. In particular, the House leader of the official opposition rose to fully deny the accusations made by the member for London—Fanshawe and the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. He detailed the events of the evening in question as he saw them, stating that it was the members of the New Democratic Party who acted in a harassing manner toward members and staff of the Conservative Party. He argued that if any contempt occurred, it was a result of the behaviour of New Democratic Party members, who stormed up the aisle to confront the Chair at the adjournment of the House and then approached the Conservative benches to confront some other members. He therefore requested that the member for London—Fanshawe withdraw her question of privilege.

• (1540)

[Translation]

The Chair will first deal with concerns about behaviour in the opposition lobby. As described in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 295, and I quote:

Connected by doors to the Chamber, the lobbies are furnished with tables, arm-chairs and office equipment for Members' use. Members attending the sitting of the House use the lobbies to conduct business and are able to return to the Chamber at a moment's notice. The party Whips assign staff to work from the lobbies and pages are stationed in the lobbies to answer telephones and carry messages. The lobbies are not open to the public. Security staff control access to the lobbies in accordance with guidelines set by the Corporate Security Office after consultation with the Whips.

[English]

Whips and their staff have always ensured a harmonious cohabitation within the opposition lobby, a shared working space currently used by the three opposition parties as well as independent members. By tradition and convention, the lobbies have been viewed as a sort of sanctum that affords members and caucuses the needed privacy to plan and coordinate their work in the chamber. However, lobbies are not an extension of the House chamber, at least not in terms of its deliberative function. Ultimately, how lobbies operate and are regulated is an administrative matter under the purview of the Board of Internal Economy, as are other working spaces beyond the chamber.

[Translation]

On the issue of the consumption of alcohol within the parliamentary precinct, Speaker Regan addressed the matter in a ruling on a question of privilege on November 20, 2018, at page 23625 of the Debates:

Speaker's Ruling

Subsection 52.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act gives the board, not the Speaker, the legal authority to:

- ...act on all financial and administrative matters respecting
- (a) the House of Commons, its premises and its staff; and
- (b) the members of the House of Commons.

Accordingly, the right forum to raise such matters...remains the Board of Internal Economy.

The use of the lobbies and the behaviour of members and their staff using the lobbies is therefore a matter that should be brought to the Board of Internal Economy. To that end, I would encourage any member who is concerned about this to raise it with their representatives on the board so that it can be addressed there.

[English]

The whips of all parties also play a crucial role in the management of the lobbies. The Chair therefore strongly encourages them to look into this issue and work together in finding a suitable solution that all can adhere to. Indeed, the Chair has written earlier today to the whips of the opposition parties to this effect.

Concerning the behaviour of members in the House during the vote on Thursday, November 28, the excessive noise did indeed hamper members' ability to hear the clerks conducting the roll call. The Chair intervened midway through the vote to call the House to order.

I also made a statement the following morning, referring members to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 643, which sets out the conduct expected during the taking of a vote, which includes not making any noise. In my statement of November 29, found at page 28,339 of Debates, I stated:

The Chair hopes this will serve as a good reminder to all members of the expectations in regard to decorum during divisions. I understand that some votes are the subject of strong disagreements, but it is still expected that all members comport themselves appropriately.

• (1545)

[Translation]

And so I remind the House again that when votes are being called, members are to remain respectful so that they can be conducted in an orderly fashion. I would add that the adjournment of the House should also happen in an orderly fashion and that approaching the Chair or the seats of one's colleagues to carry on arguments is not helpful or conducive to a respectful atmosphere. While the House had technically adjourned when such events took place on the night in question, the repercussions of these actions have a negative impact on the manner in which the House operates.

[English]

The member for London—Fanshawe also complained that, in addition to the noise, the pointed heckling was inappropriate and was received by many members as harassing or intimidating. As Chair, I wholeheartedly agree that the level of noise in the chamber during the last vote on November 28 was indeed outside of the acceptable range. The lack of decorum and noisy disruptions experienced that evening do not meet the expectations Canadians have of us.

[Translation]

The member for London—Fanshawe equated the events to interfering with her ability to carry out her parliamentary duties. While I understand the member's concerns, I cannot conclude that it resulted in any member not being able to vote or participate in proceedings.

[English]

Therefore, I cannot agree that the member was interfered with in the performance of her parliamentary duties. What happened that night was clearly a breach of decorum. I do not excuse this or seek to normalize it, but I am not aware of any precedents where incidents of this nature rose to matters of contempt or breaches of privilege.

I nonetheless take concerns about harassment and intimidation very seriously. While moments of strong disagreement and political tension are common in this place, there is still an expectation that we, as elected officials, treat each other with civility and respect. Apart from being a deliberative and law-making body, the House is also a workplace. In addition to members, employees of the House administration and staff from political parties themselves support within these august walls our parliamentary democracy. They are all entitled to a safe working environment at all times.

The Chair believes that these concerns warrant, at a minimum, a discussion between the whips. They, and in fact any member voluntarily seeking productive solutions to conflicts, may explore available support options provided by the House administration to help mediate this situation.

[Translation]

Before closing, I would like to point out that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is currently conducting a study on the issue of harassment. This study arguably already provides the remedy the member for London—Fanshawe seeks, namely, referring the matter of harassment and intimidation to that committee. The counterpoints raised by the House leader for the official opposition could also fit within the committee's existing study.

[English]

Moving forward, as Speaker, I have strong expectations that the whips will address the matter in a serious and timely way. Of all the workplaces in Canada, the House of Commons, as the heart of our democracy, should serve as a role model. Members are passionate in defending their views, and this can bring vigorous debates in the House. However, when away from the cameras, we are all colleagues and we should all work together to ensure a productive and safe workplace for not only ourselves but also our staff and all those who support us in this great place.

Notwithstanding the seriousness of the matter raised, I cannot find that this constitutes a prima facie question of privilege.

I thank all members for their attention.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is rising on a point of order.

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I certainly listened to your ruling. I understand that it was basically addressed to the question of privilege raised by the NDP member about what may or may not have happened in the lobby. You have ruled that what goes on in the lobby does not fall under the purview of a question of privilege.

In response to that, points were raised about the erratic and unhinged behaviour of the NDP members in the chamber, even though the mace was off the table. I am just wondering whether you are going to come back to address those questions that were raised as well.

• (1550)

The Speaker: I will invite the hon. member to take a look at my ruling, where that question was actually addressed.

There is a point of order from the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, is “erratic and unhinged” considered parliamentary language in this place?

The Speaker: That is a very good question. I have heard that language being used before in this place, and it was considered acceptable at the time. As, of course, members know, that language has been used here before.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, that language was utterly inappropriate from my colleague, the official opposition House leader. It borders on misogyny. I would suggest, given the Conservatives' history of being drunk and disorderly in the House of Commons, they should take lessons from your ruling.

The Speaker: I appreciate the hon. for Regina—Qu'Appelle. However, I do not want to open up a debate on this issue between the two members.

I will ask again that if members have matters to discuss on this particular matter and on what had happened on Thursday, November 28 at the vote, they would please come speak to me in the chair. Of course, I have taken into account all the issues that have been raised before, and I think the Chair has been very generous in terms of hearing concerns that were raised by multiple members on the question.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 12 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-378, an act amending the Canada Labour Code in regard to complaints by former employees.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to the supplementary estimates (B), 2024-2025.

• (1555)

[Translation]

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Joël Lighthound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology in relation to the motion adopted on Thursday, December 5, on telecommunication companies' service contract practices.

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, entitled “Concerns Arising from Parliamentary Budget Officer's Report”.

* * *

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING ACT

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-423, An Act to amend the National Housing Strategy Act (right to adequate housing).

She said: Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to protect Canadians from greedy corporate landlords whose tactics unfairly raise rents, evict tenants and harm Canadians. I thank the member for Vancouver East for seconding the bill and for her work to shine a light on the financialization of housing in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

The bill would enshrine the fundamental human right to housing into the National Housing Strategy Act. It is one of the fundamental rights that the Liberal government deliberately left out of that very same housing act. The bill would provide the government with the tools to stop renovations, demovictions and the unfair business practices that are making people homeless.

The NDP wants the housing needs of people to be prioritized over the profits of predatory corporate landlords, REITs and even unethical Liberal government pension funds. The Liberals' national housing strategy has failed to uphold people's rights to adequate housing, in favour of making real estate investors rich. Like the Conservatives before them, Liberals prioritize multi-million dollar corporations over fundamental human rights of Canadians.

Everyone, regardless of income, background or circumstance, deserves access to a safe, accessible and affordable place to call home. This is the human right that the bill would enshrine and make a reality.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

MEMBERS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three very important petitions to present today. The first is on behalf of concerned Canadians who are bringing to the House's attention the fact that Conservative members of Parliament for Brantford—Brant, Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and Lambton—Kent—Middlesex went on a taxpayer-funded trip to France in June. It is deeply troubling that the duly elected members were not allowed to speak to fellow MPs while there. In fact, they were forced to return early from the trip.

The Canadian petitioners are calling upon the Conservative members of Parliament who wasted taxpayers' money, and who put their party leadership rules above their duty to taxpayers, to repay in full those wasted costs.

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is, again, another very important petition on behalf of Canadians. It is calling to the attention of the House that the media has reported that Conservative members of Parliament are not allowed to speak publicly without the approval of their leader. It is deeply troubling that duly elected members are put in this position. The petitioners also indicate that the Conservative leader has proven himself to be insincere and that he preaches freedom to speak but denies it for his own caucus.

The petitioning Canadians are calling upon the leader of the Conservative Party to allow his members of Parliament—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether you could just clarify the rules around members of Parliament, in particular members of the Liberal caucus, signing their own petitions.

• (1600)

The Deputy Speaker: While I appreciate the help, I just want to make sure that everyone summarizes the petitions they are presenting to the House.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling the petitions momentarily, and the member can then see the signatures that are on it.

The petitioning residents of Canada are calling upon the leader of the Conservative Party to allow his members of Parliament to provide support to their communities, to access the housing accelerator fund and to remove the gags.

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a third petition, again another really important one from Canadians, brings to the House's attention the fact that the RCMP has reported that the Government of India has interfered in Canadian elections. There is deeply troubling testimony with regard to foreign interference, from which Canadians learn that Conservative MPs are involved in foreign interference.

The petitioning Canadian citizens are calling upon the leader of the Conservative Party to immediately obtain his security clearance and take action to prevent foreign governments from interfering in Canadian affairs and targeting Canadians.

I am very proud to present the petitions on behalf of Canadians.

PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting three petitions today. The first one is on the prison needle exchange program. Constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon are against the government's providing needles so inmates can do illegal drugs. That is not safe and it is not good for correctional officers. It is not good for inmates. Petitioners are calling for that government policy to end.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on natural health products. Petitioners in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon are calling upon the Government of Canada to reverse its attack on natural health products, which will decimate small businesses and a billion-dollar industry in Canada. Again, it is a policy that will hurt workers and businesses alike.

LETS'EMOT REGIONAL RECREATION & AQUATIC CENTRE

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the third petition, petitioners are calling for further support for the Lets'emot Regional Recreation & Aquatic Centre, which brings together indigenous communities and the District of Kent to provide adequate recreational facilities in the District of Kent.

Routine Proceedings

ELDERS HOME IN WIIKWEMKOONG

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand to table a petition signed by residents of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and others near the region, who are calling on the Government of Canada to assist in the funding required to build a vital elders home facility in Wiikwemkoong. The petitioners note that funding has been received from the Government of Ontario, CMHC and community members, but a funding shortfall of \$20 million remains.

Petitioners also note that the Government of Canada has also funded health care facilities in the largely indigenous community of Moosonee, a long-term care home for the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and a seniors long-term care facility in Rankin Inlet.

The current facility in Wiikwemkoong has reached the end of its life expectancy, and it is vital for the community to ensure that elders can stay in their community to share their knowledge and experience with younger generations. Petitioners indicate that this would actually impact their ability to also remain in close proximity to their family. They also do not want to be subjected to another era of assimilation.

[*Translation*]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition signed by people in northern Ontario who are calling on the House of Commons to recognize the impact to their representation of reducing the number of electoral districts in the region following the report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission.

[*English*]

Their collective appeal is to ensure that the number of electoral districts in northern Ontario is maintained at 10 by modifying the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. The petitioners are looking to the House to respect the Supreme Court of Canada's 1991 Carter decision, which states, "Effective representation and good government in this country compel that factors other than voter parity, such as geography and community interests, be taken into account in setting electoral boundaries."

I want to thank Dr. Andréane Chénier for going out and getting a lot of signatures on this petition.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 4,238 Canadians have signed this e-petition, and over 5,000 petitioners delivered a paper petition to me last Sunday.

The petitioners say, whereas the Air India bombing of June 23, 1985, which left 331 people dead, was the worst tragedy in the history of aviation terror before 9/11; whereas the victims' families continue to wait for justice and closure; whereas Sikhs in Canada widely believe that this was the handiwork of a foreign intelligence to discredit their political activism and undermine their advocacy work for human rights in India; whereas the recent development within the Sikh community in British Columbia gives credence to this perception; whereas the Canadian government is looking into the growing foreign interference in its political affairs; whereas the Sikhs are living under fear since the murder, or what I call assassi-

nation, of Surrey Delta gurdwara president Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023; and whereas, on September 18, 2023, the Prime Minister of Canada stated that there are credible allegations of a link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar; the petitioners, citizens and permanent residents of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to order a fresh inquiry—

● (1605)

The Deputy Speaker: The petition is tabled. I would remind members that we have lots of members presenting petitions, so I want to make sure that presentations are as short as possible.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by the great people of Pickering—Uxbridge, Whitby and the Liberal Minister of Health's very own riding of Ajax. They call on the House to immediately repeal sections 500 to 504 of Bill C-47, which was passed last year. These amendments made to the Food and Drugs Act are new regulatory constraints on natural health products that millions of Canadians rely upon and has since affected their medical freedom of choice and the affordability of these products.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to rise to present a petition on behalf of the great people from the healthy-living riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke who are calling on the government to refrain from endorsing the so-called pandemic treaty drafted by the World Health Organization, which had never received a single debate or vote in the House of Commons. The concern is that, by agreeing to this legally binding treaty, Canada is signing away our own sovereignty, allowing UN bureaucrats, who are unaccountable to Canadians, the power to override our laws, rights and freedoms.

POPPY FUND

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition that notes that the Kitchener-Waterloo Poppy Fund administers the poppy campaign every year to fund initiatives for veterans. That includes emergency assistance, comfort for those who are hospitalized, bursaries and more. The petitioners note that the federal government already provides mailing services, such as letters to Santa, for free, but they note that the KW Poppy Fund spends \$23,000 in mailing costs every year to distribute poppies. They note that its capacity to support veterans is lessened by that because, before they can provide a single dollar to a veteran, it needs to pay those mailing costs.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to do three very reasonable things: first, determine how much it might cost for the federal government to cover the cost of mailing poppies; second, consult with Canada Post and Royal Canadian Legion to do a cost-benefit analysis of waiving mailing fees for poppy sales; and last, take into consideration how chapters of the Royal Canadian Legion support veterans and their dependents through discussion of this possibility.

BANGLADESH

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition signed by members of the Bangladeshi community.

The petitioners draw the attention of the government to the fact that former members and supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP, are unfairly facing immigration challenges due to false narratives being spread by political opponents. They ask the government to review how IRPA is being applied in these cases, base admissibility decisions on individual circumstances and not on broad political affiliation, and grant public policy consideration on a humanitarian basis under relevant legislation.

• (1610)

GAZA

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this petition comes from the great people of northern Ontario and is signed by 4,518 people.

The State of Israel is carrying out a campaign of genocide against the people of Palestine through indiscriminate military actions against the civilian population, which have killed and maimed more than 100,000 people and have destroyed the physical and social infrastructure of Gaza. Many of the weapons used in this genocide are supplied to the State of Israel by the United States and other NATO countries.

Nickel is an important raw material used in the manufacture of these armaments, and 40% of the nickel consumed in the U.S. originates in Canada. Canadians do not want the natural resources of this land or the labour of our people to contribute to this campaign of terror and mass murder. The government of Canada has banned new contracts for the sale of armaments to Israel.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to institute a ban on the sale of nickel to Israel and to those armament manufacturers that supply Israel. They also would like for us to require purchasers of Canadian nickel to certify that they will not resell Canadian nickel to Israel or to arms manufacturers supplying Israel.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition. Petitioners are calling on the Liberals to scrap their unfair capital gains tax hike. Petitioners note that it would make Canada less competitive and have adverse impacts, including limiting access to affordable housing options, straining health care resources, exacerbating financial challenges for farmers and compromising the retirement savings of Canadians.

Routine Proceedings

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of the organization We the Nuclear Free North with 817 signatures. The signatories express their serious and heartfelt concerns regarding the safety of the transportation and storage of nuclear materials through and in their communities in northern Ontario.

Although the decision has already been made, the signatories asked me to present this petition calling on the government to immediately direct the NWMO to stop the siting process for a deep geological repository.

LEBANON

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by popular demand, I will limit myself to just one petition today.

This petition is from people in the Canadian Lebanese community who are very concerned about the impact of Hezbollah's actions on the people of Lebanon. They note how the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, which was started by Hezbollah, has had terrible consequences for the Lebanese people. They note that Hezbollah is a terrorist Iranian regime proxy that acts to serve that regime's ideology against the wishes of the people of Lebanon.

Hezbollah has refused to abide by UN Security Council resolution 1701 by refusing to disarm and refusing to allow the Lebanese government, and the Lebanese armed forces, to take back control of Lebanese territory. The Lebanese people want an end to the colonial domination of their territory by the Iranian regime.

Therefore, residents call on the Government of Canada to seek the immediate disarmament of Hezbollah, the end of aid by the Iranian regime to Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations, and the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty with all Lebanese territory being governed by an elected, sovereign Lebanese government.

CITY CHARTERS

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people in my community have been deeply concerned by instances of provincial overreach into the actions and decisions by our city council, most recently with decisions regarding bike lanes, but also in the past relating to elections and public transit.

Members from my community of Toronto—Danforth have signed a petition asking for the Government of Canada to review how the federal government can support the creation of city charters for large metropolitan areas, such as the City of Toronto, so as to better delineate the authorities between the province and the city.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to ask the House if I could have unanimous consent to table this important petition on mental health.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, on that same point of order, may I ask for consent to extend the time available by five minutes so more members could table their petitions?

● (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on that same point of order, I think there would be leave to allow members who have one petition to table the opportunity to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Members are seeking unanimous consent to allow an additional five minutes for members to table one petition each. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the collaboration in the House right now, especially when it comes to e-petition 5166, which is a privilege for me to table today. The petition has been signed by over 500 people from across Canada and was initiated by Jade Dulle, a mental health advocate who biked across Canada this summer to hear from people who have lived experiences with mental health challenges and to raise awareness about barriers to mental health care.

The petitioners highlight the prevalence of mental health disorders in Canada and the lack of a national framework for mental health care. They are also calling on the Government of Canada to collaborate with the provinces and territories to finally develop a universal mental health care system that would ensure all Canadians receive support for their mental health concerns and to commit to adequate federal funding to facilitate its successful implementation.

INSECTICIDES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this petition deals with the concerns of constituents that we are, globally, losing our pollinators. Bees are essential for agricultural production and biodiversity. The petitioners specifically call on the Government of Canada, for the sake of our bees and for food security, to follow Europe's lead, adhere to the precautionary principle and ban the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in Canada.

BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on the subject of a basic income guarantee demonstration project in the province of Prince Edward Island. In November 2020, the Special Committee on Poverty in PEI recommended immediate negotiations with the Government of Canada to implement a basic income guarantee demonstration project for Prince Edward Island. This particular idea has the full support of all the political parties on Prince Edward Island. It would be of significant benefit to Canada, as poverty is a social determinant of health.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to begin immediate negotiations with the Government of Prince Edward Island to develop and implement a basic income guarantee demonstration program in the province of P.E.I. that would be administered, monitored and evaluated for at least five years.

HOUSING

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition on behalf of concerned Canadians who are demanding action in the face of renovations. They are calling on the government to impose a moratorium on renovations and other methods of displacing tenants in pursuit of higher profits, invest in affordable housing operated by non-profit housing providers to ensure there are affordable housing units available for our most vulnerable and stop providing billions of dollars in handouts to corporate landlords who are buying up the existing affordable housing, evicting people and raising rents.

FALUN GONG

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

These petitioners draw attention to the House of Commons to the treatment of Falun Gong, which is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline. The petitioners are concerned about the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners and request that Parliament pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for the end of the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very important petition, signed by many Canadians, asking for the leader of the Conservative Party to get a security clearance. Petitioners highlight the issues of extortion and murder taking place and all forms of foreign interference. They ask that the leader of the Conservative Party take it upon himself to be more responsible and get the security clearance. That is a very important issue, and I suspect petitioners are curious as to why he might not be doing that. Maybe it is that he is hiding something from his past.

* * *

● (1620)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 3125 and 3130.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 3125—**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:**

With regard to the cap imposed by the government on the percentage of for-profit spaces as part of its Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with Ontario: (a) is the government going to accept the request from the province of Ontario to remove the cap, and, if not, why not; (b) if the answer to (a) is negative, how does the government justify removing the cap for certain other provinces, including New Brunswick; (c) what is the government's reaction to reports that the Peel Region had to turn down 2,000 child care spaces as a result of the cap; and (d) what is the government's estimate of the number of child care spaces throughout Ontario that have had to be turned down or otherwise not brought to fruition as a result of the cap?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through budget 2021, the Government of Canada is investing more than \$27 billion over five years (2021-22 through 2025-26) to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care, ELCC, system with provinces and territories, PTs. When combined with other investments, including in indigenous early learning and child care, IELCC, up to \$30 billion will be invested in support of ELCC over the same period. The goal is for families in Canada to have access to regulated ELCC for an average cost of \$10 a day by March 2026.

On March 27, 2022, the governments of Canada and Ontario entered into the mutually agreed-upon Canada–Ontario Canada-wide early learning and child care agreement to deliver on average \$10-a-day child care for Ontario families by the end of March 2026 and support the creation of 86,000 new licensed spaces by the end of 2026.

As per section 2.1 of the agreement, Canada and Ontario committed to a number of objectives and targets related to access to ELCC.

Ontario commits to using federal funding to increase the net number of licensed spaces for children under age six by flowing funds by the end of fiscal year 2025-26 to support the creation of 76,700 spaces, from 2019 levels, by March 31, 2026, and 86,000 child care spaces, from 2019 levels, by December 31, 2026.

In creating these child care spaces, Ontario commits that federal funding will be exclusively used to support licensed child care and that federal funding will be used predominantly to support the creation of not-for-profit child care spaces to ensure that the existing proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children age 0 to 5 will be maintained or increased by the end of this agreement.

For further clarity, at the end of this agreement, the proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children age 0 to 5 compared to the total number of licensed child care spaces for children age 0 to 5 will be 70% or higher.

In addition, as noted by the Government of Ontario in its March 28, 2022, news release announcing the Canada-wide agreement, the agreement includes the “protection of all for-profit and non-profit child care spaces, helping to support predominantly female entrepreneurs across the province who provide high-quality child care services.”

Ontario will receive approximately \$10.2 billion in federal investments to support its commitments as per the agreement, including commitments to support the creation of 76,700 new affordable child care spaces and lower child care fees to an average of \$10 a day by March 2026, and creating a total of 86,000 spaces by December 31, 2026. This \$10.2 billion of federal funding is in addition to other federal investments such as approximately \$765 million through the Canada-Ontario early learning and child care agreement, 2021 to 2025; close to \$150 million through the Canada-Ontario early childhood workforce funding agreement, 2021 to 2022; and over \$135 million through the 2023-26 Canada-Ontario ELCC infrastructure agreement. In total, Ontario is scheduled to receive over \$11.3 billion in federal funding between 2021-22 to 2025-26 to support child care in the province.

On August 15, the Government of Ontario announced a new parent fee cap of \$22 a day along with a new cost-based funding formula for child care operators enrolled in the Canada-wide ELCC system, both of which will come into effect in January 2025.

On October 21, Jill Dunlop, Ontario Minister of Education, wrote to the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development to note the high interest of for-profit providers in some service system managers in Ontario to join the Canada-wide ELCC system. In this letter, Minister Dunlop highlighted challenges in creating child care spaces in particular regions due to the 70-30 ratio of not-for-profit to for-profit spaces that Ontario committed to uphold in the Canada-Ontario Canada-wide ELCC agreement. The Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario are in ongoing discussions to support the successful implementation of the Canada-wide ELCC agreement.

Canada-wide ELCC agreements predominantly support not-for-profit, public and family-based child care providers, but given the unique ELCC landscape in each province and territory, the Government of Canada recognizes that licensed for-profit providers also play a role. Provincial and territorial early learning and child care systems vary in terms of the proportion of ELCC spaces that are not-for-profit or for-profit.

Routine Proceedings

While Ontario and Canada agreed to keep the proportion of not-for-profit child care spaces at 70% or higher, in New Brunswick, the ratio of for-profit providers is higher than not-for-profit. Under the Canada-New Brunswick Canada-wide ELCC agreement, New Brunswick committed to creating predominantly not-for-profit child care spaces, e.g. 2,000 of the 3,400 spaces to be created. All new child care spaces created are part of the province's designation system, which ensures high quality standards and includes a market fee threshold to control fees charged to parents.

Due to the high demand and challenges faced in creating not-for-profit child care spaces in rural areas and in francophone settings in New Brunswick, additional flexibility was agreed to, allowing for the creation of a limited number of additional designated spaces in the for-profit sector in rural areas and francophone settings and as part of New Brunswick's target to create 3,400 designated child care spaces by March 2026, as per the Canada-New Brunswick Canada-wide ELCC agreement.

Question No. 3130—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the Expression of Interest published by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) for the commercial leasing of a building at Joyceville Institution: (a) what is the specific nature of the unidentified "steel clad structure" to be leased under this Expression of Interest; (b) what type of commercial activities does the steel clad structure have the potential to accommodate; (c) how many offenders would the commercial operation be required to employ; (d) what would be the hourly rate paid by the lessee to the CSC per offender hour worked; (e) what would be the hourly rate received by the offender per hour worked; (f) what types of vocational training and industry-approved certification for offenders would the lessee be required to provide; (g) what are the estimated costs of providing security for commercial activities undertaken within the prison, and who will be responsible for these costs;

(h) what scope of work and specific repairs have been identified for the "fit up" to the "as is" buildings that the lessee would be responsible for; (i) what are the current estimated costs for the "fit up" to the "as is" buildings that the lessee would be responsible for; (j) what specific measures will the CSC take to ensure that any commercial activities undertaken on this property will remain cost-neutral to taxpayers; (k) what is the calculated or estimated monthly market rent that would be charged to the lessee; (l) what are the calculated or estimated monthly costs for utilities that would be charged to the lessee; (m) what are the calculated or estimated total monthly expenses for rent, utilities, and cost recovery that would be charged to the lessee; (n) what specific federal, provincial, and municipal regulations and statutes will the lessee be required to comply with; (o) what is the current estimated market value of the steel clad structure;

(p) what is the current estimated market value of the beef stock barn and paddock; (q) what is the current estimated market value of the cattle chute; (r) since 2022, what specific list of maintenance, repairs, and improvements have been conducted by the CSC on the buildings, including any new or upgraded equipment or technologies that have been added to the steel clad structure, beef stock barn and paddock, and cattle chute; (s) since 2022, what funds have been spent on maintenance, repairs, and improvements to the steel clad structure, beef stock barn and paddock, and cattle chute; (t) since 2022, what funds have been spent on utilities, procurement disbursements and fees, consultant fees, travel, inspections, assessments, building condition reports, as well as drafting, translating, and publishing the Expression of Interest for the steel clad structure, beef stock barn, paddock, and cattle chute; and (u) what is the calculated or estimated cost of disposal or divestment of the buildings?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the steel-clad structure was constructed in 1958. Minor additions were added to the building in 1973 and 1975. A major addition and alteration work was completed in 1987 which included the basement, refrigeration facilities, loading facilities and

exterior cladding. The building was previously leased and operated as an abattoir but is currently vacant.

With regard to part (b), it was previously leased and operated as an abattoir. The building has the potential to accommodate commercial activities that benefit not only the offenders in CSC's custody, but also the community as a whole.

With regard to parts (c) to (e), the number of offenders required for employment would vary depending on the type of operation. The hourly rate paid by the lessee to CSC per offender hour worked and the hourly rate received by the offender per hour worked would be according to CSC inmate pay levels or work release minimum wage.

With regard to part (f), the types of vocational training and industry-approved certification for offenders that the lessee would be required to provide would be dependent on the type of operation.

With regard to parts (g) to (i), the calculated or estimated costs would be dependent on the type of operation and would be the responsibility of the lessee.

With regard to part (j), specific cost-recovery measures would be included in the lease and would be dependent on the type of operation to ensure that any commercial activities undertaken on this property will remain cost-neutral to taxpayers.

With regard to parts (k) to (m), the calculated or estimated costs would be dependent on the type of operation and would be the responsibility of the lessee.

With regard to part (n), this would be dependent on the type of operation. The lessee would be responsible for ensuring that all federal, provincial and municipal regulations governing the nature of their business are adhered to.

With regard to parts (o) to (q), CSC does not have estimations for the current market value of these buildings. The market values are only determined during the disposal process, lease or sale, and there are no disposals currently planned for these buildings.

With regard to part (r), since 2022, the work completed at the steel-clad structure includes the repair of the roof penetrations, power washing and disinfection of the building, replacement of the overhead doors, repairs of the stairwell retaining wall, LED light upgrades of outside wall packs, emergency light and exit signs upgrades, replacement of the interior steel door, replacement of the door and lock hardware, an accessibility study, replacement of the building heaters, replacement of the plumbing fixtures. No work has been completed since 2022 on the beef stock barn and paddock, and cattle chute.

With regard to part (s), since 2022, \$153,216.79 has been spent on maintenance, repairs and improvements to the steel-clad structure, beef stock barn, paddock and cattle chute.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (t), since 2022, \$4,809.30 has been spent on utilities and \$898.08 for drafting, translating, and publishing the expression of interest for the steel-clad structure, beef stock barn, pad-dock and cattle chute.

With regard to part (u), the disposal costs for sales vary widely depending on factors like building type, condition, legal fees, and compliance requirements, typically ranging from \$75,000 and \$250,000 per transaction, making each case unique in its final cost assessment.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if a revised answer to Question No. 3107, originally tabled on December 9, 2024, and the answers to Question Nos. 3122 to 3124, 3126 to 3129, 3131 and 3132 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 3107—**Mr. Garnett Genuis:**

With regard to Canada's relationship with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): (a) what are the complete details of all development assistance spending intended to have an impact in the DRC over the last two years, including, for each spending item, the (i) amount spent, (ii) recipient and any additional delivery partners, (iii) allocation timeline, (iv) amount spent on each item; (b) what are the complete details of all development assistance spending intended to have an impact on Congolese refugees outside of the DRC over the last two years, including, for each item, the (i) amount spent, (ii) recipient and any additional delivery partners, (iii) allocation timeline, (iv) amount spent on each item; (c) what is the position of the government regarding the activities of the March 23 Movement (M23) rebels; (d) what is the position of the government regarding other nations supporting the M23 rebels; and (e) what is the position of the government regarding the end of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3122—**Mr. Gerald Soroka:**

With regard to Parks Canada's fire mitigation measures: with the exception of Jasper National Park, what are the details of any other instance in the last 10 years where Parks Canada analyzed, considered, studied, or received a proposal to conduct a prescribed fire or other fire mitigation measure but did not end up doing so, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name of the national park or other area impacted, (iv) mitigation action proposed or considered, (v) reason for not taking the mitigation action, (vi) title of the person responsible for the decision not to take the mitigation action?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3123—**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:**

With regard to travellers entering Canada, broken down by month since January 1, 2024: (a) how many travellers entered Canada, in total, and broken down by type of point of entry (air, road, marine); and (b) for each category in (a), how many and what percentage of travellers (i) submitted their declaration through the ArriveCAN application prior to arrival, (ii) arrived without using the ArriveCAN application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3124—**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to chip technology and devices containing chip technology imported from foreign countries, specifically those with which Canada is not allied: (a) what

safeguards, if any, are currently in place to ensure that such technology is safe and does not contain any elements, such as remote code execution elements, which could be detrimental to Canada at some point in the future; (b) what is the government doing, if anything, to address the discovered vulnerability in the Microchip Advanced Software Framework which exposes devices to the risk of remote code execution; (c) in addition to the vulnerability in (b), what other vulnerabilities has the government identified related to these chips and their connectivity to the internet; (d) for each vulnerability in (c), what action, if any, has the government taken to address the vulnerability; (e) what measures does the government have in place to address risks, including firmware updates or remote patches, that could introduce new vulnerabilities after deployment; (f) does the government conduct regular penetration testing of imported devices before approving their use in public infrastructure, and, if so, who has been tasked with overseeing such testing; and (g) does the government mandate compliance with international cybersecurity standards or frameworks when procuring or deploying such devices, and, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3126—**Mrs. Tracy Gray:**

With regard to the government's use of the third-party contractor The Right Door Consulting & Solutions Inc. since January 1, 2016: what are the details, broken down by department, of travel expenses incurred by the government related to contracts signed with The Right Door Consulting & Solutions Inc., including the (i) dates, costs, and flight details of all flights expensed by The Right Door Consulting & Solutions Inc., (ii) dates, costs, and locations of lodgings expensed by The Right Door Consulting & Solutions Inc., (iii) dates, costs, and items charged as per diems expensed by The Right Door Consulting & Solutions Inc.?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3127—**Mrs. Tracy Gray:**

With regard to Employment and Social Development Canada: (a) what are the details of travel expenses incurred by the government related to third-party management-consulting contractors since January 1, 2019, including the (i) dates, costs, and flight details of all flights expensed by third-party contractors, (ii) dates, costs, and locations of lodgings expensed by third-party contractors, (iii) dates, costs, and items charged as per diems expensed by third-party contractors; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a)(i) to (a)(iii) by (i) month, (ii) quarter, (iii) third-party contractor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3128—**Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the CRA: (a) how many toll-free telephone lines are available for taxpayers to contact the agency, broken down by purpose or business line; (b) what are the toll-free telephone numbers in (a); (c) for callers who call each of the numbers in (b), what has been the average wait time to speak with an agent, for each of the last five years; (d) what percentage of callers to the numbers in (b) received a message that the line was full and they should call back later, for each of the last five years, broken down by month and year; and (e) what percentage of calls to the numbers in (b) were disconnected before an agent could answer, for each of the last five years, broken down by month and year?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 3129—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the National Housing Strategy: (a) what funding programs or streams are dedicated to, or include streams or criteria for, rural or remote communities, and how much funding has been allocated for and disbursed by each one, broken down by year; (b) what is the population cap, or analogous constraint, on applications to funding programs or streams dedicated to, or which consider the recipient's location as, rural or remote communities, broken down by funding program or stream and year; (c) what municipalities, groups, or projects received funding based, in whole or in part, on the location of the recipient being in an area defined as rural or remote, and how much funding was received by each recipient, broken down by year, province, funding program or stream, and rural or remote designation; (d) which municipalities received funding from funds dedicated to rural or remote communities, and how much funding was received by each recipient, broken down by year, province, funding program or stream, and rural or remote designation; (e) which municipalities, which are not designated communities, received funding from funds dedicated to rural or remote communities, and how much funding was received by each recipient, broken down by year, province, funding program or stream, and project or application;

(f) in total, how much funding has been provided through funding programs or streams dedicated to, or which consider the recipient's location as, rural or remote communities, to municipalities with populations of fewer than 35,000, broken down by year, province, funding program or stream, and recipient; (g) what methods or figures are used to determine or track the number of homeless people in areas or municipalities with populations of fewer than 35,000; (h) how many people were homeless in areas or municipalities with populations of fewer than 35,000, since 2015, broken down by year, province, and municipality or area; (i) what methods or figures are used to determine or track the number of homeless people who are in, or migrate to, urban areas who are from areas or municipalities with populations of fewer than 35,000 and migrated to an urban area due to homelessness; and (j) how many people were homeless in urban areas who are from areas or municipalities with populations of fewer than 35,000 and migrated to an urban area due to homelessness, since 2015, broken down by year, province, urban municipality or area, and originating municipality or area with a population of fewer than 35,000?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3131—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the cow barn under construction by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) at Joyceville Institution and the dairy research program: (a) what was the original anticipated cost of building a cow barn at the time of the June 2018 announcement, and what was the anticipated cost of building the barn at the time the construction contract was awarded in March 2022; (b) what was the original projected date of barn completion at the time of the start of construction in April 2022, and what is the current projected date of completion of the barn; (c) what is the total amount of spending on the barn construction to date, and what is the total projected cost to achieve full barn completion; (d) beyond the barn construction costs, what is the amount of spending to date on procurement fees, consultancy fees (design, engineering, geotechnical, environmental, etc.), travel and meals, contingencies, project management, contract administration, and dairy equipment and technology for the cow barn since 2018; (e) since 2018, what has been the total amount of spending on renovating the existing barns at Collins Bay Institution as temporary housing for the dairy cows, heifers, and calves;

(f) since 2018, what has been the total amount of spending on animal feed, veterinary care, and carcass removal for the cows in temporary housing; (g) what is the total amount of spending on the acquisition of dairy cows, heifers, and calves since 2018, and of this, what is the total amount paid to the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op specifically; (h) what is the total number of dairy cows, heifers, and calves purchased since 2018, and of this, how many were purchased from the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op specifically; (i) what is the current number of dairy cows owned by the CSC, and what is the projected cost of future livestock acquisitions to begin the dairy research program; (j) what is the current projected date for barn occupation by cows, and what is the current projected start date for dairy operations in the barn;

(k) what specific research will be conducted in the barn, and what amount of quota has been provided for the dairy research; (l) what are the total projected monthly revenues to be generated by the CSC from the dairy research program, broken down by source; (m) what are the total projected monthly expenses for the dairy research program, broken down by source, including staff salaries, veterinary care, feed, waste management, milk transportation, utilities, facility and equipment maintenance, internet fees, licensing, inspections, security and supervision; (n) how many cows will be milked and what volume of milk will be produced when the dairy research program reaches full quota production; (o) by what date does Dairy

Farmers of Ontario require the CSC to reach full quota production, and when does the CSC anticipate reaching full quota production; (p) what specific accommodations and changes have been made to the barn design and construction to meet McGill's research requirements and standards, and what have been the costs of these accommodations and changes to date;

(q) what other accommodations and changes have been made to meet McGill's research requirements and standards, including renovation of additional facilities at the Joyceville site for dry cows, calves, and equipment isolation sheds, and what have been the costs of these accommodations and changes to date; (r) where will the milk from the CSC's dairy research program be sold, at what price, and will the milk enter commercial streams sold to the public; (s) how many staff will be employed directly in the cow barn and in which shifts, broken down by CSC staff and McGill staff; (t) how many offenders will be employed directly in the cow research barn; (u) what specific jobs will offenders engage in as part of the dairy research program specifically, and what vocational training and industry trade certifications will be associated with offender participation in the dairy research program specifically;

(v) who are the members of the Animal Care Committee overseeing the dairy research program and what financial compensation, if any, will they receive; (w) what specific measures will be in place to preserve institutional security and privacy, biosecurity, animal welfare, regulatory compliance, and McGill's good standing with the Canadian Council on Animal Care; (x) what is the volume of the manure lagoon and what is the volume of liquid and solid waste that will be produced by the dairy research program; (y) once complete, what is the projected or estimated market value of the cow barn; and (z) what is the estimated cost of disposal or investment of the cow barn?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3132—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to federal funding for environmental projects within the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, since the 2005-06 fiscal year: broken down by fiscal year, recipient, project, total contribution, funding program, and type of funding, what have been the federal investments in (i) terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, (ii) ecosystem and habitat protection, conservation, and restoration, (iii) species recovery, including, but not limited to, salmon, (iv) Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, (v) green infrastructure, (vi) conservation financing, (vii) energy efficiency, (viii) clean transportation, (ix) living natural resources and land use, (x) sustainable water and wastewater management, (xi) pollution prevention and control, (xii) climate change mitigation and adaptation, (xiii) the circular economy?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 9 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was probably the longest petitions segment we have had in a long time, but I am glad everybody had a chance to deliver petitions signed by their constituents, or signed by their EDAs. Some of our friends across the way probably put them together, but nonetheless, who am I to judge?

Why are we here? We are here once again talking about SDTC, the Liberal green slush fund. I think this is the third time I have had a chance to speak to this. Every time we get a chance to speak to this, we go back into our ridings and we hear more anger and frustration from our constituents regarding the NDP-Liberal government. I will just warn the Speaker that he is probably going to get a lot of points of order from our friends down along the way. I see my friend, another B.C. counterpart from the NDP down there, who likes to filibuster. He likes to take up a lot of the Conservatives' time and protest all the time about all the bad stuff that us Conservatives do, yet he has propped up the government for four years now.

The NDP-Liberal government has now frozen the business of the House for weeks because of its green slush fund scandal. We have been unable to deal with any of the pressing issues facing Canadians, because it refuses to release the documents, the unredacted documents, detailing over \$400 million of taxpayer funds that were handed to Liberal insiders. That is the honest to goodness truth. There were over 186 conflicts of interest. A senior civil servant slammed the Liberal government's outright incompetence. The Auditor General said that the industry minister did not sufficiently monitor contracts given to Liberal insiders.

As a matter of fact, the chair of SDTC directed funds right to her own organization. That is what we are talking about today. That is what we have been talking about for the last weeks, or months, really. It is shocking. I have been a member of Parliament for nine years, and I was elected during the sunny ways campaign, where the member for Papineau stood before Canadians and said that when he was Prime Minister, his government would follow the law and be the most open government in the history of our country.

What have we seen is scandal after scandal after scandal. What is shocking to me is how the NDP just fell in line with the Liberals and have really carried the water for them many times. It is always funny when pieces of legislation come before the House and we hear, "Just get it to committee. We will do good work at committee and everybody can have a say in it." What we have seen over the last four years, whether it is with the WE scandal, SDTC or so many more, is that the NDP has carried the water for the corrupt Liberal government.

Privilege

New Democrats stand up and like to be holier than thou and very sanctimonious in their deliberations and interventions. They say, "How dare they?" Their leader puffs up his chest and says, "I'm right here, bro" and is on social media talking tough. He did a press conference before QP today, where he was all tough talk and what have we.

The leader of the NDP stood before Canadians and ripped up the agreement between the two parties, and then quickly taped it up and said, "I'm sorry, dear. I didn't mean to do that. I love you." Every step of the way, he has propped up these guys. Just recently, he once again chose the Prime Minister over Canadians. It is shocking time and time again. He says that he is against the carbon tax, yet he has voted 24 times, maybe even more, in favour of it.

Liberals could end this right now by handing over the documents Parliament requested so that we can allow the RCMP to do its job and investigate the Liberal cronies at SDTC, but they will not do that.

• (1625)

Instead, Liberals stand before the cameras and say, "If only the Conservatives would stop doing what they are doing." We are the only ones doing our job and making sure that the government is held to account for \$400 million. I see the gallery is filling up again. It is Wednesday afternoon after question period and we have a semi-full gallery. I want to let the people in the gallery know that it is \$400 million.

What do the Liberals want us to do? They want us to send it to committee, to let the committee study it and see if there was any malfeasance or bad stuff going on. I have said before that, if somebody steals from you, Mr. Speaker, do you go to a committee or do you go to the RCMP? That is why we are here today.

Another thing I want to talk about today, one that is near and dear to me, is another crisis that is taking place, and that is the opioid crisis. The reason I bring that up is for us to imagine how far that \$400 million could have gone to help the opioid crisis. How many beds could that \$400 million have built?

The Liberals stand and say it was the Conservatives who cut all the jobs at CBSA, but in 2014-15, one of the highest amounts of funding went to the CBSA. Once the Liberal government and the Prime Minister were in place, in 2016-17, over 1,000 jobs were cut. Over \$440 million were cut. It is in the Liberals' own public accounts. No one has to believe me. Canadians can bring up the public accounts and see for themselves.

Privilege

Let us get back to what I was talking about: the opioid crisis. We are powerless to stop illicit drugs from coming into our country. Over 47,000 Canadians have tragically lost their lives to the opioid crisis since 2016, and that situation continues to worsen. In British Columbia, the decriminalization of hard drugs was touted as a solution to reduce stigma and save lives, yet the policy failed. It failed to deliver the intended results. Instead, communities have seen increased drug use in public spaces, needles outside of schools and in playgrounds, public disorder, diversion to youth and organized crime, and no meaningful reductions in overdose deaths.

I am going to say this again because I believe it bears repeating. Overdose is the leading cause of death for youth aged 10 to 18 in the province of British Columbia. That is staggering. I ask Canadians listening in and those in the gallery to look around their neighbourhoods and communities. Do their communities look the same as they did nine years ago? They do not.

I can say that it was not that way before the Prime Minister, and it will not be that way when we elect a strong Conservative prime minister who will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The sole focus of the next Conservative government is cleaning up the mess that the Liberal government has made.

We cannot talk about the opioid crisis without talking about safe supply programs, where these government-funded drugs are being diverted and sold illegally, undermining their purpose and fuelling addiction in vulnerable populations, including our youth. The situation is further exacerbated by the flow of deadly substances like fentanyl across our porous borders.

I talked about this earlier. Liberals like to blame Stephen Harper and the former Conservative government, yet it is the government that has been in power for nine years that cut funds and jobs at the CBSA for consecutive years when it took power. The Liberals like to blame everybody but themselves.

- (1630)

Despite clear evidence of dangers posed by these substances, enforcement and border controls remain insufficient to stem the tide. Clearly, stopping fentanyl from entering our country and destroying our communities is not a priority for the government. The government has spent billions on policies that perpetuate addiction, without addressing the root causes or providing support for treatment and recovery.

I will bring it back to the topic we are talking about today: the SDTC fund, where over \$440 million of Canadian taxpayer funds was stolen and divvied out by a Liberal-appointed committee to the chair, to other friends and to families and colleagues of the Liberals. Canadians should be outraged at this. How can the Liberals continue to ignore the pleas of families and communities devastated by this crisis? They have had nine years, and all they have been doing is making it worse.

Bill C-5 is a classic example of the Prime Minister's hug-a-thug, revolving-door criminal justice policy that is making our communities unsafe. Bill C-5 eliminated mandatory jail time for certain violent offenders. We want jail, not bail, for criminals who will endanger Canadians. This is why we introduced a motion in the House this week calling on the NDP-Liberal government to reverse Bill

C-5, bring in harsher jail sentences for drug kingpins, ban precursor chemicals that organized crime groups use to make deadly fentanyl, scan the containers at our ports and put more boots on the ground at our borders. Ninety-nine per cent of the containers that come through our borders are not scanned. It is unbelievable.

Unfortunately, to Canadians' shock and awe, the Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition voted against it. It voted against the safety of our communities and of Canadians. I ask this of any Canadian who is watching right now: Is this the government they elected in 2015? Is this what they expected? Many Canadians took the bait, hook, line and sinker. The Prime Minister likes to stand before Canadians, put his hand on his heart and dab away a fake tear. He has lied, misled Canadians all along the way.

I cannot talk about the opioid crisis without talking about young Brianna MacDonald. For those who might be just tuning in and those in the gallery, Brianna MacDonald was a 12-year-old. She was on the streets of Abbotsford. She turned 13 on July 15. That is my son's birthday. She died on August 23 in a homeless encampment from overdose. That is my daughter's birthday. Lance Charles, her dad, and Sarah MacDonald were here. Over 30 times, they took Brianna to the hospital to plead for help, for health care, for the doctors or somebody to intervene and help Brianna. What were they given? They were told that if Brianna wanted to kill herself, it was her prerogative. Instead of help, Brianna was given needles and instructions on how to do the drugs better. She was 13 years of age.

I cannot talk about the Liberal government and its failed soft-on-crime, hug-a-thug policies, without talking about Mr. Hubbard in my community. Mr. Hubbard is a senior. He was out in the morning and returned home in the afternoon to find his place being looted by criminals to fuel their drug addiction. He tried stopping them. What happened was that they drove over him, dragged him down the road and left him for dead.

Privilege

• (1635)

We are tough in northern B.C., in our region. Mr. Hubbard lived, but he has had reconstructive surgery on his face, and he almost lost his arm. He has to endure more operations down the road. However, the same day this incident took place, the RCMP caught a couple of the perpetrators. Within 24 hours, they were back out on the street. It is crazy, but that is what we are seeing time and again from this hug-a-thug Liberal Prime Minister and his friends in the NDP. They talk a big game; they always talk about doing the right thing, yet they fail Canadians every time they get a chance.

We talked about the \$400 million of taxpayer funds taken out of the pockets of Canadians and handed to Liberal insiders. We talked about the 186 conflicts of interest that were found by the Auditor General. Again, this debate could end right now if the Liberals just turned over the documents, unredacted, so that the RCMP could have a look at them and see what went on. Instead, they continue to try to cover their tracks and defend their corrupt friends. Meanwhile, Canada is broken. Time and again, we receive messages from our constituents, who are frustrated: “Can't you do anything about the government? Can't you call an election? Can't you force an election?” We are trying.

Canadians are struggling just to get by while the Liberals are focused on enriching their corrupt friends. However, it should not surprise anyone. The legacy of the Prime Minister is one of chaos, scandal, corruption and cover-up, and it did not start today with the green slush fund. It has been a nine-year pattern of dodging accountability and transparency. Did he not say that his was going to be the most transparent government in the history of the country? Somehow, the NDP and the Bloc are still supporting the Prime Minister.

I could go on for hours about the scandals and conflicts of interest that the Prime Minister and the Liberal government have been caught in: the Aga Khan, WE Charity, SNC-Lavalin, blackface, clam scam, arrive scam, GC Strategies, cash for access, gropegate, elbowgate, surf is up in Tofino, the Emergencies Act, sole-sourced contracts, foreign interference and the condo on Billionaires' Row with his media buddy.

The latest scandal to rock the government is, of course, the other Randy. First, he found himself in hot water when texts emerged of a Randy texting the business partners of a shady, fraudulent company. If anybody has seen these text messages, they know that it is an actual shakedown of \$500,000. It is a strict no-no for Crown ministers to be caught bidding on federal contracts, so the former minister explained that it was the actions of another Randy, an individual who, as far as we know now, does not exist. His partner said that it was autocorrect nine times. What a farce.

Honestly, the excuses we get from the Liberal front bench on their misgivings is really farcical. I am sure they are going to write a movie about it at some point; all of these scandals and the corruption that take place are really out of a Hollywood script.

All I have to say is that it was not this way before the current Prime Minister. It will not be this way when Canadians elect a strong Conservative prime minister who will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

• (1640)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to allow the member to correct some of the numbers that he gave out.

The member said in his speech that we eliminated border jobs, which is completely untrue. When Stephen Harper came into power, there were 14,833 CBSA employees. When he left, there were 13,774, which is a reduction of 1,059 CBSA employees—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, why are people heckling me when I am just trying to give out data?

Not only did we restore all those jobs, but we also created an additional 371. Therefore, I just want to give the member the opportunity to correct the record, because the numbers certainly do not reflect the statement that he made.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, the hon. colleague is misleading Canadians. I am reading right from the public accounts, and it says that for 2014-15, expenditures under a Conservative government were over \$2 billion. When the Liberals took government, in 2015-16 and 2016-17, over \$400 million was cut from the CBSA, including 1,000 jobs. It is in the public accounts for 2012-17, CBSA spending by program. That parliamentary secretary can look it up himself right there.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the union also identified the 1,100 jobs that were eliminated from CBSA by Stephen Harper and many of the member's colleagues who sit with him here today. The jobs included the sniffer dogs and the people doing intelligence research. They were the frontline workers, men and women who also had to go on strike to get proper protection in the workplace. Therefore, the suggestion that the Conservatives had nothing to do with that and did not take away frontline officers is erroneous. That Conservatives are insisting on attacking the union is outrageous, because the men and women on our front line, protecting our border, deserve the proper supports and protection. They have press releases, press conferences and numerous interventions in the House on this. For the Conservatives to continue to run this line of attack on the union is rather unfortunate.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Privilege

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, as I am heckled by the member right over here, I simply ask this: Why do the Conservatives continue to attack the union when we know that the CBSA is 2,000 to 3,000 officers short and, at the same time, it was the member's former government that got rid of the detector dog program and the sniffer dog program, which were some of the best programs in the world?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, talk about unhinged and erratic behaviour. Perhaps he is feeling the heat because he is complicit in all the Liberal scandals that have taken place over the last four years. His Twitter-tough leader puffs up his chest, stands before Canadians and says he is going to rip up the contract.

We will take no lessons from the NDP, which has absolutely decimated my province and has no clue what it would do if it ever formed government. The New Democrats are again going to be reduced to the third party in the House, or even the fourth. They are complicit in the Liberal scandals and the Prime Minister's scandals, so we will take no lessons from the New Democrats at all.

• (1645)

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after carefully listening to my colleague's speech, I would encourage him to update his talking points. The Bloc Québécois supported the non-confidence motion against the government on Monday. My colleague needs to get that through his head. We know that the Conservative Party has little to offer in the way of constructive contributions and keeps repeating the same thing, but it needs to be a little more diligent.

The second point that my colleague needs to update is this. The Bloc Québécois did not vote in favour of the Conservative Party's motion to eliminate the goods and services tax, or GST, on new homes because the Conservative motion expressly stated that the provinces would be asked to do likewise. A little more diligence is needed from the Conservative Party, a party that touts provincial and Quebec autonomy. The Conservatives say they want to ask Quebec to manage its own tax policy.

I would like my colleague to explain something. If it is serious about that, why is the Conservative Party trying to dictate what the provinces and Quebec should do with their tax policy? How long has that been part of the Conservative Party line?

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, it is as serious as a heart attack.

I stand corrected. I thank our hon. colleague from the Bloc for standing with us in that last confidence vote. Aside from that, I will cede the floor to the next question.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remember the scandal that brought down the former Liberal government of Paul Martin, with the ad scam; that scandal was only \$80 million to \$90 million. This is \$400 million of taxpayer money that was stolen and given to Liberal insiders and friends. The House has been seized with this for months now.

How bad are the unredacted documents? How much must they implicate Liberal friends and family that the Liberals have seized

the House and refuse to release the unredacted documents to the RCMP? How many must be going to jail?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, that is the million-dollar question right there, or the \$440-million question. How bad is it and where did the money go?

We know \$440 million of taxpayer funds was siphoned away from the fund and it went to the Liberal chair. It went to her business. It went to other members of that committee's businesses. What did it fund? I believe it funded a Chinese company, an electric car company, that has egregious human rights issues. There are other companies that it funded, probably more that are Liberal friends.

This is the question we have: How bad is it that the Liberals will not release those documents? They have to be running scared.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can see Conservative misinformation in real time, in the exchange between the member and me earlier. I questioned him about CBSA officers being removed under Stephen Harper's government. He said, "No, no, I looked at the public accounts. I have the dollar figure here. I have the number of people." Admittedly, he should not have given away the years, because he exposed himself, but he said from "2012 to 2017".

From 2012 until 2015, it was Stephen Harper in government. The member admitted, in his answer, that the jobs were eliminated under Stephen Harper. He is right. He is right about the jobs being eliminated during that five-year period. He is just wrong about who was in government during that time.

Will he now, given the fact that he has given the numbers himself, admit it was Stephen Harper who eliminated those jobs?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, the hon. colleague said I exposed myself. I have been a member for nine years, and my recollection is that only a Liberal MP exposed himself, three times, and actually was punted out for that.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I will not go down the path of whimsy and folly of this guy over here. He stands up all the time and is hopeful that he is going to get called to the front bench, and he is only going backward.

With that, I am just not going to go down the path with him.

• (1650)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, just to continue, this is a very serious issue because our men and women on the front lines, every single day, put their lives at risk. What the NDP has proposed is to eliminate the 1932 clause that restricted the CBSA officers; to get up to 3,000 officers, who are right now missing online, in terms of the frontline services; and to bring back the detector dogs that were cut, as well as other measures.

Why does the hon. member keep attacking the workers by denying what Stephen Harper and he and his colleagues did in the chamber?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, only a Conservative elected government, under our leader, is going to arm our frontline officers and make sure our borders are less porous, make sure that they have the tools they need to do their job. There is only one party in the House that takes this seriously and it is the Conservatives, and we will do it when we elect a Conservative government.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like a bit of clarification as per the standing orders. When you are standing, I should be sitting. I see that you are standing, so I am sure that you are giving me permission to stand. Should multiple members be standing at one time or is it a standing order that one person should be standing, who is recognized by the Chair?

Can you please reference a standing order to confirm what the rules are?

Mr. Todd Doherty: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, back in 2021, I suffered a horrendous leg injury that has hampered me, and so it has been commonplace, through the Speaker, this Speaker and others, that in between questions and answers, I am allowed to stand because of the injury to my leg.

If the member wants to take this further, she can come and talk to me in private—

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the update, and I want to clarify that the hon. member did have the accident and we have allowed the hon. member to stand because he cannot sit and it is very difficult for him. We make accommodations for those who have some kind of impairment.

The hon. member for Waterloo.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I rose on a genuine point of order. I am just asking for clarification. I do not know people's medical histories, and for that member to imply that I was asking something out of turn is not the case. I am just trying to ask what the rules are. Can you please clarify the rules?

It is great that accommodations are being made. I am confident that Liberal members would want to see those accommodations be made.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for asking. Again, normally members would stay seated while the Speaker is standing to address the crowd.

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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Ethics; the hon member for Calgary Shepard, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Resuming debate, the hon member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today, and always, to address the House.

Privilege

I want to start by drilling down on the concept of common sense. Members in the House, and those who follow the debates elsewhere, will know that Conservatives speak a lot about the concept of common sense. We have been highlighting the importance of restoring common sense in government decision-making.

I have observed that our critics across the way, and some of their friends online, have responded by denigrating the use of the term “common sense”. Our critics say they do not really know what we mean by common sense. The fact that the government is claiming not to understand what is meant or implied by common sense actually, I think, demonstrates the problem in substantial measure. The concept of common sense has a history and a meaning that are worth reflecting on and that used to be well understood. The fact that the government, in particular, does not know what common sense is shows how far we have gone. However, for the government's benefit, I think it is worth delving a bit into this concept and why it is important to restore common-sense decision-making in this country.

Let me say first, at a general level, that we all know ideas have practical consequences. We can see over time whether an idea works when implemented. A critical test of an idea is the practical consequences it creates in the real world. When we consider, in our policy debates, the validity of an idea, we need to ask whether that idea will work in practice, whether it produces the effects it is intended to produce and whether it contributes to or undermines human flourishing.

Most people in their regular lives hold ideas that they also practise. As they practise the ideas they profess, their lives demonstrate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the ideas they profess and practise. I would see this happen a lot, by the way, thinking back, with friends I had in university. They would develop some idea about human behaviour, maybe through a class, a discussion or something they read, put that idea into practice, and then reap the consequences, thus becoming either an example or a cautionary tale as a result. More often than not, in my recollection, it was a cautionary tale. These were little, but profound, demonstrations of John Stuart Mill's theory on the value of experiments in living: that free people engage in experiments in living, which others can then observe, and the observation of experiments in living leads to the collective formation of norms that work and lead to greater human flourishing.

The things that most people learn and practise in order to live well-ordered, healthy, happy lives are what we have come to call common sense. There is no central repository of the information that we call common sense, but the concept still has profound meaning. It refers to the things most normal people have come to know by experience and perhaps by listening to elders in their lives who have shared from their experience. Experiments in living over time produce general insights that most people recognize as true, the things most people know by experience to be right and sensible.

Privilege

If a person comes up with a new, novel theory, they might well posit that it is true, but they could not consider it common sense. New, novel theories often challenge common sense, and they are often wrong; not always, but the conservatism that we champion on this side of the House is the idea that we should at least be cautious and deferential when implementing changes in order to preserve the common-sense wisdom of the past. A lot of harm has been done through the capricious application of someone's idea of what would be a good and interesting experiment.

Let us consider one example of this in the policy space, so-called modern monetary theory. This is the theory that a government can spend as much as it wants without being constrained by revenue or worried about the consequences. Some way, somehow, modern monetary theory posits that a government can just run massive deficits in perpetuity. Needless to say, proponents of this radical theory would not consider this theory to be common sense. They would not even pretend it was common sense, because it is novel and radical. Even proponents, I think, would acknowledge it is both novel and radical.

I think we can say that, to a substantial extent, modern monetary theory has been tried in Canada by the government, which no longer believes that it ever needs to target the balancing of the budget and has more than doubled our national debt in the last nine years it has been in office.

• (1655)

This radical, novel theory has been tried and I think we can see now, or most people can see, that it has clearly failed. There are many other new and novel theories this government has tried that have failed as well. It tried experimenting with a carbon tax. It tried experimenting with very high levels of non-permanent immigration in the absence of a housing policy to make up for the need that was thus created. It tried experimenting with hard-drug decriminalization. This is just to name a few examples of radical, novel experiments that this government imposed on this great country.

These were experiments in policy and all of them failed. They were ideas that nine years ago might have sounded good to some people in theory, but we no longer need to simply debate these ideas as theory because we can see them in practice and we can see they have failed in practice.

They are also ideas that I think we can say violated common sense. They went against things we know and have known to be true for a long time about the kinds of policies that work and the kinds that do not. The government tried radical new ideas and these radical new ideas did not work. When Conservatives talk about restoring common sense, we mean, precisely, pushing back against these sorts of radical experiments and restoring an application of long-standing wisdom.

We would make decisions that are rooted in the common-sense experience of real people. We would replace the government's weak, weird, woke and wasteful policies with common-sense conservatism, with ideas rooted in the conclusive experience of history and the things normal people know from experience to be true.

I want to make one other observation about common sense, and that is that one of the biggest attacks we see on common sense is

from privileged people who promote their luxury beliefs at the expense of everyone else. Luxury beliefs are ideas promoted by privileged people, often not actually practised by the people promoting them, that confer on the promoter a kind of social recognition and status.

Here are a few examples: rich and privileged people pushing calls to defund the police while themselves relying on private security or living in gated communities; politicians denouncing choice in education while finding workarounds for their own families; and leaders pushing for higher taxes on small businesses while ensuring they will never have to pay those higher taxes themselves. These are examples of luxury beliefs where the proponents of these radical ideas have the power and the privilege to protect themselves from the impacts of the weird experiments. They are running an experiment, but they are stepping out of the lab, so they are not affected. A normal person living in the real world cannot afford to ignore common sense for long, because a lack of common sense will catch up with them. It will have consequences for their life that they and others notice and that will lead to a course correction.

Well-functioning democracies, by protecting the voice of the common people in decision-making, maximize the chance that collective decisions will be informed by common sense. The common people are often most in touch with common sense, because the common people have to live with the consequences of collective decisions. However, a small, privileged elite can often continue, even for a long time, to hold, promote and govern on the basis of a narrow set of luxury beliefs that defy common sense, while protecting themselves from the impact of those decisions.

This fundamentally defines the record and practice of the current government: making decisions based on luxury beliefs that its members can insulate themselves from and that in reality have devastating impacts on the lives of everyday Canadians.

The Prime Minister is generally insulated from the impacts of his carbon tax. He will not even share information about the amount of greenhouse gases his own activities produce. We have sought that information before and have not received it. He has a taxpayer-funded home and has never struggled to afford a home because of inherited wealth. He has the privilege to protect himself from inflation and he does not have to live in communities devastated by his own dangerous drug decriminalization policies.

• (1700)

The Prime Minister persists in his own luxury beliefs because he does not see or experience those real-world consequences. Today, many Canadians, who once voted for him, can see the failure of his luxury beliefs and see the urgency of our call in response to these radical experiments. Our call is for a return to common sense, to axe the tax, to build the homes, to fix the budget and to stop the crime, to reverse these radical policies and replace them with clear common-sense priorities.

Privilege

Conservatives' priorities notably correspond to these specific areas of NDP-Liberal failed experiments. They brought in a carbon tax, which was an experimental idea. It was the theory that if we increase the cost of everything, this will lead to less consumption in areas that produce carbon emissions. This failed because, as history has shown us, technological change leads to changes in behaviour. It was not through taxes on horses that we saw the transition to the automobile. It was through the invention of the automobile.

I remember seeing a post online of someone showing a picture of a street before the invention of the car and after the invention of the car, and it showed how quickly things can change. The point is that things changed because new alternatives become available that allow people to adapt. We would not have seen that change through a tax on horses. It just would have made taking a horse and buggy more expensive.

The carbon tax was a theory. It was tried. It has not worked. The government has not reached its targets at all. There are other countries that have pursued other policies that I think have been more effective than the actions of the government. The Conservatives' response is to reject the Liberals' radical experimentation and restore common sense in this area with our proposal to axe the tax.

When it comes to another area of experimentation, the Liberals brought in changes around housing and immigration. They were experimental changes. They radically increased non-permanent immigration to this country. They did not have any plans around home construction. In fact, fewer homes are being built today than were built in this country in the 1970s, despite the growth in population.

This experiment of not having enough homes to meet the needs of the population was a radical experiment. Individual members of the government are insulated from the impacts of the experiment, but it was an experiment that failed. In response to that, we want to champion a return to common sense, the common-sense proposal to build the homes.

Then, as I already talked about, the Liberals experimented with modern monetary theory. They wanted to try something new. They tried dramatically increasing spending and did not worry about, at any point, balancing the budget. It was a radical, novel idea. I think many people would say it would be nice if that was true. It would be nice if we could spend infinitely without needing to worry about where the money came from, but that is just not how the world works.

Disraeli famously said that the facts of life are conservative. What goes up must come down. There is a basic reality the experimentation defied. The Liberals acted on fiscal policy, and continue to act on fiscal policy, in defiance of basic common sense. The wisdom that people naturally gather over time by living normal lives, is that they realize that they cannot spend money they do not have, and if they spend money they do not have, eventually it is going to catch up to them. That is common sense.

The government tried to defy common sense. It did not work. In response to that failure, the Conservatives have a proposal to fix the budget. It is to institute a dollar-for-dollar rule, which restores common sense. If we are going to spend a dollar on something, that dollar has to come from somewhere. We cannot spend money we do

not have, and if we have that money, it had to come from somewhere. It is simply asking government to discipline itself to that common-sense reality.

That is our plan to fix the budget: axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and finally stop the crime. We have seen radical experiments from the Liberals on crime. When they took office, they made substantial changes to the bail system. We can see, if we look at the data on violent crime in this country, how violent crime was going down under Stephen Harper, and it started to go up when the Prime Minister took office. It is because the Liberals made specific policy changes—

• (1705)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. What does this have to do with the concurrence motion? If the member wants to debate the budget or another piece of legislation, perhaps he should allow the government to introduce it so we can debate that.

The Deputy Speaker: We have debated concurrence motions a lot, but we are not doing that. We are actually on the privilege motion now.

However, I will remind the hon. member to come back to the privilege motion at hand.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, we have seen the radical experiments of the government on crime, and that is why Conservatives are championing common-sense proposals to stop the crime. We will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. These common-sense principles respond to the radical experimentation of the government. I hope that is helpful for members of the government in understanding these principles of common sense.

The member highlighted the privilege issue. I have talked a bit about the privilege of the government and how it is so privileged that it has insulated itself from the impacts of its bad policies. In particular, in this privilege motion, we are talking about the fact that the government has refused to hand over documents ordered by the House of Commons. What I have been building up to is the reality that the government's approach to scandal and to the House of Commons demonstrates a lack of regard for the basic principles of common sense.

We are talking in this privilege motion about the rights of the House of Commons, fundamentally, to order the production of documents. We call it the House of Commons for a reason. It is because the House of Commons has always been the institution that represents the common people. I talked earlier in this speech about how the common people are necessarily in touch with common sense by the experience of their lives, whereas it is often the case that a privileged elite can become disconnected from common sense. We are in the House of Commons championing the common sense of the common people and the right of that House of Commons, on behalf of the common people, to order the production of documents that are relevant for the work of the House.

Privilege

In the midst of its defence of power and privilege against the common people and the House of Commons, we have a government that is refusing to hand over documents that have been ordered. In the spirit of common sense, Conservatives are going to continue to demand that those documents be handed over. What are the documents? Aside from the principle of the right of the people's House to order the production of documents, what exactly are the documents the government is making its stand on in defence of power and privilege against the rights of the people to order these documents? It is about a corrupt green slush fund, where government insiders were able to, because of their privileged access, hand out money, and they did so often to companies that were owned by people on that very board. There was a group of insiders appointed by the government that was able to hand out \$400 million to various companies, and it used that insider access, that power, to give money to its own companies.

This is obviously a violation of the basic principles of common sense. I think any reasonable person thinking about what makes sense and what is fair would understand that there should not be people with the power to allocate taxpayers' dollars to companies that they own. That is just common sense, but it was not common sense that penetrated the elite decision-making circles within the government. Both the process of this motion, the fact that the government is refusing to hand over documents, and the substance behind it, which is what happened with the green slush fund, underline the need to restore that common sense to the decision-making that takes place here in Parliament and in Ottawa, in general. The very fact that the government insiders thought that what they were doing was okay or that they could get away with it illustrates how broken things have become under the government.

I could go through the litany of scandals. Just this week, the government operations and estimates committee was doing ongoing work on the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal, how elite non-indigenous insiders took money that was supposed to be benefiting indigenous companies. In fact, the AFN said that the vast majority of those who benefited from these set-asides were actually shell companies. We had an auditor before committee who said that he, years ago, came to the government with evidence of criminal activity by people pretending to be indigenous, saying that these allegations should be referred to the RCMP, and the government decided not to do that. It is unbelievable that an auditor would say there is criminal activity and that the government would decide not to hand the documents over.

It is time to restore the common sense of the common people united for our common home, and that is what we should be standing up for in this House of Commons.

• (1710)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have certainly enjoyed the choice of words used by Conservatives lately. They do not talk about balancing the budget, but about fixing the budget. I am wondering if the member can tell me the difference between the two because I certainly do not think they mean balancing it. If we look at the history of the Conservatives over the last few decades, neither Stephen Harper nor Brian Mulroney balanced the budget. Actually, Harper only had two balanced

budgets. One questionable budget was just before he left in 2015 and the other was on the heels of Paul Martin's surplus in 2006.

The member talked about fixing the budget. What is the difference between fixing and balancing? He can spare me the rhetoric that every dollar spent must be saved. Does that basically mean that they will keep the deficit exactly where it is? In reality, most governments accept the fact that running deficits is okay as long as they are growing the economy at a pace that is outpacing the deficits, which has been the case for this government.

• (1715)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, let us all have a bit of a chuckle about what just happened. The member said, "I want an answer to this question, but spare me the answer that I expect you to give." I might as well just sit down, but maybe I will just give him that answer again so that he understands. Maybe after a few times he will actually learn something.

This is common sense, so it is good for the member to hear it. To fix the budget, we will bring in a dollar-for-dollar rule. That means when a dollar is spent that dollar needs to come from somewhere. The government needs to identify when it is making spending decisions. If it is proposing to spend \$100 million on something over here, it needs to be able to say where that \$100 million will come from. The money has to come from somewhere to go to the spending item. That is common sense.

What the NDP-Liberal government has pursued is a radical policy in defiance of common sense, where it seems to believe that it can promise new spending without ever offering an account of where that money came from. The effect of that has been massive inflation, making life significantly less affordable for Canadians, more than doubling the national debt. It is a horrible record, a record worse than any previous Conservative or Liberal prime minister.

Canadians are going to be living with the debt caused by the NDP-Liberal government for a very long time. However, we are prepared to use common sense to clean up the atrocious mess that it has created and restore our common home.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, back in the Harper era, the Conservative government reduced the GST. Members will recall that it went from 7% to 5%. I would like my colleague to explain why today, a few years later, his party objects to a GST holiday.

How was the fiscal impact under the Conservatives different from the current fiscal impact with the Liberals in power?

Privilege

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is very clear the difference between an across-the-board, permanent tax cut and the temporary tax trick proposed by the NDP-Liberal government. We permanently reduced the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%. We did so while balancing the budget. Of course, there were timely temporary deficits during the global financial crisis and we brought the country back to a balanced budget. It was a prudent fiscal approach and we were able to cut taxes permanently and across the board, cutting the GST.

This temporary tax trick says that we are going to change the list of goods that are tax-exempt for a period of two months, so there will be one list of tax-exempt goods now. That list is going to change for two months and then it is going to change back, which is just a nightmare from an administrative standpoint for small businesses that have to manage this. It is a trick because it will not cut people's taxes permanently. We favour permanent, across-the-board, effective tax cuts to make our system simpler and more effective and to provide Canadians the tax relief they deserve.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member is correct that, under that time frame, the Harper administration did bring in the largest Canadian deficit at that time, \$56 billion. Prior to that, it was Brian Mulroney in a Conservative government, at \$40 billion. Also, during that time frame, the Conservatives brought in the HST, thanks very much, with Brian Mulroney's GST before that, and they borrowed up to \$6 billion to pay the different provinces to bring in the HST, which we are still paying for right now.

Does my colleague right now regret the Stephen Harper government for having us pay interest on the deficit that we have today and then, on top of that, for paying interest on the money we had to borrow to bring in its HST policy?

• (1720)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from the NDP wishes to hold me accountable for decisions of the Mulroney government. I was born in 1987. Respectfully, I know he is a bit older than me and he has been in this place for a long time, but I do not know that I am necessarily well positioned to defend all the decisions of the Mulroney government at that time.

I will say that, over the course of almost 150 years of this country's history, up until 2015, our national debt was at a certain point. Over the Harper years, that debt-to-GDP ratio went down overall. We went through the global financial crisis and we balanced the budget coming out of that. We lowered the debt-to-GDP ratio. However, when we compare the entire accumulated debt of this country, from Confederation to 2015, with the nine years under the NDP-Liberal government, more debt has been run up by one Prime Minister in nine years than every single prime minister before that.

We can debate the particulars of the Mulroney government's record and of the Diefenbaker government's record. We can talk about R.B. Bennett at some point as well. The fact is that, in comparing all of those prime ministers of the past, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister has run up more debt than all of them combined.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could comment a bit about the wasteful spending. I cannot believe the wasteful spending over the last nine years.

The member for Kingston and the Islands asks what we are going to do. My colleague here will outline that we would not have this wasteful spending, such as \$10 million on a cricket farm about an hour from where I grew up, \$400 million in this slush fund and millions of dollars to Loblaws for coolers. I would like my colleague to talk about the wasteful spending.

One last point is that the member for Windsor is a great guy; I like him. He can talk about the spending, but I remember. I was here. Megan Leslie and Nathan Cullen said to spend more. It is one thing to say it, but that is what they were saying.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is a great question from my colleague. I do not think there is enough time in most of our lives, actually, to lay out all the waste that has happened.

However, I have the honour of serving on the government operations committee, and I will just highlight a few things that we have been able to identify there in terms of government waste. While the size of the public service has grown, there has also been a dramatic increase in spending on outside consultants. We would expect these things to go inversely; if there were a larger public service, there would be less need to contract out or vice versa. However, under the current government, there has been growth in the public service and it is contracting out more. The government is contracting to people who are then subcontracting. There is this whole class of professional contractors and subcontractors who receive contracts and then subcontract, companies like GC Strategies.

We have seen horrendous abuse of the indigenous procurement program, where non-indigenous elite insiders pretend to be indigenous or set up shell companies or abusive joint ventures and then use those arrangements to take contracts that should be benefiting indigenous communities. We are talking about the green slush fund today. There are abuses of the indigenous procurement program. There is outrageous spending on contracting out to friends of the government, like McKinsey and others. These are some of the obvious, significant examples.

I am very proud of the fact that when we have put forward proposals for cutting Canadians' taxes, like by taking the GST off new home construction, for example, we have, in every case, identified where the money is going to come from. That is our approach.

Privilege

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is once again my pleasure to get on my feet and talk about the SDTC slush fund of the Liberals and the corruption that has gone through the organization from top to bottom for years and years, nine long years. I will also bring into the debate some other governments that have had some scandals as well.

I come from Saskatchewan, and for a long time I was not proud of it. The governing party was the NDP in Saskatchewan, and it had scandal after scandal, so I will compare and contrast some of the scandals of my home province with some of the scandals that are happening right here in Ottawa.

First, though, I hope I have some leeway from my friend, the member for Kingston and the Islands. I would like to take this time, as I am not sure whether I will be on my feet again, to wish everyone across Regina—Lewvan and everyone in Canada a very Merry Christmas. Christmas is one of my favourite times of the year.

An hon. member: Merry Christmas.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member very much. We can bring some joy to the chamber. Christmas is excellent. We got the Christmas tree up on November 12. My wife was very excited to get the Christmas tree up—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I should have waited for the GST break, I guess, but we had the tree up a little bit before the GST cut's coming into place.

We did some hard work and got the backyard rink ready so we can have a hockey game with the kids and the uncles, who are with us for Boxing Day, when we welcome the start of the world junior hockey championship, which is being hosted right here in Ottawa. I wish good luck to team Canada. It is a family tradition to watch all the junior hockey games, and I am looking forward to that as well.

Let me move on to the SDTC slush fund. I talked about this earlier in my question to my colleague, the member for Cariboo—Prince George, saying that one scandal that took down the Martin Liberals was the ad scam, an advertising scandal that rocked Quebec. It was something that really showed what Liberals do when they are in government.

The Liberals actually, at some points in time, believe that they are above the law. They believe that they have the divine right to govern, and they take every opportunity to enrich their friends and family. We see it time and time again. It is not a flaw of the Liberal organization; it is actually the *raison d'être*. The Liberals want to be in government so they can enrich their friends and family.

After the Liberals get voted out and the Conservatives have to come in and clean up their mess, their friends and family can give them cushy parachute jobs so they have the opportunity to make money while they wait for their turn to come back into government and wreck everything again, and Conservatives have to clean up their mess.

The SDTC slush fund was a \$420-million fund that was set up by the Liberal government. The board was put in place by the Liberal government. The key mandate for SDTC, which was a federally

funded non-profit, was to approve and disburse over \$400 million to clean-technology companies. Ironically, many of these companies have direct relationships to people in cabinet, and the chair of SDTC actually gave money to her very own company.

My colleague, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, set it up nicely by talking about common sense. Lots of people would say that it would be common sense that if someone is on a board, especially as chair of the board, appointed by the government to give funds to clean-tech companies, they would automatically assume that one's company would not be eligible or, at the bare minimum, they would recuse themselves from the discussions. However, none of this happened with the corrupt organization.

Here are the numbers that the Auditor General's audit found: Funding was approved by the SDTC board for 10 ineligible projects. There were 96 cases where conflict of interest policies were not followed, 90 cases where conflict of interest policies were also not followed for projects without ensuring contribution agreement terms were met, \$19.5 million for seed projects and \$38.5 million for COVID relief payments. The funding in overlaps was \$62 million, for a grand total of \$390 million that was given out to ineligible projects or to projects that were found by the Auditor General to be in conflict of interest.

• (1725)

This is something that has rocked the Liberal Party of Canada and its junior partner, the NDP. These documents are so bad. This is why we are seized with this debate, day in and day out. Liberals and their NDP junior partners are terrified to see what is in these documents. They have no idea how bad this is going to get, so they do not even want to look at what has happened in this case.

I remember the 2015 campaign, the member for Papineau was running around the country saying “sunny ways” and that there would never be a more open and transparent government in the history of Canada than the one headed by the member for Papineau. What an absolute failure.

There have been over 70 scandals by the current government, and at the head of these scandals is the current NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, who himself has been in a conflict of interest, not once but twice. I once heard a very good quote from a fine football movie called *Remember the Titans*: “Attitude reflects leadership.”

Privilege

We see that within the Liberal and NDP caucuses. Their leaders have the attitude of “rules for thee but not for me.” That comes straight from the Prime Minister's Office. They believe they are above the law and that taxpayers' dollars are there for them to spend as they please, conflict of interest be damned. It does not matter to them. They are very much entitled to their entitlements, which I think came from one of their members a few years ago.

An hon. member: Dingwall.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Yes, Dingwall said that he was entitled to his entitlements.

Madam Speaker, in terms of the funds that are going out, I do not know if this is actually a strategy the NDP-Liberals have, but maybe it is that, if they have this many scandals, the Canadian population will just become accustomed to it. Maybe if there are so many wrongdoings within the government, the Canadian population will say, “It is just another Liberal-NDP scandal. What else would we expect? It is kind of what they do.”

As the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has stated eloquently, Liberals are going to liberal. That is what we are seeing here. It is actually embedded into their ideology that taxpayers' dollars are their own. I say this in many speeches, and it bears repeating: The NDP-Liberals should realize government has never earned a dollar. Government only takes money through taxation from individuals or businesses that make that money. That is how government gets its funds.

I think that we need to look at the ideology within the Liberal Party. They will give money to their friends. We had the clam scam. I have a list of all the scandals here, which I would like to run through and talk about. The Canadian population, I think, has become accustomed to Liberal scandals. I think they expect a new scandal every week, and the Liberals are obliging them because we have a new scandal every week. There is another Randy. There are so many.

I will start from the top. We put this list together in my office. Obviously, we have the Prime Minister's first breach of ethics, the Aga Khan vacation scandal, when he took a vacation that cost tens of thousands of dollars to a private island. I do not have many friends who own private islands. I do not know if any other members do, but that is probably not even an option for many in the House of Commons.

We have the prison needle exchange program. Then there was pressuring the justice minister to get Liberal donor SNC-Lavalin off the hook and firing the minister for not helping to cover it up. That was the Jody Wilson-Raybould saga, which ended with the Prime Minister unceremoniously dumping the first indigenous female justice minister, but that is just the first of many competent, strong women that the Prime Minister has thrown under the bus. I will get to more of them.

We have the “people experience things differently” response to groping allegations, and the WE Charity scandal. The member for Kingston and the Islands asked how Conservatives are going to fix the budget. I would like to add to the answer from my colleague. We fix the budget by cutting wasteful spending. There were hun-

dreds of millions of dollars given to WE Charity over the years. There is an easy cut.

● (1730)

In addition, the public service has grown exponentially, yet more than double the amount of money is being paid to outside consultants. The member asked how we grow government and increase the money given to third party consulting contracts. There was hundreds of millions given to McKinsey. There is another easy cut to save taxpayers money, so we are probably at about \$200 million right there. The Canada Infrastructure Bank has not finished a project in this country. I think that is a couple of billion we could bring home; we could actually get projects built in our country with those dollars. There is more money that could be saved. When we talk about common-sense approaches to fixing the budget, here are some concrete examples right there.

We had the WE Charity. We had the member for Papineau elbowing the female NDP member in the House of Commons. That was another scandal that rocked this nation, with the Prime Minister being physical with another MP. He prorogued Parliament to escape the WE scandal. Once again, I am building on the WE scandal. The government sent personal protective equipment to China during the pandemic. I remember that there was a stock house filled with protective equipment in Regina, and they actually just threw it out during the pandemic.

The government gave hundreds of thousands of dollars in ventilator contracts to Liberal Party insider Frank Baylis, whose company did not even produce ventilators. That is foreshadowing for what happened with SDTC, giving money to Liberal insiders.

There were fake charges against Mark Norman. In 2021, the member for Calgary Skyview took people's mail out of their mailboxes, so that was another scandal. The illegal invocation of the Emergencies Act is one of my personal favourites. The last time the Emergencies Act was invoked, Tommy Douglas said that invoking the War Measures Act was like cracking a peanut with a sledgehammer. That was a long time ago, when the NDP stood for something; now it stands for nothing but its leader's pension and keeping the current scandal-plagued Prime Minister in power.

Privilege

PHAC found a committee in contempt of Parliament with the Winnipeg lab documents. I remember that. The Liberals then took their own Speaker to court. There was the trampling of Canadians with horses, as well as the seizure of Canadians' bank accounts. That was something I never thought I would see in my lifetime. There was rampant abuse of staff in the Liberal Prime Minister-appointed Governor General's office. The Governor General wasted \$100,000 to throw private jet parties. There were connections with illegal casino magnates and vaccine delays.

The Liberal Prime Minister dressed up in racist costumes on official trips to India. The Liberal Prime Minister dressed up in racist blackface. There were mass airport delays and cancellations. The government decriminalized hard drugs. The member for Cariboo—Prince George gave a wonderful speech on how, in his province, because of the decriminalization of hard drugs, overdoses have become the number one cause of death for 18- to 27-year-olds. That is a direct result of the NDP government in B.C. and the Liberals agreeing to decriminalize hard drugs.

The sending of diplomats to a party at the Russian embassy during the invasion of Ukraine was another scandal. The Liberal Prime Minister pollutes more in one year with his private jet than the average Canadian does in half a lifetime. That is another thing. We see the Liberals prop themselves up as stewards of the environment, but they pollute more through private jet use than Canadians do in half a lifetime. That is another example, as we talked about earlier, of “do as we say, not as we do”.

This list gets longer every time I give this speech. The minister gave a \$17,000 contract to a Liberal-aligned media firm. The Liberal Prime Minister let Thomson Reuters take his chief of staff to the White House press correspondents' dinner. The former DND minister misrepresented his service in the military. The government tried to get unwarranted border searches of electronics. There was the restriction of online free speech. We all remember the anti-free speech bill the Liberals tried to get through before the last election, and we were able to slow that down.

The Liberal Prime Minister spent \$11 million to renovate his cottage. Can anyone imagine an \$11-million renovation? I think that is something Canadians would see as a waste of taxpayers' dollars. There was the raising of the carbon tax during an energy crisis.

● (1735)

Even with electoral reform, I believe 2015 was going to be the last first-past-the-post election. That was another promise the Prime Minister made, hand over heart, that he was going to change the electoral system.

Another memory is of the Prime Minister doing his Care Bear stare, hand over his heart, when he went on national TV, looked Canadians in the eye during COVID and told them that their government would take on debt so that they would not have to. Obviously, this came from a man who never thinks about monetary policy, or fiscal policy either. Can members imagine a prime minister saying that the government would take on debt so that Canadians do not have to? Who does he think pays the debt back? Does he think he can just print money? Obviously, he does think he can just print money, which he has done over the last year, which caused the inflation crisis for Canadians.

When we look at the prices in the grocery stores, more and more Canadians are going to the grocery store just to see that they cannot buy the essentials to feed their family. That is a direct cause of the Prime Minister's lack of knowledge when it comes to fiscal and monetary policies, because he does not think about it. We see grocery prices continue to go up because of the policies of the Liberals.

Then inflation happens and what do we see? An increase in mortgage rates across this country and people finding it harder to pay their mortgage. When it comes down to it, people cannot afford the groceries they need for their kids or a roof over their head because of the doubling of mortgage rates and the doubling of rents because of the reckless fiscal policy of the Prime Minister. Then they look at this debate and wonder how on earth a government, headed by the NDP-Liberals, could spend \$400 million of our money and give it to their friends and party insiders. These are the questions we get in the riding. Do they think they are above the law? They give money to their friends and family and people are left holding the bag. Hopefully, my friend from Kingston and the Islands can get on his feet and explain how, if a government goes into debt, the Canadian taxpayer does not pay that money back through taxation and increased taxes.

I think that is one of the reasons the Liberals have such an infatuation with the carbon tax, because they are trying to get money any way they can from Canadians. If they use this tax policy, which is not an environmental policy, they get more money into the coffers. On top of that, which is not in the book but should be a scandal, the NDP-Liberals charge GST on the carbon tax that they are charging Canadians. It is a tax on a tax. I get many questions at my office about how it is even legal that they can tax a tax.

We are going on to a few more scandals.

There were more than 72 secret orders in council the Liberals have passed over the last nine years.

The Liberals eliminated the mandatory minimums for gun offences while going after law-abiding firearm owners, like Uncle Joe's rifle we talked about in question period earlier this day. The actual numbers do not lie. Over the last nine long years of the government, gun crime has increased by 116%. The government members think that, by going after our sports shooters and law-abiding firearm owners, gun crime is going to go down. I do not understand why they cannot wrap their minds around the fact that it is not the law-abiding firearms owners who are causing gun crime to go up; it is the illegal guns coming across our border. It is the criminals who are actually breaking the law. What we need to do is have a common-sense policy with more border stops and more checks at the borders. We need to put criminals in jail where they belong, not out on bail.

I will talk about that for one more minute, the fact that the Liberals' bail, not jail policy has hurt communities across this country. One is my community in Grand Coulee, where someone was charged with child pornography and was let out with conditions, back into our community, the day he went to court. That is what the Liberals have done to this country.

• (1740)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the Conservatives like to reference the Prime Minister's comment on monetary policy from a few years ago.

I am curious. Could the member give us his perspective on the monetary policy of Canada?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I was expecting a bit more from the member for Kingston and the Islands than that. Obviously, he is a little bit slower today for some reason. He does not understand that we cannot spend money we do not have. It is a very basic principle. The fact that the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberals have produced more debt and made this country more indebted than all other prime ministers combined shows a lack of fiscal understanding from everyone on those benches.

• (1745)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to follow up on that question because it was not only that the Prime Minister did not want to think about monetary policy, but even more recently, just within the past few weeks, he actually said he wanted to leave the economy to the bankers. I wanted to ask my colleague about that.

Is that not a total abdication of responsibility by a prime minister to say he does not want anything to do with the economy?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, this is not the only responsibility the Prime Minister has abdicated. He has abdicated keeping our streets safe. Crime has gone up all over this country. It was a total abdication of policy when it came to his legalizing of harmful drugs. The fact that he does not think about fiscal policy and he says to leave it to the bankers is quite scary. We see by his printing of billions of dollars and causing of the inflationary crisis that he does not have the skills to deal with the job at hand.

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague on one point, which is that the Liberals are trying to cover up all the scandals.

The House did issue an order for the government to table these documents, but the government refused to do so. That is what has been paralyzing the House since September. This reminds me of another scandal that the government tried to dodge, the WE Charity scandal. I remember that shortly after I was first elected, the House was prorogued in an attempt to sweep the issue under the rug.

Still, there are other scandals that no one is talking about. They have to do with workers. One example is the Phoenix pay system, which the Conservatives brought in and this government promised to fix, but never did. Another example is the employment insurance system that the Conservative government of the day gutted, leaving unemployed workers struggling to make ends meet.

Would your party be prepared to restore a reliable Phoenix pay system for workers, as well as an EI system that will reconcile—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that I do not belong to any political party when I occupy this chair.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, there are many more scandals. I think I only got to number 40 on my list of 75. I was not here, but I believe the advice from the then Conservative government was for the Liberals not to continue with the Phoenix pay system and to do something different. This is what I have been told. There does need to be a system in place to make sure the workers are paid properly.

I think we go back to the point I made earlier, which is that the Liberals are trying to make it just a natural day when another scandal breaks out. They want to have so many scandals that Canadians just shrug it off and say, "Liberals are going to liberal." Liberals and scandals are synonymous with each other. That is not a flaw of the system. This is what they bring when they come to government. They come to government and scandals follow them everywhere they go. It is similar to the NDP members in Saskatchewan. Scandals followed them everywhere they went as well.

Privilege

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always find it rather fascinating to hear the Conservatives talk about the elite, as though the Conservative Party were not the elite of major financiers, wealthy CEOs and big business across Canada. The proof that the Conservatives are working hand in hand with the financial elite and big business is that they gave tens of billions of dollars in tax breaks to big business when they were in office.

In so doing, they were forced to cut services to the public, which hurt women, veterans, workers, the sick and our health care system. Even with their cuts, the Conservatives did not manage to balance the budget. It was not until the end of their term in 2015, when they had a fire sale and sold General Motors shares, that they managed to balance the budget.

I do not know what kind of magical thinking the Conservatives' are engaging in when it comes to the public purse, but the government cannot just hand out gifts to big business without also having to cut services to the public.

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, NDP members are complicit in propping up the most scandal-plagued government in the history of Canada. The NDP members could not even stand behind their own leader's words when he said that the Liberals are full of corporate greed and that he wanted to tear up the coalition agreement.

I will take no lessons from an NDP rump roast of a party that cannot stand up and support its own leader's words and that props up the most corrupt government in the history of Canada.

● (1750)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is clear from my previous question and the member's answer that perhaps my friend does not quite understand the difference between fiscal policy and monetary policy. Both fiscal policies and monetary policies are meant to affect an economy and to curb, increase or decrease economic output.

Monetary policy is what the Bank of Canada does. It is what the central bank in the United States does. Actually, rightly so, no government should really put itself in the business of affecting monetary policy. If the member does not believe me on that, he should ask the member for Abbotsford, who made it very clear a few years ago. Fiscal policy is when the government spends or holds back on spending money in order to affect economic output.

Given this, can the member now provide me with his thoughts on the monetary policy of Canada?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for the lesson in fiscal policy and monetary policy. I agree that his cabinet needs to have a lot more lessons. Maybe if he got to the cabinet table he could explain to the finance minister that difference, because her fiscal policy and her fiscal guardrails have done nothing but run this country's economy over the edge and create a dumpster fire of debt.

It is amazing that Liberals are so confident, but the number one expense on our budget sheet right now is debt payment. That is horrendous. The fact that the Prime Minister, aided by his NDP colleagues, has driven up debt in this country and has accumulated more debt than all other prime ministers combined over the history of our country should show that the Liberals are not fit to make monetary or fiscal decisions.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Regina—Lewvan said that he did not quite get to all the scandals he had on his list because there were just so many of them, so I just want to give him the opportunity. I am just wondering whether he wants to take the last minute or two remaining to talk a bit more about some of the scandals the government has been engaged in over time.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, what I did not get to was some of the NDP scandals in Saskatchewan and how poorly the NDP governed our province for 16 long years. People used to call it "Roy's revenge." Roy Romanow was the NDP premier of Saskatchewan who closed 152 hospitals in our province, devastating health care. Roy Romanow closed 175 schools; that was one school for every week he was premier in our province. This devastated rural Saskatchewan. When the New Democrats were in power, they were so terrible that they have not won a seat in rural Saskatchewan since Roy's revenge.

When we talk about scandals, there is also a little thing called Spudco. The NDP in Saskatchewan lost \$56 million, and this was in 1990, trying to plant potatoes. Saskatchewan has pretty good agricultural land. The government lost \$56 million on Spudco.

The kicker is something Saskatchewan called mega bingo. Only a bunch of socialists would lose money on bingo in Saskatchewan. The program lost \$20 million because the province could not get bingo right. That is a failure.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, with the holiday season upon us, I just want to take a moment to wish my constituents in Foothills a very merry Christmas. Certainly, all of us in the House understand that our communities are bustling with Christmas shopping, Christmas carols, holiday lights and the celebration of friends and family.

At this time of year, I understand the hard work that our volunteers and our community organizers are doing with random acts of kindness that are knitting our communities together. I just want to take a moment to thank each and every one of them for all the work they are doing during this holiday season, making the communities what we know they are. They are showing us what Christmas is all about.

As proud as I am of my constituency of Foothills, unfortunately, the members on the other side of the House are going to be on Santa's naughty list, with the number of Liberal scandals, schemes, breaches of ethics and conflicts of interest that they have had over their past nine years in government.

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It seems as though, while many Canadian parents are struggling to put food on the table or put gifts under the Christmas tree for their kids, the Liberal members, insiders and bagmen are the ones who are making off with the Christmas spirit this holiday season. Hard-working Canadians are seeing their paycheques eroded by out-of-control spending, higher taxes, higher inflation and scandal after scam, with the arrive scam, the WE scandal and SNC-Lavalin. Even among their members, the former minister, the member for Edmonton Centre, is getting caught in his own scandals, one after another. He tried to take advantage of his position as a cabinet minister to enrich his own company.

It seems that, with one hand, the Liberals are taking every scrap and every penny from the Canadian taxpayer, while with the other, they are enriching their friends and doling out taxpayer money to their friends, contractors and insiders.

Today, we are speaking about one specific scandal. I wish I could say it was just the latest scandal, but there have been more since this first came to light at the committee stage. This scandal in particular is egregious, not only because of the price tag, that this is a misuse of perhaps more than 400 million taxpayer dollars, but also because of the scale, in that it has more than 180 documented conflicts of interest. That is one every second day of the year.

Members of the board of directors, who were appointed by the member for Papineau, the Prime Minister, were taking SDTC money that was meant to go to innovation and projects as part of a climate change initiative. The green slush fund was being funnelled to members of the board of directors, who were themselves voting to have money go to their own companies or companies they represented.

I think that the scale of this kind of insider trading, for lack of a better description, is what frustrates so many Canadians and, certainly, members of the official opposition. This is not just government money. The Prime Minister loves to say that the Liberals are investing in Canadians, that they are investing in these projects. He is investing with Canadian taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. Actually, he used to do that. He is now just having to borrow because he has blown through whatever the taxpayer has to provide.

Those hard-earned dollars that the taxpayers are giving to the government have been directly funnelled into the hands of Liberal-appointed board members and the companies they represent. Aside from the fact that this money was going to Liberal insiders and Liberal friends, the majority of projects that were approved did not even qualify for the funding from this program. They were illegitimate, yet the Liberal-appointed board members found ways to bend the rules, circumnavigate procedure and ensure that they were enriching their own companies and lining their own pockets. It is no wonder that the level of trust from Canadians in the political structure and the Liberal-NDP government is at an all-time low. The polls certainly show that the most recent two-month tax trick and \$250 cheques are not what Canadians are buying.

The list of promises that the Prime Minister has broken would probably make Santa's naughty list blush. It seems to happen over and over again. I would just like to go over a couple. He promised that there would only be a few teeny-weeny deficits in his first three years as Prime Minister. After three years, he would balance

the budget. He promised electoral reform. He promised to reduce taxes on the middle class. He promised to build more affordable housing. He broke every single one of those promises.

● (1755)

In retrospect, one of the promises the Prime Minister made in the 2015 election, and what he continued to say after he was elected Prime Minister, is one I would find almost hilarious if it was not so painful. In the 2015 election, he promised Canadians he would have the most open and transparent government in Canadian history. That statement now, in retrospect, is laughable. He is anything but transparent and open.

In fact, this is the second time the Prime Minister has ignored the will of the House and a ruling by the Speaker of the House to table documents in the House of Commons. The first time, he actually took the Speaker to court. He prorogued Parliament and then called a pandemic election that no Canadian wanted just to hide the level of his scandal. He was trying to hide documents from the Winnipeg lab scandal from being tabled in the House of Commons. If at first one succeeds, I guess try and try again. Those documents were never tabled in the House of Commons because an election was called.

The Prime Minister is trying to do the same thing here with the green slush fund documents that the Speaker of the House has ruled must be tabled in the House of Commons because Canadians have a right to know how their money is being spent. I would say Canadians want their money back. They want that \$400 million to go back to the government and spent on things that will benefit Canadians.

Not long ago, the Prime Minister also promised, with the finance minister, in the most recent budget, that the deficit would not go over \$40 billion. In question period, almost every day for the last two weeks, members of the official opposition have been asking the Prime Minister and the finance minister if they will stick to that \$40-billion guardrail.

I would argue that a \$40-billion deficit is still outrageous, but we are asking, if the government is not going to stick to that guardrail, what the size of the deficit will be. Is the government going to stick to that self-imposed guardrail, or is it driving Canadians off a fiscal cliff? I think Canadians deserve to know that. I think it is pretty clear, by the government members' unwillingness to answer that question, that this is going to be yet another promise broken.

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The Liberals have blasted through that \$40-billion debt promise. We do not know what will be announced on Monday. The Liberals will try to spin this as a win. They will fudge numbers and come up with great phrases like debt-to-GDP ratio, or that they are sticking within this window, but Canadians feel it. They feel it every single day when they buy groceries, put gas in their cars, or are looking to renew their mortgages or heat their homes. They understand that life is not as good as the Liberals will profess.

In fact, we are seeing these levels of scandal and mismanagement, when it comes to Canadian taxpayer money, continue to pop up almost on a daily basis. We have learned from the Auditor General that the Liberals' CEBA program is yet another billion-dollar boondoggle. In fact, \$3.5 billion of taxpayers' money was paid to more than 77,000 recipients who did not meet the eligibility requirements. That means about 10% of the total 900,000 loan recipients were ineligible for the money they received. We are asking the government if it has a plan to get the taxpayers' money back. Thus far, we have not heard a single plan to accomplish that.

On top of that, the Liberals gave a non-competitive contract to Accenture. Accenture was allowed to lead the procurement process, which led to Accenture receiving \$313 million, or 92% of the total value of the contracts awarded to Accenture to deliver the CEBA program. Even worse, it was administering this program from Brazil, despite telling the government it was going to be using Canadian experts and Canadian labour. That did not happen.

• (1800)

It is frustrating how the Liberal government is trying so hard to block the tabling of these documents that they are willing to seize their own Parliament. For all intents and purposes, they have a majority government. The NDP has made that very clear every day. They should be able to control the calendar of the House of Commons. While the government says that the Conservatives are holding everything up, the government has a majority. It can make sure that the House of Commons works as it should, but it is refusing to table these documents.

In the meantime, Canadians are lined up at food banks in record numbers. While the NDP-Liberal government is lining the pockets of Liberal friends and insiders, a record-shattering number of Canadians are now being forced to access food banks. We have said this ad nauseam: When they increase taxes for the trucker who moves the food, they increase taxes for processors who manufacture the food, they increase taxes for retailers who sell the food and they increase taxes for farmers who grow the food, do members know what happens? They increase the cost of food every single day at the grocery store, making it that much more difficult for Canadians to afford it.

One aspect of that is the fact that, once again, the Liberal-NDP government has voted to quadruple the carbon tax, which will cost Canadian farmers more than a billion dollars a year. An average 5,000-acre farm will be paying \$150,000 every single year just in carbon taxes. How is that going to ensure that family farms are economically viable, let alone environmentally sustainable?

I am going to go off some numbers of the impact that the carbon tax is having on Canadian food production. I think it is very important that we talk about that term. This impacts not only farm fami-

lies but also Canadian food production and food security. For greenhouse operators alone, this is costing \$22 million a year. By 2030, it will cost between \$82 and \$100 million.

Nearly one in five farms in Quebec are unable to manage their debt because of rising transportation costs and high interest rates caused by the carbon tax and inflationary spending. This is leaving them unable to compete on the domestic and international markets. We have 44% of fresh fruit and vegetable growers already selling at a loss, and 77% of those cannot cover their production costs. We have 77% of produce growers in Canada on the brink of bankruptcy.

Alberta farmers paid \$17 million in carbon taxes last year just on natural gas and propane to dry their grain, and to heat and cool their barns. On April 1, when the carbon tax increases by 23%, that number will go to \$20 million a year. By 2030, that will be \$210 million just for Alberta farmers.

Last year, Saskatchewan farmers paid more than \$36 million in carbon taxes just to ship their grain by rail. That is not every other cost. That is not the cost of natural gas and propane to dry their grain, heat and cool their barns or manage their greenhouses. This is just the carbon tax bill that is passed on to them by CN and CP-KC rail. Next year, when that carbon tax goes up 23%, that number will be \$57 million.

The Liberal member for Kings—Hants, the chair of the agriculture committee, was stunned when he asked the representatives of the rail lines at committee last week if they were passing on the entire cost of the carbon tax to grain elevators and farmers. Their answer was that, yes, of course they were. Is that member serious? Did he think the rail lines were going to absorb the cost of the carbon tax, that they were not going to pass that on to the farmers and the grain elevators? Why would they pay that?

Every day, the Liberals cannot believe that the carbon tax is costing farmers money. They do not qualify for the rebates. They do not qualify for the Canadian entrepreneurs' rebate because the vast majority of them are incorporated. This is exactly the consequence of creating bad policy without actually talking to producers. The government could have done so much for Canadian farmers when we pointed out the mistakes in its policy, such as the original legislation on the price on pollution.

• (1805)

We brought forward Bill C-234, which would have eliminated the carbon tax on natural gas and propane, saving farmers that \$1 billion a year. However, Liberal-appointed senators and now, unfortunately, the Bloc, who at one time used to stand for rural Canada, rural Quebecers and Quebec farmers, have now withdrawn their support of Bill C-234, which Liberal-appointed senators gutted in the Senate, eliminating 90% of the benefits of Bill C-234. Every single agriculture stakeholder supports Bill C-234. Whether cattle, grain or supply management sectors, all of them support Bill C-234, except the Liberal government and now, unfortunately, the Bloc, who have turned their back on rural Quebec farmers. All of this was just to save the Prime Minister's carbon tax and perhaps to continue to prop up the Liberal government.

It is frustrating. Certainly, we hear from farmers every single day regarding how difficult it is for them to manage the increase in input costs, especially when the Liberal government puts on a carbon tax, and a tariff on fertilizer which has increased fertilizer prices more than 150%. I know, that is incredible, right? When we add a tariff to fertilizer, it impacts global prices, despite what our Liberal members might want us to believe. The Liberals put in front-of-pack labelling, changed Canada's Food Guide and are pushing for a P2 plastics ban. All of these things have impacts not only on farmers, but also on the Canadian consumer.

The new numbers are quite staggering. The Daily Bread Food Bank recently released its updated report on food bank use. Just in Toronto, there were 3.49 million client visits to Toronto-area food banks, nearly one million more than in the previous year; and a 273% increase since the pandemic. That means that one in 10 people in Toronto are being forced to rely on a food bank just to feed their families. Food bank use in Ontario has risen for eight consecutive years. In the last two years, the number of Ontarians accessing food banks has increased 73%. That is nearly triple the jump of the 2008 recession.

I know that the Prime Minister said earlier today that this is a global recession that has impacted these prices. That is simply not true. This is a Liberal-NDP-made problem that the Liberals refuse to fix. In fact, they are doubling down by voting to increase the carbon tax yet again on April 1 and quadrupling that carbon tax to 61¢ a litre.

The facts are clear. Food inflation in Canada is 36% higher than it is in the United States. That clearly shows that this is not a global recession; this is an NDP-Liberal recession that is caused by increasing taxes and increasing spending and is having a trickle-down effect on every aspect of Canada's economy. Rather than learn from those mistakes, the Liberals are ploughing ahead, as I said, by increasing that carbon tax yet again. The Liberals like to say, "Well, Canadians just do not understand what we are trying to do; they are just not listening." The finance minister liked to say, "We are in the midst of a vibecession. Canadians have really never had it so good." The finance minister just is not communicating it well enough.

Well, I guess the truth is that the Liberals are clearly out of touch because the people they are talking to truly have never had it so good. They are the Liberal insiders, Liberal members and their

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friends in corporate Canada who are benefiting from these slush funds and these scandals. Again, while Canadians are lined up at food banks, the Liberal-NDP government is lining the pockets of its insiders and its friends to the detriment of Canadian taxpayers, who are the ones who are truly paying the bills.

It shows just how out of touch the government is when the finance minister said that she knows people cannot afford to put food on the table, but the solution to that is just to cancel their Disney+, park their car and ride their bike. I would love for the finance minister to come to my rural Alberta riding, where we had two feet of snow a week ago, to say, "I just need you guys to park your truck and ride your bike." It seems like a joke, but this is not a joke.

I will finish with this. This is about the level of this scandal. This is \$400 million of taxpayer money and the Liberals need to explain to Canadians why they blew it.

• (1810)

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was going to start by thanking my friend for his remarks, but I think his leader has some people up in the gallery with notepads, so I do not want to get him in trouble.

The second thing I want to acknowledge is that I feel bad because I did not know the member was such a proponent of electoral reform, and he seems torn up by the—

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to remind you that members are not to reference anyone in the gallery.

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Agreed. The hon. member is correct.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. James Maloney: Apparently, I was right, Madam Speaker. The member just brought my point home for me.

The member is my friend and I know he cares deeply about rural Canada and agriculture. I have worked with him on some of these issues and I am proud to do so.

The member mentioned the Daily Bread Food Bank and talked about a number of affordability measures. He campaigned in the last election on the exact GST break that we voted on last week, and I would like him to explain to me and to the House how he can reconcile supporting it then and not supporting it now, when it is going to help the very people in his constituency he was talking about today.

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Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, the vote last week was about confidence in the government more than anything. I voted against what is a two-month tax trick. I have heard from small business owners in my riding that it will be extremely cumbersome for them to make all of the changes for what is going to be a two-month break for about four dollars for Canadians, but will increase our debt by \$7 billion. I do not think the cost-benefit analysis is worthwhile, but that vote, for me, was a vote of non-confidence in the NDP-Liberal government, and I can back that any day of the week.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the record. In his speech, my colleague said that the Bloc Québécois is against farmers because we oppose Bill C-234.

Let us review the facts. The bill was studied in the Senate, which proposed an amendment. To speed up the process, we are prepared to accept the amendment and vote on the bill as is. That was what our agriculture critic said last January. However, every time Bill C-234 has come before the House, the Conservatives have filibustered it, with speakers prattling on endlessly to prevent it from ever going to a vote. They are the ones holding up the bill.

Why are they doing this to farmers?

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

Let me state the facts. The Bloc supports an amended Bill C-234, which has been neutered. The Bloc supported the bill as it was when it went to the Senate. The Senate neutered it, taking away literally 90% of the benefit of that bill. The Bloc does not support an unamended Bill C-234, which is what our Canadian farmers want. There is no sense passing Bill C-234 as it is amended because it does not benefit Canadian farmers.

What the member is saying is that the Bloc supports basically a nothing bill. That is not what Conservatives are fighting for. We are fighting for our farmers and ranchers right across this country, who want a break in the carbon tax on natural gas and propane.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, throughout his speech, the member talked about affordability, absolutely, and wanting to ensure that people who have been dealing with the increase in grocery prices and household costs get some relief. New Democrats tried to put forward a couple of motions. One was to remove the GST on home heating and the other was to put a price cap on groceries and essential food items, both of which the Conservative Party voted against.

Considering he is so concerned with affordability issues, I would love for the member to explain why.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, it was a Conservative motion, I believe, brought forward by the leader of the Conservative Party, to remove the carbon tax on home heating and the GST on new homes. We have taken those measures. The NDP has kind of followed along, but it comes down to a question I have for the NDP. The NDP leader says every day how awful the Liberal government is, that it is weak and beholden to corporate Canada, like as the member says, to the grocery store CEOs, yet every time New

Democrats have a chance to send a message to Canadians and fight for affordability, they support the Liberal government, which is the most corrupt government in Canadian history.

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is something that the Conservatives have not told Canadians about the carbon tax, and I hope the Conservatives are paying attention.

If Canada had no carbon tax, Canadian farmers exporting to the European Union, for example, could face significant challenges under the carbon border adjustment mechanism. How would farmers who are exporting deal with tariffs if Canada did not have the carbon tax or carbon pricing?

• (1820)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, but I have to correct him.

The European Union does not have a carbon border adjustment on agricultural products. The member is misleading Canadians by assuming that we would be blocked from access to European markets if we did not have a carbon tax. That is just simply not true. The European Union does not have carbon border adjustments on agricultural products.

However, I think it is even worse than that. We are uncompetitive on the global market because of that carbon tax. We are putting a burden on Canadian farmers that American farmers do not have to deal with, and 60% of our products go south, not to the European Union. Our focus should be in line and competitive on a tax and regulatory regime with our biggest trading partner and our biggest competitor, which is the United States.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to get back to the green slush fund.

It is interesting, because SDTC was started in 2001. It was actually a pretty good government agency for a long time until the Liberals filled the board with appointments in 2018, and then we had this \$400-million slush fund. Canadians want to know where the money is coming from.

I would ask for the member's thoughts on this. With green technology and innovation, it was good in 2001, but the Liberals destroyed it now with their partisan appointments in 2018.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, the green slush fund is just an example of when good things can go bad in the wrong hands.

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In 2015, as an example, when the Liberals formed government, we left them with a very sound financial situation and a balanced budget. It took them about 30 seconds to demolish what the previous Conservative government, under Prime Minister Harper, had worked very hard to build. It left Canada with a very strong financial foundation. We will find out on Monday the scale and scope of how poorly a Liberal-led government, in every aspect, has left Canada's financial foundation in ruin.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend is a fantastic advocate for farmers across the country. He talked a lot about the issues and the policies that this government has foisted upon farmers, which are hamstringing them and making them uncompetitive.

One thing I would like the member to talk about is the absolute disaster that is the capital gains tax increases on farmers and how it is going to hamper succession planning. We heard heartbreaking stories about young farmers who are not going to be able to continue on the family farm because of this capital gains increase. The fact is that the minister has not talked to anyone and did not even know that it was in the budget.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, the member for Regina—Lewvan has been an outstanding advocate for Canadian agriculture and farm families.

The member is exactly right. This is another example of the Liberals ploughing through a policy without giving it the least bit of due diligence. When my colleague, the member for Regina—Lewvan, asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he knew that the capital gains inclusion rate change was going to be in the budget, he said no. He asked how many farm groups and farmers they had consulted with after the fact, and whether they had brought those comments to the cabinet table. There was no answer.

At the committee, we have had farmers literally crying about the impact that this is going to have on their ability, that young generation, to take on the family farm, burdened by additional debt, and more so for the years of succession planning that has gone into it that is going to devastate the retirement of many farm families, which is going to be detrimental for our farmers.

• (1825)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour and a privilege to be able to rise to speak on behalf of the great people of southwest Saskatchewan.

I just want to take a moment to wish everybody a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I want to point out that we are in the Advent season. The first two candles of the Advent wreath have been lit, with the first candle, of course, representing hope and the second candle representing faith. The third candle, coming up this Sunday, will be the candle that represents joy.

I want to take some time to speak a bit about some of the good work that is happening around southwest Saskatchewan. I think of all the families and businesses that have been put into hard times based on the cost of living crisis, a lot of which has been caused by the government. Many of the scandals the government is being caught in are leading to a lot of the issues being caused. When we

hear on Monday what the deficit is going to be, when the finance minister finally lets the House know what that number is, it is going to be shocking to a lot of Canadians.

It is no surprise to a lot of people what is happening, when they look at what is going on with our food banks and what all the different organizations are up to. I want to highlight a couple of great organization I read about in the news, as well as a couple of individuals. Last week, when I was flipping through the local news, I saw the story of a family in Swift Current. They were shopping at Canadian Tire, and they said that one of their family traditions is to fill an entire shopping cart full of toys.

The Salvation Army runs a program called Toy Mountain, and over 500 children are signed up for the program, to be able to get a couple of Christmas presents this year. The Harlos family, including daughters Kaylee and Taylor, filled an entire shopping cart with toys and piled them up on day one of this event that the Salvation Army puts on in Swift Current. I really want to give a big shout-out to the Harlos family for doing that. I also read that Haubie Yard Maintenance and Landscaping filled a couple of shopping carts as well to be able to pile onto the mountain of toys, so I give it a quick shout-out as well for doing that.

I also read that in Kindersley a couple of different things have happened. The Kindersley & District Food Bank, the Salvation Army there and the West Central Crisis and Family Support Centre hold a drive as well to gather food and toys for people in need.

Also, the Kindersley & District Co-op and the RCMP held a toy drive day called Cram the Cruiser, and they managed to fill an RCMP truck cruiser four times with food and toys for kids in the area. That was remarkable. They filled 360 food bags for families in the area, and they also had over \$7,300 in cash donations that was donated to the Salvation Army to help families in need this Christmas season.

I know that there are several other great organizations also doing similar things. I do not have enough time to list all of them here tonight, but a few of the great groups include the Kinsmen and Kinette Club, among others in various communities that are doing great work to try to make sure everybody has an opportunity to have a warm meal, to have a few presents underneath the tree for their kids and to truly celebrate the joy, hope and love that Christmas really means and that are reflected upon. I just want to give a big shout-out to the people who have done these great things.

With the SDTC fund, there were over 180 conflicts of interest and \$330 million that the Auditor General was able to find in her time auditing it. There are many irregularities that have occurred over time. I will be able to spend more time tomorrow, when I finish my speech, to be able to really break it down and get into a lot of these things.

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When I look at the number of \$330 million identified by the Auditor General, I start to think about what \$330 million could mean for organizations and families. We look at the inflationary crisis we are still dealing with and how much money people now have to pay to buy essentials to put on their table; \$330 million that was misappropriated and given to organizations and individuals would have gone a long way toward helping to keep the cost a bit lower for families for the groceries they need to buy and the toys they are looking to buy at this time of year.

I look forward to continuing the discussion tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1830)

[*English*]

ETHICS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am speaking tonight about the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal. We need to be very clear about what indigenous leaders have repeatedly told us at the various committees that have been studying this: that abuses of indigenous procurement under the Liberal government have become systemic. The Assembly of First Nations said “the majority” of those who benefit from these procurement set-asides are actually not indigenous. Liberals have trumpeted a 5% target, but Chief Joanna Bernard from the AFN has said it is closer to 1%.

We have repeatedly heard from indigenous witnesses, and every indigenous group has said there are serious, major problems in this program. Sometimes it is people like the member for Edmonton Centre, outright pretending to be indigenous for personal advantage. In some cases, they are shell companies or shady joint ventures that are set up to exploit these programs with all the benefit going to non-indigenous actors.

This week, we had another example revealed of this, a very significant example. This was a non-indigenous company, a Canadian health care agency, that was supposedly in joint venture with an indigenous company. The reality was that, according to the evidence we heard, the indigenous side of the partnership was exploited. All of the benefit and all of the work went to the Canadian health care agency. This was years ago.

At the time, the auditor himself came forward with the fact that he thought there was criminal activity, the invention of names of employees and fraud going on. People attempt to defraud the government, we know that, but in this case the auditor told the government about an instance of fraud, and he was told the government did not want to bring it to the RCMP. He recommended it be brought to the RCMP, and unbelievably, the government decided not to share this information with the RCMP.

We have the issue with the member for Edmonton Centre pretending to be indigenous and his company, Global Health Imports, misrepresenting itself as indigenous-owned to try to get these con-

tracts. We have now this issue of a Canadian health care agency. More broadly, we have indigenous leaders saying that, systematically, there are abuses of this program. Then, the Liberal government is interested in championing claims that it has made progress in terms of its target, so it has an incentive to turn a blind eye when these abuses take place.

On the one hand, we have bad actors, non-indigenous companies, that have an incentive to misrepresent their identities, to pretend to be indigenous to get these contracts. On the other hand, we have a government that is more interested in virtue signalling than in actually achieving results. It is more interested in being able to make statements claiming it has realized its targets when it has not. Companies misrepresent themselves as indigenous to get these contracts and the government turns a blind eye to be able to say it has achieved targets that in reality it has not achieved.

We have seen over the months that Conservatives have been looking into this and bringing attention to this abuse that Liberals have tried to cover it up, tried to cast aspersions at us and make all kinds of claims to bury the reality. However, here is the reality: We know now that they had information brought to them about criminal activity, fraud, by those pretending to be indigenous in order to take contracts intended for indigenous people. The victims of this are the taxpayer and indigenous communities. This evidence was brought to the government, and the government, in fact, buried it. It did not bring it forward.

Why have the Liberals failed so badly and why have they not prioritized results?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that we are on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin and Anishinabe people tonight.

Here we are again. It is truly incredible that the member would suggest he supports indigenous people the day after every single MP in his caucus voted against essential funding for indigenous health care, housing, school food and school infrastructure, including two schools in my home province of New Brunswick. Earlier last week, his party blocked the first nations clean water act from moving forward to the Senate. We will take no lessons from Conservatives when it comes to standing up for indigenous people.

Many allegations are being made in the House that have not been backed up. Specifically, I would like to address the issue of the member for Edmonton Centre. The company in question was never listed on the indigenous business directory. I want to be crystal clear about what this means. It means that the company has never been part of the government's procurement strategy for indigenous businesses. The company was not awarded any contracts through the procurement strategy for indigenous businesses.

The member has spent hours at the government operations committee hearing about this program. I would think it would be well understood by now, but here we are again.

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I will say that relevant concerns have been raised in our committee work, and I will point out that, if a problem is suspected with the supplier's business integrity, the case can be referred to Public Services and Procurement Canada to be assessed. Based on the assessment of each situation's specific circumstances, PSPC may then take steps to suspend or debar the supplier from future contracts awarded by the Government of Canada, and rightly so.

It is most important to note the good this program has done, as well as that it is supported by indigenous leaders and has benefited many indigenous businesses across the country. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan also heard about this yesterday at the indigenous and northern affairs committee, where witnesses such as Brian Doxtator, an entrepreneur and member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, told the member how a joint venture allowed his business to grow and create more jobs for indigenous people. Specifically, this was with a non-indigenous company.

Fundamentally, these programs are a building block toward economic reconciliation, which is a cornerstone of supporting strong, healthy indigenous communities. The procurement strategy is a catalyst for forging long-term relationships that help businesses build capacity and achieve self-sufficiency. Involving indigenous businesses in the supply chain creates a wealth of opportunities that often stay in their home communities. This, in turn, supports local economic development, helps to develop employment opportunities and skill building, and generates revenue; all of this can help support the preservation of indigenous cultures.

Indigenous leaders have told us that they support the program and that they want it to stay. Moving forward, we will work with indigenous partners to ensure ongoing improvements of the program.

● (1835)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is sad to see the government now taking this posture. In fact, it was earlier this week that the Minister of Indigenous Services seemed to be making some progress in admitting that there was a serious problem.

Even more information came out that, frankly, I suspect the Minister of Indigenous Services was aware of months ago. She has said that there is now going to be an investigation, yet we have the parliamentary secretary taking this defensive posture.

Indigenous identity fraud is when people who are not indigenous pretend to be indigenous in order to take benefits that are supposed to go to indigenous people. In fact, this is rampant in programs run by the government. Over 1,000 businesses have had to be removed from the indigenous business directory, but there have been zero consequences for any business. Indigenous identity fraud is rampant, but there have been no consequences for those who engage in it.

Why is that?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, again, the member knows that a business can be removed from the indigenous business directory for a whole host of reasons. We heard specific examples from witnesses who came forward to speak in committee, such as a status card expiring.

Again, there are some leaps being made here. The minister has also committed to an external audit of the program to encourage the ongoing improvement in collaboration with partners, as well as always listening to those indigenous leaders, not only when it benefits the narrative that they are trying to spin. The continued exclusion of indigenous people from our economy costs the Canadian economy \$27.7 billion every year. The Indigenomics Institute projects that the indigenous economy has the potential to grow from \$32 billion to \$100 billion in the next five years.

When first nations, Inuit and Métis communities have access to economic opportunities, we all benefit, and that is what this program is about. It seems that we all agree that such initiatives as the 5% minimum target are important and worth protecting. As I already said, we will continue to improve and support the program, to make sure it is delivering for first nations, Inuit and Métis businesses and communities.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, today, we are continuing to ask about the immigration levels plan. I want to draw the attention of the parliamentary secretary to annex 4, this loose-leaf piece of paper that was added to the annex. It was actually a separate document. There was a printed document and a bunch of loose-leaf pieces of paper from a photocopier. I want to draw the attention of the parliamentary secretary to the following numbers, because they are in the plan: The plan assumes that, in 2025, 816,900 persons will be allowed into the country and that, in 2026, 659,036 will be allowed in. If we look at the outflow numbers, it assumes that 1.26 million will leave the country in 2025 and that 1.1 million will leave the country in 2026.

Combined, that is a net 900,000 people who are supposed to leave the country in those two calendar years. When I asked the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship how these people were going to be made to leave, whether there were mandatory or voluntary measures, he had no answer. It was widely covered in the media that he could not answer such basic questions.

For these 900,000 people who are expected to be part of the outflows, which means they will exit the country, what are the mandatory measures to ensure that they do so? What are the voluntary measures to ensure that they do so?

● (1840)

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to say that our first and foremost priority at the moment is to take concrete and immediate actions at the border to show Canadians and our U.S. partners that our shared border is secure and that we continue to work to improve its integrity.

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To that end, we are working on a strong, smart and tough border plan, which includes immediate actions at the border as well as short-term investments and measures to bolster our posture. Our government has made significant efforts in the past years to combat cross-border criminality and transnational organized crime, particularly around the issues of human smuggling, drugs and firearm smuggling, as well as trafficking. In budget 2024 alone, we announced funding totalling \$399.5 million over five years, and \$69.2 million ongoing, for the CBSA to support the processing of asylum claims and facilitate removals. The results speak for themselves.

We have recently seen record-breaking seizures of methamphetamine as well as cocaine, alongside arrests linked to firearms trafficking. Collaborative efforts between the CBSA, the RCMP and other Canadian and international law enforcement partners, such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection, have been central in clamping down on cross-border threats.

Partnerships with U.S. law enforcement agencies and partners have already enabled several successful law enforcement actions, including Project Money Penny, a collaboration that saw the disruption of a firearms trafficking operation and led to the seizure of 173 smuggled firearms, drugs and other proceeds of crime, coupled with dozens of arrests. These great examples of co-operation between all partners and successful stories of seizures show, clearly, that our system is working, that our border is secure and that Canadians and Americans are safe.

We have no intention of stopping here. We will continue to invest and support our law enforcement and border agencies to ensure that they have the human resources as well as the tools they need to enhance the security and integrity of our border and to respond to any potential threats or surges well into the future.

That is why, in coming days, our government will make further announcements to strengthen Canada's border security posture. These additional measures will focus on providing the resources and tools the RCMP and the CBSA need, whether it be by leveraging new technologies, providing additional drones and helicopters or putting more boots on the ground and boats in the water to ensure that all areas are controlled.

I hope that all my colleagues will join me in supporting these important measures so that we can move swiftly on ensuring a smarter, stronger and tougher border.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said that the border was secure. Perhaps he would like to comment on this headline from The Globe and Mail that reads, "Jordanian terror suspect deported from the U.S. had crossed the Canada-U.S. border illegally twice". This person crossed illegally into Canada in 2017, made a refugee claim and was rejected for that refugee claim at the same refugee border that now has a 260,000-application backlog. He was not deported from this country. He crossed illegally into the United States, was apprehended by the American authorities and was then deported to his country of origin because he was a known terror suspect.

Perhaps the parliamentary secretary would like to amend his statement that the border is in fact secure when we have massive border disorder.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Madam Speaker, frankly, alarmist discourse that feeds into disinformation about the security of our border is not helpful and undermines the team Canada approach we have taken with the provinces and territories on this issue.

Just today, the first ministers were meeting with the Prime Minister to go through many issues, such as the one we are discussing this evening.

I have total confidence in the ability of these brave women and men, who every single day work tirelessly to keep our border safe and secure. We will continue to support them, because they support us, by increasing human resources, technologies and the equipment they need to continue to protect the integrity of our border and ensure border security readiness in the face of uncertainties. We will do so while also strengthening our collaboration with provincial, municipal, indigenous and American law enforcement partners.

I invite my colleagues to leave their political agendas behind and to join us in speaking in unity to show that Canada is and will continue to be a strong, reliable and trustworthy partner.

• (1845)

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

(The House adjourned at 6:46 p.m.)

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